

FRENCH DEFENCE OFFICIALS VISIT MSC

MUSCAT: Brigadier Olivier Le C., Deputy Director of International Public Relations in Africa and the Middle East at the Ministry of Defence, France, visited on Tuesday the Maritime Security Centre (MSC). He was greeted upon his arrival by Commodore Mohammed Hamoud Al Zedjali, Head of the MSC.



ROYAL OFFICE MINISTER RECEIVES AMBASSADOR OF SYRIA

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'mani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office on Tuesday Dr. Bassam Al Khatib, Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty. Al Khatib expressed his appreciation for the cooperation extended to him by all officials in Oman. **>A2**



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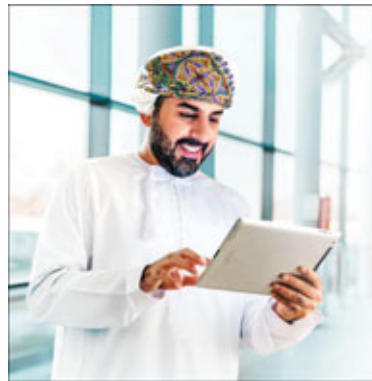
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COVID-19

Attendance at Taraweeh prayers only for fully vaccinated people

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing convening, the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic followed up recent updates about the pandemic and reviewed means of protection against the disease and ways to curb the spread of the virus.

Upon the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, COVID-19 Supreme Committee took the opportunity to greet His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Omani citizens and residents in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as the Arab people and Islamic nation. The panel wished all good health and abundant bounties and blessings.

dant bounties and blessings.

The Supreme Committee studied the epidemiological situation in the local front and international arena. It noted the decline in cases of infection and hospitalisation in the Sultanate of Oman at a time the rates of COVID-19 infections are again picking up in some countries of the world.

As the pandemic persists worldwide upon the approach of the holy month of Ramadan and, in realisation of Islam's edicts calling for safeguarding human life and, to maintain the gains made over the past period, COVID-19 Supreme Committee took the following decisions which, it said, have to be endorsed throughout Ramadan:

The decisions

First: Attendance at Taraweeh congregational prayers has to be exclusively limited to worshippers who received two-dose vaccination against COVID-19. Unvaccinated people, including children aged below 12 years, are prohibited to enter the mosques during the said period.

Second: Mass gatherings for charity breakfast meals (Iftar Sa'im) continue to be banned in mosques and other public places, including tents and public assemblies.



by halls. Charity teams and private establishments concerned, including civil society institutions, may distribute the meals to target beneficiaries, but without organising gatherings.

Third: All members of the public have to continue observing precautionary protective measures, including wearing face masks and maintaining physical distance in closed areas, including mosques.

COVID-19 Supreme Committee also underscores the need to continue operation of collective activity venues — like halls, conference places, local and international exhibitions and other mass activities.

ity areas—to a maximum of 70 per cent capacity of the said venues.

In the meantime, the committee urged all those who feel any symptoms of COVID-19 infection to avoid attending congregational prayers or entering public gathering areas, to help protect themselves and their society.

The panel also advised Omani citizens and residents in Oman to take the COVID-19 booster dose as soon as possible, notably those whose second dose vaccination lasted more than 6 months. It added that the booster dose would bolster individual and communal immunity. — **ONA**

ECONOMIC CITY

Khazaen signs pacts to establish factory and warehouses

MUSCAT: Khazaen Economic City (KEC) signed two agreements with Jana International Company to the tune of OMR2 million. The first agreement related to establishing a factory to produce consumable and commercial plastic packaging materials, while the second agreement pertained to setting up warehouses. The agreements cover the first phase which will be built on an area of 50,000 square metres.

The agreements were signed by Eng. Salim Sulaiman Al Thuhli, CEO of Khazaen and Mohammed Hassan, General Manager of Jana International Company. Al Thuhli said that the inked agreements come within the framework of Khazaen's constant efforts in attracting foreign investments. These projects in particular, he added, will contribute to supporting supply chains in the region and increasing In-country Value (ICV) by using raw materials produced through converting industries in Oman. — **ONA**

SEVEN WADIS IN MUSCAT TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO GARDENS



The Vibrant Public Spaces Initiative will initially look at the Governorate of Muscat before moving to other regions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Seven wadis in Muscat are to be converted into gardens as part of a plan to increase green cover in the Capital and beautify it.

The Vibrant Public Spaces Initiative is a joint programme by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and Muscat Municipality. Under an approved plan for development of green spaces, the initiative will also minimise

the impact of too many concrete and cement structures, a common sight in many cities.

"The initiative will initially look at the Governorate of Muscat before moving to other regions," said Dr Hanan Al Jabri, the director general of urban planning at the ministry. "The initiative was launched in 2021 and work regarding studies, integration of efforts and data collection from Muscat Municipality, is already underway."

"We conducted an integrated study and looked at existing gardens and parks in the city, according to classifications under

the National Urban Development Strategy that split them into spaces that were either undeveloped or developed. The idea behind this project is to make cities like Muscat greener and more attractive to people...this is what we are currently working on."

