

OMAN TO HOST NASA SPACE APPS HACKATHON

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) Branch in the Wilayat of Ibra, will host the NASA Space Apps hackathon next week (7-8 October 2023). **>A5**



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Sayyid Fahd receives GCC ministers of health

A5

Dhofar Governorate

Salalah plant plans to produce 100,000 tonnes of organic fertilizer

Times News Service

SALALAH: A fertilizer plant in Salalah aims to produce 100,000 tonnes of organic fertilizer in a year's time.

Since its commencement of operation in the first quarter of the current year, the factory has produced 25,000 tonnes of organic fertilizer.

The Organic Fertilizer Production Plant in Salalah, Dhofar Governorate is one of the vital environment projects under the supervision of Nakheel Oman Development Company in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. **>A3**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Taxi service campaign launched in Oman

1 The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology on Sunday launched a taxi service campaign under the slogan "Know Your Fare". Many government departments took part in the campaign. **>A2**

WORLD Attack on interior ministry in Ankara

3 A suicide bomber detonated an explosive device outside Turkey's interior ministry in the capital, Ankara, on Sunday the Turkish government said. **>A6**

OMAN First meteorite sample captured

2 The Ministry of Tourism has announced the detection of first meteorite sample whose entry into Omani airspace was documented by devices in the country. **>A3**



TOTAL VALUE OF ACTIVE ENTERPRISES IN OMAN CROSSES OMR9 BILLION

The ICV of large enterprises in the second quarter of 2023 reached OMR6.42 billion



MUSCAT: The total in-country value (ICV) of active enterprises in the Sultanate of Oman during the second quarter of 2023 reached OMR9.09 billion, according to the monthly bulletin issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

ICV is a total spend retained in-country that benefits business development and contributes to human capability development and stimulates productivity in Oman's economy.

The contribution of active enterprises in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices during the second quarter of 2023 reached 90.1 percent compared to 86.1 percent for the second quarter of 2022.

Further, the ICV of large enterprises reached OMR6.42 billion, constituting 63.7 percent compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

Meanwhile, the ICV of medium enterprises reached OMR724.60 million, constituting 7.2 percent, going up by 10.1 percent. The ICV of small enterprises stood at OMR851.60 million, comprising 8.4 percent (up by 30.5 percent).

The total ICV of micro enterprises reached OMR1.09 billion, comprising 10.8 percent, marking

an increase of 36.8 percent compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

Moreover, the number of employees in active enterprises in Oman increased by 11.1 percent to reach 1.77 million during the second quarter of 2023 compared to 1.59 million employees during the second quarter of 2022.

The number of private enterprises reached 227,609 in the second quarter of 2023, up by 13.5 percent compared to the same period in 2022. — **ONA**

JINAN ISLAND: A CAPTIVATING OASIS OF LUXURY

In a new era of luxury, Al Mouj Muscat's Jinan Island villas stand apart as exquisite masterpieces that merge opulence with nature's serenity. Tucked away amidst lush parkland surrounding a tranquil lake in the heart of Ghadeer District, the exclusive collection brings an unparalleled luxury lakeside living to the heart of the capital.

The residents-only neighbourhood is an oasis of calm with three different villa styles each a balance of contemporary amenities, style and comfort, indoors and outdoors. The Alaya Villas, boasting approximately 906 sqm set over three floors, offer mesmerizing views of the lake with every detailed carefully designed to inspire an unmatched lifestyle from its stunning top floor penthouse suite to its private Zen Garden. Overlooking the central park, the five-bedroom Amara Villas provide over 455 sqm of exquisite luxury living.

Curated with discerning taste, these villas redefine grandeur with awe-inspiring entrances, towering windows, walk-in wardrobes,

spa-like ensuite bathrooms, and exclusive private pools. Seamlessly marrying interior and exterior spaces, each villa is bathed in natural light, fostering a connection to lush gardens and terraces – a sanctuary for everyday living and unforgettable celebrations.

Discover Endless Possibilities

Home to over 8000 residents from 85 nationalities, Al Mouj Muscat redefines urban living in Oman, offering authentic hospitality coupled with an unbeatable modern-day offering. From its best-in-class business park, championship golf course, and luxurious accommodations to its culinary delights and high-end shopping on the country's largest marina, it is 'the' destination to savour life's most exquisite moments.

Al Mouj Muscat's striking oceanside views, beautiful beach, landscaped parks and promenade, in addition to its award-winning architecture, are the perfect setting to live your best life, inspire the best version of you, and discover endless possibilities.



Elegance and Exclusivity

Jinan Island villa is an investment in luxury lakeside living, privacy, and exclusivity. It's a place where you can truly relax, rejuvenate and lose yourself. A place of peace and tranquillity, immersed in beauty and serenity





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Proposal on telemedicine clinics for rare specialities discussed

The meeting addressed a number of health issues and topics of mutual concerns including visa medical examination

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman hosted on Sunday the Ninth Meeting of the GCC Health Ministers Committee, and the 86th General Conference of the GCC and Yemen Health Ministers Council in its forty-eighth session.

The opening programme of the ninth meeting of the GCC Health Ministers Committee included a speech delivered by Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health where he welcomed the delegations and stressed that the meeting is part of the GCC endeavours towards promoting cooperation in health sector in order to improve the provision of health services to the level of excellence thus keeping abreast with the rapid progress in technology (Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things), and promote joint action process to develop the system of this vital sector in the Gulf.

The Health Minister pointed out that the meeting's agenda addresses key topics which will achieve positive impact of the decisions of 36th session of the GCC Supreme Council held in Riyadh on December 2015 on promoting integration of the gulf joint action process.

Dr. Al Sabti added that the meeting's agenda will put emphasis on



the significance of seeking further integration in specialised services among the GCC countries.

The meeting, said that minister, will highlight the importance of activating telemedicine clinics among various specialties in GCC countries hospitals with rare specialties.

In his turn, Jasem Mohamed Al Budaiwi, the GCC Secretary General delivered a speech where he said that data and statistics confirm the GCC commitment to the health development issues, which is notably marked in their ability to achieve some of the objectives of the third goal of Sustainable Development Goals on ensuring healthy lives and well-being for everyone.

He affirmed that the GCC efforts to achieve universal health coverage by providing health and human resources for the health systems have ensured people's access to the various levels of health services.

The ninth meeting of the GCC Health Ministers Committee approved the agenda of the meeting and endorsed number of draft res-



olutions submitted from Health Undersecretaries Committee.

The meeting addressed a number of health issues and topics of mutual concerns including visa medical examination, following up the implementation of International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), Health Cities, registration and classification of health specialties, in addition to the strategic dialogues among the GCC countries and the establishment of a

Virtual Gulf Health Centre.

During the meeting, the Saudi Ministry of Health's proposal on recognising March 2 of every year as World Health Martyr Day was reviewed.

In addition, the meeting discussed the Sultanate of Oman's proposal on the specialised services integration among the GCC countries that aims at benefiting from Health Centres of Excellence and strengthening complementarity in specialised services among the GCC countries.

Treatment abroad

This would allow the rest of the GCC countries to access the services of any Gulf specialised centre at a lower cost compared to when seeking treatment abroad in non-Gulf countries while ensuring the quality of service.

The specialised centres include corneal transplantation/retina treatment centers, cochlear implantation centers, organ transfer and transplantation centres, joint replacement centres, cancer centres, diagnostic and therapeutic

intervention centres (Intervention Medicine), spine centres, brain and nerve centres, cardiology centres, fertility centres, physical therapy and rehabilitation centres, public health laboratories/centres, national training centres for medical and allied medical categories (OMSB / Saudi Commission for Health Specialties, etc.), and toxicology centres.

Furthermore, the meeting addressed the Sultanate of Oman's proposal on activating telemedicine clinics for rare specialties among Gulf countries. The proposal aspires to create a joint electronic platform for all GCC countries on clinical consultancy so that rare specialties' physicians can discuss and follow up rare medical cases of various congenital anomalies in newborns and children, and types of cancers that are rare or unresponsive to treatment, and others.

Following the 9th Meeting of the GCC Health Ministers Committee, the 86th general conference of the GCC and Yemen Health Ministers Council in its forty-eighth session was convened.

Suleiman Saleh Al Dakheel, Director General of Gulf Health Council stated that today's gathering comes in time where magnificent developments in the health sector are evolving which entail joint work and persistent cooperation to address challenges and achieve success.

He stressed that the joint Gulf action in the health sector has always been of great benefit for the region.

The Gulf Health Council Director General elaborated that the meeting is supporting the continuation of the cooperation, aiming at achieving the desired goals, and boosting health services to meet expectations and aspirations of Gulf people.

The Conference reviewed spectrum of draft resolutions submitted from the Executive Board of

the Gulf Health Council for endorsement including for instance draft resolution on Gulf Centre for Disease Prevention and Control where the plan of the Gulf CDC 2024 was approved along with approving to share related health data that is being shared with the World Health Organization with the GCDC for the purpose of risk assessment and studying the burden of morbidity and mortality.

The collaborative action mechanism (tawasul) with the GCC Health Ministries was also approved.

Regarding medical examination of expatriates coming to GCC, updates of the Rules & Regulations of Wafid medical test programme were approved.

Moreover, the meeting endorsed the new codification of items system of Gulf joint procurement programme instead of the old codification.

It was also decided, with regard to the registration of medical devices and supplies and manufacturing companies, to approve the Gulf regulations for the registration of medical devices and supplies.

Moreover, it was decided to approve restructuring of the pay and benefits and develop the organisational structure and governance with an expert house.

With regard to central registration, it was decided to adopt the update of the change requests guidelines, approve the updated request form for canceling a centrally registered product.

Moreover, the Conference endorsed resolution on updating the inspection mechanism for the pharmaceutical and veterinary factories and products, as well as factories of medical supplies and devices. On medication pricing, it was decided to approve the updated price certificate form for the reference countries in Health Council to be (18) countries. -ONA



In pursuit of its goals to bolster investment prospects and foster an appealing business environment that aligns with Oman Vision 2040, the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Mada'yn" is pleased to announce the following investment opportunity for developers and investors:

Opportunity No.	Project Name	Deadline for Document Purchase	Field Visit Date	Deadline for Proposal Submission	Bid Document Fee
1/2023	Designing, developing and managing a residential city in Samail Industrial City on an area of 100,000 sqm	02/11/2023	05/11/2023	28/12/2023	RO 100

Samail Industrial City, which is managed by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Mada'yn", is located in the Wilayat of Samail in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, in close proximity to Al Sharqiyah Expressway. This strategically positioned hub presents the closest industrial city to Muscat Governorate and is home to a wide range of industrial, logistics, and service projects.

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TRANSPORT MINISTRY

Taxi service awareness campaign launched



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology on Sunday launched a taxi service campaign under the slogan "Know Your Fare".

Many government departments participated in the three-phase campaign, which seeks to regulate the service of taxis, to secure the rights of customers and taxi drivers and to optimise the use of technical apps.

The first phase began on Sunday, 1 October 2023, and it targets taxis operating at airports.

The second phase will begin on 1 November 2023 and it targets taxis operating in hotels, commercial centres and ports. The

third phase will begin on 1 January 2024 and it targets taxis operating in public places.

Earlier, the Ministry awarded licences for two taxi apps (Otaxi and Oman Taxi app) for the regulation of taxi service at Muscat International Airport, after the two apps met conditions stated in the Land Transport Law.

The Ministry will launch an all-accommodating app named 'Aber', which serves as a single window comprising all licensed applications for Oman taxis. The app "Aber", which means 'bypass' is distinguished for ease of access to all apps to which taxi clients might wish to subscribe.

-ONA



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COMMENTARY

On the trail of the sunset



Saleh Al-Shaibany

When I decided to follow the sunset last weekend, I never knew where it was going to take me. The late evening sun was like a brilliant ball of fire casting its golden light on the shimmering water of the sea. The fading light of the sun was slowly painting the sky the shade of orange and the clouds seem to rejoice the changing of the colour. Just minutes later, I also noticed the full moon rising from the opposite direction. The two celestial bodies were competing with each for the reign of the sky in those few minutes before the darkness started descending on the land below them. When the sun was half-way buried on a spot that divided the horizon and the sea, I spotted a group of seagulls having the last frolic over the water. They flew in circles very low over the receding force of the waves before flying off to the trees behind me. I could hear



them squawking noisily as they passed over my head. When finally the sun disappeared behind the wavy water of the sea, the moon took great pride in claiming the sky. It was 'goodbye' the day and 'welcome' the night. The moon replaced the orange light with a yellow beam gleaming on the sea, and of course, the land I was walking on. But the moon had another competition that night. The stars started to twinkle in the darkness as if they were telling the moon that 'we are here to add to the splendor of the night'. They were like little dots of pearls in the vast space twinkling profusely adding to the magic of the night sky. It made me stop to absorb the atmosphere. It also made wonder. We go on living most of our lives but never notice the beauty of the night sky. I was not alone on the road but most of the people were too preoccupied with their own thoughts. Their feet were firmly placed on the ground and so were their eyes. Probably their

thoughts were occupied by money matters, office responsibilities or family affairs. They 'see' only the contents of their minds and 'hear' the voice of their turmoil as they carry on with their business. As for me, my affair with the evening sky was over for that day. I walked back to my car and made my street exit. I gave the full moon the last look before driving away. The stars were still winking down at me. The clouds were keeping a respectable distance avoiding to block the shine from the moon. A twinge of sadness descended on my thoughts as I arrived home. I was leaving behind the full glamour of the night sky when I was entering my house. But as a great compensation, the warm welcome I got from my family made me feel good again. Besides, I told myself as I was preparing for dinner, I could go back to the seafront minutes before the daybreak to watch the sun make a comeback from the horizon during sunrise.

