

HIS MAJESTY GREETES ARGENTINIAN PRESIDENT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Alberto Fernández of the Argentine Republic on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments to President Fernández, wishing him good health and happiness. His Majesty also wished the people of the Argentina further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



HIS MAJESTY GREETES KING OF JORDAN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Abdullah II of Jordan on his country's 77th Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to King Abdullah, wishing him good health, happiness and a long life. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty for the return of this and similar occasions on King Abdullah while the people of Jordan realise further aspirations of progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



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His Majesty issues two Royal decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday issued two Royal decrees reading as follows:

Royal Decree No. (32/2023) on ratifying the air services agreement between the governments of the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Tajikistan, signed in Muscat on 15 March, 2023.

Article (1) ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (33/2023) on endorsing the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Protocol that supplements the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed in Beijing on 10 September, 2010.

Article (1) endorses the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Protocol that supplements the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) instructs the departments concerned to deposit the official document for joining the aforementioned Protocol in accordance with its provisions.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — **ONA**

HM TO VISIT IRAN ON SUNDAY



The visit will promote cooperation between Oman and Iran and serve their aspirations

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on an official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran this Sunday, according to a statement issued by the Diwan of Royal Court on Wednesday.

The statement reads as follows: "In culmination of the ties of friendship between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on an official two-day visit to Iran

with effect from Sunday, 28 May 2023, in response to an invitation from the Iranian President, Dr. Ebrahim Raisi.

The visit stems from the fruitful relations and good neighbourliness between the two countries.

His Majesty's visit comes within the context of the continuous consultation and coordination between the two leaderships to discuss various developments in the regional and international arenas.

The visit will also touch on means of promoting cooperation between Oman and Iran in different spheres to serve their current and future interests and aspirations.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan will be accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, 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, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office,

Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al Ra'eisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces, ambassador at large Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al Hinai and Ibrahim bin Ahmed Al Mu'aini, Ambassador of Oman to Iran.

May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan wherever he might be and grant him good health, happiness and success for the good of the Arab and Muslim nations!" — **ONA**

Remarkable growth in Oman-Iran relations

MUSCAT: The Oman-Iran relations have been witnessing a remarkable growth in various areas, which truly reflects the deep-rooted friendship between the two neighbouring countries.

The official visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Iran on Sunday affirms the advanced relations between Oman and Iran. These relations are based on mutual respect and good neighbourliness.

Furthermore, the talks, to be conducted by His Majesty the Sultan with President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi of Iran, will open broader horizons for cooperation between the two countries in different spheres, particularly in the economic, investment and trade fields. The two leaders will also exchange views during the talks on a set of regional and international issues. **>A2**



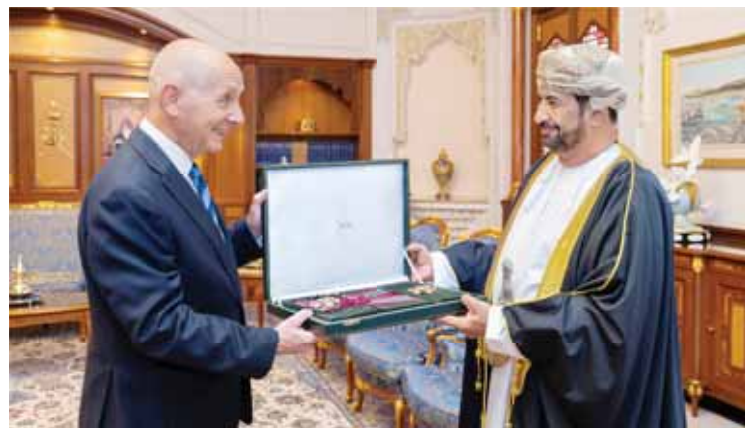
SAYYID SHIHAB RECEIVES INDIAN ENVOY, REVIEWS RELATIONS

His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs received Amit Narang, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Sultanate of Oman in his office at Al Murtafaa Garrison on Wednesday. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed relations between Oman and India and means of enhancing them, in addition to discussing several matters of mutual interest. — **ONA**

HONOUR

His Majesty confers Order of Felicitation on Outward-Bound Oman Executive Director

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik yesterday conferred the Order of Felicitation on Mark Evans, Executive Director of Outward-Bound Oman, in recognition of his efforts in upgrading the status of Outward-Bound Oman, earning it an international reputation. The medal was handed over by Sayyid Khalid Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of the Royal Court, when he received Evans at his office yesterday. — **ONA**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Sayyid Badr meets Yunnan Governor

1 Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received Wang Yubo, Governor of Yunnan Province in China. The meeting reviewed relations between the two countries. **>A5**

MARKET

BankDhofar offers to acquire ahlbank

2 BankDhofar at its May 23 meet resolved to make an offer to acquire 100% of the issued share capital of ABO in a takeover pursuant to the Oman Acquisition and Takeover Regulations. **>B1**

SPORTS

Maqsood to lead Oman in World Cup

3 Experienced all-rounder Zeeshan Maqsood will lead Oman at the forthcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier, which will be held in Zimbabwe from June 18-July 9. **>B5**

BEAUTIFUL COASTS

Diverse Muscat landscape ideal for marine tourism

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Due to the diverse terrain and seasonal climate, the Governorate of Muscat is one of the important tourism destinations in summer.

Boats are one of the attractions for marine tourists due to its biological and geological diversity and wildlife along its beautiful coasts.

Eng. Waheed bin Ali Al-Hindassi, Head of the Ship Registration Department at Port Sultan Qaboos, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said: "The number of tourist boats registered in the Governorate of Muscat reached 500, while the number of marine tourism companies reached 65, and these boats are distributed along the marinas of Muscat Governorate in Marina Bander Al Rowdha,



Shangri-La Marina, Yacht Club, Al Mouj Marina, and Seeb Port.

He added: "There are many marine sports activities carried out by tourism institutions, such as sunrise and sunset trips, diving, fishing trips, skiing, windsurfing, kayaking, dolphin watching, as well as enjoying the stunning scenery and discovering the marine environment." Marine tourism

has witnessed a boom with expansion in services, and this has become a source of income for workers in this field leading to the creation of new job opportunities for Omani youth.

The founder of Oman Tourism said that the sea in summer is an ideal tourist destination, and a place to enjoy the atmosphere with exciting water activities such as

diving, where you can see marine life such as fish, turtles and colourful and amazing coral reefs.

He added: "There are a number of other activities such as: rowing boats, and fishing trips. Summer is the perfect time for fishing and enjoying a freshly grilled meal. In the end, it can be said that the sea in summer provides us with a lot of fun, relaxation and adventure."

500

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Kuwait to host 26th Gulf Cup



OFA chief re-elected as AGCFF vice-president

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A formal seal of approval was given to Kuwait as host of the 26th edition of the Arabian Gulf Cup on Wednesday. The green light was given during the Ordinary General Assembly of the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation (AGCFF) that was held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in the Qatari capital of Doha on Wednesday. It may be recalled that Kuwait were announced as hosts in January earlier this year but a formal approval from the governing body was made on Wednesday. This would be the fifth time Kuwait would be hosting the region's biggest football extravaganza, which features eight teams – Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Iraq, Yemen and Kuwait. Kuwait are also the record title



holders of Gulf Cup titles, winning it ten times. Defending champions Iraq have won it four times while Saudi Arabia, Qatar have won it thrice. UAE and Oman have claimed the top honours twice while Bahrain have won it once. Yemen, which entered the competition only in 2003-04 edition, are the only nation not to have won the title. The AGCFF meeting on Wednesday was chaired by AGCFF president Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and was attended by AGCFF vice-president Sheikh Salem bin Saeed Al Wahabi, who is also the Oman Football Association (OFA) chairman

along with other members of the associations. Sheikh Hamad, who is also the president of the Qatar Football Association, was re-elected as the AGCFF chief for another four-year term along with Al Wahabi as the vice-president. Sheikh Hamad has been the president of the AGCFF since its inception in 2016. The 25th edition of the Gulf Cup was held successfully in Basra, Iraq, with the host nation edging past Oman 3-2 in the final in January this year. The regional tournament was first played in 1970 when it was hosted in Bahrain.

19 expatriates arrested

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A total of 19 expats have been arrested for attempting to enter the Sultanate of Oman illegally, and possessing large quantities of narcotics and psychotropic substances, said the Royal

Oman Police (ROP). ROP said: "The Coast Guard Police, led by the Dhofar Governorate Police, arrested 12 people of Arab nationality in the Omani territorial waters for attempting to enter the country illegally." In another incident, the Gen-

eral Administration for Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Control arrested seven people of Asian nationalities on charges of possessing large quantities of narcotics and psychotropic substances. Legal procedures against them are being completed.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Seminar on building responsible society



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Curriculum Development Citizenship Department, organised on Monday a seminar entitled "Positive Citizenship towards Building a Responsible Society." The seminar targeted 20 members of the Parents Councils in the Governorate of Muscat and took place at the training centre in Al Khuwair, Muscat. Sabeha Al-Haimli, an educational researcher in the Citizenship Programs Department supervised the training seminar in which she presented two papers. The first paper was "The Role of Educational Institutions in Promoting Positive Citizenship Values (The Family as a Model)." The paper dealt with the concept of positive citizenship, its

importance at the level of individuals and society, its values, the importance of promoting it, the manifestations of strengthening it in the family and the school, and the challenges facing educational institutions in applying it, as well as ways to overcome them. The second paper titled "The Role of Social Media in Promoting the Values of Positive Citizenship" addressed the concept of social media, models of which are used in our society, their importance in promoting the values of positive citizenship, and the topics and issues they address and affect positive citizenship. The training seminar aims to educate parents about the necessity of promoting the values of citizenship, not spreading rumors, maintaining public order and respecting laws, and instilling a positive outlook towards the achievements gained.

