

**PACT TO PROVIDE INTERACTIVE
SCREENS IN SCHOOLS SIGNED**

The Ministry of Education signed on Sunday a cooperation agreement with the Asyad Ports Company to finance a number of schools in the Wilayat of Suwaiq in North Al Batinah Governorate with interactive screens. **>A3**



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HM GREETES PRESIDENT OF TUNISIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Kais Saied of the Tunisian Republic on his country's Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and a long life to President Kais Saied. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty for the return of this and similar occasions while the people of Tunisia realise aspirations of further development and growth. — **ONA**



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MEETING

Sayyid Asa'ad bids farewell to US Ambassador to Oman

MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received in his office yesterday Leslie M. Tsou, Ambassador of the United States of America (USA) to the Sultanate

of Oman, to bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty. The ambassador expressed thanks for His Majesty the Sultan's support during her tour of duty. She also voiced appreciation to the Omani government and people. She wished His Majesty good health, happiness and a long life and the Sultanate of Oman further development and growth under the

wise leadership of his Majesty. In his turn, HH Sayyid Asa'ad expressed his appreciation for the efforts exerted by the ambassador in serving bilateral relations. He also wished her success and the American people further progress and prosperity. The meeting was attended by the Secretary General and the two advisors at the Office of HH Sayyid Asa'ad. — **ONA**



'TOGETHER MOVING FORWARD' FORUM HIGHLIGHTS GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES

HH Sayyid Theyazin patronises the launch of forum that discussed Oman Vision 2040 initiatives, global economic developments and handling of employment sector

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, patronised the launch of 'Together Moving Forward' forum, which was organised by the Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Sunday. HH Sayyid Theyazin affirmed that the topics raised at the forum assume special significance. He expressed his delight at the forum's convening and said that he was interested to listen to the queries and discussions of the participants and viewers.

Al Fadhil bin Mohammed Al Harthy, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, said that the forum was organised under the



directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and that this reaffirms His Majesty's keenness on the principle of active public participation and the consolidation of communication between the government and society.

The forum reviewed the government's policies highlighting three themes: "Oman Vision 2040", "measures taken in view of global economic developments" and "mechanisms of handling the employment file".

He pointed out that, when organising this forum, the Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers was keen to ensure the largest volume representation of various segments of society. This, he added, was envisaged through the establishment of an electronic platform for the registration of participants. The forum saw a large turnout of registrants, he explained.

Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Head of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, presented a visual display featuring components of Oman Vision's charter, which comprises 4 main pillars,

12 national priorities, 12 strategic approaches, 75 strategic goals and 68 national and international performance indicators. He pointed out that challenges facing Oman Vision 2040 include the need to review and amend the development of indicators, notably in the backdrop of developments that occurred after the launch of the Vision charter. This is in addition to economic, financial and health conditions that prevailed and their related social impacts. He added that there was a need to build an integrated planning system for the Vision's strategic and operational dimensions.

Al Jabri affirmed that, by the end of 2022, Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit's strategic support team identified more than 300 developments in 10 driving forces, which, he said, are climate change, technology, geopolitics, health, the social aspect, robots, food security, COVID-19 repercussions and the continuous improvement of business and local developments.

The international and national indicators being revised by Oman Vision 2040 are being reviewed by a team from the Ministry of Economy, the National Centre for Statistics and Information and Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, said Al Jabri.

As a result of improvement of oil prices and the financial situation, projects began to go back to normal, with OMR200 million added to development projects, said Al Jabri, noting that, in 2023, a sum of OMR200 million was added and allocated to various projects. **>A2**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN



Australian wheat shipment arrives

1 Oman Flour Mills Company (OFM) received the first Australian wheat shipment it purchased through its affiliated company OMAUS PTY Ltd, as part of its project for purchasing wheat directly from Australian farmers. **>A5**

WORLD

Strong earthquake kills 16 in Ecuador

2 The death toll in the Ecuador earthquake has risen to 16, taking the toll of injured to 381, according to media report citing authorities on Sunday. The quake hit on Saturday and measured 6.8 on the Richter scale near the southern town of Balao. **>A6**

MARKET

Pact inked to develop digital platform

3 A joint cooperation programme to develop the digital platform for the Sultanate of Oman's National Innovation System was signed here on Sunday during the meeting of the steering committee of Oman Innovate Platform. **>B1**

PRODUCT PROMOTION

No licence fees required for social media influencers, companies

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Social media influencers and companies who wish to promote or market other products online will not have to pay any fees for procuring a mandatory licence.

This was clarified by a senior official at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion on Sunday following the announcement of new online regulations that will be implemented from March 24.

Speaking to *Times of Oman*, Azza bint Ibrahim Al Kindi, Director of the Commercial Affairs and E-Commerce Department at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said: "There will be no fees for the mandatory licence needed to practice marketing and promo-

tional activities on websites and social media, currently."

She added that companies who wish to promote their own products and services don't require a licence. "But if they want to promote other companies or individuals they need one," she added.

It may be mentioned that from March 24, 2023, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion will begin implementing the regulation regulating the practice of marketing and promotion activity on websites and social media, issued by Ministerial Resolution No. (619/2022) on December 25, 2022.

Azza Al Kindi said: "There will be no taxes applicable on the licence holders and one licence can be utilised for employing multiple social media influencers



to promote their activities."

She added that any expatriate company or individuals can come to Oman and promote their products and services but will have to establish their own company and get a licence to start his or her activities in the Sultanate of Oman.

Azza Al Kindi also clarified that the new regulations will not be applicable on home business owners and street vendors.

The regulation aims to regulate the marketing and promotion of all products, goods and services through social media.

This is in order to protect the merchant and the consumer, provide the necessary protection for e-commerce transactions and preserve the rights of dealers.

Azza Al Kindi said the method for obtaining a license for the

"marketing and promotion on websites and social media" activity is by entering the "Invest Easy" portal, through self-service or service delivery centres, creating a new commercial register or choosing an active commercial register, then choosing the Tarakhees service, permits of commercial registry, choosing the activity, filling out the data and attaching the documents, as well as choosing the license period, which ranges from one to three years.

Azza Al Kindi added that companies and commercial establishments that deal with unlicensed promoters and advertisers will face a fine not exceeding OMR1,000, suspension of licence for a period not exceeding a year and cancellation of licence after a warning.



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PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:20pm
Asr.....3:45pm
Maghrib.....6:23pm
Isha.....7:33pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:55am



‘Together Moving Forward’ forum highlights government’s policies

<FROM A1 Nasser Khamis Al Jashmi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance, also presented a visual display spotlighting key factors that gave rise to the Fiscal Balance Plan and approaches undertaken to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040. The presentation also covers Oman’s credit rating since 2014, Oman’s financial position at the global level from 2010 to 2020, the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the country’s financial situation and mechanisms to mitigate it.

Al Jashmi explained that a sustainable financial situation is important for the attraction of investments and is closely associated to economic growth.

Al Jashmi added that goals of the National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Development of the Financial Sector call for focus on improving the state’s public finance, completing related initiatives and consolidating the financial sector system’s readiness to absorb upcoming developments in the investment and economic sectors.

Al Jashmi observed that emphasis should be laid on making the financial system a major enabler for attaining the goals of Oman Vision 2040, raising the rate of competitiveness, augmenting the participation of the private financial sector and supporting it to provide suitable funding options for various groups, while at the same time expanding the volume of the financing market.

Al Jashmi added that the outcomes of improvement in oil prices includes the acceleration of economic growth by increasing developmental spending beyond allocations approved in the State Budget towards a total of OMR1.1 billion, with an increase of OMR200 million that would be channeled to urgently needed projects that have an economic and social impact.

Al Jashmi pointed out that that a second outcome was the development of policies that enabled the State to contain inflation by increasing government subsidies for fuel and basic food commodities by more than OMR760 million, which, he said, contributed to reducing the impacts of global inflation.

With regard to the social protection system, Al Jashmi said that it was compiled with the participation of government institutions, pension funds and segments of society. He explained that the system seeks to address current problems in retirement systems and ensure their sustainability, address current complications in social pro-



grammes and endorse a principle for determining criteria for entitlement to benefits based on life cycle risks rather than case studies.

Al Jashmi said that the design of a modern national protection system is in line with the approaches and aspirations of Oman Vision 2040. It constitutes a shift from programmes based on case study to a comprehensive coverage system, in addition to merging civil, military and private funds. This also includes a shift to an integrative design comprising “subscription-based insurance programmes” and “minimal protection programmes”, he added.

Dr. Mahad Said Ba’Owain, Minister of Labour, said that the National Employment Programme (NEP) is an independent, execu-

tive national system launched under Royal blessings in 2021.

The NEP deals with studying the employment system in two concepts: Supply and Demand. Supply caters to jobseekers and their capacity building, while demand deals with the labour market, the economic situation and finding sustainable employment solutions in accordance with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Ba’Owain pointed out that the NEP will launch the “Marsad” electronic service specialised in providing detailed data for decision makers about the labour market, jobseekers and students studying in various educational institutions.

He added that “Khuta” (steps) platform emerges as the first inter-



active national electronic platform that provides students and jobseekers with specialised counseling services, as well as comprehensive data on higher education study programmes, employment opportunities and the nature of professions in the local labour market.

The platform also offers specialised training courses on future and basic skills, said the minister.

He explained that goals for supporting and promoting self-employment include the initiation of a regulatory package to facilitate jobseekers’ espousing this option, the establishment of an attractive environment to streamline commercial registration and assuming that self-employment comprises a ratio of Omanisation in contracting companies and within social

insurance. The motion envisages making contracts and tenders designed for self-employment, as well as support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the availability of an electronic link so that the system becomes clear and easy to follow up.

The minister pointed out that minimum wage is being reviewed and that this is a purely economic matter based on the profitability system, supply, demand and skills.

He explained that between 2011 and 2012 employees received their belated promotions, and that the Ministry is currently embarked in coordinating with the Ministry of Finance to study the promotion of belated promotions for batches from 2013 to 2018.

The minister explained that

Ejada system for individual performance is aimed at improving the System of Promotions, which stipulates that, after a ‘referral period’ of 3 to 4 years, a high-performance employee deserves a job promotion.