AL KHADHAF



STATE-OF-THE-ART PLANT

FROM A1 Fertilizer plant

Sarah bint Zaher Al Afan, Director of farms planning at Nakheel Oman Development Company said that the company expects to produce 100,000 tonnes of organic fertilizer in a year's time. — ONA

First meteorite sample captured by monitoring devices in Oman

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has announced the detection of the first meteorite sample whose entry into Omani airspace was documented by devices in the Sultanate of Oman. The step was taken in cooperation with the Natural History Museum in Bern in Switzerland, Curtin University in Australia with technical support from the Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel). The local meteorite monitoring devices were able to determine the geographical location of the meteorite (two samples weighing 8.2 grams and 13.8 grams), as well as the route of

their fall, which made it easier for the Omani-Swiss team to quickly pick the sample. The meteorite sample was classified as "breccia H5-6" and was officially named "Al-Khadhaf" in reference to the location of its fall in the Al-Khadhaf area in the Wilayat of Thumrait, Governorate of Dhofar. Al Khadhaf meteorite emerged as the smallest outer-space object from among 40 meteorite falls captured by meteorite monitoring devices around the world. The achievement offers evidence of the possibility of searching and finding similar astronomical objects by using modern technology in Oman. — ONA



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GLOBAL MONEY EXCHANGE COMPANY

Over 10,000 Indian expats have benefitted from GMEC counters in Oman annually

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Over 10,000 Indian expatriates have benefitted every year since 2018 for their renewal of passport and attestation services, provided by Global Money Exchange Company (GMEC) in collaboration with BLS International Services, at nine different cities in Oman. The nine centres of the Global Money Exchange Company have been rendering the services against a prescribed fee on behalf of the Indian Embassy in Oman at Salalah, Sohar, Shinas, Buraimi, Nizwa, Ibri, Sur, Khasab and Duqm. The services have provided a big relief to expatriates who live in these cities as it avoids the hassle of making a trip to Muscat to get the passport-related work or attestation of documents.

Speaking to *Times of Oman*, R. Madhusoodanan, Executive Advisor to GMEC Board, said: "We feel happy to be serving the Indian community. The fact that more than 10,000 people have utilised the services at our centres annu-



ally since 2018 makes us feel proud to play a role in supporting the Indian expats in Oman."

Three new branches opened in Salalah

As part of its expansion plans, GMEC recently inaugurated three new branches at Salalah International Airport with an aim to provide world class services and support international tourism in the Dhofar Governorate. Following the opening of three branches, the total number of branches in the Dhofar Governorate have risen to ten, the highest among all the exchange houses in the region.

GMEC, managed by State Bank of India, was established in the

year 2002 and is one of the leading exchange companies in Oman.

GMEC has direct banking arrangements with more than 35 banks in several countries. The services of popular International Money Transfer agents are also available.

"Global Freedom" the online transfer facility is widely accepted by customers.

GMEC is also planning to launch a revamped mobile application with more features in place of the existing mobile app. The GMEC branches deal in all major currencies of the world and also has a wholesale currency division where currencies are bought and sold at competitive rates.

GMEC also announced registration and periodical subscription payments to the Kerala Pravasi Welfare Fund that is offered through all their branches.

As part of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, GMEC has opened branches in the Oman Exhibition and Convention Centre (OCEC) and at Port Sultan Qaboos (PSQ) at Muttrah to meet the foreign currency requirements of tourists visiting Oman.

GMEC also provides encouraging employment opportunities to locals and also impart training to the local staff in various areas including leadership programmes.

K.S. Subromoniyam, GMEC Managing Director, said: "GMEC aims to give top priority to the digital front, which is in tune with Oman government's Vision 2040 as well as various digital initiatives of the Central Bank of Oman."

Also present at the press briefing were Amit Talukder, General Manager, and Said Salim Hassan Al Balushi, Head of Administration.

LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT



Seminar highlights Shura march in Oman

MUSCAT: A seminar titled "Shura Council: Reality & Aspirations" was held here on Sunday under the patronage of Sayyid Saud Hilal Al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat.

The seminar was organised by Oman Journalists Association with the participation of a number of experts and specialists in the Council of Oman, as well as academic, legal and civil society institutions.

The event included two sessions as the first one touched on the legislative development in regulating the work of the Shura Council, the elections of its members, and the march of Shura in the Sultanate of Oman. Meanwhile, the second ses-



sion dealt with the political participation of Omani woman as a member of the Shura Council, in addition to the role of media in raising the society's awareness on the importance of national participation in the Shura Council's elections. -ONA

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

'Development not at the cost of losing the character of Al Jabal Al Akhdar'

MUSCAT: She has been part of the hospitality industry for more than two decades in the region. Maren Kuehl, General Manager of Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort, has been with the luxury hospitality brand in Oman for more than two years and has now fallen in love with the country, the people and the town of Al Jabal Al Akhdar.

In an exclusive chat with *Times of Oman* Maren Kuehl said: "I initially came after the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were over as part of the hotel's task force to revive the operation in the aftermath of the pandemic. I was here on a three-month assignment but I am glad that I have stayed back to enjoy this beautiful place and the country.

"The people of Oman and, in particular, the local people in the mountains are so warm and hospitable. This is the very reason that we have 40 percent of the hotel workforce as Omanis and they mostly come from the mountains. They actually elevate the hospitality with their natural warmth and affection and we have really benefited from their presence."

Maren, who hails from Germany, said: "Development in Al Jabal Al Akhdar is needed but it should not be fast-paced. We have to be mindful of the development pace of such a beautiful place.

"There is still scope of more hotels here but the government should make sure that the character of the town is not lost in the guise of development. The place still needs a lot of spotlight and more should be done to promote this lovely town."

She added: "Sustainable development is the key for the growth of Al Jabal Al Akhdar and the essence of the traditional town should be safeguarded at any cost."

'Hectic season ahead'

Maren said the hotel is all geared up for a "hectic season" and has received "good bookings till early March next year."

She said: "We are all ready for our guests, mainly from Europe now, after an amazing summer where we had the majority of guests from the GCC countries. We expect to have good business this winter. We are committed to providing heartfelt hospitality in one of the world's most beautiful destinations. The resort promises an invigorating travel experience."

Al Qalaa reopens

Maren informed that the Arabic Omani restaurant Al Qalaa reopened its doors at the resort from October 1.

Inspired by Khasab Castle in Musandam, Al Qalaa boasts a constellation of hanging lanterns and a sweeping mountain backdrop. Authentic recipes from Oman



and across the Gulf are presented with flair. Ingredients are freshly harvested from the Arabian Sea and local farms – then crafted or grilled to perfection.

"We are expecting a great winter season and to enhance the authentic Omani experience, we have reopened our Al Qalaa restaurant from October 1," she said.

Among the other activities during the season ahead is a Friday Garden barbeque fiesta, Chill about the Clouds offer and theme nights at different restaurants.

She said: "At our property we have to ensure a wide range of culinary options as usually we have guests here for a couple of nights. They like to explore the resort

MAREN KUEHL,
GENERAL MANAGER
OF ANANTARA AL
JABAL AL AKHDAR, IS
UPBEAT ON A BUSY
WINTER TOURISM
SEASON IN OMAN



and providing them with a variety of cuisines is very important. We also have a lot of outdoor activities including rock climbing, mountain climbing, archery and mountain hikes. Our guests can enjoy the gym, spa and an infinity pool to relax."

Day pass for OMR25

On special offers for the domestic market, Maren said: "We value the importance of domestic and regional markets and do provide various promotional offers throughout the year online.

"The year-long day pass for OMR25 provides guests a full day access to pool, gym and discount at spa. The full voucher amount can be used at all the hotel outlets."

Maren admitted that the room tariff at the resort is higher as compared to competitors but said the hotel ensures that "rooms, facilities and services come with value addition".

Maren further said: "There still needs to be a lot to be done to promote Al Jabal Al Akhdar and Oman in the international market. We hope to contribute in the best possible way to promote Oman and Al Jabal Al Akhdar in the Sultanate and around the world with the cooperation of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. The success of Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival is a testament of the growing interest among locals and we hope we can host such events more often."



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MEETING

Sayyid Fahd receives GCC ministers of health



MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers yesterday received GCC ministers of health participating in the 9th meeting of GCC Health Ministers hosted by the Sultanate of Oman.

After welcoming the ministers, HH Sayyid Fahd expressed Oman's appreciation for the benign efforts exerted in the health fields to push the march of GCC action forward.

He also commended achievements made by the Council of GCC Health Ministers and its role in upgrading health services.

HH Sayyid Fahd also affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman has been accorded a major attention to health sector as it is considered among pillars of comprehensive development through constant development witnessed by this vital sector and upgrading its health services.

The meeting reviewed most important topics listed on the agenda of the ministerial meeting that covered according attention for enhancing integration of GCC health services, maximising the benefit from potentials available at specialized centres in the GCC states and supporting training programmes for GCC physicians, as well as seeking to find a GCC electronic platform for physicians in the GCC states.

In their turn, the GCC ministers of health expressed their thanks to the Sultanate of Oman, Chair of the GCC current session, for hosting this meeting.

They hailed the constructive role undertaken by Oman to ensure success of the GCC march. They also lauded the benign efforts in providing healthcare and the achievements made at the level of medical services rendered to all citizens.

The meeting was attended by Jasem Mohammed Al Budaiwi, GCC Secretary General and Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health. -ONA

MEETING

Oman and Lebanon explore opportunities for cooperation

MUSCAT: Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information, received here on Sunday Ziad Makary, Minister of Information of the Republic of Lebanon, as part of the latter's current visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, Dr. Abdullah and the Lebanese minister discussed bilateral relations and explored opportunities for cooperation in various media fields.

They looked into ways of enhancing coordination about the exchange of news content and media training.

The two ministers underscored the role of the media in consolidating the cultural identity of countries, instilling authentic values in young generations and fostering understanding among people belonging to different cultures.

They exchanged views about various media issues and studied technical developments that support media action, notably through modern mass media.

The meeting was attended by the Lebanese envoy to Oman and officials from both sides. -ONA

MUSCAT: As part of his current visit to the Sultanate of Oman, Lebanese Information Minister Ziad Makary yesterday visited various departments of the Ministry of Information, including Oman News Agency (ONA), the News Centre and the digital studios of Oman TV.

During the visit, the minister listened to a briefing about news services provided by the Ministry of Information.

The Lebanese Minister took note of advanced technical tools and modern programmes endorsed by the ministry's facilities to keep pace with the requirements of media action.

The Lebanese Minister gave a statement in which he commended the progress made by the Omani media, describing it as a model to be emulated in the Arab world.

He said that Omani media constitutes an intellectual industry run by established Omani personnel who are well versed in integrating traditions in modern life. This, he added, highlighted the country's aesthetic features in many ways.

The Lebanese Minister pointed out that his visit to Oman was aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two countries in different media fields through the signing of memorandums of understanding between ONA and the Lebanese National Media Agency.

The visit, he added, also aims to benefit from the experience of Oman TV in developing Lebanon's official television. -ONA

UTAS

Oman to host NASA Space Apps hackathon next week

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) Branch in the Wilayat of Ibra, will host the NASA Space Apps hackathon next week (7-8 October 2023).

The events will be held in the Wilayat of Bidia, the Governorate of North Al Sharqiyah, in cooperation with NASA.

The hackathon will be participated by public and private establishments, as well as universities and colleges in Oman. As many as 185 countries will be taking part in the event.

The hackathon is catered for innovators who are interested in space science and exploration.

The participants will get a chance to develop creative solutions for different challenges that face the earth and space, in order to get qualified to participate in the International Hackathon.

The Sultanate of Oman's hosting of this event aims to enhance its position as a centre for technological innovation, research and encouraging cooperation between academic and industrial establishments on the local and international arenas. -ONA

EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

Oman takes part in meeting of Arab Electricity Council

CAIRO: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the extraordinary session meeting of the Arab Electricity Ministers Council, which was held at the Arab League's headquarters in Cairo, Egypt.

The Sultanate of Oman was represented in the meeting by Abdullah Nasser Al Rahbi, Oman's Ambassador to Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League.

The meeting discussed a set of topics, including the general agreement to establish the Arab Common Electricity Market. -ONA



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794/2023/MAFWR/H Q-90	Maintenance works for Wadi Dayqah Dam At Wilayat Quriyat in Muscat Governorate	80/-	Excellent	Thursday 5/10/2023	Thursday 26/10/2023
795/2023/MAFWR/H Q-91	Supply and Installation of Fume Hoods Cupboard and Canopy for CLFS	25/-	Specialized	Thursday 5/10/2023	Thursday 26/10/2023
802/2023/MAFWR/H Q-92	Maintenance Works of Storage Dam at Wadi Saiq in Wilayat AlIabal AlKhthar, AlDakhiliyah Governorate.	25/-	Third	Sunday 8/10/2023	Sunday 29/10/2023

-

Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

-

The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.

-

Preference will be given to companies whose bid includes the largest percentage of Omanization and possible purchase of national products.