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GCC 42ND ANNIVERSARY:

A MOMENT TO PONDER PAST ACHIEVEMENTS, CONTEMPLATE FUTURE ONES



The establishment of the GCC on 25 May 1981 took place during exceptional circumstances emanating from regional tensions

MUSCAT: Today, the 25th of May, marks the 42nd anniversary of foundation of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The anniversary constitutes a moment during which the member states ponder about the great strides made in implementation of the goals set by the GCC Articles of Association. The statute provides for consolidating economic and political cooperation, enhancing regional development and establishing stronger ties among member states in various fields.

The establishment of the GCC on 25 May 1981 took place during exceptional circumstances emanating from regional tensions that prevailed at that time, posing political, security and economic challenges to the countries of the region. This prompted the GCC states to unify efforts, cement cooperation among them and enhance economic, political and security integration to realize stability and address the challenges.

Besides achieving coordination, integration and interdependence among member states, the Articles of Association stresses the need to boost ties and establish similar regulations in economic, financial, commercial, customs and transportation fields. It calls for cooperation among member states in educational, cultural, social, health, media, tourism, legislation, tourism, legal, technical, scientific and industrial areas.

It also covers measures to expand cooperation in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and livestock resources, in addition to establishing research centres and encouraging private sector cooperation.

In this regard, Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, said that, on this anniversary, GCC people recall with great pride the foundation of the GCC way back in 1981, which gave rise to the march of prosperity, security and stability of its peoples.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Sayyid Badr said: "In his first speech after assuming the reins of power, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik



affirmed his strong backing to the GCC.” Sayyid Badr quoted His Majesty the Sultan as saying, “We will continue joining hands with our brethren, leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council states, to contribute to the progress made in the march of cooperation, realize the aspirations of our peoples and upscale the GCC accomplishments.”

Sayyid Badr pointed out that, on the occasion of the 42nd GCC anniversary, it is time to highlight the GCC's remarkable achievements and development indicators in member states in all fields. This, he added, "gives us all more confidence and strong will to move forward with the blessed march of cooperation and serve the interests of its citizens." Sayyid Badr stressed that the 'GCC citizen' constitutes the cornerstone of the GCC's comprehensive development and the very objective of decisions issued from time to time by GCC leaders.

Sayyid Badr explained that the GCC current session, which is chaired by the Sultanate of Oman, is inspired by the directives of the GCC leaders, aimed at preserving the gains made in the past four decades, maintaining security and stability in the region and contemplating further economic integration with all its programmes, pro-

jects and goals.

Meanwhile, Idris Abdul Rahman Al Khanjari, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations and International Organizations in Geneva, said that the 42nd anniversary of the establishment of the GCC embodied the bonds of cooperation among member states during the past four decades.

Al Khanjari added that GCC countries have achieved remarkable progress in various fields, while at the same time enhancing the spirit of solidarity. He pointed out that this served as a source of inspiration for all GCC countries, which, he said, put their economic and human resources and potentials at the service of their people, while also promoting regional and international status of the Cooperation Council.

Al Khanjari affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman, acting in its capacity as chair of the current GCC session, plays an important role in boosting the process of joint Gulf action and highlighting the GCC's presence in the international arena.

This, he said, enhances the status of the GCC in the global arena and highlights its unified positions on various issues that are floated for discussion during in-

ternational forums.

In view of its presidency of the 43rd regular session of the GCC, Oman began, this May in Muscat, to host meetings of GCC ministerial committees. These meetings seek to enhance cooperation between GCC states in various political, economic, trade, security and defence fields.

In the political aspect, Gulf efforts led to the development of a unified and effective foreign policy that serves the aspirations of Gulf peoples, preserving their gains and sparing them ongoing regional and international conflicts. Gulf efforts focused on establishing unity in economic, defence and security policies and achieving the GCC common goals and aspirations.

GCC States have contributed to resolving many regional issues, the most important of which is the crisis in Yemen, where the GCC capitalized on dialogue and consultation between the parties concerned and on initiatives to support a political settlement and provide humanitarian aid. GCC States also worked hand in hand with the United Nations by supporting the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Yemen.

On the Palestinian issue, the

positions of the GCC countries were and still are consistent that the Palestinian cause constitutes the prime concern of Arabs and Muslims. The GCC also supports the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The GCC calls for ensuring that the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people should be guaranteed. They also reject the displacement of Palestinian people and the creation of settlements on the occupied Palestinian lands.

The GCC states also played a prominent role in the return of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Arab League by means of a diplomatic solution. The efforts culminated in Syria's participation in the 32nd Arab Summit held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Lebanon also garnered special attention from the GCC, which took keen interest in the country's safety, sovereignty, independence and stability. The GCC urged the Lebanese people to stick to their unity and to elect a president in accordance with the Lebanese constitution.

The developments in Sudan received the attention of the GCC, which expressed its firm stance in support of the country's security, safety and stability. The GCC called upon all political leaders in Sudan to exercise restraint and give priority to dialogue and wisdom. It urged all to join ranks and overcome their differences and focus on fulfilling the aspirations of the Sudanese people.

On the global arena, the GCC occupied centre stage and earned international and regional respect, thanks to the fact that it succeeded, during the past four decades, in endorsing dialogue as an approach to deepen common understanding as a basis for resolving issues.

Major GCC joint economic projects during the past 40 years include the Gulf Common Market, the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority, the GCC unified smart card, the Customs Union, the Gulf Payments Company, the GCC railway project and the customs information centre.

The GCC states endorsed, in 2002, the "Security strategy for combating extremism accompanied by terrorism". In the same year, they issued the "Muscat Declaration on Combating Terrorism". In 2004, the GCC states signed the GCC agreement on combating terrorism. Most of the member states ratified the agreement, which became binding un-

der Article (46), for countries that deposited ratification documents at the GCC General Secretariat.

The education sector has received the attention of the Cooperation Council during the past 42 years. Many achievements were made in this sector, including equality in general and technical education and the promotion of the values of Gulf citizenship. GCC states endorsed a guide for equality among GCC citizens who are resident in each other's countries in terms of treatment at universities and government higher education institutions.

In the health field, GCC states demonstrated their cooperation through the exchange of expertise and medical technologies during the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. The experience showed the member states' ability to work jointly to stem the spread of the virus through quarantine measures and application of preventive standards regulating international travel and trade.

In fields of culture, tourism, antiquities and museums, the GCC achievements include the establishment of the Centre for Translation and Arabization. The members states also endorsed the new “GCC Cultural Strategy 2020-2030”, as well as a guiding law to regulate antiquities and a programme for cooperation to protect antiquities in conjunction with the countries of the world.

In the field of youth and sports, the GCC states have maintained achievements such as the Gulf Cup, a strategy for developing joint action in the sports field, regulations for the technical committees of the youth and sports ministers committee, a website for information bases on youth activities and a strategic plan devised by the committee of ministers of youth and sports.

GCC states also accorded attention to innovation and invention. To this effect, a GCC Patent Office was established at the General Secretariat of the GCC in October 1998. Also, an awarded was dedicated to talented people. The GCC states participated in regional and international exhibitions on inventions and hosted similar events.

GCC states took keen interest in elevating the status of women by supporting them and encouraging their active participation in all activities at the local, regional and international levels. Women's representation in senior administrative positions and board of directors of companies stood at 50 percent. -DNA



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Indian PM ends 3-nation tour, emplanes for Delhi

The Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi informed about the conclusion of PM Modi’s tour to three-nation spanning over six days



SYDNEY: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday emplaned for New Delhi after completing the final leg of his three-nation trip. He was on a visit to Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi informed about the conclusion of PM Modi’s tour to three-nation spanning over 6 days through Twitter. “A successful three-nation tour concludes! PM @narendramodi emplanes for Delhi following a three-nation visit to Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia, fostering stronger linkages with partner countries,” Bagchi tweeted.

PM Modi reached Sydney on Monday, as a part of his three-

nation tour. In Sydney, along with PM Albanese, he addressed a joint conference at Admiralty House in Sydney.

At the conference, the PM raised the issue of attacks on temples in the country and said that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese had assured to take “strict actions against such elements in the future.”

“PM Anthony Albanese and I have in the past discussed the issue of attacks on temples in Australia and activities of separatist elements. We discussed the matter today also. We will not accept any elements that harm the friendly and warm ties between the India-Australia relationship by their action or thoughts. PM Albanese assured me once again today that he will take strict actions against such elements in

the future also,” he added.

PM Modi said that in the meeting with his Australian counterpart Albanese, they discussed Australia-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership taking to greater heights in the next decade.

Meanwhile, PM Modi also met Australia’s Governor-General David Hurley and his wife Linda Hurley in Sydney and held a meeting with them. He also met CEOs of top Australian companies.

The leaders discussed the strength of the bilateral trade, investment and business relationship and reiterated their shared ambition for an early conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement.

During his visit to Papua New Guinea, PM Modi co-chaired the 3rd India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit with the

Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, James Marape on Monday this week.

PM Modi’s visit holds importance in many respects. Historically, it marks the first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the island and strategically, it lays the foundation of what could possibly be one of the most significant bilateral partnerships of India in the context of the Indo-Pacific, as per Global Order.