He stressed that, as per the system, the termination of services of private sector employees is only done in the presence of the production parties and in accordance with clear-cut legal provisions.

The forum included a discussion session with officials concerned. The session covered three aspects of Oman Vision 2040, fiscal sustainability and employment initiatives. The queries raised by the forum’s attendees were answered during the session. -ONA

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WEATHER UPDATE

Heavy rains expected in the Sultanate of Oman on Monday

Times News Service

Muscat: Heavy rains expected from Monday till Tuesday morning in the Southern governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, reported Oman Meteorology department.

An alert was issued that heavy rains are expected from Monday noon until Tuesday morning. The governorates of Dhofar, Al Wusta and South Al Sharqiyah are ex-

pected to be affected because of sporadic rain ranging from 20 to 100 millimetres from Monday till Tuesday morning.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has issued a warning and asked citizens to refrain from crossing valleys, visiting low places and going to the sea until the end of the warning period.

The expected effects during the alert period are the flow of reefs and valleys in a sweeping manner in some areas.

Active downward winds accompanied by fall of hailstones, a decrease in horizontal visibility during thunderstorms to less than 1,000 metres are also predicted. The nature of the sea might be medium to rough and the waves might be at a height of 1.5 to 3 metres on the coasts of the Arabian Sea and the coasts of Southeast.



COMMENTARY

Where are the stars?



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

When a 12-year old boy from Jabal Al Akhdhar visited Muscat for the first time in his life, he was wide-eyed from what he saw around him and every tall building and shopping mall was a new experience to him.

He was full of questions that his big brother could not keep up with all of his inquisitiveness. He said the buildings were as big as the mountains back home and the inside of shopping malls was 'full of fun.' He did not want to go back to his brother's house in the evening.

For three days, he was constantly out and asking his brother to take him everywhere. On the fourth night, his brother found him missing in his bedroom and he feared that he walked out of the house. An hour later, he found him sitting silently on the roof. When he asked him why, the little boy just pointed to the night sky.

The brother did not see anything up there but darkness. When he asked him what he was really looking at, he just remained silent for a few minute before saying that there were no stars in the city's sky. Then the boy got up and went down to sleep. Early in the morning, the boy went back to the roof and this time he was looking for the sunrise. The tall buildings, he found out, completely



obscured the horizon

He refused to have breakfast and demanded his brother to drive him back straight to his home town. He was supposed to stay in Muscat for a month during his summer school holiday but lasted less than a week. When the schools were opened for the new academic year, he was asked by his teacher if he enjoyed his summer holiday in Muscat.

He told him that the city was 'against the beauty of the nature' and he would not go back again there. But as life would have it, the same boy was forced to leave his home town six year later after completing his secondary education. Since there was no university at Jabal Akhdhar and he was keen to get into higher education, he had to leave his hometown.

However, he decided not to get a scholarship in Muscat but chose to get enrolled in a University in the United States. His parents were baffled. How their small town son chose to study in New York instead of Muscat when he already complained of tall buildings that secure the beauty of the nature?

Their son did not offer an

answer and that baffled his parents even more. He arrived in New York and soon found himself surrounded, like his email explained to his brother, with buildings that nearly touched the clouds. His brother was amused but decided to let him figure out his problems. The only worry he had that his younger brother was in a foreign country.

Almost twenty years later now, I caught up with him accidentally only last week after being introduced to him by one of his former university colleagues. He is now a director general in one of the civil ministries. He offered an explanation saying that the skyline in Muscat, when he was seven, was dictated by the fact it was right in his own country.

But the skyline in New York was a revelation and his imagination then was no longer dictated by nature but for the knowledge he was seeking to advance his ambitions. As it has turned out, he is an engineer with a responsibility of urban planning where tall buildings threaten to obscure the beauty of the nature.

THIRSTY FOR MORE

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NORTH AL BATINAH

Agreement to provide interactive screens in some schools signed



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education signed on Sunday a cooperation agreement with the Asyad Ports to finance a number of schools in the Wilayat of Suwaiq in North Al Batinah Governorate with interactive screens. Majid bin Said Al Bahri, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs, attended the agreement signing that took place in the Ministry's General Diwan.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Ministry of Education by Dr. Waleed bin Talib Al Hashemi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Education in North Al Batinah Governorate, and on behalf of Asyad Ports Company, Faissal bin Ali Al Balushi, Director-General of Commercial Affairs in the company.

Dr. Walid Al Hashemi, said: "The signing of this agreement comes as a translation of the real

partnership between the educational directorate of North Al Batinah and the private sector, which will enhance the educational process in schools, and support modern educational methods that aims to achieve the educational system in the Sultanate in line with Vision 2040."

Faissal Al Balushi said: "This partnership with the educational sector comes as part of the company's societal mission aimed at advancing and serving the community."

"It's a pleasure to provide this support to the Directorate-General of Education in North Al Batinah, and we hope that this partnership achieves the goals and visions it was set for, the most important of which is the development and enhancement of students' abilities and the educational process," he added.

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ACTIVITIES OF MUSANDAM INTERNATIONAL SCULPTURE FORUM CONCLUDES

As part of an event of Musandam Winter, the first edition of Musandam International Sculpture Forum recently concluded in Khasab.

The Forum had started on 26th February and continued until 15th March. It was organised by Musandam Governor's Office in cooperation with Musandam Municipality and implemented by Sohar Art Team. A large number of sculptors from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman participated in the Forum.

HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Hamoud Al Farsi, the Wali of Khasab, sponsored the closing of the Forum, and the sculptors and those in charge of making the Forum a success were honoured.

The Forum was held for the first time in Musandam Governorate. Eleven male and female sculptors from eight different countries, namely Italy, Turkey, Russia, Spain, Egypt, Sudan and Tunisia, including three sculptors from Oman participated in the Forum.

The Forum aimed to establish a cultural art destination in Musandam for international sculptors where visitors can visit. The sculptors were creative in carving various works of art in different styles including the public spaces in Musandam, thus adding value to the place and attracting residents and tourists.

The Forum, which was held over 18 days, aimed to train young Omani sculptors for the future so that more and more young Omani sculptors would work in the field of sculpture. The presence of a group of international sculptors was also an opportunity to learn from their techniques and skills.



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HIGH QUALITY GRAIN

Oman Flour Mills Company receives first shipment of Australian wheat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Flour Mills Company (OFM) received the first Australian wheat shipment it purchased through its affiliated company OMAUS PTY Ltd, as part of its project for purchasing wheat directly from Australian farmers.

The affiliated company signed an agreement with Australian farmers for purchasing 34,728 metric tonnes (MT) of Australian wheat.

Dr. Saud bin Hamoud Al-Habshi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources inspected the first wheat shipment accompanied by Mark Lawrence Donovan, Ambassador of Australia to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Yemen Arab Republic.

They also listened to an explanation about the efforts exerted by OFM to diversify the sources of purchasing wheat.

Haiatham bin Mohamed Al Fan-nah, Chief Executive Officer of OFM, said: “Oman Flour Mills Company secured high quality wheat from farmers in Australia. This resulted in shortening the supply chain, as part of its role



played to enhance the food security and secure the strategic stock of grain in the Sultanate of Oman.”

He added: “The establishment

of OMAUS PTY Ltd in Australia, which worked directly with farmers to secure wheat shipments from Australia adds value to

the strategic stock by receiving high quality grain in a way that achieves a competitive advantage in the international markets.”

The chief executive officer of OFM explained that his company moves forward to invest in strategic assets across the grain value chain.

This will ensure that the Sultanate of Oman will receive high quality grain at competitive prices. It will also guarantee the availability of grain, which will enable the Sultanate to secure strategic procurements and ensure food security.

NCSI

Oman’s population to hit 5 million mark

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An addition of mere 4,000 people is required for the population of Oman to hit the 5 million mark, says a report by the National Centre for Statistics and Information in Oman. This

is the first time in history that the Sultanate is hitting the mark of 5 million. The population clock in the Centre revealed that as on the morning of Sunday, the population has reached 4,997,063. This includes 57.6% Omanis and 42.3% expatriates.

ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Turtle Commandos programme ends



MUSCAT: The Environment Authority yesterday concluded the 2nd edition of the “Turtle Commandos” programme, which focuses on the protection and detection of turtles in the Sultanate of Oman.

The concluding event was held under the patronage of Dr. Yahya Badr Al Ma’awali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah.

The 6-month programme

was participated by more than 270 volunteers from Oman and abroad.

As many as 16,369 campaigns were conducted within the framework of the programme, in addition to awareness programmes on the importance of marine turtles.

Moreover, the first edition of Turtle Commandos was inaugurated in 2021. -**ONA**

SHINAS

Incentives for wheat cultivation

SHINAS: Wheat cultivation in the Wilayat of Shinas is growing rapidly. In order to achieve interest in cultivating agricultural crops with economic returns, the farmers enjoy continuous support from the Ministry of Agricultural Wealth, Fisheries and Water Resources. The area of land cultivated with the wheat crop in the state this season is estimated at 4 acres, distributed over four main sites.

The Director of the Department of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources in Shinas, said: Cultivating wheat in the Wilayat of Shinas is one of the ancient agricultural professions. This interest is reflected through the allocation of a special extension programme to preserve the seeds of the improved Omani varieties of wheat to spread its cultivation.



He added that Shinas is one of the wilayats that produces wheat crop. It is grown in 5 different locations in the state, with an agricultural area estimated at four acres, and among the villages in which wheat is grown abound.

The ministry has provided farmers from the wilayat wheat seeds, along with periodic follow-up to them which is reflected in the rise in the amount of production of wheat crop. -**ONA**



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Oman Refreshment Company SAOG, I am pleased to present to you the annual report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Algeria Investment (Atlas Bottling Corporation)

Business Environment

Financial Highlights

At the OMC Group consolidated, the group achieved a net profit after tax of RO 7,778,837 on a turnover of RO 76,863,585 during the year 2022 against a net profit after tax of RO 7,069,611 on a turnover of RO 73,686,228 in 2021, registering a decrease in the net profit after tax by 19.1% and increase in turnover by 10.9%.