-

The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration (regarding the exemption from submitting a bid bond in tenders).

-

All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.

-

All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@mtc.it.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

Mwasalat launches bus service between Muscat-Abu Dhabi



By **Abdulrahman Al-Buraimi**

Mwasalat said the cost of a round-trip ticket will be OMR22

Times News Service

AL BURAIMI: Mwasalat, one of the Asyad Group companies, on Sunday launched its first intercity bus service on Route 202 (Muscat - Al Buraimi - Abu Dhabi) passing through the UAE city of Al Ain, with one round trip per day on the route.

The company received passengers at a transportation station in the Wilayat of Buraimi on the opening day's service.

This route will provide passenger transportation service in integration with other

routes for transport from Abu Dhabi, through Al Ain in the UAE, to the cities of Muscat and Salalah and vice versa, as passengers from Muscat can reach Abu Dhabi and other cities in the neighbouring country. This route passes through several stoppage points. Among the major stops are Al-Azaiba Bus Station, Muscat International Airport, Burj Al Sahwa Bus Station, Al Khoud Bridge, Al Ma'abelah Bus Station, Al Naseem Park, Al Rumais, Barka Bridge, Wadi Al Jizzi, Al Buraimi, Al Ain Central Station, and Abu Dhabi Bus Station. The route will take the Batinah Expressway from Barka Bridge to Wadi Al Jizzi.

Mwasalat Company said that the price of ticket for the route from Muscat to Abu Dhabi will be OMR11, while the cost of a round-trip ticket will be OMR22.

The company confirmed that passengers can book their tickets through the electronic reservation portal on www.mwasalat.om.

It should be noted that the latest bus service comes as an extension of the agreement signed by the Mwasalat Company, related to the establishment of an integrated public transport station project for buses and taxis in the Buraimi Governorate.

The move is also in line with the urban strategy that aims to connect and integrate cities using the smart transportation system. The service also comes as part of the passenger transportation agreement that Mwasalat signed it with Capital Express, the licensed company for passenger transport services from the Integrated Transport Centre in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The latest bus service is aimed to expand and strengthen the international bus transport network between the two brotherly countries and link the bus station in the Buraimi wilayat to the bus station in the city of Al Ain in the UAE.

UNITED NATIONS

UN to send mission to Nagorno-Karabakh

BAKU: In the aftermath of Azerbaijan's victory over the Nagorno-Karabakh and thousands of people displaced from the territory, United Nations will send a mission to the territory, according to media report.

The American media outlet said the United Nations will send a mission to Nagorno-Karabakh this weekend, amid reports that about 80 per cent of the population have been displaced.

Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, Stephane Dujarric, said during a press briefing on Friday that the mission's visit had been agreed by Azerbaijan and would go ahead over the weekend.

"We haven't had access there in about 30 years. So it's very important that we will be able to get in," he said.

"While there, the team will seek to assess the situation on the ground and identify the humanitarian needs for both people remaining and the people that are on the move," the spokesperson added.

Earlier it was reported that the self-declared republic of Nagorno-Karabakh will cease to exist from next year. This comes as the region's president signed a decree dissolving state institutions following its defeat to Azerbaijan, according to CNN.

Huge exodus

Further, as per CNN, the Azerbaijani victory last week triggered a huge exodus of ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh and marked the end of decades of conflict, and potentially the end of centuries of Armenian presence in the region. — **ANI**

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SUICIDE BOMBER



‘Terrorists’ attack Turkish Interior Ministry in Ankara

ANKARA: A suicide bomber detonated an explosive device outside Türkiye's interior ministry in the capital, Ankara, on Sunday the Turkish government said.

Two officers were wounded in the blast that killed the bomber. Authorities "neutralised", or killed, the other attacker, the Minister of Interior Affairs, Ali Yerlikaya said.

The attack took place hours before parliament was set to reopen.

In his speech to lawmakers later on Sunday President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, condemned the attack, saying: "The villains who threaten the peace and security of citizens have not achieved their objectives and will never achieve them."

No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

How the attack unfolded

According to Yerlikaya, the two attackers drove up to the interior ministry in a car, one jumped out at the entrance gate and charged the building.

"One of the terrorists blew himself up and the other terrorist was neutralised," Yerlikaya said. He added that two police officers

were "slightly injured" in the fire caused by the blast.

Turkish media also reported that gunshots were heard in the same area after the blast.

Ankara police said it that it was carrying out "controlled explosions" of "suspicious packages" to prevent other explosions.

The attackers targeted district is home to several other ministries and the Turkish parliament.

Ankara's chief public prosecutor launched an investigation into the attack, Turkish media reported. Officials also limited access to the scene and imposed a news blackout on the attack.

Erdogan dropped his opposition to Sweden's NATO bid earlier this year after earlier accusing it of being soft on groups that Türkiye considers to be security threats.

He did not elaborate in the bid during his speech during Sunday's opening of parliament.

But Erdogan slammed his country's long wait for accession to the EU and said Türkiye "no longer expects anything from the European Union, which has kept us waiting at its door for 40 years."

— **DW**

INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION

India’s Aditya-L1 spacecraft successfully escapes sphere of Earth’s influence: ISRO

BENGALURU: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday informed that the Aditya-L1 spacecraft has successfully escaped the sphere of Earth's influence adding that it is now navigating its path towards the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 1 (L1).

Taking to X (former Twitter), ISRO said, "The spacecraft has travelled beyond a distance of 9.2 lakh kilometres from Earth, successfully escaping the sphere of Earth's influence. It is now navigating its path towards the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 1 (L1)."

ISRO further stated that it is the second time in succession that the space agency could send a spacecraft outside the sphere of influence of the Earth with the first time being the Mars Orbiter Mission. The PSLV-C57.1 rocket carrying the Aditya-L1 orbiter lifted off successfully from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh on September 2. The successful launch of the maiden solar mission of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) came on the heels of the historic lunar landing mission

— Chandrayaan-3. According to the agency, the Aditya-L1 mission is expected to reach the observation point in four months. It will be placed in a halo orbit around Lagrangian Point 1 (or L1), which is 1.5 million km away from the Earth in the direction of the sun.

It will carry seven different payloads to have a detailed study of the sun, four of which will observe the light from the sun and the other three will measure in-situ parameters of the plasma and magnetic fields.

Major objectives of India's so-

lar mission include the study of the physics of solar corona and its heating mechanism, the solar wind acceleration, coupling and dynamics of the solar atmosphere, solar wind distribution and temperature anisotropy, and origin of Coronal Mass Ejections (CME) and flares and near-earth space weather.

The successful launch of the maiden solar mission of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) came on the heels of the historic lunar landing mission — Chandrayaan-3. — **ANI**

SPORTS CAR

60 years on, the Porsche 911 remains a cultural icon

STUTTGART: Since its creation in 1963, the Porsche 911 has wooed car enthusiasts worldwide, proving its worth on the racetrack and serving as an iconic status symbol over the past decades.

Frank Jung, head of Corporate Archives and History Services at Porsche AG, describes the Stuttgart-manufactured car as "the heartbeat and core of Porsche to date."

An early change of name

Unveiled at the Frankfurt International Motor Show in September 1963 as the Porsche 901, the model's number was quickly changed to 911 since French automotive manufacturer Peugeot owned international rights to all car type numbers with a zero in the middle. Six decades later, over a million Porsche 911s have rolled out of the assembly lines, with different adjustments over the eight generations of the model.

Built to this day in Zuffenhausen, a borough of Stuttgart in southern Germany, the sports car gained global recognition by first entering the American market, with the first 911s exported to the US in February 1965.

"Export was always one of the driving factors behind the success of Porsche 911, especially to the US market in the first place but today worldwide," Jung tells DW.

Cultural icon

As the 911 is "the face of Porsche worldwide, this might be one of



the reasons why it has that iconic status globally," Jung points out.

The fact that it appears in movies, music videos and artworks and is driven by celebrities has also contributed to the model's desirability.

In "Downhill Racer" (1969), Robert Redford plays a professional skier who drives through the Alps in a yellow 911T.

The first sequence of the 1971 movie "Le Mans" shows actor Steve McQueen, known at the time as the "King of Cool," driving a Slate Gray 1970 Porsche 911S. He bought the car after the film shoot for his own collection.

The plot of "No Man's Land" (1987) centers on thieves who exclusively steal Porsche 911s.

The bombastic 2017 spy thriller "Atomic Blonde," set in East Berlin on the eve of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, features a supporting

character driving a modified Type 964 911 Carrera 4.

And a 911 crashes through a showroom glass in the opening scene of the 2000 action heist movie "Gone in 60 Seconds."

Artworks and museum exhibitions worldwide have also paid tribute to the iconic car.

Recently, Porsche AG has partnered with musicians, artists and designers to diversify the model's reach and brand engagement. Designers have expressed their creativity on different models by designing interiors; artists were invited to showcase different paint jobs.

Numerous past and present music videos feature the car, depicting it as a status symbol and a key ingredient to the "living large" lifestyle.

Among them, the music video to Billy Ocean's 1988 classic "Get

Outta My Dreams, Get Into My Car" has the singer in a Porsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet.

Notable personalities who drive the Porsche 911 include actor Keanu Reeves, rapper Eminem, model Kendall Jenner, football player David Beckham, basketball legend Michael Jordan, fashion designer Ralph Lauren and pop stars Harry Styles and Justin Bieber.

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld is said to own several 911 sports cars in his collection.

In Germany, singer Udo Lindenberg, politician Christian Lindner and classical music conductor Christian Thielemann, who has just been named director of Berlin State Opera, are also known as Porsche 911 owners.

A recent faux-pas

An ad to promote the launch of the



new 911 S/T and celebrate the 60-year history of the iconic sports car was released in August 2023.

In the video, a famous Portuguese landmark, the Cristo Rei — a statue of Jesus Christ that gazes over the nation's capital, Lisbon — was initially digitally removed from the backdrop in one driving scene, sparking controversy on social media.

Meanwhile, the video has been replaced with a new version, where the statue has reappeared.

"This was a mistake, and we apologize for any offense caused," says Porsche in a statement accompanying the re-uploaded YouTube clip.

Looking to the future

Beyond its timeless design, the model continues to evolve through engineering innovations.

Facing the climate crisis, Por-

sche has pledged that 80% of its lineup would be fully electric by 2030. But the company is also pushing its research and investment in e-fuels in order to maintain one exception: the 911.

"We will produce the 911 as long as possible with a combustion engine," Porsche's e-fuels team leader Karl Dums told press agency Reuters in July this year.

For now, the famous sports car remains an item for the privileged class: The 2024 model costs upwards of €120,000. Yet the car company reports high demand and customers having to wait two years for deliveries.

The most expensive new Porsche 911 sports car sold at auction is the one-off Porsche 911 Sally Special, which fetched the exorbitant price of \$3.6 million at the RM Sotheby's Monterey Auction in August 2022. — **DW**

US avoids shutdown after Congress passes funding bill

After it was passed in the House of Representatives, the Democrat-majority Senate voted 88 to 9 in favour of the bill. The nine senators who voted against the bill were all Republicans

WASHINGTON: United States Congressional lawmakers on Saturday passed a last-gasp budget measure to avoid a shutdown of the federal government within hours of a midnight deadline.

Republicans had so far failed to agree on a bill to continue US government spending, amid reluctance by some conservatives to send more aid to Ukraine.

After it was passed in the House of Representatives, the Democrat-majority Senate voted 88 to 9 in favour of the bill. The nine senators who voted against the bill were all Republicans. The funding bill was then sent to President Joe Biden who signed it into law.

Biden says bill 'good news'

Biden said the bill was "good news for the American people."

"But I want to be clear: we should have never been in this position in the first place," he stressed. "Just a few months ago, Speaker McCarthy and I reached a budget agreement to avoid precisely this type of manufactured crisis."



"For weeks, extreme House Republicans tried to walk away from that deal by demanding drastic cuts that would have been devastating for millions of Americans. They failed," he said.

He also said the United States "cannot under any circumstances allow American support for Ukraine to be interrupted."

He said that he expected Republican Kevin McCarthy, the speaker of the House of Representatives, to "keep his commitment to the people of Ukraine and secure passage of the support needed to help Ukraine at this critical moment."

US media reported that a vote on a separate bill on \$24 billion (€22.67 billion) in military assistance to Ukraine could be held next week.

McCarthy pushed a 45-day funding bill through the House with support from Democratic

lawmakers as 90 members of his own party voted against the bill.

The measure would fund the US government at current 2023 levels until November 17.

The bill does not include financial support to Ukraine, a White House priority opposed by a growing number of GOP lawmakers, but would increase federal disaster assistance by \$16 billion, meeting President Joe Biden's full request.

The quick pivot came after the collapse Friday of McCarthy's earlier plan to pass a Republican-only bill with steep spending cuts of up to 30% to most government agencies.

The White House and Democrats rejected that plan as too extreme.

What caused the delay?

The deadlock in the US Con-

gress was due to a small group of hard-line Republicans pushing back against temporary funding proposals put forth by their own party that would at least keep the lights on.

Had both houses of Congress not passed a deal to fund government operations by a midnight on Saturday (0400 UTC Sunday) deadline, the United States would have faced a disruptive federal shutdown.

The closure would have included everything from troops to border control agents to office workers, scientists and others.