PM Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Papua New Guinea.

Earlier, he visited Japan where he attended the summit of the G7 advanced economies and held bilateral meetings with several world leaders. The Quad Summit was also held on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Hiroshima.

— ANI



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Student lit deadly Guyana school fire

MAHDIA: A fire in a school dormitory in Guyana that killed 19 children was lit by a student after her mobile phone was confiscated, police said on Tuesday.

“A female student is suspected of having set the devastating fire because her cellular phone was taken away by the dorm’s mother and a teacher,” according to the official report.

Police said that there were 57 pupils in the dormitory that went ablaze.

A government pathologist found that the cause of death of six individuals was smoke inhalation and burns.

Thirteen sets of remains had been moved to Guyanese capital Georgetown for DNA identification.

Nearly 30 other children were hospitalised after the fire.

On Monday, President Irfaan

Ali declared three days of national mourning. The Guyanese head of state met with parents of the deceased after visiting Mahdia’s hospital.

School dormitory

The fire broke out in a school dormitory in the town of Mahdia in central Guyana.

An unnamed government official told a news agency that the student was under police guard at the district hospital in Mahdia. The official said that the girl had admitted to the arson, with police seeking advice on whether to charge her.

“They (staff) took away the phone from the girl and the girl threatened the same night that she will burn down the building and everybody heard her,” an anonymous official said.

— DW

GLOBAL SLAVERY INDEX

50 million people trapped in ‘modern slavery’: Report

NEW YORK: There has been a significant rise in the number of people becoming victims of modern slavery in recent years, a new study published in London on Wednesday shows.

An estimated 50 million people were “living in situations of modern slavery” in 2021, according to the Global Slavery Index released by the human rights organization Walk Free.

That represents an increase of 10 million since a previous estimate five years ago.

The situation is deteriorating “against a backdrop of increasing and more complex armed conflicts, widespread environmental degradation” and repercussions from the COVID-19 pandemic, among other factors.

What is modern slavery?

Walk Free describes modern slavery as covering “a set of specific legal concepts including forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices, and human trafficking.”

“Modern slavery is hidden in plain sight and is deeply intertwined with life in every corner of the world. Each day, people are tricked, coerced, or forced into exploitative situations that they cannot refuse or leave. Each day, we buy the products or use the services they have been forced to make or offer without realizing the hidden human cost,” the study stressed.

Forced labor accounts for 27.6 million of those in modern slavery, while forced marriage accounts

for 22 million, or nearly one of every 150 people in the world, the report said.

Where is slavery most common?

North Korea (104.6 people per 1,000 population), Eritrea (90.3), and Mauritania (32) have the highest number of modern slavery victims, the report said.

“These countries share some political, social, and economic characteristics, including limited protections for civil liberties and

human rights,” the study said.

It added that many of these regions have witnessed conflict, political instability, and/or authoritarianism, while several others are home to a large refugee and migrant worker population “who are often not afforded the same legal protections as citizens and are highly vulnerable to exploitation.”

In several countries, governments force their citizens to work in different sectors, in private jails, or through forced conscription, the report said. — DW



HIT BY CORONAVIRUS

How COVID-19 halted labour migration

DHAKA: The COVID-19 pandemic brought international migration to a standstill — and migrant workers have borne the greatest cost. But Bangladeshi workers are doing well.

Abul Basar has been in Saudi Arabia for 14 years now. After failing to find a suitable job in Bangladesh, he tried his luck as a migrant worker in the oil-rich state in order to support his family in Bangladesh, first in Riyadh, later in Jeddah. Most recently, he worked as a plumber at a water treatment plant in Al Qasim province. Then the coronavirus hit.

Basar is one of approximately 260 million migrants worldwide whose labour contributes to a major redistribution of capital to lower-income regions of the world. Ninety percent of what he earns (\$533 a month), he sends home to support his family of four people. — DW

Full story @ timesofoman.com/world



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Mumbai Indians set up a date with Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2 on Friday after a comfortable 81-run victory in Chennai

CHENNAI: A fiery five-wicket haul by Akash Madhwal powered Mumbai Indians (MI) to an 81-run win over Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their IPL Eliminator match at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Wednesday.

The facile victory set up a clash between the five-time champions and holders Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2 on Friday.

It was a clinical show by Mumbai Indians with Madhwal picking up the most economical five-for in IPL history - 5 for 5 in 3.3 overs.

He might have taken more but Lucknow Super Giants kept running themselves out in ridiculous ways, to fold their innings at

101 in 16.3 overs, chasing a target of 183 to win.

One of the run out was the result of a collision, it ended their best batter's stay at the crease, Marcus Stoinis gone for 40 off 27.

Another had both players at the same end. Lucknow Super Giants fell from 74/3 to 101 all out.

Mumbai saw the opposition opening the bowling with spin and exploited the fact that only two men are allowed outside the 30-yard circle.

Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan hit four fours in the first three overs - all just placed into gaps behind point and past fine leg because they knew that would be enough. These were the conditions



that were supposed to stop the biggest hitters in the IPL. But they didn't. Mumbai cruised to 98/2 in ten overs. They hit 15 boundaries in this period - roughly one every four balls.

Cameron Green (41) and Suryakumar Yadav (33) were not just clearing the boundary, they were smashing around the park and were on course for Mumbai Indians to clear 200.



celebrated each of his four wickets by putting his fingers in ears, perhaps a response to the hate he's received on social media for his part in the blow-up with Virat Kohli earlier in the tournament.

Mumbai brought their Impact Sub in Nehal Wadhwa and he walked in as Suryakumar's substitute to face the last 21 balls of the innings.

Wadhwa played a massive role.

He came in at a time when Mumbai had managed only 30 runs in the previous 4.2 overs. And he smashed 23 off 12, including two fours and a six in the final over.

Brief scores: Mumbai Indians 182/8 (Cameron Green 41, Suryakumar Yadav 33, Nehal Wadhwa 23; Naveen ul Haq 4/38) beat Lucknow Super Giants 101 in 16.3 overs (Marcus Stoinis 40; Akash Madhwal 5-5). - **Agencies**

QUALIFIER 2
Friday, May 26

Gujarat Titans

VS

Mumbai Indians

6pm, Ahmedabad

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We were in a really good position. Everything started when I played that shot... that was not on, and I completely take all the blame. The wicket was the same. We just had to bat better, just take that responsibility."

Krunal Pandya
Lucknow Super Giants captain

I can be a very annoying captain: Dhoni

CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings (CSK) captain MS Dhoni, who led his team's march into the IPL final following a 15-run win over defending champions Gujarat Titans (GT) at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Tuesday, admitted that he can be a very "annoying captain".

CSK managed to score 172 after losing the toss in Qualifier 1 on a pitch that was tough for batting. During the defence, Dhoni was in his element, marshalling his bowlers and making field placements to stifle the Titans' chase.

"You see the wicket, you see the conditions and according to that, you keep adjusting the field," he said.

"I can be a very annoying captain because I shift the fielding one or two feet here and there every time.

"The fielder needs to keep an eye on me. Imagine you are fielding and every two balls or three balls, I am like, 'Okay two feet to your right, three feet to your left.' It can be annoying. I always say I believe in my gut feel, I see the wicket, the line, what is really happening and more often than not, it pays off. The only request



I ask from the fielders is 'keep an eye on me, if you drop a catch, there won't be any reactions but just keep an eye on me.'

Asked whether he'd be back in Chennai next year, Dhoni continued to be non-committal about the subject, saying he had another eight-nine months to decide, but acknowledged that it had taken a "heavy toll" on him.

"I don't know, I have eight to nine months to decide, the small auction may be around December, so why take that headache right now?" Dhoni said. "I have ample time to decide."

Dhoni has had an issue with his knee all through the season and was seen wearing a brace after CSK's final league game. While he hasn't missed a match, he has had trouble running between wickets.

"I will always be there for CSK, whether that is in the playing form or sitting somewhere outside...I don't really know.

Frankly, it takes a heavy toll. I have been out of home for literally four months. January 31 was when I got out of the house, finished my work, and started practicing from 2nd or 3rd of March. It takes a lot, but I have ample time to decide."

It hasn't been an easy road to the final for CSK. They have grappled with several injuries, but have managed with the resources they have, especially in the pace department where Tushar Deshpande and Matheesha Pathirana have grown into their roles over the course of the season.

"We try to create an environment. Other than that, we reiterate as to what is the strength of the fast bowler. Along with that, we make sure that they are improving in the areas where they need to be good at," Dhoni said.

"At the IPL, more often than not with the new ball, they know what needs to be done. The question is when it is not swinging, when it is not in your favour, then with the two fielders, where you can bowl to a particular batsman and what field you can keep. If a bowler knows that, more often than not, he will be successful.

"We try to motivate them as much as possible. The support staff is there, they are always there. Now, [Dwayne] Bravo is there, Eric [Simons] is there. There are a lot of people who can help them out. At the end of the day, when they are standing, they are there on their own. It is a very lonely place, but that's where you can be brave and courageous."

Dhoni and CSK now travel from Chennai to Ahmedabad for their tenth IPL final in 14 seasons. When asked whether an IPL final now felt like just another game, Dhoni said it did not.

"IPL is too big to say that it is just another ... and not to be forgetting that there used to be eight top teams, who used to compete with the best players available in the world and now it is tougher.