Further, company has contributed to various corporate social responsibility activities by an amount totaling 42K Omani Rials was contributed to ministry of defense and Oman charitable organization.

Internal Control System

Dividend

Based on company performance during 2022, and after reviewing the company's liquidity requirements, future earnings and shareholders interest, the Board is pleased to recommend a cash dividend of 60 Baisas for each share for the year 2022.

Future Outlook

As a responsible Omani corporate citizen, the Company is totally aligned with Sultanate of Oman strategic vision to nurture Omani talent in the private sector. The company's HR strategy focuses on recruitment of right staff & their continuous development, through on the job training and by providing focused learning opportunities commensurate with the responsibilities to enable them assume higher responsibilities in the organization. The Company consistently maintained its staff Organization target above the prescribed requirement.

Appreciation

Further, on behalf of the Board of Directors & the management, I take this opportunity to extend our sincere appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq and his Government for their wise leadership, guidance and direction which continue to motivate and inspire us towards greater participation in the development and service of Oman. We pray to the Almighty Allah to bestow His Majesty with the best of health and bless him with long life to lead the Sultanate of Oman on the path of prosperity.

Buti Obaid Al Mulla
Chairman

Notes: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder, who requests them either in Arabic or English, within 7 days of receipt of such request.
The address to which the shareholder should send his/her request is as follows Oman Refreshment Company SAOG, P.O. Box 30, CPO Airport, PC 111, Sultanate of Oman

PARENT AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Parent	Group	(Restated)
	2022 RO	2021 RO	2022 RO
Assets			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	29,936,773	27,823,624	57,362,221
Intangible assets	-	-	1,498,786
Right-of-use asset	-	-	43,560
Investment in subsidiaries	730,039	730,039	-
Deferred tax asset	-	-	940,913
Financial assets at amortised cost	2,641,644	-	2,641,644
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	13,765	13,765	13,827
Total non-current assets	33,322,221	28,567,428	62,500,931
Current assets			
Inventories	16,799,503	10,438,706	21,414,449
Trade and other receivables	19,981,600	11,890,252	13,549,531
Loan to a subsidiary	23,737,946	23,729,701	-
Term deposits	30,925,100	26,881,407	30,925,100
Cash and cash equivalents	11,562,878	17,460,881	12,221,498
Total current assets	93,907,027	90,409,987	78,110,578
Total assets	127,229,248	118,977,415	140,611,509
Equity and liabilities			
Equity			
Share capital	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Legal reserve	1,686,067	1,686,067	1,686,167
Foreign exchange translation reserve	-	-	203,644
General reserve	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
Retained earnings	71,958,830	67,179,993	69,210,813
Total equity	81,125,497	76,346,660	78,610,624
Liabilities			
Non-current liabilities			
Term loans	6,803,769	-	7,364,607
Lease liability	-	-	35,161
Deferred tax liabilities	266,097	99,989	294,833
Employees' end of service benefits	1,350,073	1,343,409	1,365,376
Total non-current liabilities	8,419,939	1,442,398	9,079,977
Current liabilities			
Term loans	18,896,631	24,097,142	28,050,372
Lease liability	-	-	12,719
Trade and other payables	17,535,368	15,372,825	23,571,052
Provision for income tax	1,291,793	1,518,390	1,288,785
Total current liabilities	37,683,812	40,988,357	52,920,908
Total liabilities	46,103,751	42,430,755	62,000,885
Total equity and liabilities	127,229,248	118,977,415	140,611,509
Net assets per share	1.623	1.527	1.572

PARENT AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Parent	Group	2021
	2022 RO	2021 RO	2022 RO
Revenue	76,863,585	69,290,408	95,004,170
Cost of sales	(49,541,368)	(43,014,081)	(64,343,096)
Gross profit	27,322,217	26,276,327	30,661,074
Selling and distribution expenses	(16,045,592)	(14,308,370)	(17,625,736)
General and administrative expenses	(3,754,378)	(3,548,395)	(6,056,018)
Impairment reversal or financial assets	305,712	450,000	1,177,841
Other income	447,337	741,570	503,900
Finance income (net)	873,949	1,713,592	327,669
Profit before tax	9,149,245	11,324,724	8,988,730
Income tax expense	(1,370,408)	(1,714,953)	(1,291,156)
Profit after tax for the year	7,778,837	9,609,771	7,697,574
Other comprehensive income/(loss):			
Items that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss			
Foreign exchange difference on translation of goodwill	-	-	10,697
Foreign exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	-	-	181,755
Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	-	-	192,452
Total comprehensive income for the year	7,778,837	9,609,771	7,890,026
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.156	0.192	0.154

RESCUE ON

Strong quake shakes Peru, Ecuador killing 16 people

GUAYAQUIL: The death toll in the Ecuador earthquake has risen to 16, taking the toll of injured to 381, CNN reported citing authorities on Sunday.

The quake hit on Saturday and measured 6.8 on the Richter scale near the southern town of Balao and was more than 65 km (nearly 41 miles) deep, according to the United States Geological Survey.

According to a tweet from the General Secretariat of Communication of the Ecuadorian Presidency's Twitter account, the earthquake injured an estimated 381 persons, CNN reported.

At least 11 persons lost their lives in the province of El Oro.

The president of Ecuador's communications office stated that at least one further death has been recorded in the province of Azuay.

Authorities said that a person

in Azuay died when a wall fell on top of a car and that at least three of the deceased in El Oro died when a security camera tower collapsed in an earlier statement, reported CNN.

People who were injured were being treated at hospitals, the Presidency added, but did not provide further details.

The USGS gave the tremor an "orange alert", saying "significant casualties are likely and the disaster is potentially widespread."

"Past events with this alert level have required a regional or national level response," the USGS added. It also estimated damage and economic losses were possible, as per the report in CNN.

In the town of Machala, a two-story home collapsed trapping an unknown number of people inside.

Ecuador's emergency response

agency said firefighters were at work to rescue those who remain trapped. The country's national police were at work assessing the damage.

Power and telephone lines were both reportedly down in some places, making the work of emergency crews all the more hazardous.

Three tunnels were closed in Guayaquil, a city of three million. People gathered on the streets following the quake with many reporting objects falling inside their homes.

No deaths or injuries were reported in northern Peru, though the old walls of an army barracks collapsed in the northern region of Tumbes.

In 2016, 600 people died following an earthquake in Ecuador. The Ecuadorean Navy ruled out the risk of a tsunami. -ANI

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Xi Jinping to leave for Russia today

BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping, will finally begin his three-day trip to Moscow on March 20. Beijing has characterised the trip as "a visit for peace" that will aim to "improve global governance" and contribute to "the development and progress of the world."

Xi is expected to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in person while also holding a call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Russia said the two leaders would talk about the development of their partnership and both leaders are expected to sign important bilateral documents. Some observers say that China is trying to capitalise on the recent diplomatic credits that it received from mediating the deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia. -ANI



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MACRON'S DECISION

Protests intensify across France over pension reform

PARIS: The ongoing protests in France have grown tense amid widespread anger among the protesters who have been opposing President Emmanuel Macron's decision on pension reform.

According to Al Jazeera, the protesters have time and again claimed that the government has raised the state pension age without a parliamentary vote, which has now become a cause of major concern over growing unrest in the country.

The agitators have taken to the streets of Paris to oppose the reform and multiple refinery strikes are also taking place across France.

The escalating unrest and the mounting trash piles on Paris' streets as a result of refuse workers joining in the action, have now put Macron in a tough state.

Notably, Macron pushed the unpopular pension reform scheme which proposed to raise the retirement age for most workers to 64 from 62 without a vote of lawmakers in the National Assembly on Thursday, defying mass protests throughout the country, The New York Times reported.

Macron's decision prompted

raucous protests inside the assembly chamber, where opposition lawmakers sang the French national anthem and banged on their desks.

The upper house of Parliament, the Senate, approved the Bill on Thursday morning. But in the National Assembly, the lower and more powerful house, where Macron's party and its allies hold only a slim majority, did not have enough votes to pass the Bill.

Macron said France's pension system is in "an increasingly precarious state" because retirees are living longer and their numbers are growing faster than those of today's workers, whose payroll taxes finance the system. But his plan has angered a society that reveres retirement and a generous balance between work and leisure.

In polls, roughly two-thirds of French people say they disapprove of the plan, as per The New York Times report.

After Macron proposed the pension reform scheme, many angry protesters lit small fires and clashed with police clad in riot gear at the Place de la Concorde in central Paris on Thursday.

-ANI

FUEL SECURITY

India-Bangladesh pipeline vital for growth: Sheikh Hasina

DHAKA: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday said that the Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline will play a "vital role" in ensuring the fuel security of the country while many nations face fuel crises due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. She made the remarks while virtually inaugurating the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline is the first cross-border energy pipeline between the two nations.

While addressing the event, Sheikh Hasina said, "At a time when many countries across the world are on the verge of fuel crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine war, this pipeline will play a vital role in ensuring fuel security of our people." Sheikh Hasina said that the



pipeline will increase economic growth.

She called the pipeline an achievement of cooperation between two nations. She stressed that the 16 districts of Bangladesh will be benefitted from the pipe-

line. Bangladesh PM said, "The time and expenditure for importing diesel from India will be reduced significantly by this pipeline." Sheikh Hasina said that she wants the friendship between the two nations to remain intact.

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A 60-DAY EXTENSION

Ukraine Black Sea grain deal extended: United Nations

BRUSSELS: The United Nations said on Saturday that a deal allowing for the safe export of grain from Ukrainian reports had been extended.

The UN did not specify the length of the renewal, while Russia and Ukraine issued conflicting statements on the matter.

“The Black Sea Grain Initiative, signed in Istanbul on 22 July 2022, has been extended,” the UN said in a statement, and thanked the Turkish government for its diplomatic and operational support of the deal.

Türkiye’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also confirmed the extension without specifying how long it would last.

The length of the extension of

the pact had been a sticking point in the renewal process with Russia wanting 60 days and Ukraine wanting 120 days.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in a tweet that the agreement had been extended for 120 days.

However Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Moscow had only agreed to a 60-day extension.

“We are seeing reports from parties to the ‘grain deal’ that the deal has been extended for 120 days,” Zakharova said in remarks reported by the Interfax news agency.

“We have repeatedly stated... that the Russian side has notified all parties to the deal that it is extending the deal for 60 days.”



A day earlier, aid chief Martin Griffiths said that the UN was “doing everything possible” to ensure the Black Sea grain deal continues.

The initial 120-day agreement struck with the UN and Türkiye

was extended in November for a further 120 days, and was due to expire at 21:00 GMT on Saturday.

“Attempts by the aggressor to reduce the extension period are a manipulation to continue further

blackmail and deepen a global food crisis. We have to prevent this,” Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said earlier.

According to the UN, Ukraine has exported nearly 25 million tons of food under the deal that has helped bring down global food prices.

“The world relies on these supplies,” Griffiths said.

Russia’s deadline on sanctions

Moscow says a parallel agreement has failed to facilitate Russian exports of grain and fertilizer through the Black Sea.

The West has imposed tough sanctions on Russia for its full-scale invasion and war in Ukraine.

While its food and fertilizer exports are not under sanctions, Moscow says restrictions on payments, logistics and insurance industries are a barrier to shipments.

“If Brussels, Washington and London are genuinely interested to continue the export of food from Ukraine through the maritime humanitarian corridor then they have two months to exempt from their sanctions the entire chain of operations which accompany the Russian agricultural sector,” Russia’s UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the Security Council.

Griffiths admitted obstacles remain to help facilitate Russian food and fertilizer exports, notably the payment systems. — **bw**

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Invitation to the Annual General Meeting of Al Ahlia Insurance Co. SAOG

The Board of Directors of AL AHLIA INSURANCE COMPANY SAOG (the "Company") has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Annual General Meeting, which will be held on Thursday at 03:00 PM on 30/03/2023, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om). If the quorum requirement for holding the Annual General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Annual General Meeting shall be held on Friday at 03:00 PM on 31/03/2023, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om) to discuss the following agenda:

Annual Ordinary General Meeting Agendas :

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' Report for the financial year ended December 31, 2022.
- To consider and approve the Report on Corporate Governance for the financial year ended 31 December 2022.
- To consider and approve the Auditor's Report and Audited Financial Statement of the company for the financial year ended on 31 December 2022.
- To consider and approve the proposal cash dividend to the shareholders as on date of the meeting amounting to 29 Baisas for each share for the financial year ended 31 December 2022.
- To ratify the payment of sitting fees to the Board of Directors and Sub-Committees for the financial year ended 31 December 2022 and to determine the sitting fees of the Board of Directors and Sub-Committees for the next financial year 31 December 2023.
- To ratify the payment of Directors' remuneration for an amount of RO 80,000 (Rials Omani Eighty Thousand Only) for the financial year ended 31 December 2022.
- To notify the General Assembly of the transactions carried out by the Company with related parties during the financial year ending 31 December 2022.
- To consider and approve the proposed related party transactions to be entered by Company during the financial year ending 31 December 2023.
- To notify the General Assembly of donations disbursed to support community services during the financial year ended on 31 December 2022.
- To consider and approve the allocation of a budget of RO 25,000 (Rials Omani Twenty Five Thousand only) to support community services during the financial year ending 31 December 2023.
- To appoint the statutory auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2023 and approve their fees.
- To elect a new Board of Directors for the Company from amongst Shareholders or nonshareholders. Any person who wishes to be nominated to the Board of Directors of the Company is required to fill in a Director's Nomination Form. Such a form can be obtained from the Company. The completed Form should be delivered to the Company at least five (5) days prior to the date of the Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the Company (no later than the end of the business hours on, 23rd March 2023). The candidate must satisfy the company's board membership requirements.

According to the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the capital market authority , we would like to draw your attention to the following:

(a) only a corporate person may authorize a natural person to attend and vote on its behalf on decisions/resolutions of the AGM through electronic means, provided such natural person has an investor number with the MCD.

(b) voting on any item of the agenda shall commence prior to the convention of the AGM at a maximum of three (3) days and ends on the day of the AGM. If a shareholder's balance is changed either by increase or decrease, the voting process shall stand canceled and must re-vote at the AGM.

Please attend at the venue or online at least 30 minutes prior to the AGM.

For more information, please contact Mr. Abdul Karim of Al Ahlia Insurance Co. SAOG on telephone No. (+968) 93884566, 24766906.



Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Health

NOTICE

The Ministry of Health (MOH) would like to announce to the citizens and residents who have been accepted to perform the Hajj pilgrimage this year (1444H/2023G) about providing vaccines in health institutions starting from the second week of April 2023.

According to the requirements of the competent authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the necessary vaccinations are:-

- The Quadric-vaccination against Meningococcal Meningitis (ACYW135)**
- Seasonal flu vaccine**
- Covid-19 vaccine (Bivalent vaccine).**

Therefore, MOH urges all citizens and residents who want to perform the Hajj pilgrimage this year (1444AH / 2023) to adhere to taking the vaccinations. The above requirements are considered a prerequisite to entering the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to prevent the spread of infection and safeguard public health.

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SPORTS

Oman pick silver at Asian Beach Handball Championships

Coached by Hamood al Hasani, Oman failed to get past five-time champions Qatar in the final of the Asian tournament that concluded in Bali, Indonesia on Sunday



MUSCAT: There was no change in the script as Oman, once again, failed to topple Qatar in the final of the Asian Beach Handball Championships on Sunday. Favourites and five-time cham-

pions Qatar defeated Oman 2-0 (18-16, 14-12) in the summit clash of the 9th Asian Beach Handball Championships in Bali, Indonesia. This was the sixth time that the

teams have played in the final of the continental championships and Qatar have triumphed on all occasions. Both Oman and Qatar had ear-

lier secured their place in the 11th IHF Men's Beach Handball World Championships in June/July 2024 after advancing to the Asian finals. Oman did put up a strong show

on Sunday but like in the previous five occasions, they could not find their way past the Team in Maroon. The scoreline in Bali was similar

to the 2019 final in Weihai, China, when Qatar beat Oman for their fifth Asian title.

While both the teams have featured in seven of the nine editions, Oman have the honour of being crowned the champions at the inaugural championship in 2004 when they defeated Bahrain in the final played in Muscat.

Coached by experienced Hamood al Hasani, Oman will now plan their preparations for the world championships next year.

Overall, it was a successful outing for Oman as they defeated defending champions Iran 2-0 (23-11, 22-20) in the semi-finals and won all their group matches. The only loss they tasted was in the final against their nemesis, Qatar.

Earlier, Iran finished third in the championships, defeating Vietnam 2-0 on Sunday.

Oman will participate in the beach handball worlds for the seventh time next year after making their debut in 2004.

SECOND ODI

SECOND TEST VS SRI LANKA

Australia thrash India by ten wickets

NZ in driver's seat

VISAKHAPATNAM: Australian pace spearhead Mitchell Starc's devastating bowling (5/53) and openers Mitchell Marsh (66 not out) and Travis Head's (51 not out) unbeaten 121-run opening partnership helped the visitors thrash India by 10 wickets to level the three-match ODI series 1-1 in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

The Australians, set a lowly 118-run target to win the match, completed the job with 234 balls to spare, making it India's worst-ever defeat in the 50-over format in terms of number of deliveries.

Marsh and Head slammed Indian blowers all around the ground from early in the innings with the former bringing up his 28-ball



half-century in the 8th over of the game. In the 10th over of the game, the duo led the team past the 100-run mark. Head also brought up his half-century in 29 balls.

Earlier, Starc produced one of the best bowling spells as he dismantled the Indian batting line-

up, bundling Men in Blue for 117.

The veteran Australian fast bowler broke the opening partnership in his third ball and the first over of the match as he lured Shubman Gill to play a shot in the offside. Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli tried to overcome the early

loss and switched to attacking mode. Their plan of the onslaught on Australian bowlers did work well for some time.

However, Starc made a comeback in the fifth over of the match as he had Rohit play a shot on the offside only to be caught at first slip by Steven Smith. Rohit's wicket triggered a collapse with only Kohli holding on his wicket.

Nathan Ellis joined the party by dismissing Kohli for 31(35). Axar Patel hit two consecutive sixes to take India past 100-mark.

Brief scores: India 117 (Virat Kohli 31, Axar Patel 29; Mitchell Starc 5-53) vs Australia 121/0 (Mitchell Marsh 66 n.o., Travis Head 51 n.o.) - ANI

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's bowlers dominated on day three of the second Test to put the hosts on the brink of a 2-0 series whitewash over Sri Lanka, picking up ten wickets on Sunday, forcing a follow-on and leaving the visitors still 303 runs behind with eight wickets and two days remaining.

At the crease for the visitors were Kusal Mendis, unbeaten on 50, and Angelo Mathews on 1.

New Zealand's bowlers maximised the conditions on offer and Sri Lanka's batters were undoubtedly guilty of far too often failing to put a price on their wickets.

Sri Lanka were four down for 34 with barely an hour played in the morning.

Dimuth Karunaratne and Dinesh Chandimal then put up a semblance of fight and the pair put on 80 for the fifth wicket.

However, Sri Lanka lost their final six wickets for just 55 runs in the period between lunch and tea.

With a 416-run lead, Tim Southee then enforced the follow-on, and back out came Karunaratne for his second essay a little over 10 minutes after he had been dismissed.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 164 (Karunaratne 89, Chandimal 37, Henry 3-44, Michael Bracewell 3-50) and 113 for 2 (Karunaratne 51, Mendis 50, Southee 1-9) trail New Zealand 580 for 4 decl by 303 runs. - ANI

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An extensive workshop on empowering public establishments and governorates with joint national solutions and systems kicked off yesterday. The four-day workshop is organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.



The MSX index closed at 4,871.82 points, down by 0.32 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.09 per cent at 480.56 points. Oman Fisheries, up 5.88 per cent, was the top gainer while Shell Oman Marketing, down 9.78 per cent, was the top loser.