Among the wadis selected for greening under the project are Wadi Al Manooma, Wadi Samail in Al Khoudh, Wadi Al Ansab and Wadi Uday and a number of smaller wadis. Once turned into parks, these wadis will meet the standards of parks listed under the National Urban Development Strategy. **>A3**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN SalamAir scheduled flights to India

1 Oman's fastest-growing value-for-money airline, SalamAir, will operate non-stop flights to four Indian cities — from Salalah to Calicut and from Muscat to Jaipur, Lucknow, and Thiruvananthapuram. The Salalah-Calicut flight will be on Friday and Sunday from 3 April. Flights from Muscat to Jaipur will operate daily except on Sunday. **>A3**

WORLD Russia-Ukraine talks conclude in Istanbul

2 Ukrainian and Russian negotiators concluded face-to-face peace talks in Istanbul on Tuesday, with the Ukrainian side saying that there have been enough developments to have a meeting between the presidents of the two countries. Russia said the talks were "constructive," raising hopes that there could be progress toward ending the war. **>A6**

MARKET BankDhofar approves dividend

3 The Board of Directors of BankDhofar conducted its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday, March 22. The AGM approved the report of the board of directors of the bank on the business and financial position of the bank for the financial year ended 31st December 2021. The meeting also approved a cash dividend of two baissas per share (two per cent) for the shareholders of the company. **>B1**



FACT SIGNED

OCCI to support and promote film industry

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has signed an agreement with Action Films Production Company and Destinations Rising Company, for promoting the Sultanate as an attractive film destination and attracting international film-makers.

These companies have distinguished themselves globally as promoters of film and television production sites.



The OCCI seeks, through this agreement, to promote different terrains and geographical locations, and make the Sultanate

an ultimate destination for the film and television production industry globally.

Besides making a preferred destination for film production, it would place the Sultanate on the map of countries that attract such industries, and enable it to enhance effectively its 'soft power' so as to project the Sultanate as an attractive tourist destination.

This would be in perfect alignment with the future plans for the tourism sector as stipulated in Vision 2040.



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PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:17pm
Asr.....	3:44pm
Maghrib.....	6:27pm
Isha.....	7:37pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:45am

GCC central bank governors discuss cybersecurity



Oman's delegation was headed by Tahir Salim Al Amri, CBO's Executive President

RIYADH: THE Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), participated in the 78th meeting of GCC Committee for Central Banks Governors, held at the GCC Secretariat General in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on Tuesday.

Oman's delegation was headed by Tahir Salim Al Amri, CBO's Executive President.

The Committee discussed the supervision and oversight over the banking sector in the GCC, as well as the payment systems, GCC Fin-Tech developments and banking

cyber security.

Further, the Committee reviewed the new developments within the framework of combating money laundering and financing of terrorism in the banking sector.

The Committee reviewed the topics proposed by the GCC countries to be studied by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) within the context of the joint meeting between finance ministers and governors of central banks in the GCC countries and the IMF Managing Director.

-ONA

TRADE EXCHANGE

Oman-Bahrain business forum explores investment opportunities



MEETING: Eng. Ridha Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of OCCI said that the forum is an opportunity to enhance business and investment partnership between the private sector of the two countries. -ONA

MUSCAT: The Oman-Bahrain Business Forum, held here on Tuesday, explored investment opportunities and incentives offered for investors, as well as means of enhancing trade exchange and investments between the two countries.

Several presentations were given by officials from Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and other government units on the investment milieu in Oman.

Dr. Saleh Said Masn, Commerce and Industry Undersecretary said

that Oman has gone a long way in terms of enacting legislations to attract investments. He added that in Oman, there are legal and financial guarantees for the inbound and outbound capital. Oman launched several initiatives to ease investment, Dr. Saleh said.

On his turn, Eng. Ridha Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of OCCI said that the forum is an opportunity to enhance business and investment partnership between the private sector of the two countries. Al Saleh further said that the Oman-Bahrain Investment Holding

Company with a capital of RO 10 million is an embodiment of this partnership.

B2B meetings were held on the sidelines of the forum to sign agreements and establish partnerships, as well as expanding cooperation between the two sides.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) from the Kingdom of Bahrain in Oman reached OMR389.8 million during the third quarter of 2021. The volume of trade exchange between the two countries by the end of 2021 hit OMR 323,353,757.

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VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCING



Oman participates in key UN meeting

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the National Survey Authority (NSA), on Tuesday took part in the 9th meeting of United Nations - Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) for Arab States Committee, held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Held via video-conferencing, the meeting discussed means of enhancing cooperation among

the member states of the committee. The meeting also stressed the importance of exchanging expertise of countries that would contribute in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The meeting also reviewed the annual report of the Arab Committee and a report of the UN-GGIM, submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). - ONA

FAREWELL

Royal Office Minister receives Syrian envoy

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'mani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office on Tuesday Dr. Bassam Al Khatib, Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

Al Khatib expressed his appreciation for the cooperation extended to him by all officials in Oman.

He also lauded the advanced relations between the two countries. In his turn, Al Nu'mani thanked the ambassador for his



efforts towards enhancing bilateral relations during his tenure, wishing him continuous success. -ONA

FOCUS ON ICT SECTOR

Oman ICT Group launches new commercial identity

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Information Technology and Communications Group (OICT) launched the new commercial identity 'ITHCA Group' on Tuesday at the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM).

The event was held under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Loay bin Ghalib bin Khalid Al Said, and in the presence of His Highness Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ITHCA Group.

The ceremony was attended by Eng. Said bin Abdullah Al-Mandhari, CEO of ITHCA Group, a number of ministers, undersecretaries, CEOs, media representatives, in addition a number of investors and entrepreneurs interested in the technology and communications sector.

Established in 2019

The ITHCA Group was established in 2019 with the aim of developing infrastructure of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, expanding the range of networks, and enhancing digital capabilities through integration and partnership between the public and private sectors and international companies.