"I won't say it is just another final. It is hard work of more than two months because of which we are standing over here. Lot of character is shown by the individuals, from where we started to where we are, and I feel everybody has contributed. Yes, the middle order has not got ample opportunity, but in between everybody has got a chance to chip in and they have done that." - **ANI**

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by July 2023 reaching \$76.61, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$1.74 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$74.87. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,686.66 points, up by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.12 per cent at 468.85 points. Shell Oman Marketing, up 4.17 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Finance, down 5.17 per cent, was the top loser.

BankDhofar makes an offer to acquire ahlibank

The terms of the offer will be identical to the terms previously outlined in the revised offer

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Further to its disclosure on May 18 announcing the terms of a revised non-binding offer made to the board of directors of ahlibank SAOG (ABO) on April 26 (the Revised Offer), the board of directors of BankDhofar at its meeting held on May 23 resolved to make an offer to acquire 100 per cent of the issued share capital of ABO in a takeover pursuant to the Oman Acquisition and Takeover Regulations (Ministerial Decision No. 2 of 2019) (Offer) and to therefore withdraw our merger proposal.

The terms of the offer will be identical to the terms previously outlined in the revised offer, and are summarised below:

Offer structure

The offer provides all ABO shareholders with an option to elect to receive up to 25 per cent of their consideration in cash (the "Cash Component"); the rest of the consideration will be paid in the form of newly issued BankDhofar shares (the "Share Component").

For ABO shareholders who are: (i) Sharia-compliant juristic shareholders; or (ii) subsidiaries of Shar-



ia-compliant juristic shareholders, the Cash Component will be increased to 100 per cent of the total consideration received, to reflect their (or their parent shareholder's) de jure inability to receive shares in a conventional bank.

BankDhofar envisages funding the cash component of the offer from its existing liquidity and capital resources as well as a contribution from BankDhofar's existing shareholders, if and as required.

Financial terms

The financial terms of the offer are set forth as follows:

OMR 1.2910 BankDhofar ordinary shares per ABO share (the "Swap Ratio"), valuing each ABO share at OMR 0.200 based on the BankDhofar closing share price of OMR 0.155 as of 9 April 2023 (the "BankDhofar Unaffected Share Price"), OMR 0.200 per each ABO share as the Cash Component.

The above represents

A premium of 15.0 per cent to ABO's closing share price of OMR

0.174 as of 9 April 2023 (the "ABO Unaffected Share Price");

An implied price to Q1 2023 book value multiple of 1.30x.

Since the submission of the initial non-binding offer to the board of directors of ABO on April 10, 2023 (the "Initial Offer"), BankDhofar's share price has appreciated. As a result, for the Share Component, this appreciation translates into a significant increase in the value of each ABO share under the agreed Swap Ratio of 1.2910. As of closing share prices on May 17, 2023.

The swap ratio of revised offer now represents:

A premium of 30.6 per cent to the ABO Unaffected Share Price, valuing each ABO share at OMR 0.227 based on the BankDhofar closing share price of OMR 0.176;

An implied Price to Q1 2023 Book Value multiple of 1.48x, by far exceeding the average Price to Book Value multiple of the Omani banking sector. For the avoidance of doubt, the Cash Component val-

ues each ABO share at OMR 0.200.

Strategic Rationale

After completion of the takeover offer, BankDhofar will look to effect a combination with ABO. We believe that a combination of BankDhofar and ABO is a compelling opportunity for ABO shareholders to:

Create a leading domestically-focused wholly owned Omani bank with a robust competitive position, well placed to serve the entirety of the market with leading market positions across a number of customer segments;

Combine the banks' highly complementary activities and expertise across retail, corporate and Islamic banking for the benefit of the combined group and its customers;

Provide career development opportunities for both banks' employees;

Provide opportunities to create value for both sets of shareholders, notably through an improvement in the combined group's cost of funds; and

Provide enhanced liquidity for both sets of shareholders.

All in all, the proposed transaction offers an immensely attractive opportunity for shareholders of both entities to benefit from value creation with significant synergy possibilities and to participate in the long-term growth story, whilst ensuring a strong and well-capitalised bank on day one.

BankDhofar remains highly confident in its ability to successfully execute the contemplated transaction.

Any transaction, should it proceed, is subject to obtaining approvals from regulators and other applicable requirements.

A further announcement will be made if and when appropriate.

NATIONAL PRIORITY



Academic Accreditation Authority to launch Oman Qualifications Framework

MUSCAT: Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) will officially launch the Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF) on May 31.

The OAAAQA is responsible for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF. It is also responsible for preparing and developing the Comprehensive National Qualifications Framework, listing Omani qualifications in it, and aligning foreign and international qualifications with it". The OQF includes qualifications from all public and private sectors of education and training in Oman. These include academic, technological, professional, technical, and vocational qualifications.

During the press conference held here, Dr. Jokha Abdullah Al Shukhaili, CEO of the OAAAQA underscored that education is at the forefront of national priorities. She said that having a national framework ensures that students are equipped with various skills, abilities and necessary knowledge that are required in the labour market.

The OQF was developed in line with supporting national economic and educational needs and achieving several national objec-

The Oman Qualifications Framework includes qualifications from all public and private sectors of education and training in Oman

tives. These national objectives were identified in consultation with stakeholders from the education and training sectors in Oman.

The OQF assists with classifying qualifications offered in Oman, comparing Omani qualifications with foreign or international qualifications and assists with the provision of a reference point for qualification development.

The OQF also assists with the recognition of prior learning and encourages lifelong learning. It is worth noting that OQF facilitates learner progression through the qualifications system. - **ONA**

PARTNERSHIP



Agreement signed to transfer aircraft engines maintenance technology

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance, represented by the Partnership for Development (PFD) programme and in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, signed a partnership agreement with Safran Group, a leading company in aerospace engineering, to implement projects that have economic and development returns and contribute towards modernisation processes undertaken by the Ministry of Defence and Royal Army of Oman.

The agreement will also enhance national capacities in the military areas.

The agreement was signed by Nasser bin Khamis Al Jashmi,

Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the PFD programme and Frederic Fourciangue, Vice President for Support at Safran Group.

The signing ceremony was attended by Dr Mohammed Nasser Al Za'abi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence.

The agreement entails the establishment of an advanced maintenance workshop in the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), and training the staff concerned. The agreement also entails the provision of licenses required to maintain some of the helicopter engines. - **ONA**

DIGITAL PAYMENTS

Amazon Payment Services expands its services to Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Amazon Payment Services, a regional leader in digital payments operating across the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region, has now expanded its services to Oman.

Amazon Payment Services' merchants can now accept online payments from all locally-issued debit cards with OmanNet to expand their reach and attract customers in the Sultanate while continuing to be able to accept payments from other major globally-issued cards.

OmanNet is a safe, convenient, and reliable payment solution enabling shoppers in the country to conveniently pay with their debit card. OmanNet debit cards comprise 95 per cent of all cards in the Sultanate, and with this launch, OmanNet cardholders are now able to shop on thousands of merchant websites enabled for digital payments by Amazon Payment Services.

Through this launch, merchants will also enable the Oman-



Net payment option on the Payment Link invoicing product offered by Amazon Payment Services which allows merchants to collect payments from anywhere online by generating a link which can be easily sent to customers via email or SMS.

Commenting on the launch,

Peter George, Managing Director for Amazon Payment Services in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), said: "At Amazon Payment Services, we strive to facilitate seamless and secure payments across the region. The addition of Oman Net to our portfolio is an important step toward achieving this vision, enabling our merchants to accept payments through a prominent card-based payment gateway in Oman."

"With this launch, we are supporting our existing merchants to drive better conversion in the Sultanate, while enabling more Omani merchants to utilise our range of innovative payment products to accept online payments and grow their businesses."

Rapid growth

The launch also reinforces Amazon Payment Services' commitment to strategic forward-thinking to help merchants prepare for the future. Oman is experiencing rapid growth in digital payment adoption, presenting a burgeoning opportunity for online retail-

ers in the region. Specifically, more Omani customers are opting to use debit cards, with online payment and point-of-sale transactions found to represent 81 per cent of card transactions in Oman in 2021, whereas ATM cash withdrawals accounted for only 19 per cent, according to this data from the Central Bank of Oman.

Enabling payments from locally-issued debit cards as well as from globally-issued cards will help local and regional merchants to process online payments in Oman and grow their businesses, supporting them to expand their reach and provide their customers with multiple choices.

Amazon Payment Services enables payments on Amazon stores in the MENA region including Amazon.ae, Amazon.sa and Amazon.eg, in addition to supporting thousands of other merchants and businesses across the region. The company's services are available for businesses in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain.

REPORT

You're hired! Experts warn of new dream job scam



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Experts warn against a new wave of phishing scams on LinkedIn targeting people in the Middle East, Türkiye, Africa (META) region, with the promise of a dream job, according to a new report.

"Specifically, cybercriminals focus on users from the UAE, Türkiye and Nigeria. Cybercriminals posing as HR managers from high-end fashion brands are luring victims to download fraudulent files with the intent to steal credentials for Facebook Business accounts and run ads for monetary gain,"

says an expert from Kaspersky.

People working in the field of digital marketing and sales are prime targets for this scam. As a first step, the scammers proactively contact victims on LinkedIn highlighting a lucrative salary package for a job role. After gauging the victim's interest, the scammers share a malicious link and persuade candidates to download documents related to the job from a cloud storage platform to successfully meet their objective. Upon investigating the malicious files, Kaspersky experts found that scammers were using malware named Ducktail to infiltrate

devices. Ducktail is designed to steal user logins and passwords for Facebook Business accounts and uses stealthy techniques to remain undetected. The scam is targeted at the META region, with detections in the UAE, Turkey, Iraq, Nigeria, and Lebanon.