3RD EDITION

NEW DELHI: The third edition of the International SME Convention 2023 (ISC) commenced on Sunday, organised jointly by the Ministry of MSME and Ministry of External Affairs, India SME Forum, along with the government of Madhya Pradesh as a key state partner and Uttar Pradesh as associate state partner.

NEW DELHI: The third edition of the International SME Convention 2023 (ISC) commenced on Sunday, organised jointly by the Ministry of MSME and Ministry of External Affairs, India SME Forum, along with the government of Madhya Pradesh as a key state partner and Uttar Pradesh as associate state partner.

The event will come to a close on Tuesday.

This year's convention is expected to be participated by over 1,500 SMEs with the main focus areas being India's major four sunrise sectors, which are cleantech and green energy, manufacturing, services sector and agro food processing and agri implements sector.

There will be several panel discussions that will aim to provide actionable insights and recommendations for building sustainable ecosystems for MSMEs. -ANI

MUSCAT: A cooperation programme to develop the digital platform for the Sultanate of Oman's National Innovation System was signed during the meeting of the steering committee of 'Oman Innovate Platform'.

The cooperation programme is conducted jointly by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Oman Information and Communication Technology Group (ITHCA Group) and the Ministry of Transport,

Communications and Information
Technology.

The programme was signed by Dr Saif Abdullah Al Hadabi, Undersecretary for Research and Innovation, Dr Ali Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communication and Information Technology and Eng. Said Abdullah Al Mandhari, CEO of ITHCA.

Saif Al Hadabi said that the signing of the cooperation programme comes within the framework of ensuring the establishment of ef-

fective and integrated digital milieus in the field of innovation. The cooperation programme also aims to benefit from global experiences in this field.

Al Shidhani pointed out that the

development of the digital platform for innovation reflects the government's relentless pursuit of maximising the benefits of employing modern digital technologies and applying best practices

in this field. The move, he underscored, comes in line with the directives of the Sultanate of Oman in achieving the objectives of the National Programme for Digital Economy. **-ONA**

Business visits, policy certainty boost Chinese market optimism

GENEVA: Talks over rescuing Credit Suisse (CSGN.S) rolled into Sunday as UBS AG (UBSG.S) sought \$6 billion from the Swiss government to cover costs if it were to buy its struggling rival, a person with knowledge of the talks said.

Authorities are scrambling to resolve a crisis of confidence in the 167-year-old Credit Suisse, the most globally significant bank caught in the turmoil spurred by the collapse of US lenders Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank over the past week.

While regulators want a resolution before markets reopen on Monday, one source cautioned the talks are encountering significant



obstacles, and 10,000 jobs may have to be cut if the two banks combine. Reuters reported.

The guarantees UBS is seeking would cover the cost of winding down parts of Credit Suisse and potential litigation charges, two people told Reuters.

Credit Suisse, UBS and the Swiss government declined to comment.

The frenzied weekend negotiations follow a brutal week for banking stocks and efforts in Europe and the US to shore up the sector. US President Joe Biden's administration moved to back-stop consumer deposits while the Swiss central bank lent billions to Credit Suisse to stabilise its shaky balance sheet.

Pressure

UBS was under pressure from the Swiss authorities to take over its local rival to get the crisis under control, two people with knowledge of the matter said. The plan

could see Credit Suisse's Swiss business spun off.

Switzerland is preparing to use emergency measures to fast-track the deal, the Financial Times reported, citing two people familiar with the situation.

US authorities are involved, working with their Swiss counterparts to help broker a deal, Bloomberg News reported, also citing those familiar with the matter.

Berkshire Hathaway Inc's Warren Buffett has held discussions with senior Biden administration officials about the banking crisis, a source told Reuters.

The White House and US Treasury declined to comment. -BNA

BEIJING: Global firms are endeavouring to take the pulse of the recovering Chinese market, with some making long-awaited business trips and others staying on top of the latest policy moves.

For Oliver Blume, chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG, his recent business trip to China proved a definite source of optimism.

"China is the most important market for us, and we will continue to expand our product lineup in the country," Blume said in an interview with Xinhua.

Right after the Spring Festival holiday, Blume used a full week to visit the cities of Beijing, Changchun, Shanghai and Hefei, exchanging ideas with his Chinese colleagues, business partners and representatives from local governments. Such face-to-face talks and intensive onsite visits have led to a deeper understanding of the Chinese market. "We predict that the Chinese automobile market will sustain its recovering momentum in 2023, and the market prospect of new energy vehicles is particularly bright," said Blume. [xinhua](#)


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CELEBRITIES IN LIMELIGHT

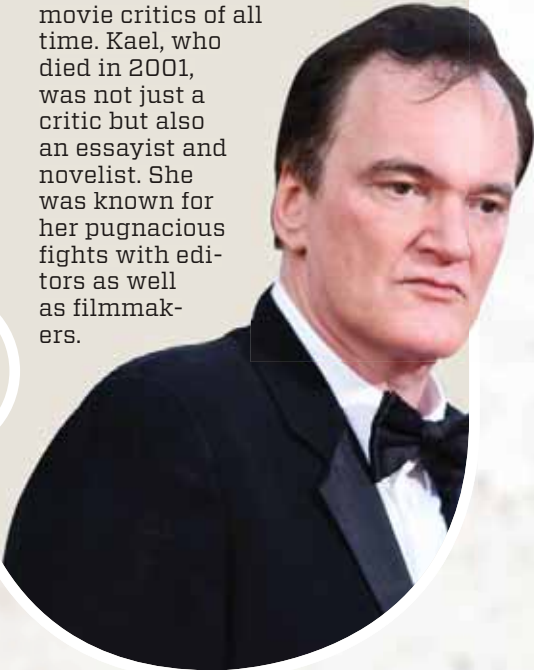


LIFESTYLE

1 Is Quentin Tarantino working on his final film?

If reports are to be believed, filmmaker Quentin Tarantino is working on his last film. The Movie Critic is the name of the script that Tarantino wrote and is prepping to direct this fall, The Hollywood Reporter reported. As per the outlet's sources, the story is set in late 1970s Los Angeles with a female lead at its center.

Apparently, the story focuses on Pauline Kael, one of the most influential movie critics of all time. Kael, who died in 2001, was not just a critic but also an essayist and novelist. She was known for her pugnacious fights with editors as well as filmmakers.



2 Samantha Ruth Prabhu gets emotional after watching her film

Samantha Ruth Prabhu who is gearing up for her upcoming movie pan-India mythological drama film 'Shaakuntalam', recently expressed her emotions towards the film after watching it for the first time. The film is based on a popular Indian play Shakuntala by Kalidasa. Shakuntala is the wife of king Dushyant and the mother of emperor Bharata. King Dushyant meets Shakuntala when he is out on a hunting trip in the jungle. They fell in love and got married as per the Gandharva system. 'Shaakuntalam' is all set to hit the big screens on April 24, 2023. Earlier the film was slated to hit the theatres on February 17, 2023. It will be out in Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada.



3 Akshay Oberoi calls 'Gaslight' co-star Sara Ali Khan as "bundle of energy"

Akshay Oberoi who is gearing up for his upcoming film 'Gaslight', recently shared his experience working with Sara Ali Khan in the movie. The suspense thriller is helmed by Pavan Kripalani and produced by Ramesh Taurani. The film stars Sara Ali Khan, Vikrant Massey, Chitrangda Singh and Akshay Oberoi in the lead roles.

Akshay said, "Sara is a bundle of energy on sets! Whenever she's on sets while we were shooting, she would always bring in her positive energy around everyone. She is funny and humorous and doesn't ever leave an opportunity to crack jokes which keeps your mind fresh and lighter while you're shooting."



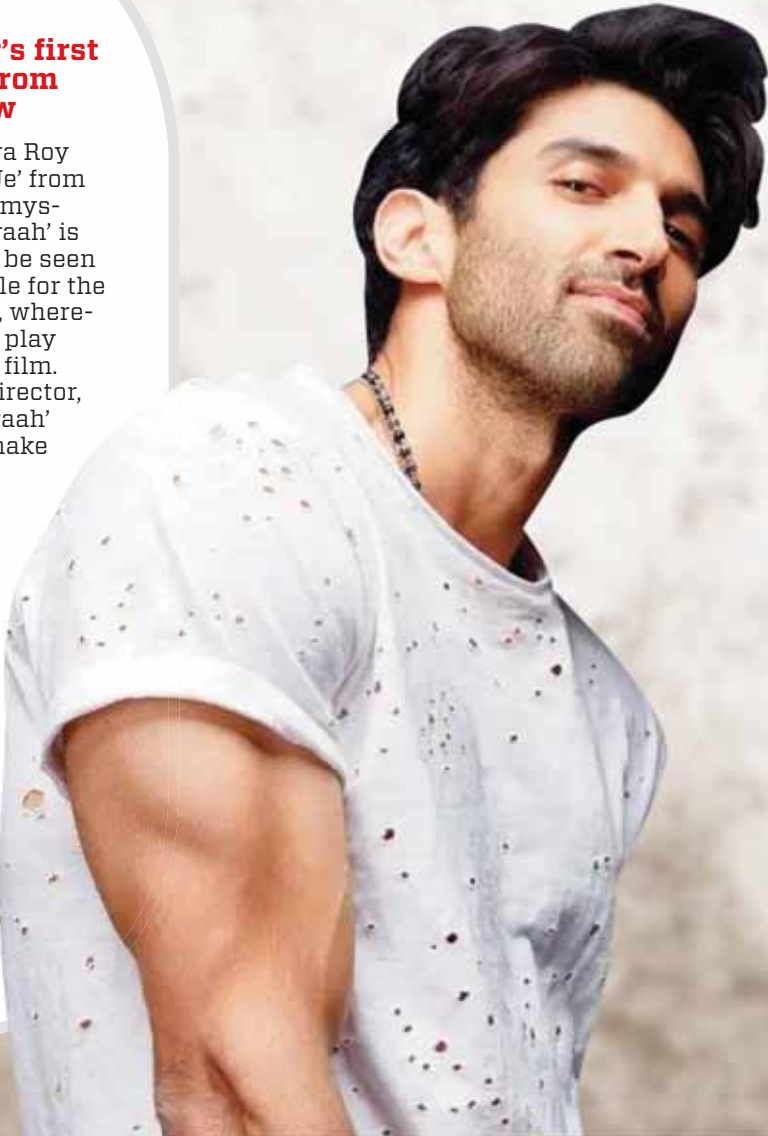
4 Parineeti Chopra wraps up shoot of Imtiaz Ali's next

Actor Parineeti Chopra recently shared a special note for her co-actor Diljit Dosanjh and director Imtiaz Ali. 'Chamkila' revolves around two popular Punjabi singers Amarjot Kaur and Amar Singh Chamkila. While Parineeti will be essaying the role of Amarjot, Diljit will be seen as Chamkila. Amar Singh Chamkila and his wife Amarjot Kaur were assassinated on March 8, 1988, along with the members of their musical band. A few days back, Parineeti shared her 'Thank You' note for the director when she wrapped up the film.