The Group will also expand investments in emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), financial technologies (fintech) and other technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

In a statement to the media, His Highness Sayyid Kamel bin Fahd Al Said, Chairman of the

Board of Directors of ITHCA Group, stressed that most of the group's investments are harnessed in modern technologies, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Internet of Things and high-performance cloud services, besides advancement of the technical innovations sector, betting on young national capabilities and the inspiration of pioneers businessmen in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Oman's Vision 2040

These efforts come within the objectives of Oman's Vision 2040, in promoting investments and geographical expansion of companies operating in the sector locally, regionally and internationally through partnership with the private sector, he added.

Eng. Said bin Abdullah Al-Mandhari, CEO of the Group, emphasised in his speech on the continuation of the efforts to develop the ICT sector, cloud infrastructure services, and to promote digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman.

Investments in ICT

He said "We will harness our investments in information and communication technology to create opportunities, enable economic sectors, develop the skills and capabilities of young people, support small and medium enterprises, and support entrepreneurs working in technology and innovations."

The CEO said that the Group intends to launch a number of annual initiatives to motivate young people with creativity and innovations through the use of future

technologies such as artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, cybersecurity and others. The details of the initiatives will be published in the second half of the year, he added.

Based on technology

Al-Mandhari further said, "We are determined, through the companies operating under the umbrella of the Group, to build a bright future for Oman based on technology and fuelled by the energies and minds of the promising Omani youth. We will continue our investments in the infrastructure to build a solid foundation and a solid base for future technologies, and keep pace with the aspirations and requirements of the future."

The ITHCA logo, holds the gold and platinum 'MUSE' award for creativity, reflects the group's vision in speed of its networks, transfer and use of modern data, and reliance on the creativity and aspirations of the ambitious generation of young people. This is why the young man's face appears as he looks forward to the bright future ahead.

The new identity was chosen to reflect the Group's commitment to investing in modern technologies and enabling the employment of information and communication technology in the Sultanate of Oman in various sectors, keeping pace with the technological development witnessed by the world that includes all aspects of life and the business environment.

The revolution of things was selected to be the slogan of ITHCA Group.

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

37,359 REACH

After a two-year hiatus, Tarawih prayers are allowed to be performed in the holy month of Ramadan.

People in Oman can perform Tarawih prayers during Ramadan

A story on Tarawih prayers during Ramadan reached 37,359 people and had 2,002 link clicks on Facebook.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

1,200 VIEWS

Let's Talk Banking video

The Let's Talk Banking video had 1,200 views and reached 5,705 people on Facebook

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

1,403 VIEWS

Morning Minute video

The Morning Minute video on Muscat on bucket list of must-see places around the world had 1,403 views and 87 likes on Instagram.



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AVIATION

SalamAir to operate scheduled flights to four cities in India



MORE CONNECTIONS: Our strategic cooperation with Oman Air enables us to serve the Indian market and augment demand and traffic volume, thus fulfilling the Oman Vision 2040, said Captain Mohamed Ahmed, CEO of SalamAir.

GREEN SPACES

<FROM A1 Parks to be classified by offered services

There are several other categories of parks mentioned, including regional parks, district parks, neighbourhood parks, local parks, community parks and green zones.

Parks need to meet these classifications by offering certain services and facilities to the public. This helps guarantee the quality of the park and provides services that meet the needs and comforts of visitors to such public spaces.

“These classifications are important because they regulate the quality of gardens and specify the facilities that must be provided such as walking paths, barbecue zones, bicycle paths, public areas for people to play and other facilities,” said Al Jabri.



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman’s fastest-growing value-for-money airline, SalamAir, has announced non-stop flights to four Indian cities – from Salalah to Calicut and from Muscat to Jaipur, Lucknow, and Trivandrum.

The flights from Salalah to Calicut will operate on Friday and Sunday starting from 3rd April. Flights from Muscat to Jaipur will operate daily except Sunday, Lucknow double daily, and Trivandrum daily except Monday.

While the Salalah to Calicut route is new, previously, SalamAir operated special flights to these Indian destinations as part of the COVID-19 pandemic related air bubble pact between India and Oman, now with the launch of the scheduled flights from Muscat to Jaipur, Lucknow, and Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram), SalamAir has expanded its network in the Indian Subcontinent.

Captain Mohamed Ahmed, CEO of SalamAir, said, “In line with our network expansion plan, it is with great pleasure that we announce our direct flights to India. Our aim is always to provide our customers

with greater connectivity and convenience, and the addition of these routes will cater to the expat population, business travellers, and tourists. Our strategic cooperation with Oman Air enables us to serve the Indian market and augment demand and traffic volume, thus fulfilling the Oman Vision 2040”.

SalamAir recently announced its strategic cooperation with Oman Air, which expanded the codeshare agreement to facilitate dynamic and smooth passengers’ movement to the Sultanate to promote tourism growth.

“As part of our network expansion goals, we plan to introduce non-stop flights from Suvarnabhumi to Calicut; the groundwork for these flights is currently being done to have four flights a week on this route, which we hope to announce soon,” he added.

“While Oman is home to a large Indian community, India is one of the top trading partners of Oman. During the pandemic, we operated multiple charter flights; and we hope to continue our service to the community and hope our flights will continue to facilitate and strengthen these strong ties and bilateral relationships in the future,” he said.



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PEACE TALKS

Russia-Ukraine talks conclude in Istanbul

ISTANBUL: Ukrainian and Russian negotiators concluded face-to-face peace talks in Istanbul on Tuesday, with the Ukrainian side saying that there have been enough developments to have a meeting between the presidents of the two countries.