Sharing her experience to warn people of this ongoing scam, Hiba Safadi, Marketing Manager from the UAE said, "When the recruiter contacted me, I was intrigued. To know if he was genuine, I checked his LinkedIn profile which seemed authentic because it had a picture, testimonies etc. As we continued our conversation, he

repeatedly insisted that I download some files related to the job, and this is when I felt something was off. Since I did not comply, he deliberately started mentioning the salary package to convince me into downloading the files, and this was the second red flag."

Amin Hasbini, Head of Global Research and Analysis Team (GReAT), for META at Kaspersky, said "This is not the first time Ducktail malware has made a comeback. Enticing people with a dream job that includes a hefty remuneration is a classic example of a social engineering tactic commonly used by scammers.

Scammers are capable of communicating from accounts that look like corporate addresses, but in reality, are compromised or from free email services or phishing domains.

"We understand it is very difficult to constantly be on alert, but it is necessary to remain cautious and take basic measures into consideration. For example, understand how the recruiter found you, research the employer, make sure you have a security solution installed, and most importantly, avoid clicking on links or downloading attachments from unknown or suspicious senders."

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Shell Oman Marketing, up 4.17 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Finance, down 5.17 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,686.66 points, up by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.12 per cent at 468.85 points. Shell Oman Marketing, up 4.17 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Finance, down 5.17 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 287 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.81 million, with more than 4.77 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 9 advanced, 17 declined, and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR943,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR75,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,634.89 points, up 0.09 per cent. Prices of Ahli Bank, Global Financial Investments, National Finance and Oman Arab Bank were up by 2.70 per cent, 1.67 per cent, 0.86 per cent and 0.66 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Finance, Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Madina Investments, Al Sharqia Investment and Al Madina Takaful were up by 5.17 per cent, 2.70 per cent 2.56 per cent, 1.35 per cent and 1.19 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,037.58 points, up 0.23 per cent. Prices of Oman Flour Mills and Raysut Cement were up by 3.02 per cent and 1.71 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics and Oman Cables Industry were up by 2.14 per cent and 0.26 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.14 per cent before closing at 1,690.62 points. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,687.79	4,677.82	4,686.66	4,686.26	0.40	0.01
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,637.70	7,609.37	7,634.89	7,628.00	6.89	0.09
Industry Index	6,056.46	6,015.49	6,037.58	6,023.58	14.01	0.23
Services Index	1,693.09	1,685.85	1,690.62	1,693.07	-2.45	-0.14
MSX Shariah Index	470.32	468.31	468.85	468.31	0.54	0.12
MSX TR INDEX	6,163.05	6,149.94	6,161.57	6,161.04	0.53	0.01

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
4,778,388	2,806,166	287	23,717,288,276	9	17	23	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PRI VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	64,000	3,880	5	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.001	1.667	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.100	12,200,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	100,000	15,500	2	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.100	310,048,482
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	7,600	2,863	2	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.000	0.000	0.378	0.374	0.378	0.100	252,642,131
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	24,610	7,875	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.100	105,879,287
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	74,363	20,837	8	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.000	0.000	0.280	0.270	0.300	0.100	34,971,429
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	113,828	6,489	14	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.100	20,259,256
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	495,823	482,054	19	0.972	0.976	0.972	0.972	0.972	0.000	0.000	0.972	0.960	0.972	0.100	729,000,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	20,000	7,560	2	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.000	0.000	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.100	89,362,980
OM0000003968	ODREDOO	88,140	24,539	9	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.000	0.000	0.360	0.358	0.360	0.100	234,339,923
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	977,640	236,656	66	0.263	0.263	0.261	0.262	0.263	-0.001	-0.380	0.262	0.260	0.262	0.100	1,666,676,030
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	90,941	9,549	6	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.106	-0.001	-0.943	0.105	0.105	0.106	0.100	15,750,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	11,100	954	4	0.087	0.087	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.082	0.085	0.100	16,969,026
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	7,601	633	3	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.084	-0.001	-1.190	0.083	0.083	0.084	0.100	14,525,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	5,792	425	2	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.073	0.074	-0.001	-1.351	0.073	0.073	0.076	0.100	6,570,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	7,427	2,041	3	0.280	0.280	0.274	0.274	0.280	-0.006	-2.143	0.274	0.271	0.280	0.100	60,280,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	8,000	576	2	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.074	-0.002	-2.703	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.100	8,775,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE	415,286	44,492	6	0.109	0.109	0.106	0.106	0.110	-0.004	-3.636	0.106	0.106	0.110	0.100	26,378,100
Total	17	2,492,151	886,915	154												
Parallel Market																
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	250,000	224,937	8	0.884	0.900	0.884	0.900	0.864	0.036	4.167	0.900	0.864	0.900	0.100	85,500,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,000	546	1	0.546	0.546	0.546	0.546	0.530	0.016	3.019	0.546	0.540	0.546	0.100	85,995,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	2,700	513	1	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.185	0.005	2.703	0.190	0.185	0.190	0.100	370,434,919
OM0000004148	RAYSUT CEMENT	7,489	1,310	5	0.180	0.180	0.174	0.179	0.176	0.003	1.705	0.179	0.175	0.179	0.100	35,800,000
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	520	50	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.001	1.053	0.096	0.090	0.095	0.100	19,200,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	4,070	476	1	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.116	0.001	0.862	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.100	67,123,401
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	100	15	1	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.152	0.001	0.658	0.153	0.153	0.150	0.100	255,419,730
OM0000001301	DHOFA FOODS AND INVESTMENT	1,100	72	2	0.071	0.071	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.059	0.065	0.100	5,255,250
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	2,381	3,345	1	1.405	1.405	1.405	1.405	1.405	0.000	0.000	1.405	1.405	0.000	0.100	70,250,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	2,000	130	2	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.059	0.064	0.100	10,400,000
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	305,296	27,566	7	0.091	0.091	0.088	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.088	0.091	0.100	24,008,988
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	14,091	2,649	3	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.000	0.000	0.188	0.170	0.188	0.100	38,161,452
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	60,832	6,402	10	0.105	0.108	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	8,547,289
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	501,641	46,655	9	0.094	0.094	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.000	0.000	0.093	0.093	0.094	0.100	208,036,632
OM0000004925	ALBATAH POWER	112,806	3,271	2	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.028	0.031	0.100	19,571,735
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	168,765	4,839	4	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.029	0.031	0.100	20,717,784
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	21,125	2,027	3	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.092	0.096	0.100	14,932,838
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	4,000	544	1	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.000	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.100	10,270,992
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	134,187	38,885	35	0.290	0.290	0.289	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.290	0.300	0.100	223,358,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	5,000	9700	10	1.940	1.940	1.940	1.940	1.945	-0.005	-0.257	1.940	0.000	1.950	0.100	174,018,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	69,500	8,768	3	0.125	0.129	0.125	0.129	0.130	-0.001	-0.769	0.129	0.125	0.130	0.100	12,616,479
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	29,650	2,935	7	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	-0.001	-1.000	0.099	0.098	0.099	0.100	8,415,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	12,303	1,058	2	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.085	0.091	0.100	17,000,000
OM0000005689	PHOENIX POWER	119	6	1	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.066	-0.001	-1.515	0.065	0.065	0.066	0.100	95,069,095
OM0000007407	DHOFA GENERATING	200	12	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.000	0.060	0.100	13,334,400
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	5,219	198	4	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.039	-0.001	-2.564	0.038	0.038	0.039	0.100	3,230,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	26,912	1,479	5	0.067	0.067	0.053	0.055	0.058	-0.003	-5.172	0.055	0.055	0.062	0.100	16,893,048
Total	27	1,743,006	388,391	121												

ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING ORGANISATION FOR ISLAMIC FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Alizz Islamic Bank's Sharia Supervisory Board participates in AAOIFI annual conference

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of Alizz Islamic Bank's 'Empowering the Second Line of Sharia Supervisory Board Members' Programme to nurture potential candidates for future roles, the two interns from the Office of the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman participated in the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) conference held in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The conference was attended by members of the Sharia Supervisory Board of the bank as well as the Sharia Compliance and Audit Department.

The annual AAOIFI conference is of vital significance within the Islamic financial industry. It serves as a platform to address crucial issues and developments in the industry. The conference aims to enhance the state of the global Islamic financial industry,



foster innovative opportunities, and facilitate its expansion worldwide. It also focuses on preserving the industry's authenticity and adherence to Sharia principles. The event featured over 35 speakers, including Sharia scholars, policymakers, and professionals in the field of global Islamic banking and finance, engaging in detailed discussions on a wide range of important topics.

Issa bin Salim Al Riyami, Head of the Sharia Audit & Compliance Department said, "Conferences of this nature hold significant value in achieving harmony between international Islamic financial practices and the financial reporting of local financial institutions. They ensure adherence to the provisions and principles of Islamic Sharia while providing essential guidance for the opera-

tions of Islamic financial markets and the preparation of financial reports in an appropriate manner. These conferences also play a crucial role in establishing standards for Islamic financial institutions, thereby supporting the growth and advancement of the industry."