5 Aditya Roy Kapur's first song 'Soniye Je' from 'Gumraah' out now

The wait is over! Aditya Roy Kapur's song 'Soniye Je' from the upcoming murder mystery thriller film 'Gumraah' is finally out. Aditya will be seen portraying a double role for the first time in his career, whereas Mrunal Thakur will play the role of a cop in the film. Helmed by debutant director, Vardhan Ketkar, 'Gumraah' is an official Hindi remake of a Tamil hit action-thriller film 'Thadam', released in 2019. Directed by Magizh Thirumeni, the film starred Arun Vijay and Tanya Hope in the lead roles. Aditya and Mrunal will be sharing the screen space for the very first time in the film.



SPORTS



Oman Racing stage strong fightback to finish ninth



The trio of Ahmad al Harthy, Michael Dinan and Charlie Eastwood do well at the Sebring race after the car suffered an early puncture

MUSCAT: The Oman Racing with TF Sport trio of Ahmad Al Harthy, Michael Dinan and Charlie Eastwood staged a competitive recovery during the opening round of the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) at Sebring in the USA on Friday to finish ninth in the LMGTE Am class despite suffering a puncture in the first hour of racing.

The trio was in a good position to mount a challenge for the GTE Am podium finish during the 8hr race, thanks to a superb top-three qualifying performance from Al Harthy. However, they had to be content with a ninth spot, having losing significant time during the first stint.

American racer Dinan took the

start at his home race in the No.25 Aston Martin GTE and held third place early on, but just five laps into the contest a heavy accident for the No.83 Ferrari 488 resulted in the appearance of the Safety Car.

Almost all of the GTE Am cars served their first pit-stops while the race was under caution, with the D'Station Racing Aston Martin an exception. When racing resumed, Dinan was fourth but when the D'Station car pitted around 75 minutes into the race Dinan moved back into third.

Just a short while later, though, a puncture to the front-right tyre put Dinan off the circuit and a huge amount of time was lost as he coaxed the car back to the pits. Re-

joining the track in 12th position in GTE Am, Dinan pitted again with one hour and 45 minutes elapsed.

Al Harthy climbed into the driving seat of the Aston Martin for his first race miles in FIA WEC and he immediately set the squad's fastest lap of the race at that point.

The Omani, supported by Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS, then climbed into 11th place before the end of hour two and closed time on the cars ahead.

Dinan returned to the driving seat late in hour three, before Al Harthy started his second stint in hour four and continued to push as the team tried to recover as much time as possible. Halfway through the race Al Harthy held 10th position and he lapped impressively, delivering pace which confirmed the squad's podium potential had the early puncture not occurred.

During the second half of the encounter Eastwood became part of the mix but with so much time having been lost, his only option was to consolidate the ninth place which was secured later on - a

character building event in some respects but a clear indication of Oman Racing's WEC potential.

Ahmad Al Harthy said: "It was a tough race. Unfortunately, because of the puncture in the first hour, we had to catch up from there but the time lost was just too big in such a competitive championship where it's very difficult to come back. But we did come back to P9, which was the best we could do.

"I was really happy with my performance, it showed if things go perfectly well for us we can get good results here in WEC. It's a very competitive championship and we learned a lot about racing at Sebring.

"Personally, for me, it was a new track and I learnt a lot and was really happy with my pace overall. In terms of the championship we learnt a lot as well, which will hopefully help us in Portimao in Portugal."

Round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship, the 6 Hours of Portimao, will take place on Sunday, April 16, at the Autodromo do Algarve in Portugal.

Al-Qudra karate club emerge champions

MUSCAT: Al-Qudra karate club emerged champions while Ali Al-Raisi karate club claimed the second place and The Champ karate club came third in the sixth Karate Pioneers Open Championship that concluded at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Saturday.

The three-day championship was organised by Karate Pioneers Academy and the awards were given in the presence of Salem bin Hamad Al Mahrrouqi, Chairman of the Omani Karate Committee, and Muhammad Bahrami, President of the JSKA Organisation for Asia.

A total of 335 men and women players, representing 27 clubs, academies and private centres from nine countries, took part.



The championship was officiated by the head of the Karate Pioneers Academy, Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Zakwani. On the sidelines of the championship, a lecture was held for the coaches to get an update on the latest rules and regulations.

Kashyap slams double ton in Muscat CT win

MUSCAT: A double century by Kashyap Prajapati powered Muscat CT past Oman Stallions in the 2022-23 Oman Cricket Super League match on Friday. The win secured Muscat a berth in the final where they will meet Oman Stallions again. The final will be played on Monday.

Put to bat first, Muscat CT made the most of the offer as opener Prajapati went on a ram-paging. Along with his partner, Jatinder Singh, the team were off to a flyer. Prajapati scored a run-a-ball century and got his double in just 48 balls. His 204 came off 147 balls with 21 fours and 6 sixes as Muscat CT reached 333/5 in 50 overs. Ayaan Khan provided good support with 49.

Muscat CT bowlers then ran through the Oman Stallions batting, bundling them out for 147 in 44.4 overs. Ayaan picked 3/13, while Samay Shrivastav and Sandeep Goud took two each.



Yalla Shabab edge past Renaissance

Yalla Shabab beat Renaissance in the other league game and the teams will play once again on Tuesday to determine the third place in the Super League

Brief scores: Yalla Shabab 182/10 in 38.3 overs (Imran Alam 32, Khalid Kail 31; Nadeem Khan 4/40, Imran Ali 2/22, Bilal Mohammed 2/35) beat Renaissance: 179 in 49 overs (Nadeem Khan 54; Mohammed Nadeem 4/37, Hasnain Ali Shah 4/37).

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(12) **United States Patent**
Al-Sahli

(10) Patent No.: **US 10,032,156 B2**
(4) Date of Patent: **Jul. 24, 2018**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONDUCTING FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS USING A MOBILE DEVICE**

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(71) Applicant: **Mahmoud Anass Mahmoud Al-Sahli, Mississauga (CA)**

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(72) Inventor: **Mahmoud Anass Mahmoud Al-Sahli, Mississauga (CA)**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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Primary Examiner — Hai Tran

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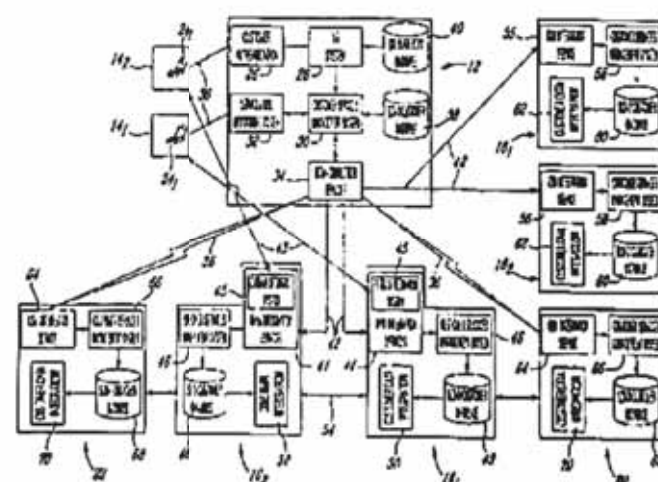
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) Chip Bank system and method for enabling users registered in the system to control their financial and telecommunications resources from their mobile device over a mobile communications network. The system combines mobile network providers and financial services through the use of SIM chips without the need for modifying the users' mobile devices or SIM chip installed thereon. A SIM Chip Bank System Operator (SCB-O) regulates data flow between users, banks, mobile communications service providers, SIM Chip Automated teller Machines and SIM Chip Service Providing Machines through a plurality of communications channels. Upon a user connecting to the SCB-O to request a transaction, the SCB-O connects to the appropriate bank to authorize the requested transaction. Upon successful completion, reports are sent back and forth to users confirming the event.

18 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets

(52) U.S. Cl.
CPC G06Q 20/3229 (2013.01); G06Q 20/1085 (2013.01); G06Q 20/18 (2013.01);
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(58) Field of Classification Search
CPC G06Q 40/00; G06Q 20/32; G06Q 20/341; G06Q 20/04; G06Q 20/108; G06Q 40/02; G06Q 40/04; G06Q 40/06
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CPC G06Q 20/32 (2013.01); G06Q 20/40 (2013.01); G06Q 20/4014 (2013.01)

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(58) Field of Classification Search
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See application file for complete search history.

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ROUND-UP

Geely launches ‘Season to Explore’ in Oman with Ramadan benefits

Geely launches its ‘Season To Explore’ Ramadan benefits with a range of attractive benefits on two newly launched Geely models - the all-new Emgrand and the all-new Azkarra

MUSCAT: Now is the perfect time to treat you to the latest Geely car models in Oman and get the benefits of some very exciting offers.

This Ramadan, Geely launches its ‘Season To Explore’ Ramadan benefits with a range of attractive benefits on two newly launched Geely models - the all-new Emgrand and the all-new Azkarra.

The offer, besides an unbelievable price, also includes cash gifts ranging from OMR1,801 to OMR2,701, free 3 years of AAA roadside assistance, and a manufacturer’s warranty for 5 years or 150,000 kilometres. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Conditions apply. Visit the showroom for exact details).