Russia said the talks were “constructive,” raising hopes that there could be progress toward ending the war.

However, Russian top negotiator Medinsky said a meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy is possible only if a deal has been approved by the foreign ministries of both countries.

Following the talks, Ukrainian negotiators told reporters that Kyiv would agree to a neutral status if a security guarantee system is put in place. They said, under the new system, Israel, Poland, Canada and Turkey could be among Ukraine’s security guarantors.

The neutral status would include not hosting any foreign military bases on Ukrainian territory.

There needs to be full peace



across Ukraine for any final agreement with Russia to come into force, the Ukrainian side stressed, adding that a referendum would be needed in Ukraine on the terms of any final deal.

They also proposed holding consultations with Russia on the status of Crimea.

The talks on Tuesday lasted

around four hours with occasional breaks. It is unclear if the discussions will continue for a second day.

Russia pledges to reduce military activity after talks

General Alexander Fomin, Russia’s deputy defence minister, told reporters that Russia would reduce its military activity around

Kyiv and Chernihiv in light of the latest round of negotiations with Ukraine.

“In order to increase mutual trust and create the necessary conditions for further negotiations and achieving the ultimate goal of agreeing and signing (an) agreement, a decision was made to radically, by a large margin, reduce military activity in the Kyiv and Chernihiv directions,” Fomin told reporters.

According to the AP news agency, Ukraine’s military said it had noted withdrawals around Kyiv and Chernihiv. However, the Pentagon said it could not confirm the reports.

Turkey said Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministers were expected to meet in the next phase to set a mutual understanding and set the stage for a meeting between Zelenskyy and Putin.

“We are extremely happy to see an increased rapprochement between the two sides at every stage,” Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said. **bw**



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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

IAEA chief visits Ukraine on nuclear safety mission

KYIV: Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is in Ukraine for talks with senior government officials about ensuring the safety and security of the country’s nuclear sites. Grossi is to offer urgent technical assistance including sending experts to key places in a bid to avert the

risk of any accident. “The military conflict is putting Ukraine’s nuclear power plants and other facilities with radioactive material in unprecedented danger. We must take urgent action to make sure that they can continue to operate safely and securely and reduce the risk of a nuclear accident,” Grossi said. **am**

PARTYGATE

UK police to fine 20 people over lockdown breaches

LONDON: The UK Metropolitan Police said on Tuesday it would recommend an initial 20 fixed penalty notices over reported COVID lockdown breaches at Downing Street.

“We will today initially begin to refer 20 fixed penalty notices to be issued for breaches of COVID-19 regulations,” the Metropolitan Police said in a statement, adding that further fines could follow “if the evidential threshold is made.”

Police said they wouldn’t identify the people hit by the fines, but Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s office has said it will reveal if the prime minister is included.

According to the Reuters news agency, the fixed penalty for breaching COVID rules by participating in a gathering of more than 15 people is a fine of £800 (around €945/\$1,050).

What is ‘partygate’?

Police have been investigating allegations that dozens of politicians and government officials flouted the pandemic restrictions that they had themselves had imposed on the public during the UK lockdown.

There are 12 gatherings in



question, as an internal inquiry concluded that Johnson’s staff had gathered for alcohol-fueled parties. Johnson is believed to have attended at least a few of the events himself.

More than 100 people, including Johnson, have received questionnaires from investigators.

The revelations about those parties quickly evolved into a political scandal dubbed “partygate” by the British press.

“Partygate” has sparked wide-

spread anger, with several calls for Johnson to step down.

The 57-year-old British leader has denied any wrongdoing. But he admitted that he had attended a “bring-your-own-booze” gathering in the Downing Street garden, saying he believed it would be a work event. The scandal had disappeared from headlines in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, Tuesday’s developments signal that the issue could return to haunt Johnson. **bw**

BANDIT ATTACK

Gunmen attack train in Nigeria, seven dead

ABUJA: Nigerian officials on Tuesday said at least seven people were killed and others were missing after gunmen attacked a passenger train headed to the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna.

Hundreds of passengers were aboard the train from the capital, Abuja, when suspected bandits blew up rail tracks and exchanged fire with security officials, authorities said.

A security source was quoted by the AFP news agency as saying 970 passengers were aboard the train when the attack occurred at around 9 p.m. local time (2000 UTC) on Monday.

“The attack has been repelled

by the troops who deployed in time.

The terrorists fled when the soldiers arrived. The train is bulletproof, this saved the passengers who lay still on the floor,” the source told AFP.

Relatives told the Reuters news agency that most of the passengers were taken from the scene of the attack on buses to Kaduna.

However, local media reported that some passengers had been kidnapped. Kaduna-based journalist Yusuf Atta said his mother and sister were on the train and were not accounted for as of Tuesday morning.

Kaduna security services were

expected to hold a media briefing media later on Tuesday.

Growing number of attacks attributed to bandits

The incident highlights growing insecurities in Africa’s most populous country, with recent attacks on villages and rural roads, as well as kidnappings.

Criminal gangs, known locally as bandits, have been blamed for rising violence in northwest Nigeria.

Monday’s train attack came just days after heavily armed men attacked the Kaduna airport, killing a security guard and temporarily disrupting flights. **bw**

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ASIAN QUALIFIERS FOR WORLD CUP QATAR: OMAN BEAT CHINA 2-0

In the last round of the final Asian qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup Qatar, Oman's national football team defeated China 2-0. "Oman's first national football team beat its Chinese counterpart 2-0 in the last round of the final Asian qualifiers for the World Cup Qatar 2022," Oman News Agency, ONA, said.—**ONA**



FOOTBALL

Match against North Macedonia 'life and death' for Portugal: Ronaldo

LISBON: Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo termed the team's final World Cup play-off match against North Macedonia as a "life and death" situation.