In the context of his speech, Al Riyami also highlighted that these conferences aim to enhance the quality of auditing and governance practices in Islamic financial institutions. Stating, "Efforts are directed towards improving the standardisation of these practices through

Maqsood to lead Oman at Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe

Samay Shrivastav and Rafiullah are the only two uncapped players in the 17-member squad that will be trimmed to 15 after the tour of South Africa

MUSCAT: Experienced all-rounder Zeeshan Maqsood will lead Oman at the forthcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier, which will be held in Zimbabwe from June 18-July 9.

Oman Cricket unveiled the 17-member national squad at the Oman Cricket Academy Grounds in Al Amerat on Wednesday with the skipper expressing confidence in the team's hopes to qualify for the World Cup.

"We are ready for the challenge and it's a big opportunity for us to showcase our potential. We have the experience of playing against all the teams except for West Indies and Zimbabwe. We have to play to our best abilities and hopefully we can achieve the desired results," said Maqsood.

The ten-nation Qualifier will decide the remaining two spots for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in India 2023. Oman, who are aiming to qualify for the World Cup for the first time, will be heading to Durban in South Africa for a preparatory camp on May 28.

Oman will play five practice games before heading to Zimbabwean capital of Harare on June 11.



Oman's 17-member squad will be trimmed to 15 for the Qualifier after the trip to Durban.

Oman's flamboyant batter Aqib Ilyas has been named Maqsood's deputy with the squad consisting of a majority of all-rounders. Leg-spinner Samay Shrivastav and all-rounder Rafiullah are the only uncapped players in the squad.

The batting responsibilities will be shared by Jatinder Singh, Kashyap Prajapati, Ilyas, Shoaib Khan, Maqsood, Mohammed Nadeem, Ayaan Khan and Sandeep Goud.

The bowling attack will be spearheaded by left-arm pacer Bilal Khan and the lanky Kaleemullah with Rafiullah, Fayyaz Butt, Nadeem, Goud and Shoaib in support roles as medium pacers.

The spin department will depend on the guiles and the magic of Jay Odedra, Shrivastav, Maqsood, Ilyas and Ayaan.

With an average age of 32, the team will rely on the experience, which had come good during the ICC World Cricket League Division 2 where Oman finished second in the seven-nation tournament that featured 36 ODIs over the past four years.

Three wicketkeepers - Naseem Khushi, Suraj Kumar and Adeel Shafique - have been drafted with one of them sure to miss out from the final 15.

Oman have been clubbed with former World Cup winners Sri Lanka, Ireland, Scotland and neighbours UAE in Group B.

Hosts Zimbabwe, West Indies, Netherlands, Nepal and United States make up Group A.

Oman will begin their campaign on June 19 in Bulawayo against Ireland followed by a game against UAE on June 21.

On June 23, Oman will take on 1996 World Cup winners Sri Lanka before concluding the league stage with a match against Scotland on June 25.

Each side will play the other teams in their group once with the top three from the groups progressing to the Super Six stage.

The teams each play three Super Six matches against the sides they did not meet in the group stage. All points won in the groups will be carried over to the Super Six stage apart from those gained against the bottom two from each group.

The finalists will both progress to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023. The Super Six stage will commence on June 29, while the bottom two teams from each group will compete in the playoff.

Oman squad (final 15 after Durban trip): 1. Zeeshan Maqsood (captain), 2. Aqib Ilyas (vice-captain), 3. Jatinder Singh, 4. Kashyap Prajapati, 5. Shoaib Khan, 6. Mohammed Nadeem, 7. Sandeep Goud, 8. Ayaan Khan, 9. Suraj Kumar, 10. Adeel Shafique, 11. Naseem Khushi, 12. Bilal Khan, 13. Kaleemullah, 14. Fayyaz Butt, 15. Jay Odedra, 16. Samay Shrivastav, 17. Rafiullah.

OMANTEL LEAGUE



Al Nahda crowned champion

MUSCAT: Al Nahda celebrated their title success in the 2022-2023 Omantel League, organised by the Oman Football Association (OFA) on Tuesday night in front of their home fans after a goalless draw against Sur in the concluding round.

Al Nahda had clinched their fourth domestic top-flight league crown with a round to spare and on Tuesday shared the spoils with Sur.

Later, the CEO of Omantel, Talar Said al Mamari, handed over the Omantel League shield to Al Nahda.

It was a successful finish to the domestic season for the Buraimi Governorate club, having earlier won the His Majesty's Cup.

Al Nahda ended with 56 points with 16 wins, eight draws and two defeats in 26 matches.

Al Suwaiq trounced Sohar 4-0 to secure the runner-up spot edging past last season's champions Seeb by a point. Suwaiq ended with 52 points, having won 16 but losing six and drawing four. Seeb came a close third after scraping to a 1-0 win over Rustaq on Tuesday to finish at 51 points. Dhofar were fourth with 45 points following

their 4-1 win over Al Ittihad in the last round. Rustaq took the fifth place with 43.

Al Arouba, Al Ittihad and Al Bashayer got relegated to the first division.

Other results (final round): Bahla 2 Al Nasr 1, Oman 3 Al Arouba 3, Al Mussanah 1 Al Bashayer 0.

Final standings: 1 Al Nahda (56 points), 2 Al Suwaiq (52), 3 Seeb (51), 4 Dhofar (45), 5 Al Rustaq (43), 6 Bahla (40), 7 Oman (37), 8 Sohar (37), 9 Al Mussanah (33), 10 Al Nasr (30), 11 Sur (28), 12 Al Arouba (17), 13 Al Ittihad (17), 14 Al Bashayer (12).

AHF MEN'S JUNIOR ASIA CUP SALALAH 2023

Oman lose to Bangladesh; India rout Chinese Taipei



MUSCAT: Hosts Oman began their campaign in the ninth AHF Men's Junior Asia Cup Salalah 2023 on a disappointing note as they went down to Bangladesh 2-0 in a Pool B match on Tuesday night.

And on Wednesday evening, defending champions India started their title defence on a rousing note as they steamrolled Chinese Taipei 18-0 in a Pool A match. The winners led 6-0 at half-time.

On Tuesday, Pakistan had drubbed Chinese Taipei 15-1 as both India and Pakistan vie to top the group. In another match on Wednesday, South Korea routed Uzbekistan 6-1. The winners led 2-0 at half-time.

Earlier on Tuesday, Pakistan, Japan and Malaysia recorded easy wins. Oman are playing in the Junior Asia Cup for the fourth time, while Bangladesh are making their seventh appearance.

Bangladesh drew the first blood in the 22nd minute when Ali Mohammed found the back of the net.

Khalid al Raisi-led Oman came back strongly looking for the equaliser but it remained elusive. Hossain Mohammed made it 2-0 for Bangladesh to take the game away and despite Oman making repeated forays into the Bangladesh area, they failed to

reduce the deficit.

Oman and Bangladesh have been drawn in Pool B of the ten-nation competition along with Malaysia, South Korea and Uzbekistan.

While Malaysia trounced Uzbekistan 8-1 in the earlier match on Tuesday, South Korean launched their campaign in style on Wednesday.

Pool A comprises holders and three-time champions India along with three-time winners Pakistan, Japan, Thailand and Chinese Taipei.

The Junior Asia Cup is a qualifying event for the FIH Junior Men's Asia Cup in Malaysia in December.

LA LIGA

Real Sociedad triumph; Valladolid stun champions Barca

MADRID: Real Sociedad edged closer to Champions League qualification with a 1-0 victory at home against Almeria in their La Liga match on Tuesday.

Takefusa Kubo netted the game's only goal during the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time, striking a brilliant shot into the top corner of the net.

Almeria was reduced to 10 men just 10 minutes later following a harsh challenge from Luis Suarez on Robin Le Normand. Despite not

managing to equalise in the second half, their resilience suggested that they might yet avoid relegation.

Barcelona upset

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez altered his starting lineup significantly for the league champions' visit to relegation-threatened Valladolid.

Pablo Torre made his league debut for Barca, with Eric Garcia and Marcos Alonso also included in the starting lineup. Barcelona fell

behind in the first minute when Andreas Christensen inadvertently headed the ball into his own net.

Larin doubled Valladolid's lead from the penalty spot in the 21st minute, after Eric Garcia was adjudged to have fouled Gonzalo Plaza. This happened amidst another underwhelming performance by Barcelona.

Plaza added a third goal for Valladolid, who also hit the woodwork twice in the second half before Robert Lewandowski scored a late

consolation for Barcelona. Valladolid's win breaks their five-game losing run.

Celta Vigo and Girona settled for a 1-1 draw, a result that likely assures Celta's La Liga survival. Carles Perez put the home team ahead just four minutes before half-time. Cristhian Stuani equalised with a twice-taken penalty in the 58th minute, and both goalkeepers made excellent saves in the closing moments, resulting in a split of points. - Xinhua



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Affordable EMI options on high performance Changan CS95 2023



Changan CS95

impresses with its well-equipped features, elegant refinement, confident performance, and comfortable and reassuring ride



MUSCAT: The high-performance intelligent seven-seat SUV Changan CS95 is now available for purchase with EMI options starting at OMR 162 for a six-year term announced by Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE) in Muscat.

The approximate EMI is calculated by banks based on a 20 per cent down payment for loan tenure of six years, and is subject to credit approval till May 31. The low EMI offer is applicable only for vehicles

purchased for personal use and is subject to the terms and conditions of the lending institution.

“We are thrilled to offer low EMI on CS95 which is packed with endless features and has numerous advantages over its segment competition, CS95, a flagship model of Changan, is a perfect seven-seater SUV for a large modern family who wants to travel in luxury, with business class comfort in all road conditions with its intelligent 4WD system,” said a spokesperson for AGAE.