In the event of a shutdown, federal workers would face furloughs, more than 2 million active-duty and reserve military troops would work without pay and welfare programs and services that Americans rely on from coast to coast would begin to face disruptions.

McCarthy's job on the line

The pivot tests McCarthy's narrow 221-212 House majority and could even lead to a challenge to his position as speaker.

The manoeuvre required Democratic votes, a fact that angered some Republican party hardliners who had wanted to pass a bill without their support.

The latest standoff comes just months after Congress brought the federal government to the brink of defaulting on its \$31.4 trillion debt.

The drama has raised worries on Wall Street, where Moody's ratings agency has warned it could damage US creditworthiness.

Congress typically passes stop-gap spending bills to buy more time to negotiate the detailed legislation that sets funding for federal programmes.

Mohamed Muizzu wins presidential elections in Maldives

MALE: Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) candidate Mohamed Muizzu, won the Maldivian presidential elections on Saturday, according to media report citing local media.

This was the second round of polling after no candidate emerged clear winner in the first round. Muizzu had emerged as the front-runner in the first round with around 46 per cent votes, followed by Ibrahim Solih's 39 per cent.

Al Jazeera reported citing several local media platforms that Muizzu has won with more than 53 per cent of the vote, after the tallying of results of all 586 ballot boxes.

After the thumping win, the Maldives president-elect delivered a brief statement at his party's headquarters, thanking all those who voted for him and calling on the government to release former President Abdulla Yameen, who is serving an 11-year jail sentence on a corruption conviction.

"Today is a very happy day...I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the Maldivian people. This outcome today is a huge encouragement for us in our pursuit to build a better future for our country, and to ensure the sovereignty of our nation," Al Jazeera quoted him as saying.

"Yameen, the leader of the PPM, must be released", Muizzu said. "The president has the power to transfer [Yameen] home imprisonment. And doing so, I believe, is the best action that can be taken in our nation's interests," he added.

Notably, Muizzu and his is considered 'pro-China' because of the huge Chinese loans by the country, under the previous PPM government.

After the results, Maldives President Ibrahim Solih conceded defeat in Saturday's run-off vote and congratulated Muizzu. -ANI

UNITED NATIONS



UN adopts new global rules to reduce chemicals harm

BONN: New global rules for the safe handling of chemicals were adopted at a United Nations conference in the German city of Bonn on Saturday.

The Global Framework on Chemicals sets out a roadmap for reducing environmental risks from chemicals and waste.

"Everyone on this planet should be able to live and work without fear of falling sick or dying from chemical exposure," said Inger Andersen, executive director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) who organised the conference.

Participants also adopted the Bonn Declaration, in which they committed to "prevent exposure to harmful chemicals, and phase out the most harmful ones, where appropriate, and enhance the safe management of such chemicals where they are needed."

What does the roadmap envisage?

The plan sets out 28 concrete targets and guidelines for key sectors from production to waste. These include preventing illegal trafficking of chemicals and waste, introducing national laws and phasing out highly dangerous pesticides in agriculture by 2035.

It also calls for a transition to more sustainable chemical alternatives, responsible use of

Germany records 3,100 heat-related deaths

BERLIN: According to a preliminary report by Germany's public health agency, around 3,100 people have died this year due to high temperatures.

The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) said the largest share of heat-related deaths in Germany this year were in the age group of 75 and older.

Federal Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said a heat protection plan launched this summer helped to keep deaths below the 4,000-mark. "Many lives saved,"

Lauterbach wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

The plan included targeted messaging for older people and those with underlying conditions so they could protect themselves better in extreme heat, among other measures.

The report will be updated later this fall. The RKI found that heat-related mortality was higher among women than men, but this was likely due to the fact that there are more elderly women than men in Germany. -DW

chemicals in industry, agriculture and healthcare sectors, and better access to information about the risks associated with different chemicals.

Classifying and labelling

In addition, a system for classifying and labelling chemicals is to be introduced in more countries

and a fund is to be created to promote the safe use of chemicals.

Germany has pledged €20 million to implement the framework, which UNEP will manage.

"The production of chemicals is increasing rapidly. It is therefore high time to curb global pollution," German Environment Minister Steffi Lemke said. -DW

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SPORTS

Oman’s Al Rawahi a victory away from MERC title glory

The Muscat-based driver is set for a thrilling summit showdown with experienced Nasser Al Attiyah in Cyprus later this week

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The mood in the Oman Rally Team is upbeat. There is an air of cautious optimism as Oman’s Abdullah Al Rawahi and his co-driver Ata Al Hmoud of Jordan gear up for the Cyprus Rally, which will decide the winner of the 2023 FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC) winner. The Cyprus Rally will be held in Nicosia from October 6-8.

As history beckons for Oman Rally Team, Al Rawahi is mindful of the challenge he faces as he chases a feat that no Omani has ever come close to since the inception of MERC in 1984. Al Rawahi goes into the final round of the MERC in Cyprus as overall leader after the scheduled final round in November (Kuwait International Rally) was cancelled.

Never before has an Omani rally driver led the overall MERC standings but the 26-year-old Muscat-based driver is mindful of the task ahead as he faces a direct title showdown with one of the greatest rally drivers the region, Qatar’s Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah.

Al Attiyah, the record breaking 18-time champion of the regional rally championship trails the Omani by six points in the points tally after the conclusion of fourth MERC round - Rally of Lebanon in September. On October 8, when the MERC champion will be crowned, it will be a thrilling conclusion of the season with both Al Rawahi and Al Attiyah in direct fight for the overall honours.

The battle is not just between



PHOTOS: WWW.FIA.COM

Al Rawahi and Al Attiyah for the Drivers’ Championships but also for Co-drivers’ Championships with Al Rawahi’s co-driver Ata Al Hmoud and Al Attiyah’s navigator Mathieu Baumel also separated by six points.

What makes the final round so interesting is that Al Rawahi currently has two wins (Oman and Jordan) and a second place (Lebanon) under his belt and a non-finish (Qatar).

Al Attiyah earned a win in Qatar, second places in Oman and Jordan and crashed out of the lead at the recent Rally of Lebanon.

That means, should Al Attiyah claim the win in Cyprus and Al Rawahi finish second, the MERC

would have a dead heat and the FIA would need to determine the winners of the championship, according to the sporting regulations for FIA Regional Rally Championships.

The likelihood of this happening is extremely high as well, because only three of the 26 crews on the official entry list are registered for the MERC, with the remainder competing in the Cyprus National Championship.

Meanwhile, a victory for Al Rawahi would give him a first ever regional title and also a first for Oman.

Seven-time Cyprus Rally winner Al Attiyah again wheels out his Autotek Motorsport-run

Volkswagen Polo GTI R5, while Al Rawahi will line up in his Oman Rally Team Škoda Fabia R5.

Al Rawahi began the 2023 MERC season with a victory on his home turf, winning the opening round in Oman but was forced to retire in the next at Qatar International Rally, which was won by Al Attiyah.

Rawahi’s excellent form in the season continued when he became the first ever Omani to win the Jordan Rally, the third round of the MERC, and with his second-place finish in the challenging Rally of Lebanon, the momentum has swung in his favour.

After four rounds, Al Rawahi has collected a total of 84 points while

Al Attiyah has collected 78 points.

Speaking ahead of the Cyprus Rally, Al Rawahi told *Times of Oman*, “I will need to maintain my focus and hope luck is on my side in Cyprus. I am up against one of the greatest rally drivers in Nasser Al Attiyah. I hope I can achieve my dream of becoming the first Omani MERC champion.”

Over the past six years of his rallying career, Al Rawahi has recorded a total of four victories in MERC rally, which places him sixth best overall in the history of the championship. The only other Omani to have a rally win in the MERC is Nizar Al Shanfari.

Al Attiyah has to his credit a record 80 rally wins. UAE’s Mo-

ammed Ben Sulayem is the next best with 60 wins while Roger Feghali of Lebanon is third with 16. Qatar’s Saeed Al Hajri with 11 and UAE’s Khalid Al Qassimi with eight are the other drivers ahead of Al Rawahi, who shares the same number of rally wins in MERC with Cyprus’s Andreas Tsouloftas.

In Cyprus, the third MERC-registered driver is Kuwait’s Meshari Al Thefiri. The Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X driver holds third place in the Drivers’ Championship – 24 points adrift of Al Rawahi – and heads to Cyprus having already clinched another MERC2 title alongside his Qatari co-driver Nasser Al Kuwari.

Another fascinating twist to the conclusion of the series is that Al Thefiri and Al Kuwari could also win their respective titles if they were to finish the event and their rivals were to retire. They would drop a lowest five-point score, earn 30 for the win and pip Al Rawahi and Al-Hmoud to both championships by a single point.

Competition to the MERC trio comes from a host of local drivers, who have supported the event since it lost its status as a round of both the FIA World and European Rally Championships.

Christos Demosthenous wheels out his Petrolina Racing Team Škoda Fabia R5, Costas Zenonos drives a Citroën DS3 R5, Yiangou Motor Sport has entered a Hyundai i20 R5 for Panayiotis Yiangou and Simos Galatariotis drives a Petrolina Racing Team Volkswagen Polo GTI R5. The remainder of the entry is made up of Rally3, Rally4 and National cars.

Organised by the Cyprus Automobile Association, competitors will face 12 mainly gravel special stages and 195.36 competitive kilometres on Saturday and Sunday. Last year’s event was cancelled because of a government funding shortfall.

Only the Yeri and Lefkara stages, which are repeated twice on Sunday, contain small asphalt sections.

The remainder are narrow, twisty and demanding gravel trails, where the risk of punctures is large over abrasive rocky surfaces in high temperatures.

(With inputs from www.fia.com)

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ADIPEC EXHIBITION 2023

The Adipecc 2023 will be held from today until October 5, under the theme of 'Decarbonising. Faster. Together.' The exhibition will gather the global energy industry to advance decarbonising today's energy system and to collaborate on the energy system of tomorrow.

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,699.08 points, up by 0.45 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.58 per cent at 464.41 points. Raysut Cement, up 9.40 per cent, was the top gainer while Gulf International Chemicals, down 6.85 per cent, was the top loser.

GCC stock markets slide once again on global cues

The MSCI GCC index witnessed a 2.7 percent decline this month that wiped off gains since the start of the year

Times News Service

MUSCAT: GCC equity markets declined for the second consecutive month in September-2023 taking cues from the decline in global equity markets, according to a new report.

"The global decline was led by investor fears that rates would remain higher for longer as inflation and the economy remain too strong for the central banks to cut rates," the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest said in its GCC Markets Monthly Report September 2023. "The MSCI GCC index witnessed a 2.7 percent decline this month, that wiped off gains since the start of the year. The year-to-date (YTD) decline now stands at 3.0 percent," the report further added. The decline in the GCC was broad-based with only Dubai and Qatari markets seeing gains last month while the rest of the markets declined. "Saudi Arabia's TASI was the biggest monthly decliner with a fall of 3.8 percent followed by Oman and Kuwait with declines of 2.5 percent and 1.7 percent, respectively," the Kamco Invest report said.

However, in terms of YTD-2023



performance, Dubai continues to boast healthy gains of 24.8 percent followed by Saudi Arabia and Bahrain with gains of 5.5 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively. The rest of the markets in the GCC were in the red.

In terms of sector performance, most of the GCC indices were in the red during September-2023, including banks that dropped by 3.8 percent. On the other hand, gainers were few but included real estate and energy with gains of 2.4 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively.

The Kamco Invest report further said that all key indices i.e. the MSCI World Index, the S&P 500 and the MSCI GCC index were down during the month and during Q3-2023.

Regional performance also showed declines in almost all key global markets during September-2023 barring the UK which clocked a gain of 2.3 percent. The MSCI World index witnessed the biggest decline in 12 months while the US gauge witnessed the biggest decline this year led by a sharp fall in Technology stocks mainly due to higher interest rates. Meanwhile,

crude oil witnessed a gain of almost 10 percent during the month mainly backed by production cuts.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

Saudi Arabia's headline equity index TASI reported monthly decline during September-2023. The index peaked at a closing high of 11,491.20 points during the first week of the month but mostly trended downward during the rest of the month to close with a decline of 3.8 percent at 11,056.0 points. Despite the decline, Saudi Arabia ranks second in the GCC in terms of YTD-2023 performance with a gain of 5.5 percent.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The FTSE ADX index dipped 0.3 percent during September-2023, closing the month at 9,785.32 points and recording its first monthly decline after three consecutive months of gains. In terms of sectoral indices, six out of ten sectors recorded growth during the month while the remaining four recorded declines. On the gainers' side, the Real Estate in-

dex witnessed the biggest monthly gain registering 7.1 percent growth to close the month at 8,766.7 points mainly due to Sharjah Group Company's 67.8 percent share jump.

The Healthcare index followed with a 5 percent index gain to close the month at 3,790.0 after two out of the three companies in the sector recorded monthly gains that included Gulf Medical Projects (7.34 percent) and Burjeel Holdings (6.4 percent).

Dubai Financial Market

The DFM General Index witnessed a monthly gain of 2.0 percent during September-2023 to close at 4,163.58 points registering its sixth consecutive monthly gain. Monthly index performance was skewed to the gainers during the month after five out of eight indices witnessed gains during September-2023 while the remaining three indices saw declines that partially offset the overall growth during the month.