The legendary number seven also admitted that he wants "hell breaking loose" at Estadio do Dragao as Portugal are just one game away from sealing a spot at Qatar 2022. Ten European teams have secured their spots at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, with three places still up for grabs via the play-off path. Two finals will be decided on Tuesday, while Wales will take on the winner of the tie between Scotland and Ukraine at a later date to determine the last UEFA representative at Qatar 2022.

The Manchester United forward, who has scored a world record 115 goals for Portugal during his career, has issued a rallying cry to supporters for extra noise and passion in Tuesday's final.

"I urge the fans - I want hell breaking loose at Dragao [Stadium]," said Ronaldo as per goal.com.

"I went to bed last night thinking that I want the stadium to shut down the music for our national anthem and let the fans sing it acapella to show our passion, our strength and union around the objective of reaching the World Cup."

The 37-year-old Portuguese added on the importance of the fixture: "For us, this game is a matter of life and death. There is a responsibility to win this game. For us, also a game of our lives."

"They have surprised [opponents] in many games but I believe they will not surprise us," he added. After their shock last-minute semi-final win over reigning European champions Italy, North Macedonia are now just one more victory away from making it to the World Cup for the first time in their history. To make this dream a reality, coach Blagoja Milevski's have another tough task on their hands however - first Italy, now Portugal. **ANI**

BRAND NEW CHALLENGE

Al-Zubair to start GT World Challenge campaign

Times News Service

IMOLA: Oman's Al-Faisal Al-Zubair begins a brand new challenge for honours in the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS at the opening round of the increasingly popular championship on Italy's demanding Imola race circuit this weekend.

Al-Zubair will represent the Al-Manar Racing by HRT operation in the 17-strong Silver Cup category, alongside team-mates Fabian Schiller and Axcil Jeffries. Schiller actually posted the fastest lap time during pre-season testing in the team's Mercedes-AMG GT3 in France.

A further four HRT Mercedes-AMGs will line-up on the grid, alongside four Lamborghinis, a quartet of Audis, two McLarens and a pair of Porsche GT3s.

With 52 cars scheduled to line up at the start of the three-hour race across all the classes, officials have confirmed this is the biggest Endurance Cup grid, outside of the 24 Hours of Spa in Belgium since 2018, and a record number of entries in the Silver Cup.

Al-Zubair said: "I am really looking forward to the start of the championship. It is definitely the toughest championship that I will have participated in. I am in the silver category, which is extremely tough. I believe there are 17 entries in the silver class. So, it will be extremely difficult, especially with a grid of over 50 cars."

"I think for the first weekend we just need to go and make sure that we have a relatively strong position in our class. That will be our target. The target for the season will be to finish in the top three in the silver class and maybe even win it. No expectations to really win, but we will be doing our best. We have a strong line-up and an extremely strong team. I am excited now to get the season started."

Team-mate Jeffries, 24, was born in Zimbabwe and is a professional racing driver and a senior race instructor at the Yas Marina circuit in Abu Dhabi. Last year he took part in Asian Le Mans Series, International GT Open and FIA World Endurance Championship races.



AMGs will line-up on the grid, alongside four Lamborghinis, a quartet of Audis, two McLarens and a pair of Porsche GT3s.

JOB VACANCY

Asian Paint Middle East SPC – A Multi National Paint company, looking for **Retail -Sales Officer** for their Oman operations.

- Educational qualification: Bachelor's degree and above.
- Work Experience -2-4 years of sales experience in Dealer/ Distributor segment.
- Experience in Paint/ Building Material /FMCG industry will be preferred.
- Age – Below 30 Years.
- Computer Skills -Proficient in MS Office.
- Excellent communication skills in English and Hindi
- Valid Oman/GCC Driving License.

Remuneration package will commensurate with Educational Qualification and Experience

Interested candidates may send their CV to recruitment.apme@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENT



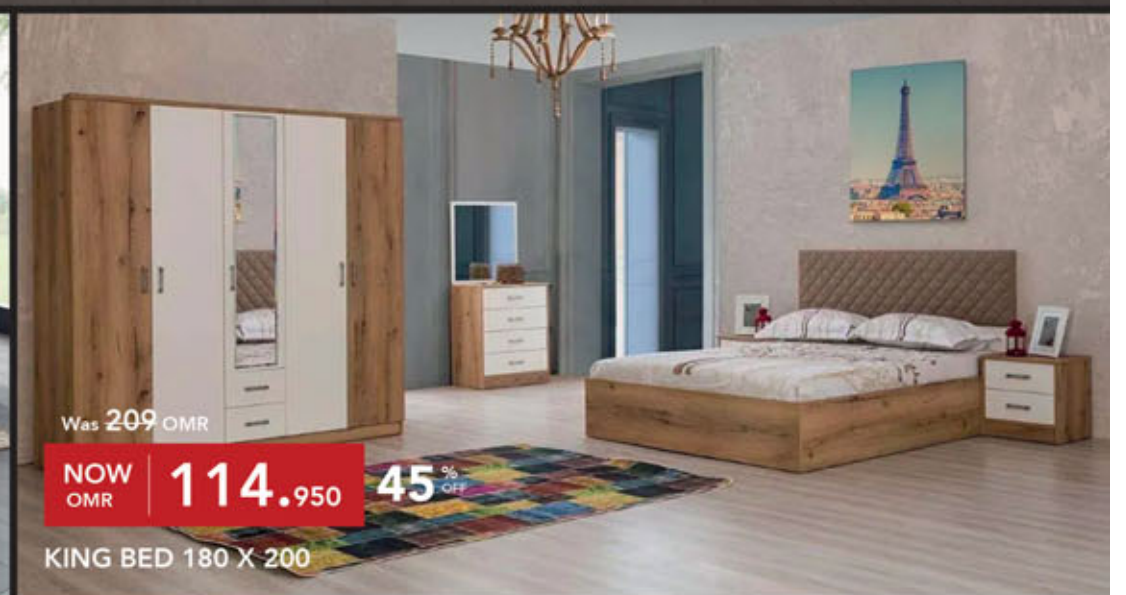
This is to inform all concerned that Mrs. EVELYN SENTO GEROCHE holder of Philippines Passport No. P0829104B Resident card No. 110715571 has been terminate from PEARL ISLAND MANPOWER (C.R. No. 1318580). Therefore, all the concerned are requested to stop dealing with the above named in favor of the company.