Changan CS95 impresses with its well-equipped features, elegant

refinement, confident performance, and comfortable and reassuring ride quality. The 4WD SUV, which is equipped with a 2.0L turbo engine, offers a superior driving experience with its sophisticated luxury and exceptional comfort.

The vehicle has been designed to evoke and intensify the emotions of the driver, making it a truly thrilling ride. Beneath the hood of the Changan CS95 4WD lies a Blue Core 2.0L turbocharged engine paired with a 6-speed automatic transmission, capable of producing 224 horsepower and 360 Nm of torque. The SUV is also equipped

with perforated leather seats that provide business-class comfort, and a lane departure warning system to enhance safety.

The vehicle boasts a commanding presence and a muscular stance that demands attention wherever it goes. The vehicle’s meticulous attention to detail is complemented by advanced technology, providing refined luxury to up to seven passengers on every drive.

With a range of innovative driving technologies, the CS95 delivers an assured sense of confidence and control to the driver.

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

Represents strength and comfort

The wide-winged grille of the Changan CS95 4WD symbolises strength and comfort, and its matte texture is well-complemented by a bright strip. The original C-shaped light integrates position lights, steering lamps, and daytime running lights into one cohesive design. The sculpted waistline wraps around the entire body, creating an extraordinary visual.

The floating roof design affords the vehicle a sense of speed. The two-tone rim design highlights the dynamic outline. Additionally, Changan shows ingenuity by integrating its V logo in the details.

The refined instrument panel with silver highlights aligns with the exquisite man-machine function button. Broad central control matches high-grade multi-functional storage space. Leather seats feature elaborate stitching. A variety of seating combinations are offered to meet a diversity of customer needs. Second and third row seating is spacious and foldable.

Its Adaptive Cruise Control System, which includes a move-stop function with a speed range of 0 to 150 km/h, allows the CS95 to intelligently accelerate or decelerate from a stationary position. The system also ensures that the CS95 maintains a safe distance, stops, or moves in tandem with the forward vehicle while adapting to varying road conditions, making it easier to drive.

Cutting-edge safety features

Fitted out with Bosch MPC2 Plus camera, CS95 can detect the lane line and to warn drivers when deviating from the lane, preventing accidents from fatigue or distracting driving. The distance lights and passing lights can be switched intelligently when driving at night. CS95 can also automatically detect speed limit and avoid speeding when driving on express way.

The three intelligent functions, car distance warning, forward collision warning, and collision mitigation, equipped in CS95 can avoid or ease the collision by alarm and auxiliary braking.

Superior audio system

CS95 is endowed with 10 Pioneer HiFi Speakers & DSP power amplifiers to deliver fresh, new audio experiences to every passenger.

NEW MODELS

Get best value and latest technology with JAC S3, JS4

MUSCAT: The automotive industry in Oman has seen tremendous growth recently, thanks to the introduction of new models by various acclaimed car makers. Two of the most popular models in this market are the JAC S3 and the JAC JS4, both of which have been designed with the latest technology to offer a well-rounded driving experience.

JAC S3

The JAC S3 is a sporty hatchback that comes with an impressive range of features and specs. It has a 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine that offers 118 horsepower and 150 Nm of torque. It also has an impressive fuel capacity of 45 litres and can move with a top speed of 180 km/hr. On the exterior, the S3 features: stylish 5-spoke alloy wheels, daytime running lamps, and chrome accents on the grille and door handles for a visually appealing look.

JAC JS4

The JAC JS4 is a popular SUV that is known for its bold and aggressive styling. It is equipped with a powerful 1.5-litre four-cylinder Turbo engine that delivers up to 147 horsepower and 210 Nm of torque, this vehicle is a force to be reckoned with on the road. It comes with amazing features which include a 360 camera, rear radars, electronic stability control (ESC) and much more. On the outside, the JS4 has a striking design with 5 spoke Alloy wheels, a muscular front grille, and chrome accents on the door handles and roof rails.

JAC safety features

Both vehicles come equipped with a range of modern safety and convenience features. The S3 has multiple airbags, ABS brakes with EBD, cruise control, parking sensors, and an 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. Similarly, the JS4 comes with multiple airbags,



Electronic Stability Control, hill-start assist, and a 10.25-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

JAC IINJAZ package

But that’s not all! When you purchase a new JAC vehicle from Towell Auto Centre, you’ll also receive a JAC IINJAZ service package for 3 years/50,000km (whichever comes first) for an unbeatable price. The service package cost varies depending on the JAC model, starting from OMR100 on JAC S3, and OMR120 on JAC JS4 (VAT extra).

AAA Roadside Assistance

AAA roadside assistance, which is a valuable service that is included for free with the purchase of a new vehicle for the first three years. This service is a great resource for customers who may find themselves in need of assistance on the

road. So take advantage of it and enjoy the peace of mind that comes with knowing you have help just a phone call away.

JAC manufacturer’s warranty

With JAC Motors Oman, you can rest assured that you’re getting a reliable, high-quality vehicle that is backed by a manufacturer’s warranty of 6 years / 200,000km (Whichever is earlier) for passenger cars and 5 years / 250,000km (Whichever is earlier) for light trucks.

With all the options and outstanding customer service from JAC Motors Oman and Towell Auto Centre, you’re sure to find the perfect vehicle to suit your needs. So why not head down to Towell Auto Centre today and take a look at the JAC S3 and JS4?

With their unbeatable price, luxurious interior, and performance, you can’t go wrong.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE



JCDecaux Oman achieves significant milestone in its commitment to ESG standards

MUSCAT: JCDecaux Oman, the leading international outdoor advertising company, has achieved a significant milestone in its commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in the city of Muscat.

By implementing a range of sustainable initiatives, JCDecaux Oman has not only established itself as a responsible corporate entity but has also contributed to the overall well-being of the local community.

JCDecaux is proud to recognise the vital importance of sustainability and has made it a core element of its operations. As part of this strategy, the company committed to sourcing 100% renewable electricity by 2022. JCDecaux Oman Branch has actively participated in this endeavour for the previous few years. It stands out as one of the pioneering branches within the JCDecaux Group to pledge towards fulfilling the entirety of its electricity needs for its structures, advertisements, and street furniture assets in Oman. This commitment is achieved by equally contributing our electric-



ity consumption to the production of renewable energy from solar, wind, and hydropower.

The company maintains high standards of governance and ethics, complying with local regulations and prioritizing employee well-being. JCDecaux Oman’s exceptional performance in ESG standards sets a benchmark for responsible business practices and contributes to a more sustainable future for Muscat.

Collaborating with their local partners Muscat Municipality and Oman Airports, this initiative from JCDecaux Oman comes in line with Oman’s collabora-

tive efforts and commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and our 2030 sustainable development strategy which aims to support the circular economy, promote outdoor advertising as a catalyst for ecological and social transition and work towards the decarbonization of the economy and society.

Adding to the above, Bechir Chehab – Managing Director of JCDecaux Oman commented, “We are extremely proud of the initiatives that we are conducting locally as it’s in line with His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik’s Oman’s visions 2040. Being a responsible employer is part of the group strategy and we have very specific objectives to follow to protect our environment and ensure we are providing a healthy and fair workplace. I believe that all companies regardless of if they are international or local, big or small enterprises must have ESG strategies as a major part of their DNA, worldwide major companies are now asking for ESG reports to partner with the suppliers and vice versa.”

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat wins Best Retail Bank Award

The Mena Banking Excellence Awards celebrated the achievements of the best banks in the region

MUSCAT: In recognition of its excellent banking products, services, and its customer-centric vision to serve its customers better every day, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, was awarded the prestigious Best Retail Bank – Oman Award for the second consecutive year, at the recently-held Mena Banking Excellence Awards 2023 instituted by MEED.

The award was received on behalf of the bank by Mohammed Sultan Al Habsi, Chief Representative, UAE Representative Office, Bank Muscat, at a glittering ceremony held in Dubai and attended by several senior bankers from across the region.



The Mena Banking Excellence Awards celebrated the achievements of the best banks in the region, which are focusing on innovative solutions and international best practices to enhance the banking experience of their customers. The recognition is an acknowledgement of the global best practices adopted by Bank Muscat, its customer-centric vision, and its large number of innovative, modern products and services.

These have been developed to suit a modern lifestyle and provide more opportunities for its customers to enjoy a convenient and distinctive banking experience.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager -Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “We are delighted to win the MENA Banking Excellence Award for the second consecutive year. The accolades and recognition Bank Muscat continue to receive for its banking services come as a result of the great efforts made by its employees and the innovative products and services, which are being continuously developed by the bank. We thank MEED for recognising us through this prestigious award and will work to further better our services based on our customer-centric vision. Bank Muscat will continue to launch new, innovative products

and services, which add value to our customers and are in line with their varying needs.”

He added: “Bank Muscat is keen to contribute to the ongoing digital transformation of Oman, strategised as a part of Oman Vision 2040, and this is reflected in the continuing launch of a diverse range of products and services for our different customer segments. We would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to all our valued customers for their continuing trust and confidence in our services and products, and promise to keep developing more such innovative services in the future to fulfil their aspirations.”

WORKSHOP

KR Eshraqa trains government sector employees

MUSCAT: Khimji Ramdas (KR) Group's social development arm – Eshraqa -announced the successful completion of the second session of its ‘Personal Excellence’ workshop, aimed at enhancing the skills and capabilities of government sector employees.