So, it is much more than great cash benefits! Owning a Geely vehicle also offers you many years of peace of mind, be it a quick trip or a long drive. All these advantages are available at an exciting price, making Geely vehicles a wise choice.

Geely cars have gained immense popularity worldwide.

Now, the people of Oman can experience the exceptional all-new Emgrand and all-new Azkarra models. Customers can visit the

showrooms to book a test drive with these two models.

All-new Emgrand, a visually stunning sedan, is crafted using the B-segment Modular Architecture (BMA) and is engineered to exceed the 5-star NCAP safety ratings. Its 1.5-litre engine offers excellent performance and fuel efficiency. Key features include a 17-inch alloy wheel size, special suede imitation leather seats, 6-way electric adjustment for the driver’s

comfort, side and curtain airbags, and a sunroof for added style. Its advanced safety and technical features such as ABS with EBD, Electronic Stability Program, traction Control, Uphill Auxiliary Control, electric parking brake with Auto hold, six airbags, and Intelligent Seating Monitoring System are sure to assure you a safe ride.

All-new Azkarra, a lifestyle-inspired premium SUV, has a dynamic appearance and is power packed

with advanced features making it the perfect vehicle for families and adventure-seekers. Its advanced 1.5-litre turbocharged engine and direct fuel injection help it deliver a powerful driving experience. The 48V Electric Motor Synergy mild hybrid system helps save the environment. Inside the stylish cockpit, we have Nappa leather seats, a 7-inch LCD dashboard, an Entertainment system with a 12.3-inch screen, and wireless smartphone

charging to entertain you during long journeys. The Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) with Lane keep assist (LKA), Lane departure warning (LDW), Intelligent Cruise Control System (ICC), and Power boot opening & Closing are some of the key features. Discover a new level of driving with multiple modes - Normal, Eco, Sport, and Off-Road.

Geely vehicles are brought to you in Oman by Towell Auto Centre.

EXPANSION



Sharaf Group opens two new stores of Forever 21 in Muscat

MUSCAT: Retail conglomerate, SharafRetail significantly expands its presence in the lifestyle market across the Middle East with two new openings of its flagship brand - Forever 21, the popular fashion brand, in Muscat Oman.

The new stores are located in the Mall of Oman and Oman Avenues Mall, both of which are popular shopping destinations in the city.

The new stores are spread across a combined area of 20842.12 sq. ft. of shopping space which mirrors the group’s expansion strategy across the region.

The new stores will offer a wide range of trendy and affordable fashion for men and women, including clothing, shoes and accessories. Customers can expect to find the latest styles and fashion trends, as well as classic pieces that are perfect for any occasion.

“We are thrilled to be opening two new stores in Muscat,” said Yasser Sharaf, Vice President of Retail, Hospitality, Industry and financial services, Sharaf Group,

“Muscat is a vibrant and dynamic city, and we believe our unique blend of fashion and affordability will be a hit with local shoppers.”

The opening of the two new stores of Forever 21 in Muscat is part of Sharaf Retail’s continued expansion in the Middle East. The company already has a strong presence in the region, with stores in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Forever 21 is known for its fast-fashion model, which allows the company to quickly respond to changing fashion trends and offers customers the latest styles at affordable prices. The company also places a strong emphasis on sustainability and has taken steps to reduce its environmental impact, including using more sustainable materials in its products and implementing energy-efficient practices in its stores.

The new stores in Muscat are now open, and customers are invited to visit and shop the latest fashion trends at affordable prices.

PROMOTION

Lexus unveils exclusive benefits across its amazing range of vehicles

MUSCAT: Own a Lexus and welcome amazing experiences with exclusive benefits. Service from 3 years / 30,000km up to 6 years / 60,000 km (whichever is earlier), 1-year free registration and Scratch and Win 70 battery-operated ride-on toy Lexus SUVs. (Conditions apply. For details visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom).

In Oman, Lexus has a wide range of vehicles including sedans, SUVs and HEVs. The models include the UX, NX, RX, GX, IS, ES, LS and LX.

The UX reflects the “Yet Philosophy,” in many ways, but especially in terms of design, performance and utility. The front-wheel drive Lexus UX is powered by a high-efficiency 2.0 litre, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT).

The NX SUV is equipped with two powertrain options. An inline 4-cylinder, 2.4 L turbocharged engine that produces 275 hp and 6000 RPM and is paired to an 8-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission (8AT).

The NX is also available with a hybrid-electric system that combines two power sources consisting of a 2.5-litre petrol engine and two electric motors producing 240 hp. The hybrid-electric system is paired with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT).

The all-new fifth-generation RX has been completely reimagined to deliver greater style, comfort, and performance than ever before and comes with a choice of three powertrains, two of which are electrified. A newly developed inline 4-cylinder, 2.4-litre turbocharged engine that produces 275



hp and 430 nm of torque is paired with a new 8-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission (8AT). Meanwhile, the new hybrid-electric system combines a 2.5-litre petrol engine and electric motor to produce a total of 247 hp, which is paired with an electronically-controlled continuously variable transmission (E-CVT) to provide excellent fuel efficiencies. A hybrid-electric system pairing a 2.4-litre turbocharged engine with an electric motor is also available, which provides a combined power of 366 hp mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission.

The powerful Lexus GX460 is perfect for families who seek no-holds-barred adventure on their days off, yet also desire an easy-driving, comfortable and versatile luxury SUV for the work week. The Lexus GX460 features a 4.6L engine that provides outstanding power and responsive performance.

In sedans, the range includes the IS350. This sleek and stylish powerful sedan is equipped with a 3.5-litre engine that’s paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission. The turbocharged IS300 features a 2.0-litre twin-scroll turbocharged inline four-cylinder engine with an intercooler that generates 241 Hp.

The flagship LS which is an inspiring luxury sedan is available in 3.5-litre V6 Multi Stage Hybrid System producing 354 hp, a 3.5-litre V6 naturally aspirated Atkinson-cycle producing 311 hp and 38.7 Kg.M Torque, and a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 engine producing 415 hp and 61.2 Kg.M of Torque.

Lexus ES’s emotional design elevated by the new design front grille is a thrilling drive personality imbued by two powertrain options. ES350 is powered by a 3.5 litre, 24 valves, V6 engine that produces 298 hp and 36.3 kg.m. of torque.

While the ES250 is powered by high efficiency 2.5 litres, 16-valve DOHC engine that produces 204 hp and 24.8 kg.m of torque.

The flagship LX is available with a choice of two powertrain options, including two newly developed V6 twin-turbo engines. The V6 twin-turbo 3.5-litre petrol engine achieves class-leading performance that surpasses that of a conventional V8, producing 409 hp and up to 66.28 Kg.m torque. Meanwhile, the V6 twin-turbo engine 3.3-litre diesel variant is capable of 302 hp and up to 71.38 Kg.m torque. Both versions are mated to a 10-speed automatic transmission.

In Oman, every Lexus vehicle comes with special benefits and privileges such as a manufacturer’s warranty of 4 years/100,000km (whichever is earlier) and 24-hour on-road assistance from AAA.