If anyone is dealing with her it is at their own risk and company will not take any responsibility hereafter. If anybody has any claim, he/she should report to the company within next 3 working days.

GULF OVERSEAS EXCHANGE CO . LLC							
P. O. BOX 3931, RUWI, P.C. 112, SULTANATE OF OMAN							
SUMMARY OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021							
(Amount in RO'000)							
ASSETS			LIABILITIES				
Sr. No.	Description	2021	2020	Sr. No.	Description	2021	2020
1	Cash on hand	337	216	1	Capital and reserve	1,447	1,413
2	Deposit with Central Bank of Oman	100	100	2	Borrowings from banks	-	-
3	Precious metals	-	-	3	Balance due to branches	-	-
4	Balance due from banks	998	1,052	4	Balance due to money changers	38	22
5	Balance due from branches	-	-	5	Loans and advances payable	-	-
6	Balance due from money changers	-	-	6	Cheques and drafts issued outstanding	-	11
7	Cheques and drafts purchased	-	-	7	Other liabilities	131	131
8	Fixed assets	107	137				
9	Investments	-	-				
10	Other assets	74	72				
Total		1,616	1,577	Total		1,616	1,577
We certify that the above balances are in agreement with the books and records of the company as at 31 December 2021.							
GULF OVERSEAS EXCHANGE CO. LLC DIRECTORS			Auditors: CROWE MAK GHAZALI LLC CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS 28 February 2022				

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE CO.LLC							
P.O. Box 41 Muscat, Postal Code 100, Sultanate of Oman							
SUMMARY OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES (MONEY CHANGING ESTABLISHMENT) AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2021							
(In RO 000's)							
ASSETS		2021	2020	LIABILITIES		2021	2020
1.	Cash on hand	2,049	1,674	1.	Capital reserve	4,223	4,390
2.	Deposit with Central Bank of Oman	170	150	2.	Borrowings from banks	9	6
3.	Precious metal	16	4	3.	Balance due to branches	-	-
4.	Balance due from banks	1,670	2,837	4.	Balance due to money changers	174	89
5.	Balance due from branches	-	-	5.	Loans and advances payable	1,148	1,147
6.	Balance due from money changers	552	853	6.	Cheques and drafts issued outstanding	-	-
7.	Cheques and draft purchased	-	-	7.	Other liabilities	1,919	255
8.	Investments	-	-				
9.	Loans and advances	-	-				
10.	Fix assets	82	96				
11.	Other assets	2,934	273				
		7,473	5,887			7,473	5,887
PKF L.L.C. Chartered Accountants				For PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE CO. L.L.C. Chairman			

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by May 2022 reaching \$108.24, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$2.46 from the price of Monday, which was \$110.70. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,194.99 points, down by 0.89 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.10 per cent at 485.64 points. Oman & Emirates investment, up 8.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Omantel, down 6.99 per cent, was the top loser.

BankDhofar AGM approves cash dividend of 2 baisas per share

The AGM approved the report of the bank's board of directors on the business and financial position of the bank for the financial year ended 31st December 2021

Times News Service

Muscat: The Board of Directors of BankDhofar conducted its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday, March 22.

The AGM approved the report of the board of directors of the bank on the business and financial position of the bank for the financial year ended 31st December 2021.

The meeting approved the cash dividend, which will be distributed to the shareholders, at the rate of 2 baisas per share (2 per cent). The meeting brought to the attention of Shareholders the transactions in which the bank entered with related parties during the financial



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The meeting was chaired by Eng. Abdul Hafidh Salim Rajab Al Aujaili, chairman of the board, and attended by the board members, senior management of the bank and shareholders. - **Supplied picture**

year ended 31st December 2021.

The meeting was chaired by Eng. Abdul Hafidh Salim Rajab Al Aujaili, chairman of the board, and attended by the board members, senior management of the bank and shareholders.

The sitting fees being availed

by the members of the board of directors and members of the board sub-committees along with the members of the Sharia Supervisory Board for the financial year ended 31st December 2021 were ratified and the sitting fees for the next financial year were speci-

fied. The meeting approved the proposed directors' remuneration of OMR150,000 for the financial year ended 31st December 2021. The meeting ratified the donations made during the financial year ended 31st December 2021 to help the families affected by

the tropical cyclone Shaheen of OMR500,000. Additionally, the meeting approved allocating OMR 120,000 for supporting local community services for the financial year ending 31 December 2022. The meeting appointed the new members of the Sharia Supervisory

Board and elected the members of the Board of Directors for a new term of office.