The Real Estate Index recorded the biggest monthly gain registering 8.6 percent growth to close the month at 7,457.1 points mainly

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Saudi Arabia announces pre-budget statement for fiscal year 2024

driven by Emaar Properties' nearly 13.9 percent price gain during September-2023. The Financial index followed as the second largest gainer during the month with 2.4 percent growth after several of the sector's biggest weighted companies witnessed significant gains during the month.

Qatar Exchange

After reporting losses during the previous month, the Qatar Stock Exchange recorded a marginal gain during September -2023. The QE 20 index closed the month at 10,252.0 points witnessing a gain of 0.6 percent, in-line with gains in the Qatar All Share Index that reported at 0.6 percent. In terms of YTD performance, the QE 20 index was down 4.0 percent, the second biggest decline in the GCC while the All Share index clocked a gain of 0.2 percent.

The sector performance chart remained mixed during the month. The Insurance sector recorded the biggest monthly gain of 9.9 percent during September-2023 followed by Industrials and Transportation with gains of 6.2 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain Bourse All Share Index recorded the second consecutive month of decline during September-2023 with a marginal fall of 0.7 percent to close the month at 1,939.13 points.

In terms of sectoral performance, six out of the seven sector indices witnessed declines during the month. The Materials index together with the Consumer Discretionary index recorded the biggest monthly decline in September-2023 at 2.2 percent each to close the month at 5,030.6 and 3,387.9 points, respectively.

RIYADH: The Saudi Ministry of Finance announced its pre-budget statement for fiscal year (FY) 2024, saying that it estimates total expenditures will reach SAR 1,251 billion, and total revenues SAR 1,172 billion.

The ministry also estimates that a modest deficit will be recorded at about 1.9 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with continued efforts to increase the efficiency of spending and fiscal consolidation, strengthen fiscal sustainability, and implement economic and fiscal reforms.

These efforts are aligned with the pursuit of economic and fiscal reforms, as well as the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030, which include its significant programmes, initiatives, and projects. Furthermore, the aim is to stimulate domestic investment growth by enabling the private sector and facilitating its contribution across the Kingdom. Continued efforts will be made to enhance the level of services provided to citizens and residents.

The pre-budget statement for FY 2024 reflects the proactive structural and fiscal reforms that the Kingdom has taken to enhance its economy's ability to face economic developments and challenges, resulting in the positive performance of economic indicators, which has led to GDP growth at a continuous rate, the expansion and performance of the non-oil sector, and the increase of labour force. The Kingdom continues to support social protection programs and shows continued progress toward the objectives of the Fiscal Sustainability Program. -SPA

PARTICIPATION AS COLLECTING BANK

ahlibank provides customers opportunity to subscribe to OQGN IPO

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In line with its efforts to provide the best for its growing customer base, ahlibank has recently announced its participation as the Collecting Bank for OQ Gas Networks (OQGN) Initial Public Offering (IPO).

This is in line with the bank's strategic objectives to collaborate with key institutions across Oman, to bring the latest propositions to its customers.

Customers can use the mobile banking app to subscribe to the IPO at their convenience.

The bank will provide the 1:1 financing option service digitally at competitive rates. In addition, ahli Islamic, ahlibank's Islamic bank-

ing window, will also offer 1:1 IPO financing through its mobile banking app.

Individuals (Category II) willing to subscribe to the IPO can do so starting September 26 until October 5 whereas institutions (Category I) who wish to subscribe can apply starting from September 26 until October 9.

ahlibank research division initiated the OQ Gas Network report with a target price of 160 Baisas, implying an upside of 14.1 per cent on the high end of the IPO price range (for Category I investors) and 26.8 per cent upside on the IPO price (for Category II investors).

In regards to making this year's most talked about IPO subscription accessible to a broader popu-

lace, Hana Al Kharusi, Senior General Manager - Wholesale Banking, ahlibank, said, "We are thrilled to be a facilitator of the biggest IPO in the sultanate, as it is a testament to our commitment to providing excellent services."

"This reinforces our dedication to empowering businesses and investors with innovative solutions. We look forward to helping our customers seize this remarkable opportunity and navigate their path to financial success."

A successful IPO of OQGN will create value for customers and will contribute to the growth and development of Oman's capital markets. ahlibank has been an active player in Oman's capital market since acting as the issue manager

for the successful IPO of Abraj Energy Services earlier this year. The investment banking division at ahlibank provides a one-stop-shop solution for both corporates and investors. The Bank's innovative solutions include fundraising through debt capital markets and equity capital markets as well as core expertise in mergers & acquisitions, asset management, brokerage and research services.

ahlibank has a rich history of providing exceptional financial services to individuals and businesses alike. The bank has become a trusted financial partner with its team of professionals who work tirelessly to deliver customized digital solutions that meet the unique needs of its customers.



PARTNERSHIP

Shell Oman, Precision Tune Auto Care collaborate to offer customers premium, carbon-neutral lubricants

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Strengthening their 24-year partnership in Oman, Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) and Opal Marketing and Industry's Precision Tune Auto Care (PTAC) have signed a strategic agreement to supply Shell Oman's premium lubricants through PTAC's extensive service centre network across Oman.

This includes the cutting-edge Shell Helix Ultra-premium oil and Shell Helix ultra OW carbon-neutral range of products which are made from natural gas using Shell's patented PurePlus Technology. Emphasising sustainability, these premium products offer enhanced protection against engine stress and wear, ultimate power, and performance even in extreme temperatures, along with superior piston cleanliness.

Shell Oman and PTAC have fostered a strong partnership built on innovation, customer-centricity, and service excellence.



The new agreement brings together Shell Oman's world-class lubricants technology and PTAC's expertise in automotive services, which includes everything from car repairs to routine maintenance, offering customers an unrivalled driving experience and easy accessibility to high-quality lubricants for their vehicles.

Commenting on the partnership, Mohamed El Fatatry, General Manager - Lubricants, Supply

Chain & Customer Operations at Shell Oman, said, "We deeply value this enduring collaboration with Precision Tune Auto Care, consistently surpassing customer expectations and delivering unparalleled value. By offering our high-quality, premium lubricants including the carbon-neutral range through Precision Tune Auto Care's expanding network, we have taken a significant step towards minimizing environmental impact and supporting the

country's energy transition goals."

Sandeep Ghai, Chief Executive Officer at Opal Marketing, and Industry added saying, "Precision Tune Auto Care network (PTAC) ensures value to their esteemed customers by offering Quality, Time bound Cost-effective service solutions across Oman. PTAC's partnership with Shell Oman for the supply of lubricants fosters our commitment to quality offerings to customers."

BRIBERY AND FRAUD CASE

Mozambique, Credit Suisse settle 'tuna bonds' row

FRANKFURT: Credit Suisse reached a last-minute settlement with Mozambique on Sunday in a \$1.5-billion (€1.42 billion) bribery and fraud case, its owner UBS was quoted as saying by Bloomberg and the Reuters news agency, a day before a London trial was due to start.

The trial at London's High Court was scheduled to last for 13 weeks. Mozambique, which had brought the case against Credit Suisse alleging bribery and fraud, was seeking \$1.5 billion in damages.

"The parties have mutually released each other from any liabilities and claims relating to the transactions," Reuters news agency quoted UBS as saying on Sunday. "The parties are pleased to have resolved this long-running dispute stemming from events occurring a decade ago," it added.

Details of the deal were not immediately available.

The case is one of the biggest disputes that UBS inherited when it took over embattled Credit Suisse in June this year.



What is the 'tuna bonds' scandal?

The case dates back to 2013 and 2014, when three state-owned Mozambican companies, ship-builder Privilinvest and Credit Suisse struck deals for loans of about \$2 billion.

Before the scale of the case became public in 2016, the loans were secured with undisclosed government guarantees and billed as being aimed to fund projects such as a state tuna fishery.

Donors, including the International Monetary Fund, halted support when the case came to light, triggering a debt default and criminal investigations. -DW

MARKET

MSX index ends higher



Raysut Cement, up 9.40 per cent, was the top gainer while Gulf International Chemicals, down 6.85 per cent, was the top lose

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,699.08 points, up by 0.45 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.58 per cent at 464.41 points. Raysut Cement, up 9.40 per cent, was the top gainer while Gulf International Chemicals, down 6.85 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Raysut Cement were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 453 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR1.48 million, with more than 8.64 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 21 advanced, 13 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR305,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR212,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR93,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,689.08 points, up 0.51 per cent. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Global Financial Investments, Bank Dhofar, Muscat Finance,

Oman & Emirates Investment were up by 8.57 per cent, 3.51 per cent, 2.94 per cent, 1.92 per cent, 1.64 per cent respectively. Prices of United Finance, Bank Nizwa, Oman United Insurance were up by 3.51 per cent, 2.02 per cent, 0.74 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,644.78 points, down 0.19 per cent. Prices of Raysut Cement were up by 9.40 per cent respectively. Prices of Gulf International Chemicals, Muscat Thread Mill, Oman Chromite, Al Maha Ceramics, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 6.85 per cent, 3.64 per cent, 2.00 per cent, 1.85 per cent, 1.79 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.35 per cent before closing at 1,623.77 points. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Al Suwadi Power, SMN Power Holding, National Gas, Oman Telecom were up by 7.90 per cent, 5.56 per cent, 1.45 per cent, 1.12 per cent, 1.01 per cent respectively.

Prices of Muscat Desalination, Sembcorp Salalah, Abraj Energy were up by 2.44 per cent, 0.94 per cent, 0.34 per cent respectively.

— United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,699.624	4,656.651	4,699.076	4,678.130	20.946	0.45
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,689.082	7,615.585	7,689.082	7,650.211	38.871	0.51
Industry Index	5,665.864	5,644.775	5,644.775	5,655.245	-10.470	-0.19
Services Index	1,635.277	1,616.546	1,623.773	1,629.494	-5.721	-0.35
MSX Shariah Index	467.925	464.405	464.405	467.106	-2.701	-0.58
MSX TR INDEX	6,187.619	6,131.041	6,186.898	6,159.321	27.577	0.45
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,390.200	8,310.002	8,390.200	8,347.786	42.414	0.51
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,052.553	6,030.025	6,030.025	6,041.209	-11.184	-0.19
SERVICES TR IDX	1,806.077	1,785.389	1,793.372	1,799.690	-6.318	-0.35

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,640,915	1,483,505	453	23,531,849,977	21	13	15	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. B/D	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR. VALUE	SECURITY SYMBOL	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001087	19,200	5,184	3	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.272	-0.002	-0.735	0.270	0.270	0.275	0.100	OUIK	27,000,000
OM0000001152	10,000	1,050	2	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.104	-0.001	0.962	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.100	ONES	15,750,000
OM0000001483	3,600	1,115	2	0.302	0.310	0.302	0.310	0.309	-0.001	0.324	0.310	0.300	0.310	0.100	NBOB	504,043,370
OM0000001538	2,630	1,052	1	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.394	-0.006	1.523	0.400	0.389	0.400	0.100	OMVS	267,346,170
OM0000001681	228,819	13,919	9	0.061	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.061	-0.001	1.639	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.100	OBIO	7,556,250
OM0000001749	5,000	1,675	2	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.000	0.000	0.335	0.320	0.334	0.100	OCOI	110,842,358
OM0000002168	1,500	283	2	0.190	0.190	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.000	0.000	0.186	0.184	0.186	0.100	AACT	40,920,000
OM0000002176	706,000	172,970	14	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.240	0.245	0.100	ATMI	30,600,000
OM0000002226	10,400	2,215	3	0.213	0.213	0.213	0.213	0.212	-0.001	0.472	0.213	0.213	0.213	0.100	AJSS	13,036,510
OM0000002374	161	9	1	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.057	-0.002	-3.509	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.100	UFPI	19,587,001
OM0000002440	2,500	173	1	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.068	-0.001	1.471	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.100	SIHC	6,210,000
OM0000002549	11,308	1,979	1	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.170	-0.005	2.941	0.175	0.000	0.175	0.100	BKDB	524,361,501
OM0000002796	861,269	238,802	37	0.277	0.279	0.275	0.279	0.273	-0.001	0.380	0.279	0.279	0.280	0.100	BKMB	2,094,384,780
OM0000003000	8,000	8,000	3	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.060	-0.060	-5.680	1.000	1.000	1.040	0.100	MHAS	69,000,000
OM0000003026	102,121	101,445	21	0.990	1.000	0.990	1.000	0.990	-0.010	1.010	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.100	OTEL	750,000,000
OM0000003125	19,213	11,151	15	0.057	0.059	0.057	0.059	0.057	-0.002	3.509	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.100	GFIC	11,800,000
OM0000003224	758	310	2	0.410	0.410	0.407	0.407	0.405	-0.002	0.494	0.407	0.406	0.444	0.100	RNSS	96,218,870
OM0000003398	894,201	92,103	16	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.102	0.103	0.100	BKSB	563,192,516
OM0000003968	30,001	11,302	7	0.376	0.377	0.376	0.377	0.376	-0.001	0.286	0.377	0.375	0.378	0.100	ORDS	245,405,975
OM0000004248	40,870	2,981	9	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.069	-0.001	1.449	0.070	0.070	0.074	0.100	SMNP	13,974,492
OM0000004768	125,221	10,551	12	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.084	0.085	0.100	AMAT	14,700,000
OM0000005005	3,000	795	1	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.270	-0.005	-1.852	0.265	0.250	0.265	0.100	AMCI	14,575,000
Total	22	3,257,372	679,043	164												