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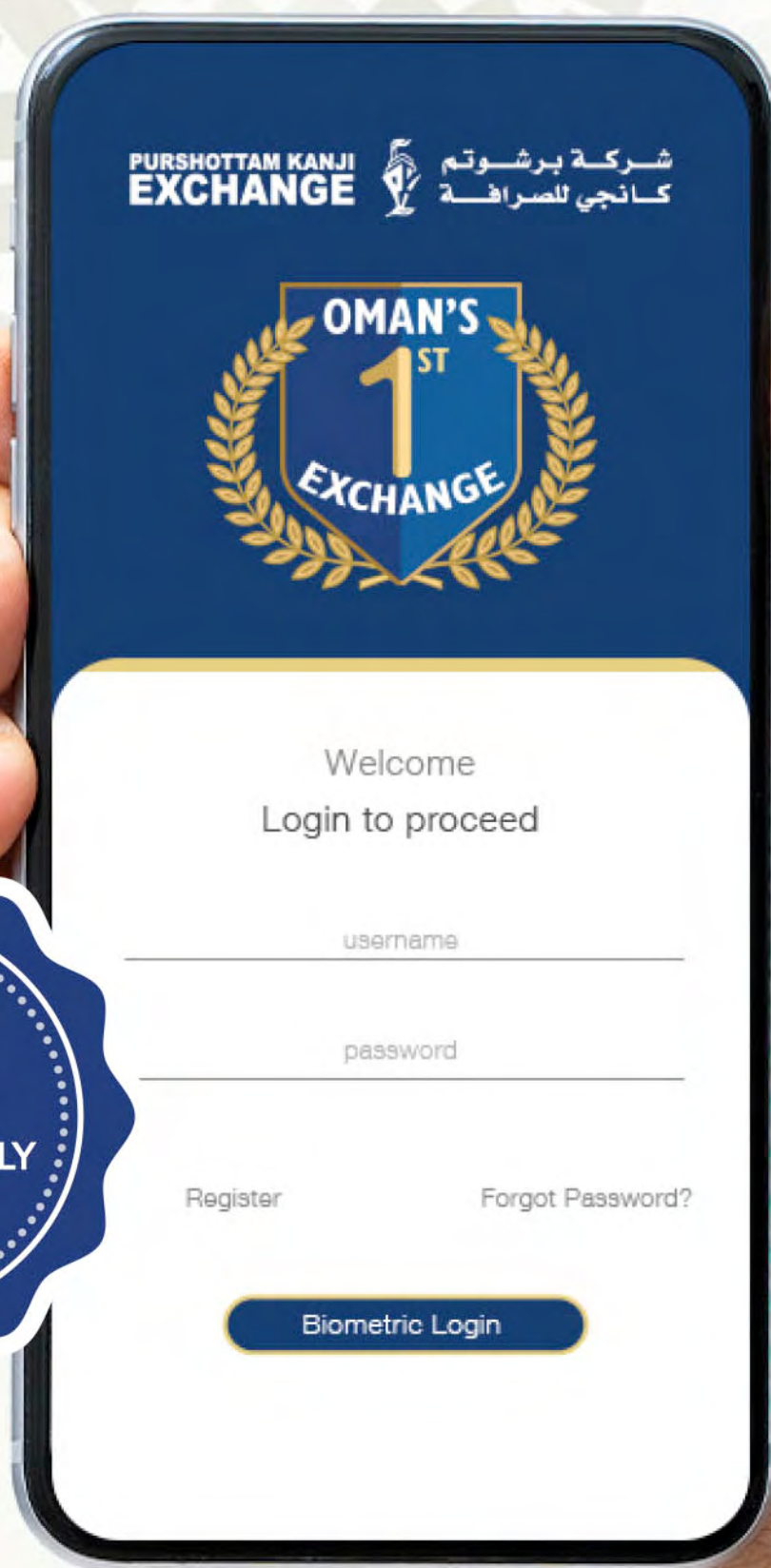
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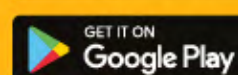
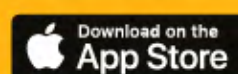
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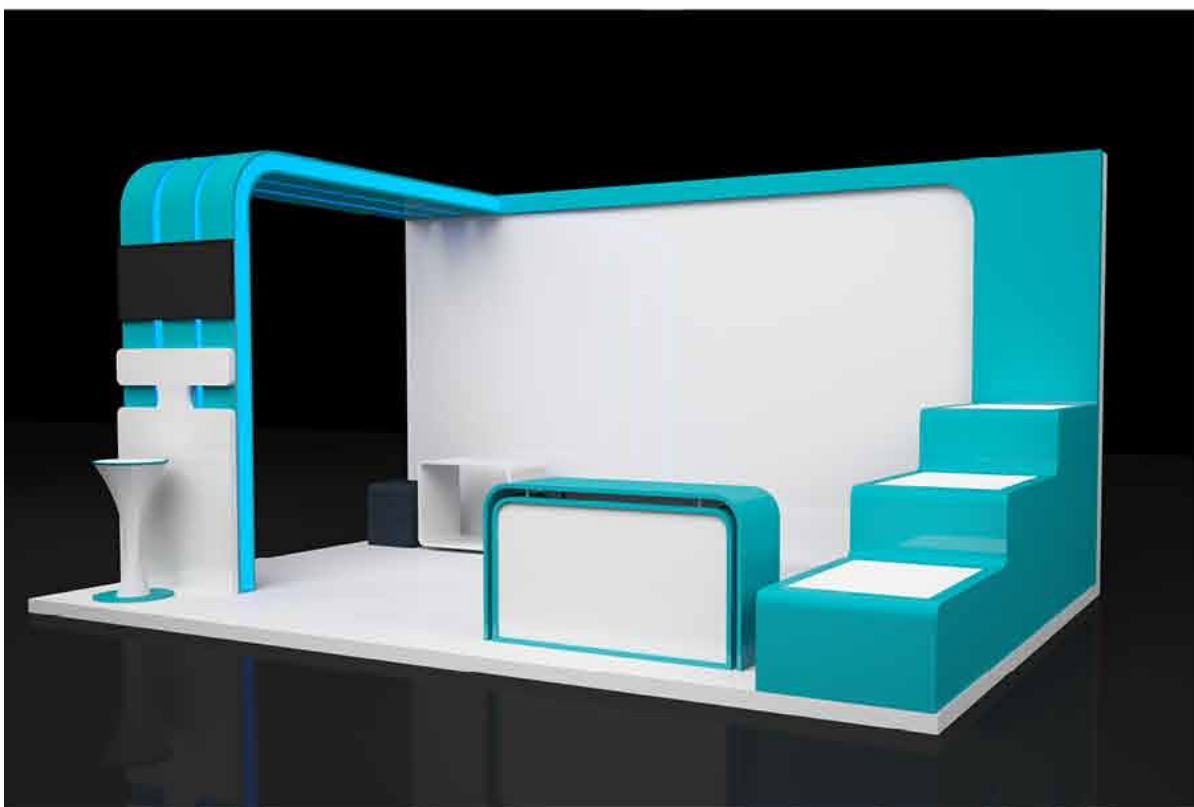
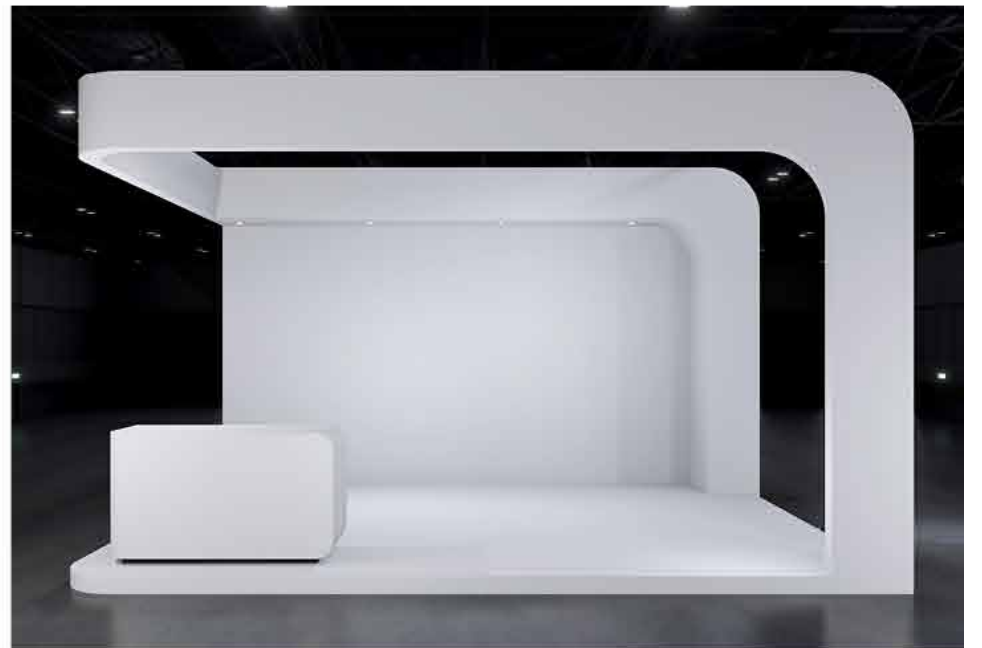
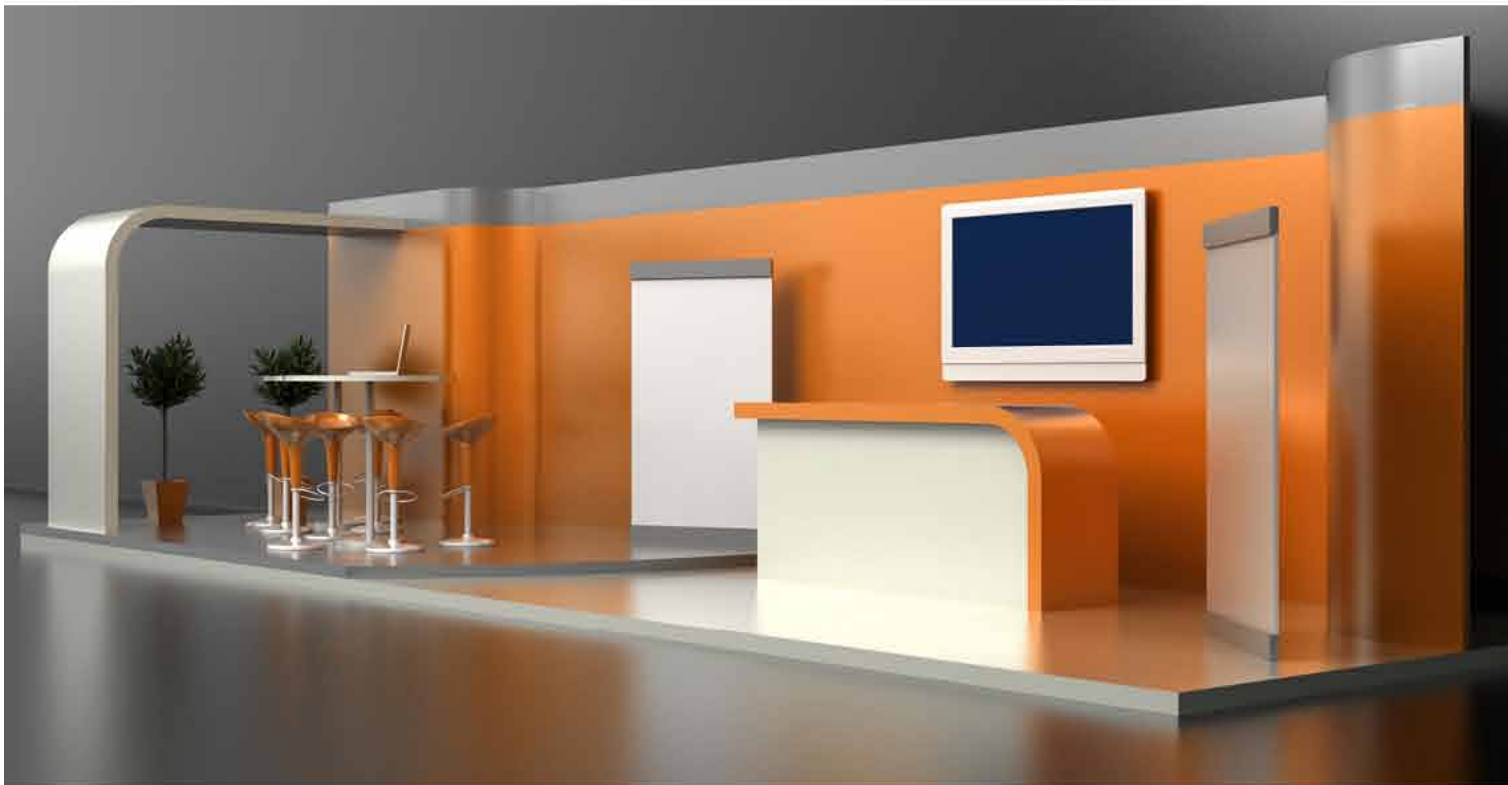


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