The training, which kicked off earlier this year in Nizwa, has garnered significant success, with its second session being held at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in Ibri. The workshop was attended by Varun Khimji, Director of Khimji Ramdas Group, and staff members from the Ministry of Labour.

The ‘Personal Excellence’ workshop is designed to shed light on best practices in self-development, equipping participants with the tools and techniques necessary to achieve personal excellence and cultivate highly productive workforces within the government sector.

Comprising a total of six sessions, the third session is expected to take place in Sohar. Each session will focus on sharpening individual skills, fostering personal growth,



and creating more efficient work environments.

Emphasising the value of such initiatives in enhancing the skills and capabilities of the nation's workforce, Varun Khimji, Director of Khimji Ramdas Group stated, “The ‘Personal Excellence’ workshop not only equips individuals

with essential skills for personal growth but also strengthens the collaboration between the public and private sectors, fostering a brighter future for Oman. We are delighted to witness the positive impact of these workshops on participants from the government sector. The aim is to create a more

productive work environment that develops the capabilities of individuals and supports the realisation of Oman Vision 2040.”

Saif Said Rashid Al-Badi, Chairman of the Board of Directors OCCI, Al-Dhahirah, Ibri mentioned: “The workshop has received favourable feedback from participants, serving as motivation for all of us.

“We recognise the importance of partnering with the private sector and believe that these workshops will significantly contribute to upgrading the skills of our government staff members.”

KR's Eshraqa has been established on the premise that the private sector has a responsibility towards the development of local communities and empowering talented individuals in the Sultanate. By working towards nation-building at the grassroots, Eshraqa aspires to contribute meaningfully to socio-economic progress by building infrastructure and talent that will lead to the enhancement of knowledge, skills, and capabilities in society.

BRIEFS

K.M. Trading picks ‘Shop and Drive’ grand winners



MUSCAT: K.M.Trading's ‘Shop and Drive’ car promotion which was launched in connection with Eid Al Fitr, the grand draw was held on May 15 at various branches in the Sultanate of Oman in the presence of authorities which was witnessed by a huge crowd. The promotion was started on March 16 and due to the high participation of customers in the promotion and that made the talk of the town. In connection with this promotion earlier for 21,000 customers, shopping vouchers worth OMR110,000 was distributed through a lucky scratch-and-win. Apart from this in the grand draw, K.M.Trading announced 8 Suzuki Vitara lucky winners from K.M.Trading and Al Safa outlets in the Sultanate of Oman.

AOU organises Strategy Practitioners’ conference



MUSCAT: Faculty of Business Studies (FBS) of Arab Open University (AOU) Oman under the patronage of Professor Mohammed Hamdan Al Badi, Rector, Arab Open University, Oman organised the AOU-FBS-2nd Strategy Practitioners’ Conference on May 23 in its new purpose-built campus at Al Seeb Al Mabelah. Following the success of the AOU-FBS-1st Strategy Practitioners Conference (powered by Omantel, Oman and Khimji group, Oman), AOU-FBS is organising the 2nd Strategy Practitioners’ Conference with the aim of Shaping Strategy Practice powered by Al Ansari Group, Oman.

At this conference, the inaugural address was delivered by Eng.Maqbool Al Wahaibi, CEO, Oman Data Park, Oman. Sanjeev Madavi, Group Chief Digital Transformation Officer, Khimji Ramdas, Oman and Abbas Irshad Al Lawati, Executive director of Oman Invest, delivered keynote addresses. Warith Al Kharusi, Chairman of Oman Centre for Skills Development (MAHARAT); Jawhara Al Hashemi, ASAAS Oman; Amina Butt, Nama Group Oman, Amjid Ali, Al Ansari Oman, Dr Aju Samuel, The Performance Factory participated in a panel discussion. It was a great platform for strategy practitioners to explore and shape strategy practice.

FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Toyota Gazoo Racing wins 6 hours of Portimão

MUSCAT: Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR) maintained its winning start to the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) with victory in a dramatic 6 Hours of Portimão. Sébastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley, and Ryo HIRAKAWA, the reigning World Champions and 2023 Le Mans winners, delivered a faultless performance in the No. 8 GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar to dominate the race and finish a lap ahead of their closest competitors.

TGR's fourth consecutive Hypercar win saw the team extend its World Championship advantage to 18 points with five rounds remaining. Buemi, Hartley, and HIRAKAWA also moved to the top of the drivers’ standings and hold an

11-point lead.

The race began with Buemi in pole position in the No. 8 GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar, who dropped to third and then moved up to second place with a brave overtake on lap four. Buemi then regained first place during lap 33 shortly before the first round of pit stops, before handing over to HIRAKAWA at the two-hour mark with a half-minute lead. HIRAKAWA further extended this advantage, with Hartley taking over the lead with two hours remaining.

The No. 8 GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar kept up the pace at the front and eventually lapped the second-placed vehicle late in the fifth hour. This earned a valuable cushion that enabled Hartley to



safely navigate the closing stages and take the chequered flag after 222 laps for the team's 41st win in its 78th WEC race.

Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: “Con-

gratulations to the entire team on this outstanding result, which further strengthens Toyota's lead in the manufacturers' championship and underlines the outstanding performance of the GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar. We are proud to contribute to a more sustainable future by developing ‘ever-better cars’ through motorsports to ensure no one is left behind. I'd like to thank our development teams and all of the fans for their support, and am looking forward to another exciting race ahead during the next round in Belgium.”

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and

the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that ‘the roads build the people and the people build the cars,’ GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making ‘ever-better’ cars.

Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.



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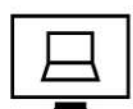
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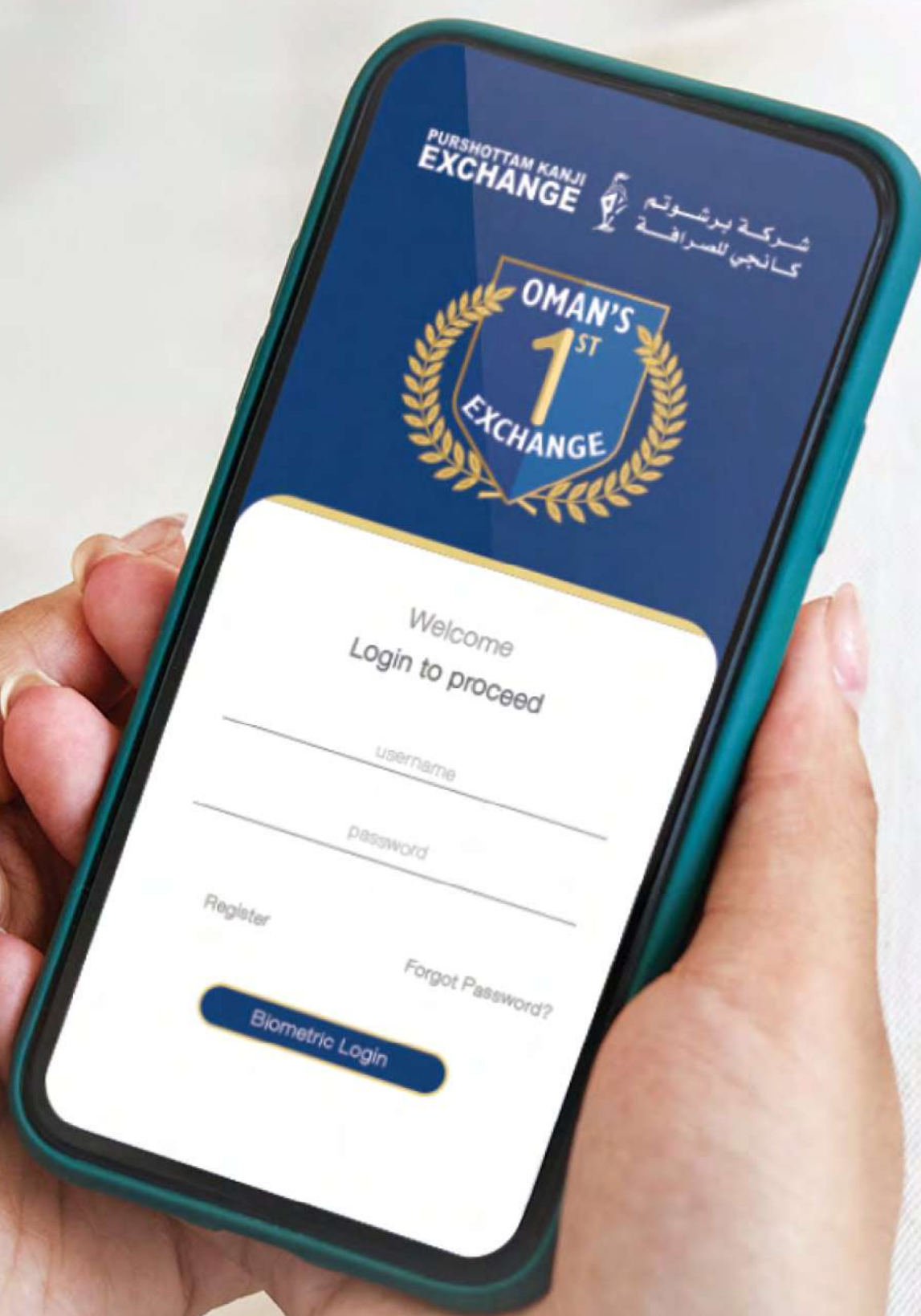
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