Parallel Market

OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	2,850	14,075	7	5.050	5.100	4.900	4.900	5.000	-0.100	-2.000	4.900	4.900	5.000	1.000	OCOI	14,700,000
OM0000001095	DHOFAH INSURANCE	30,000	5,550	3	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.000	0.000	0.185	0.190	0.185	0.100	DCOS	20,195,500
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	234,856	21,249	16	0.092	0.092	0.090	0.090	0.089	-0.001	1.124	0.090	0.090	0.091	0.100	NGCI	7,650,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	3,133,249	374,377	73	0.118	0.128	0.118	0.128	0.117	-0.011	9.402	0.128	0.128	0.118	0.100	RCCI	25,600,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	238,400	12,447	10	0.052	0.053	0.052	0.053	0.052	-0.001	1.923	0.053	0.052	0.055	0.100	MPCI	16,278,755
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	17,749	14,034	14	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.079	0.078	-0.001	1.282	0.079	0.079	0.081	0.100	AAIC	16,274,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	15,000	1,575	3	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.100	0.105	0.100	BACS	9,450,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	5,000	190	2	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.035	-0.003	8.571	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.100	AMII	3,230,000
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	30,178	2,112	4	0.070	0.070	0.068	0.068	0.073	-0.005	-4.849	0.068	0.069	0.080	0.100	GICI	1,428,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	4,950	282	1	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.055	-0.002	-3.656	0.053	0.000	0.000	0.100	STMI	1,851,851
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	146,509	23,886	5	0.163	0.164	0.163	0.164	0.163	-0.001	0.613	0.164	0.164	0.000	0.100	ABOB	385,343,824
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	18,000	3,975	4	0.221	0.221	0.220	0.220	0.224	-0.004	-1.786	0.220	0.205	0.224	0.100	GMPI	10,068,476
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	4,540	4,063	1	0.895	0.895	0.895	0.895	0.895	0.000	0.000	0.895	0.820	0.895	0.100	SOMS	85,025,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	294,722	11,880	16	0.041	0.041	0.039	0.041	0.038	-0.003	7.895	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.100	SWPC	6,560,000
OM0000003321	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	414,500	66,103	24	0.160	0.162	0.159	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.155	0.160	0.100	GECS	32,477,831
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,665	190	3	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.000	0.000	0.114	0.115	0.125	0.100	VOES	9,279,914
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	51,453	4,991	9	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.099	-0.002	-2.020	0.097	0.095	0.098	0.100	BKYZ	216,984,444
OM0000004725	SEMBCORP SALALAH	90,000	9,389	9	0.101	0.106	0.101	0.106	0.107	-0.001	-0.955	0.106	0.101	0.105	0.100	SSPW	101,184,625
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	5,383	275	1	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.051	0.055	0.100	TAOI	12,750,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	550	12	1	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.021	0.019	0.021	0.100	BATP	14,172,636
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	60,000	3,160	3	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.001	5.556	0.019	0.018	0.019	0.100	SUNP	51,573,729
OM0000005683	PHOENIX POWER	5,000	300	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.055	0.065	0.100	PHPC	87,754,088
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	1,596	128	1	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.082	-0.002	-2.439	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	MCDE	12,444,032
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	182,230	52,981	68	0.291	0.291	0.290	0.291	0.292	-0.001	-0.342	0.291	0.291	0.291	0.100	ABRJ	224,128,200
Total	24	5,148,380	625,173	281													

EXHIBITION

Adipec gathers global energy leaders today

Featuring a rich exhibition programme that covers energy-related technology, innovation, collaboration, and digitalisation, Adipec 2023 is expected to attract more than 160,000+ attendees from 164 countries

legacy of innovation to showcase and platform the cutting-edge technologies and systems critical to achieving the global energy transition. Companies from across the energy ecosystem will showcase the innovations and technologies driving the industry's journey to Net Zero, including direct air capture, carbon capture, utilisation and storage, green hydrogen electrolyzers, power-to-x, artificial intelligence and the Industrial Internet of Things.

The exhibition will enable visitors to connect with over 2,200 global companies across 16 exhibition halls and 30 country pavilions, making it an ideal platform to drive business growth through its invaluable opportunities for cross-sectoral networking, deal-making, and knowledge exchange.

This year, Adipec also includes four specialised areas focused on facilitating cross-sector collaboration and game-changing partnerships – Decarbonisation Accelerator, Maritime and Logistics Zone, Digitalisation in Energy Zone, Manufacturing, Industrialisation Exhibition and Conference.

The Maritime and Logistics Zone is located in the dedicated Marina Hall, which also includes the Maritime and Logistics Technical and Strategic Conferences. Visitors can also attend Innovation Sessions, where industry experts will share insights on new ways of thinking and working that are driving decarbonisation at scale and pace.

Split across three dedicated tracks – Decarbonisation, Maritime and Logistics, and Digitalisation in Energy – the sessions are designed to facilitate solution-orientated dialogue in a curated programme format. They are complemented by the Cross-Sector Co-Lab Programme, where visitors can explore the cross-industry partnerships that are accelerating the energy transition.

Christopher Hudson, President of dmeg events, organisers of Adipec 2023, said, "Adipec 2023, with its bold conference agenda and massive exhibition plan, presents visitors with unparalleled opportunities for collaboration, partnership, learning, and investment."

-WAM

oman OASIS

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DATA

Travel frenzy to reach new peak in China's 'golden week' holiday period

BEIJING: With this year's super-long "golden week" spanning both the Mid-Autumn Festival and the National Day holidays

LIFESTYLE

YOGA IMPROVES
CARDIOVASCULAR
FUNCTION IN
PATIENTS WITH
HEART FAILURE

A recent study examined the long-term effects of yoga therapy to see whether including it as an additional kind of care for the treatment of heart failure is advantageous or not

Heart failure occurs when the heart muscle is either too frail or too stiff to effectively pump blood, leading to fluid retention, shortness of breath, and other problems. The New York Heart Association (NYHA) Functional classification method is the most widely used system for assessing the severity of a patient's symptoms.

According to their physical activity restrictions, patients are divided into one of four groups according to the NYHA classification, with Class I being the least severe and Class IV being the most severe. Clinicians examine the ejection

fraction to assess how effectively the heart pumps blood.

The study comprised 75 heart failure patients who had undergone coronary intervention, revascularization, or device therapy over the previous six months to one year at a tertiary care centre in South India. The study's patients were all less than or equivalent to NYHA Class III and had been on optimised medical therapy for at least 6 months to one year.

Patients had to be between 30 and 70 years old and have a left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) of 45 per cent to be eligible for the trial.

The interventional group had 35 participants (31 males and 4 women), while the non-interventional group had 40 (30 men and 10 women). The interventional

group received yoga therapy as well as standard guideline-directed medical care, whereas the non-interventional group only received standard guideline-directed medical therapy.

To assess the impact of yoga therapy on heart failure patients, echocardiographic parameters were examined at various follow-ups.

The interventional group included 35 participants (31 men and 4 women) and 40 (30 men and 10 women) were in the non-interventional group. The interventional group received yoga therapy and guideline-directed medical therapy, while the non-interventional group only continued with standard guideline-directed medical therapy.

Echocardiographic parameters were compared at various follow-ups to see the impact of yoga therapy on heart failure patients.

"Yoga is a combination of mind-body techniques, which is a set of physical exercises [asana] with breathing techniques [pranayama], relaxation and meditation that can be effectively used to stimulate physical and mental well-being," said Ajit Singh, PhD, research scientist for the Indian Council for Medical Research at Kasturba Medical College & Hospital, Manipal Academy of Heart Education in Manipal, India, and the study's lead author.

"Our patients observed improvement in systolic blood pressure and heart rate compared to patients who were on medi-

cation without yoga," he said.

Participants in the yoga group were taken to the Department of Yoga at the hospital and an experienced yoga therapist taught selected yoga therapy like pranayama, meditation and relaxation techniques. Each session lasted around 60 minutes and participants were supervised for one week at the training center before being asked to continue self-administered yoga at home.

Those in the yoga group were advised to perform yoga at least five days a week for 12 months. At the training centre, all the participants were taught together to perform the same steps, but individual support was available.

Researchers measured quality of life improvements using the World Health Organization Quality of Life questionnaire, which uses 26 questions to evaluate quality of life in four aspects: physical, psychological, social and environmental health. The participants completed the questionnaire at enrollment, as well as at 24 weeks and 48 weeks of follow-up.

According to the researchers, the study showed participants in the yoga group had improvement in endurance, strength, balance, symptom stability and quality of life. They also observed that while patients improved physically and psychologically, there was no improvement in social and environmental health.

Echocardiographic parameters did

not show any significant differences between the two groups at baseline. At both the six- and 12-month follow-up, improved biventricular systolic function was seen in the interventional (yoga) group compared to the non-interventional group. The interventional group also showed substantial improvement in functional outcomes as assessed by the NYHA classification.

"This study proves that the addition of yoga therapy to standard medical management of heart failure leads to an improvement in left ventricular systolic function and quality of life in heart failure patients," Singh said.

"Hence, yoga therapy may improve physical well-being and left ventricular function among heart failure patients on guideline-directed optimal medical therapy," he said. - ANI



SPORTS

Disappointing day for Oman

Both the 200m sprinters, Mohammed Obaid Al Sadi and Rashid Al Aasmi, fail to go beyond the semifinal round in Hangzhou

MUSCAT: For the second consecutive day, Oman's athletes failed to go beyond the semifinal heats at the 19th Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium in Hangzhou, China, on Sunday. Al Sadi and Al Aasmi began the day's proceedings on a positive note as they advanced to the semifinal round after recording 21.24sec and 21.35s respectively in their first round heat. Al Sadi displayed early promise as he finished heat 1 in third place among the eight runners. Chinese Taipei's Chun-Han Yang won the heat in 20.98s while South Korea's Minkyu Shin was second with a time of 21.03. Competing in round one Heat 4, Al Aasmi finished fifth in his race with Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Mohammed winning the first round in a time of 20.78s. Al Aasmi's timing of 21.35, however, was enough for him to get a place in the semifinal heat later in the day. However, like their 100m teammates, Barakat Al Harthi and Ali Anwar Al Balushi, who also failed to advance to the 100m final on Saturday, Al Sadi and Al Aasmi also crashed out in the semifinals. Both Al Sadi and Al Aasmi clocked 21.32sec and finished sixth and seventh in their respective



semifinal heats. Both the athletes' timings were much below their personal and season best times. While Al Sadi's personal best is 20.62, Al Aasmi's PB is 20.78.

Elyas finishes second in Group B 67kg event The other Omani in action on Sunday was Elyas Al Busaidi in weightlifting at the Xiaoshan Sports



Centre (XSC) Gymnasium. Competing in Group B of the 67kg non-Olympic class, Elyas lifted 118kg in snatch and then lifted 157kg in clean and jerk for a total of 275kg

to finish behind Group B winner Kazakhstan's Ishimbek Muratbek who lifted a combined 277kg. Athletes are divided into groups of 10 competitors at major and in-

ternational championships. Lifters in Group B submit lower entries than weightlifters in Group A. China's Lijun Chen later won the gold after the Group A competition finished on Sunday with a combined lift of 330kg, a Games record. He lifted 150kg in snatch and then 180kg in clean and jerk. Elyas's total matched the weight of the ninth placed lifter in Group A.

Oman meet South Korea today On Monday, Oman will conclude their hockey group engagement with a game against fancied South Korea, who will look for a victory to advance to the semi-finals. Korea and Malaysia are tied with nine points each while China tops the Pool B with 12 points.

Oman, coached by Dutchman Siegfried Aikman, have registered two wins so far against Thailand and Indonesia respectively and suffered defeats at the hands of Malaysia and China. Oman would hope to give Koreans a good fight to conclude their campaign at the Games on a positive note. Also in action will be the 4x100m relay quartet of Barakat Al Harthi, Ali Anwar Al Balushi, Mohammed Obaid Al Sadi, Rashid Al Aasmi and Khalid Al Ghailani. The final four will be picked ahead of heat 1 on Monday. Husain Al Farsi will also compete in the 800m round one heat on Monday.

If the relay quartet and Al Farsi manage to reach the finals of their respective events, Oman's campaign in athletics will continue till Tuesday when the finals of 800m and 4x100m relay will be held. Oman's high jumper Fatek Beit Jaaboub, who was part of the athletics squad, was injured during training and had to be withdrawn from the event. Fatek had done Oman proud in July when he won the gold at the Pan Arab Games in Morocco. Oman's lifter Amur Al Khanjari will be the final athlete in action when the Group B category event in the 81kg class will be held at the XSC Gymnasium on Tuesday.