The meeting also agreed to appoint the external auditors and Sharia External Auditors for the financial year 2021 and specified their fees.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR100.5 million

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR100.5 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 364 days, from March 30, 2022, until March 29, 2023.

The average accepted price reached 98.458 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 98.250 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 1.54673 per cent and 1.57129 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).



It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 0.5 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 0.75 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills pro-

mote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

FROM BLOCKS 3&4

Tethys February oil production in Oman reaches 299,189 barrels

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before the government, take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore in the Sultanate of Oman, in February 2022 amounted to 299,189 barrels of oil, corresponding to 10,685 barrels of oil per day.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for February 2022 was \$73.14 per barrel. The OSP, as published by the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.

Tethys Oil, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Tethys Oil Block 3 & 4, has a 30 per cent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East with 20 per cent and the operator CC Energy Development (Oman branch) holding the remaining 50 per cent.

Tethys Oil is a Swedish oil com-



pany with a focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The company's core area is the Sultanate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58.

Tethys Oil has net working

interest 2P reserves of 26.2 million barrels of oil (mmbo) and net working interest 2C Contingent Resources of 15.6 mmbo and had an average oil production of 11,136 barrels per day from Blocks 3&4 during 2021.

OMAN BANKS ASSOCIATION

OBA holds Annual General Meet

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Banks Association (OBA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the year 2022 on March 29. The meeting was held virtually and attended by OBA members from banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, 2021 achievements and audited financials were presented as well as the 2022 work plan and budget. External auditors for the current financial year were appointed. The Board of Directors for the term 2022 - 2024 was appointed under the Chairmanship of Abdul Hakeem Omar Al Ojaily.

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

This Ramadan let more blessings come your way!

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MARKET



MSX index ends lower

The top gainer was Oman Chlorine which closed higher by 3.45% while top loser was Al Madina Investment which closed lower 5.41%.



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,194.99 points, down by 0.89 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.10 per cent at 485.64 points. Oman & emirates investment, up 8.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Omantel, down 6.99 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Ahli Bank were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Ominvest was the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1,228 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR8.34 million, with more than 51.14 million shares changing hands.

Out of 46 traded securities, 19 advanced, 8 declined and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR126,000 while GCC and Arab investors were net buyers for OMR83,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR43,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,755.47 points, up 0.03 per cent. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Sharqia Investment,

Al Anwar Investment, Muscat Finance, and United Finance were up by 8.00 per cent, 7.41 per cent, 4.71 per cent, 3.57 per cent, and 3.41 per cent respectively. Prices of Bank Nizwa, and Ahli Bank were down by 2.02 per cent, and 1.64 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,011.74 points, up 0.33 per cent. Prices of National Aluminium, Galfar Engineering, Oman Fisheries, and Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 5.81 per cent, 3.49 per cent, 3.49 per cent, and 0.47 per cent respectively. Prices of Voltamp Energy, and Oman Cement were down by 1.65 per cent, and 0.42 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.72 per cent before closing at 1,599.14 points.

Prices of SMN Power Holding, National Gas, Sharqiyah Desalination, Muscat Desalination, and OIFC were up by 4.76 per cent, 2.92 per cent, 2.8 per cent, 1.75 per cent, and 0.73 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Telecom and Renaissance Services were down by 6.99 per cent, and 0.92 per cent respectively. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,233.48	4,188.86	4,194.99	4,232.54	-37.55	-0.89
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,758.06	6,727.10	6,755.47	6,753.68	1.78	0.03
INDUSTRY INDEX	6,013.18	5,985.96	6,011.74	5,991.88	19.86	0.33
SERVICES INDEX	1,611.53	1,598.09	1,599.14	1,610.72	-11.58	-0.72
MSX SHARIAH INDEX	485.64	485.13	485.64	486.12	-0.48	-0.10
MSX TR INDEX	5,267.01	5,211.49	5,219.12	5,238.58	-19.46	-0.37
FINANCIAL TR IDX	6,935.78	6,904.01	6,933.12	6,872.62	60.50	0.88
SERVICES TR IDX	1,644.19	1,630.47	1,631.54	1,643.36	-11.82	-0.72
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,236.53	6,208.30	6,235.03	6,192.83	42.20	0.68

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
51,145,829	8,344,044	1,228	22,165,863,358	19	8	19	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 29