SPANISH LA LIGA

Bellingham on target as Real Madrid go top



GIRONA: Jude Bellingham scored his seventh goal of the season as Real Madrid moved top of La Liga with a comfortable 3-0 victory over high-flying Girona on Saturday. Joselu opened the scoring from a fabulous Bellingham pass before Aurelien Tchouameni headed in the visitors' second. Bellingham completed the scoring with a smart second-half finish. The win lifts Madrid above Girona and Barcelona, who beat Sevilla on Friday. Girona, who topped the table going into the latest round of La Liga fixtures, started with a spring in their step and created two golden opportunities to take the lead. Yangel Herrera headed narrowly over the crossbar from a central position inside the area, before Viktor Tsygankov struck the outside of the post from another free header. Madrid gradually found their rhythm and eventually took the lead thanks to a marvellous piece of play from Bellingham,

who picked out Joselu with the outside of his right boot to give the former Stoke and Newcastle forward an easy finish. Tchouameni doubled Madrid's lead four minutes later after being left completely unmarked from Toni Kroos' inswinging corner. The home side almost pulled one back five minutes into the second half, but Kepa Arrizabalaga was equal to David Lopez's header and Eric Garcia was unable to steer home the rebound. Bellingham got Madrid's third with 20 minutes remaining, finding the far corner after Paulo Gazzaniga had parried Joselu's initial effort. The 20-year-old is only the second player to score at least six goals in his first seven La Liga matches for Madrid this century, after Cristiano Ronaldo in 2009. The game ended on a sour note for the visitors as Nacho was dismissed deep into added time for a reckless challenge on Portu, who left the field on a stretcher. - Agencies

FRENCH LIGUE 1



PSG held to a draw by Clermont

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) have made their worst start to a season under owners Qatar Sports Investment after being held to a goalless draw by Ligue 1 strugglers Clermont on Saturday. The result means Luis Enrique's side have 12 points after seven league games, their lowest tally at this stage of a season since the 2010-11 campaign. Although the French champions were boosted by the return of Kylian Mbappe after he limped off in last weekend's 4-0 win over Marseille, he had a frustrating afternoon and was booked for diving late in the game. Clermont goalkeeper Mory Diaw, who played for PSG as a youngster, did well to deny a number of efforts from Mbappe, Randal Kolo Muani and Ousmane Dembele before the break. PSG head into Wednesday's Champions League game against Newcastle second in Ligue 1, one point behind surprise leaders Brest, who have a game in hand.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Man City shocked by Wolves, Spurs defeat nine-man Reds

LONDON: Wolves stunned defending champions Manchester City 2-1 while Liverpool missed the chance to go top as they were reduced to nine men in a 2-1 defeat at Tottenham on Saturday. Manchester United slumped to another defeat as Crystal Palace won 1-0 at Old Trafford, while Arsenal moved to within one point of the top after cruising to a 4-0 win at Bournemouth. City had won the opening six games of their title defence as they aim to become the first side to ever claim four consecutive English top-flight titles.

By contrast, Wolves had taken just four points from their first six games, but stunned the champions at Molineux. Ruben Dias' own goal put the home side in front only for City to respond through Julian Alvarez's free-kick. Wolves, though, were a constant threat on the counter-attack and got their reward when Hwang Hee-chan swept home at the second attempt 25 minutes from time. City's defeat meant victory would have taken Liverpool top, but Jurgen Klopp's men had a mountain to climb when Curtis Jones was shown a straight red card for going over the top of the ball and making contact with Yves Bissouma after just 26 minutes. Son Heung-min put Tottenham in front, but the 10 men hit back when Cody Gakpo levelled in first-half stoppage time. Liverpool were then reduced



to nine men as Diogo Jota was shown two quickfire yellow cards. Yet the visitors held out until the 96th minute when Joel Matip turned Pedro Porro's cross into his own net. The three points take Tottenham above Liverpool into second, one point behind City, as they remain unbeaten in the Premier League under Ange Postecoglou. United are now off to their worst ever Premier League start to pile more pressure on Erik ten Hag. Joachim Andersen's stunning first-half volley separated the sides at Old Trafford. The defeat sees United slip to 10th. Arsenal moved up to third as Mikel Arteta's men eased to victory at Bournemouth. Bukayo Saka had been an injury doubt, but was able to make his 87th consecutive Premier League appearance and headed into an

empty net to open the scoring. Elsewhere, Ollie Watkins bagged a hat-trick as Aston Villa thrashed Brighton 6-1. Two goals from the England striker and a Pervis Estupinan own goal put Villa 3-0 up inside 26 minutes before Ansu Fati reduced the deficit with his first Brighton goal. But the day belonged to Watkins and he became the first Villa player in 47 years to score two hat-tricks in one season. Jacob Ramsey and Douglas Luiz piled on the pain for Brighton in the closing stages and did enough to edge Villa ahead of the Seagulls into fifth on goal difference. Luton secured their first ever Premier League win with a 2-1 victory at Everton. Sheffield United remain bottom after the Blades were beaten 2-0 at West Ham. - Agencies

BOXING



Alvarez defends super-middleweight titles

LAS VEGAS: Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez defended his undisputed super-middleweight title by beating Jermell Charlo on points on Saturday. Canelo, 33, secured a unanimous 119-108, 118-109 and 118-109 win over the American to retain his WBO, WBC, WBA and IBF belts at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, BBC Sport reported. The Mexican knocked Charlo

down in the seventh round on the way to a 60th win in 64 fights. "I'm the best. Who's better? Nobody can beat this Canelo," he said. Charlo, 33, was undisputed light-middleweight champion until he was stripped of his WBO belt when the fight started. "I worked all the fight to go in the body," said Canelo, who dropped Charlo for only the second time in

his career with an overhand right followed by an uppercut. "Then I changed the punch and that's what happened. We worked for that. "We know he's a great fighter. He knows how to move in the ring and we worked that in the gym for three months. "Three months in the mountains without my family, without everything.

"But I still love boxing. Boxing made me the person I am today. Boxing is my life." Defeat was the second of Charlo's 38-fight career, having stepped up in weight. Australian Tim Tszyu, who held the interim WBO light-middleweight title and was the mandatory challenger to Charlo, was elevated to champion status on Saturday once the bout began. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Where nature’s beauty unfolds: Discovering Alila Hinu Bay in Salalah

Nestled between rugged cliffs and the azure waters of the Arabian Sea, this luxurious retreat provides an oasis of calm amid the vibrant energy of Salalah Autumn Rateb

MUSCAT: As the sweltering heat of summer makes its gradual retreat, and the first whispers of autumn touch the air, a mesmerising transformation begins to unfold in the coastal paradise of Salalah. From September to December, this enchanting season, affectionately known as SARB (Salalah Autumn Rateb), weaves its magic, inviting travellers from across the globe to witness a breathtaking natural spectacle. At the heart of this captivating journey is Alila Hinu Bay, a sanctuary of serenity nestled along the Arabian Sea. As the gateway to Salalah's splendid landscapes, the resort offers an experience like no other, making it the ideal place to stay while exploring the wonders of SARB. SARB, Salalah's answer to the traditional spring season, is a spectacle of nature's resilience and beauty. During these months, the



arid desert terrain of Salalah undergoes a miraculous transformation, turning into a lush green paradise adorned with vibrant flora. The unique climate, driven by the monsoon winds, bestows Salalah with a bounty of fresh water, coaxing the dormant earth into a vi-

brant burst of life. The rolling hills, valleys, and wadis transform into a tapestry of verdant hues, making it a paradise for nature enthusiasts, hikers, and photographers. The property sits on the cusp of this breathtaking transformation, offering guests a front-row seat to

SARB season offer
Bookable on Hyatt.com or directly with the reservation team at Alila Hinu Bay
Booking date: From September 1st
Stay date: From September 1 until December 20
• Complimentary à la carte breakfast
• Complimentary kids' activities at Play Alila as per the weekly schedule
• Complimentary activities as per the weekly schedule
• 50 OMR credit voucher per night
• Other terms and conditions may apply

the spectacle. With its minimalist design and eco-friendly ethos, Alila seamlessly blends into the natural landscape, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the beauty of their surroundings. From the comfort of your private villa or suite at Hinu Bay, you



can wake up to panoramic views of the ocean and the emerald green hills. As the cool breeze carries the scent of frankincense and tropical flowers, you'll be transported to a world where time seems to stand still. The resort's world-class amenities and attentive staff ensure that your stay is not just comfortable but truly memorable. SARB is a time of celebration in Salalah, with traditional festivals, markets, and cultural events taking place throughout the season. This haven plays a vital role in connecting guests with the local culture, offering curated experiences that showcase the rich heritage of Salalah. From traditional Omani cuisine to guided tours of ancient ruins and historic sites, the resort creates a holistic experience that extends beyond its luxurious accommodations.

For nature enthusiasts, Hinu Bay offers guided excursions into the heart of SARB's lush landscapes. Explore the verdant valleys, discover hidden waterfalls, and witness the unique Khareef fog that blankets the region, adding an ethereal touch to the scenery. In conclusion, SARB is a season of rebirth and natural beauty that should not be missed, and Alila-Hinu Bay stands as the ultimate gateway to this enchanting experience. Whether you seek relaxation, adventure, or cultural enrichment, this luxurious resort offers it all, making your journey to Salalah an unforgettable one. So, when the call of SARB beckons, answer it with a stay at this Arabian paradise, where nature's beauty and luxury harmoniously coexist, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

HARVEST FESTIVAL



ISC Malayalam Wing celebrates Onam

MUSCAT: The spirit of Onam, the harvest festival that embodies the rich cultural heritage of Kerala, came alive in Muscat as the Indian Social Club Malayalam Wing hosted their grand Onam Celebrations that brought together people from various backgrounds to revel in the festivities. The two-day event was held on September 22 and 23 at the Le Grand Hall, Al Falaj Hotel. The celebrations commenced with the formal inauguration by the chief fuest Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, in the presence of the special guest Ahmed Rashid Al Hina, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland, Guest of Honour Renowned Philanthropist and great visionary K N Anandakumar, Babu Rajendran - Chairman, ISC Oman; Ajit Vasudevan, Convener, ISC Malayalam Wing and other dignitaries and guests. In a heartwarming twist to the traditional Onam celebrations, the Indian Social Club Malayalam Wing embodied the spirit of giving and compassion. Every year, Malayalam Wing honours an eminent personality of Kerala who has contributed immensely either in the film industry, literary or artistic areas by giving the Cultural Award. This time, Malayalam Wing redefined the Onam festivities by making it different from the past by presenting this year's Cultural Award to K N Anandakumar, who is a well-known philanthropist and a great visionary. He is the Executive Director and one of the founders of the Sree Sathya Sai Orphanage Trust in Kerala. He has been a philanthropist for the past 30 years, contributing to

more than 200 projects through 124 branches in Kerala. Anand Kumar was selected unanimously by the members considering his notable humanitarian services. As a mark of admiration, Malayalam Wing also honoured Dimple Mathew, Head of Care and Special Education at Indian School Muscat for the invaluable contribution by the department in educating differently-abled students in Oman. This unique Onam event not only celebrated the rich cultural heritage of Kerala but also served as a platform for meaningful contributions to the community. The Le Grand Hall was adorned with exquisite floral arrangements, including the iconic Pookalam, a stunning floral carpet made from a variety of colourful blossoms. The sight of the Pookalam was a testament to the artistic talent of the Malayalam Wing's women who came together to create this work of art. The festivities began with the mesmerising sound of the customary Chendamalam followed by the welcoming of Mahabali and thrilling spectacular festivities, setting the tone for the cultural performances that followed. The members enthralled the audience with their enchanting dance performances such as Thiruvathira, Poothapaattu and Muthappan, etc which left the spectators spellbound with their synchronicity and grace. No Onam celebration would be complete without the grand Onasadya, the traditional feast. Onam celebrations concluded with Onasadhya on September 23. The sumptuous traditional Onasadya was prepared by a team of duochefs who came from Kerala.

NEW BRANCH

Bank Muscat celebrates relocation of Sinaw branch

MUSCAT: Reaffirming its commitment to enhance branches' network spread across various wilayats and to provide the best services and facilities to its customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, celebrated the relocation of the Sinaw branch, under the patronage of Khalid bin Al Sayed Al-Mahri, Wali of Sinaw. The new branch features a number of unique facilities including dedicated financing desks for Baituna and Najahi products, in addition to a desk for insurance services and a special center for Asalah Priority Banking customers. It is also designed to facilitate access of persons with disabilities to various banking services. This comes as part of the bank's strategy to provide a comfortable environment for customers to complete their transactions with ease and enjoy a unique banking experience. The development and growth witnessed by Sharqiya North Governorate in general and willayat Sinaw in particular obliges the bank to create more convenient, accessible, and comfortable environment to its customers. Featured with its distinctive location and spacious area, the relocated branch is designed to meet the needs of different groups of the society and thus align with the financial inclusion concept. The new branch is staffed with experienced Omani cadres, who are willing to provide the best services for customers.

On this occasion, Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager, Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "We are pleased with the relocation of Sinaw branch. This will undoubtedly contribute to provide variety of banking services and facilities



to our customers in an efficient and a comfortable environment. The bank's branches represent an important channel and a direct link with customers where we successfully engage in fruitful discussions, happily listen to their feedback and suggestions and proudly continue developing services and meet their aspirations and needs. I would like to thank all our customers for their confidence and trust in the bank's services and products. Bank Muscat will continue to develop its policies to meet the different needs of its customers." Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager - Interior Regions, said: "Wilayat of Sinaw is experiencing population and commercial growth and has many government and private institutions. The area is one of the most important markets in North Sharqiya, so the decision to move the bank branch to a new location with a larger area was to keep up with these developments in order to ensure the best banking services to customers. This new branch

constitutes an important addition to the 12 existing branches in the Governorate. The bank will undoubtedly continue to strengthening its branches network with keenness to provide the best banking services and facilities that meet the needs of customers." The new branch, besides the other 12 branches in North Al Sharqiya, is projected to provide a unique banking experience to customers. The total number of retail branches in the Sultanate stood at 146, equipped with the state-of-art technologies to better serve the customers from various segments. During this year, new branches of the bank were inaugurated including those in Madiant Al Sultan Qaboos, Al Hail, and Al Amerat in Muscat Governorate, as part of the bank's strategy to strengthen its branches' network. These branches represent an important hub to communicate with customers and provide various banking services and facilities to all segments of society. Moreover, the bank has more

than 820 ATMs and CDMs distributed throughout the country. The bank is also constantly updating its digital channels to enhance the banking experience of customers. Therefore, there are today more than 1.6 million customers benefiting from a wide range of services offered through the bank's digital channels, including bill payments, local and international money transfers, besides other products and services. Premium banking customers can avail a higher class of service through Private banking solutions, Asalah priority banking and Al Jawhar privilege banking. For its tireless efforts in this regard, the bank has been recognised by various local, regional and international institutions. Forbes Middle East ranked the bank as one of the top 50 banks and the top 100 institutions in the region. Also, the bank was recently crowned the Best Retail Bank in the Sultanate from the MEED Foundation among others, confirming its pioneering role in the Omani banking sector.

MUSICAL LIVE CONCERT

Haripad Koottayma Muscat set to celebrate 10th anniversary



MUSCAT: As part of its 10th anniversary of Haripad Koottayma Muscat, the organisers announced in a press conference that they are organising an event called "Layam 2023" at Al Falaj Hotel on Friday, October 6. Film director K. Madhu will be the chief guest and the main attraction will be a musical live concert led by famous playback singer Vidhu Prathap and his band. This is the first time Vidhu Prathap is performing in Oman with his band. Cochin Gold and Diamond is the

main sponsor of the event under the supervision of NHP Events. Entry to the event is free but restricted by invitation. Harippad Koottayma Muscat executive committee members, Suraj Rajan, President, Rajan Cherumanasseril, Oman patron, George Mathew, Secretary, Dhanya Sasi, Joint Secretary, Aju Shivaraman, Treasurer, Jagajith Prabhakaran, Chairman and Managing Director, Cochin Gold & Diamonds, Vijay Madhav, Programme Convener were also present in the press meet.

ROUND-UP

BankDhofar adopts strategic approach to SME financing

The bank’s dedicated SME Unit within its corporate banking offices in Muscat, Sohar and Salalah has a comprehensive mandate to provide cost-competitive, flexible, and hassle-free credit to small and medium enterprises

MUSCAT: In alignment with the Omani government’s dedicated efforts to empower the small and medium enterprises (SME) sector, BankDhofar is placing a strong emphasis on supporting this crucial segment of the national economy.

The bank is achieving this by introducing innovative lending solutions tailored to the specific needs of small and medium businesses.

Recognising the government’s unwavering focus on SMEs as a vital source of employment for Omanis and their contribution to socioeconomic growth, BankDhofar has significantly increased its commitment to this underserved sector. To achieve this, the bank has established a dedicated SME Unit within its corporate banking offices in Muscat, Sohar, and Salalah. This unit has a comprehensive mandate to provide cost-competitive, flexible, and hassle-free credit to small and medium enterprises.

As a one-stop lender with the expertise to create financing solu-

tions for even the most complex requirements, BankDhofar is fully equipped for the task. These end-to-end capabilities draw on the bank’s in-house advisory services, digital resources, and exceptional trade facilitation services. The following standout capabilities are at the disposal of BankDhofar’s SME Unit when assessing entrepreneurs’ financing needs:

Tailored financing

BankDhofar offers a diverse range of financing options, including long-term and short-term loans, working capital loans, bill discounting, and more.

These options cater to the unique needs of Omani businesses, enabling them to seize growth opportunities, expand their operations, and invest in innovation.

Expert advisory services

The bank’s seasoned business advisors provide personalised guidance, market insights, and



strategic direction to help businesses navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and unlock their full potential.

Cutting-edge digital tools

BankDhofar leverages technology to streamline banking processes, enhance convenience, and offer

digital solutions that align with the evolving needs of modern businesses. This ensures seamless operations and efficient cash management.

Trade facilitation

With a deep understanding of international trade dynamics,

BankDhofar offers comprehensive trade finance solutions that facilitate cross-border transactions, mitigate risks, and open doors to global markets.

In light of Oman’s nascent economic recovery, easy access to credit has become imperative for SMEs as they strive to rebuild

their businesses, which were adversely affected by the recent back-to-back global economic crises and the pandemic.

BankDhofar remains committed to helping them navigate the intricacies of financing and reignite their aspirations to become successful entrepreneurs.”

RAJA YOGA CENTER FOR SELF DEVELOPMENT

International Day of Non-Violence to be celebrated today

MUSCAT: The Raja Yoga Center for Self Development, in collaboration with the Embassy of India in Oman, announced a grand celebration marking the United Nations International Day of Non-Violence and the 154th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The event will take place at the A’Rayya Ball Room of Intercity Hotel, Al Khuwair, Muscat, on October 2 at 7:30 pm. This day is observed across the world to give the message of non-violence. Gandhi has been an inspiration for non-violent movements across the globe.

Amit Narang, Ambassador of India will deliver special message related to this important day.

Her Highness Basma Al Said, who is well known in the social arena in Oman has agreed to bless the event. Other important dignitary representing Oman is Asila Al Samsami, currently heading the “Invest Oman”, a project initiated by the government to attract investment opportunities in Oman, who has held various important positions in the Government of Oman including Undersecretary to the Minister of Commerce & Industry, will be another guest of honour at the event.

The International Day of Non-Violence, observed on October 2 each year, is a poignant reminder of Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy and commitment to non-violence as a means of achieving social change and peace. The Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi is a momentous occasion, and this celebration aims to honour his enduring legacy of peace, truth, and non-violence.

This commemorative event

The event will take place at the A’Rayya Ball Room of Intercity Hotel, Al Khuwair, Muscat, today at 7:30pm

will feature a keynote address by BK Maureen Goodman, Programme Director of the Brahma Kumaris, UK, an international organisation imparting education in moral and cultural values to promote peace and harmony in the society.

She is the nominated representative at the United Nations, Vienna. In her speech, Goodman will shed light on the importance of non-violence in today’s world and on Igniting the Light of Human Goodness for Global Peace. As the Programme Director for the Brahma Kumaris UK, Maureen has had the opportunity to work with many diverse communities. Her interests include young people, women’s empowerment, sustainability and building spiritual capacity. As the Brahma Kumaris representative at the United Nations, Vienna, she meets and dialogues with leaders actively engaged in politics, science and community.

The evening’s programme will also include cultural performances, interactive sessions, and a candlelight vigil to honor the vision for a nonviolent world.

This celebration is open to all residents of Muscat.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Zubair Corp’s Smart Electrification & Automation sector participates in Ru’ya Careers UAE 2023

MUSCAT: The Smart Electrification and Automation (SEA) Sector at the Zubair Corporation, represented by Zubair Electric Group & Federal Electric participated in Ru’ya, Careers UAE Redefined.

The three-day exhibition, held at the Dubai World Trade Centre, helps Emirati youth prepare for their future careers by offering skills development and networking opportunities.

The Ru’ya Career fair hosted a series of events, career-defining discussions, live performances, interactive workshops, and opportunities to engage with leading employers. The showcase helps Emirati youth prepare for their future careers by offering skill development and networking opportunities.

Haitham Al Hamdani, Human Resource Sector Head for Smart Electrification and Automation said, “Our participation is a culmination of our commitment to promote sustainable development in the United Arab Emirates by supporting Emirati youth and directing them towards successful internship leading into employment. This falls in line with the National Employment Strategy 2031 aimed at supporting the



government’s efforts to build a knowledge-based economy.”

“The exhibition is a vital platform for discovering and attracting young talent, as young people represent the foundation of achieving success for an economy. Ru’ya hosts skilled young nationals with companies across sectors to construct comprehensive roles suited to their calibre. We hope to continue our pathway of sustainable development to support the economic success of the United Arab Emirates,” he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarah Safer, Human Resource Specialist at Zubair Electricin the United Arab Emirates said, “As an Emi-

rati national, I take personal pride in our participation at the Ru’ya Careers UAE 2023 as we seek to attract and develop Emirati talent within a variety of roles. We aim to provide extensive training and employment opportunities for the selected candidates that will enhance operations within both the companies. This in turn will contribute to the vision of the Smart Electrification & Automation sector of at The Zubair Corporation.”

With a rich history of over 50 years, Zubair Electric Group is a well-established organisation specialising in electrification and automation, and its expertise lies in providing comprehensive and

sustainable solutions to meet the increasing demand for energy.

The company’s client base is diverse, encompassing various sectors including utilities, industries, railways, infrastructure development, data centres, information, and communication technology (ICT), commercial, and residential. The company’s focus on electrification and automation in correlation with its extensive experience along with major global technology partners, offers a wide range of products, systems, and services that enable efficient and effective management of electrical systems and processes.

Federal Electric, on the other hand, is an ISO 9001 group of original equipment manufacturing units established in 1999. The company is an industry expert in designing and manufacturing Power & Distribution Transformers, Oil Filled, Dry Type Cast Resin, Package / Kiosk Unit Substations, Special Transformers, Switchgear, Busways and Cables. Its products are designed, manufactured & tested to comply with national and international standards including IEC-60076 / IEC-60076-11 / IEC-62271 / ANSI C57 / BS-171.

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Years/30,000 km (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. EMI calculated are for base models with 20 percent down payment for 10 years. Loan approval is based on the sole discre-

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The Toyota Crown makes its bold and inspiring presence felt with its stylish appeal, range of advanced features and safety technology.



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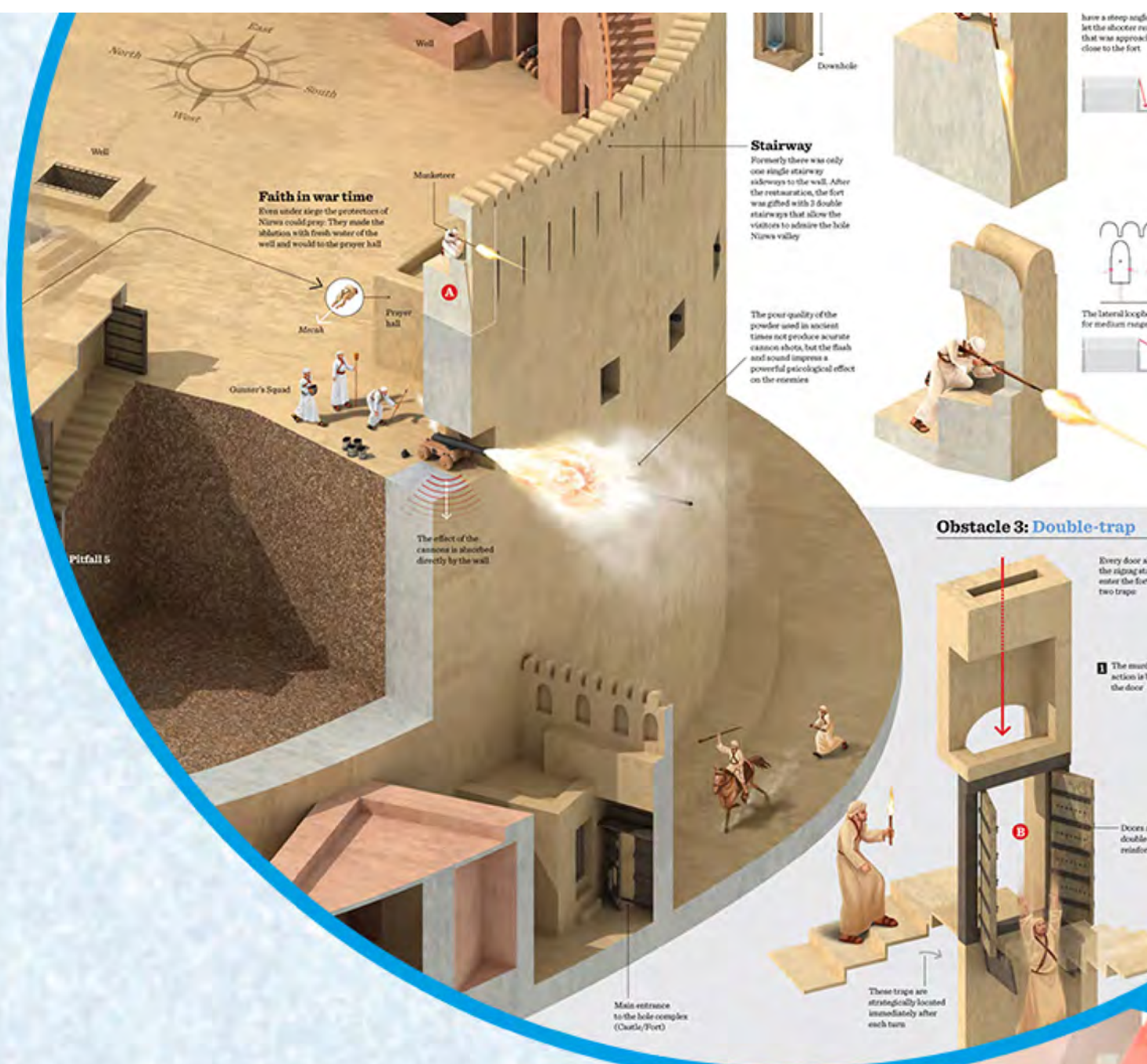
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