REGULAR MARKET

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PUB VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002440 AL SHARQIA INV.	671,803	58,143	46	0.083	0.088	0.083	0.087	0.081	0.006	7.407	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.100	7,830,000
OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	3,388,341	300,910	125	0.086	0.092	0.086	0.089	0.085	0.004	4.706	0.092	0.091	0.091	0.100	17,800,000
OM0000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE	588,295	34,368	38	0.057	0.060	0.057	0.058	0.056	0.002	3.571	0.059	0.059	0.060	0.100	17,814,000
OM0000001160 NATIONAL GAS	217,000	30,662	18	0.140	0.145	0.140	0.141	0.137	0.004	2.920	0.144	0.143	0.145	0.100	11,985,000
OM0000003388 SOHAR INT. BANK	1,291,240	148,498	20	0.118	0.118	0.114	0.115	0.114	0.001	0.877	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.100	343,857,163
OM00000001525 OMAN INVST&FIN.	186,100	25,625	14	0.137	0.138	0.137	0.138	0.137	0.001	0.730	0.137	0.138	0.137	0.100	32,706,000
OM0000001533 OMINVEST	5,518,616	1,874,607	22	0.340	0.340	0.334	0.340	0.338	0.002	0.992	0.340	0.338	0.340	0.100	227,244,245
OM0000001087 OMAN UNITED INSUR.	2,363,484	925,618	26	0.390	0.392	0.390	0.392	0.390	0.002	0.513	0.390	0.388	0.390	0.100	39,200,000
OM0000002168 AL ANWAR CERAMIC	565,000	243,750	21	0.434	0.434	0.430	0.432	0.430	0.002	0.465	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.100	95,040,000
OM0000001400 OMAN FLOUR MILLS	67	48	1	0.720	0.720	0.720	0.720	0.720	0.000	0.000	0.720	0.900	0.720	0.100	113,400,000
OM0000001418 RAYSUT CEMENT	396,172	65,368	34	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.163	0.165	0.100	33,000,000
OM0000002226 ALJAZEERA SERVICES	206,272	54,662	23	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.000	0.000	0.265	0.265	0.275	0.100	16,219,132
OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	1,019,643	521,110	44	0.510	0.512	0.510	0.512	0.512	0.000	0.000	0.512	0.508	0.512	0.100	1,921,537,648
OM0000003988 GOREDDO	30,000	10,046	6	0.336	0.336	0.334	0.334	0.334	0.000	0.000	0.336	0.334	0.336	0.100	217,415,373
OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	500	245	1	0.490	0.490	0.490	0.506	0.506	0.000	0.000	0.490	0.474	0.490	0.100	27,830,000
OM0000001749 OMAN CEMENT	56,665	13,371	7	0.237	0.237	0.235	0.236	0.237	-0.001	-0.422	0.235	0.230	0.237	0.100	78,065,960
OM0000003224 RENAISSANCE SER.	425,000	182,750	8	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.434	-0.004	-0.922	0.430	0.426	0.430	0.100	101,656,300
OM0000002230 AHLI BANK	12,170,000	1,493,289	9	0.120	0.120	0.119	0.120	0.122	-0.002	-1.639	0.120	0.119	0.119	0.100	233,958,896
OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	586,850	500,435	39	0.852	0.860	0.848	0.852	0.916	-0.064	-6.987	0.852	0.848	0.852	0.100	639,000,000
Total	19	29,661,958	6,450,610	502											
OM0000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO.	2,095,737	168,861	105	0.078	0.082	0.077	0.081	0.075	0.006	8.000	0.082	0.080	0.082	0.100	9,871,875
OM0000001319 ALUMINIUM PROD.	1,915,100	174,009	102	0.087	0.093	0.087	0.091	0.086	0.005	5.814	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.100	3,055,002
OM0000004248 SMN POWER HOLDING	5,233	230	2	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.042	0.002	4.762	0.044	0.041	0.044	0.100	3,783,966
OM0000001568 OMAN FISHERIES	1,427,028	127,629	89	0.086	0.093	0.086	0.089	0.086	0.003	3.488	0.093	0.091	0.093	0.100	11,125,000
OM0000003521 GALFAR ENGINEER	12,019,284	1,070,602	256	0.087	0.091	0.086	0.089	0.086	0.003	3.488	0.089	0.088	0.092	0.100	18,065,794
OM0000002374 UNITED FINANCE	991,240	89,866	21	0.089	0.091	0.089	0.091	0.088	0.003	3.409	0.091	0.087	0.091	0.100	31,772,141
OM0000003125 GLOBAL INV H	1,913,976	140,246	61	0.072	0.074	0.072	0.073	0.071	0.002	2.817	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.100	14,600,000
OM0000004699 SHARQIYAH DESALIN.	25,000	2,750	2	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.107	0.003	2.904	0.110	0.108	0.110	0.100	10,758,238
OM0000007084 MCT DESALINATION	54,106	6,276	2	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.114	0.002	0.002	1.754	0.116	0.115	0.116	0.100	18,043,846
OM0000004768 MADINA TAKAFUL	144,020	13,515	7	0.093	0.094	0.093	0.094	0.093	0.001	1.075	0.094	0.094	0.097	0.100	16,450,000
OM0000001132 OMAN NAT ENG	38,000	3,734	5	0.098	0.099	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.107	0.100	13,720,000
OM0000001178 MUSCAT GASES	67	11	1	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.144	0.160	0.100	4,800,000
OM0000001426 OMAN REFRESHMENT	359	595	1	1.700	1.700	1.700	1.750	1.750	0.000	0.000	1.700	1.700	0.000	0.100	87,500,000
OM0000001517 HSBC BANK OMAN	60,576	7,209	4	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.000	0.000	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.100	238,037,222
OM0000001897 MAJAN COLLEGE	2,889	417	1	0.144	0.144	0.144	0.146	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.144	0.140	0.144	0.100	13,140,000
OM0000002275 SHELL OMAN MKK	50	44	1	0.884	0.884	0.884	0.844	0.844	0.000	0.000	0.884	0.760	0.884	0.100	80,190,000
OM0000002549 BANK DHOFAR	5,000	585	1	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.114	0.117	0.100	283,569,469
OM0000002804 ASAFFA FOODS	5,000	560	2	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.111	0.111	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.110	0.112	0.100	13,320,000
OM0000003281 TAAGEER FINANCE	6,961	585	2	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.084	0.088	0.100	21,727,591
OM0000003280 OMAN ARAB BANK	646	79	1	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.123	0.132	0.100	200,329,200
OM0000005983 PHOENIX POWER	46,100	2,214	3	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100	70,204,870
OM0000007919 AMAN REAL ESTATE	12,009	1,161	4	0.099	0.099	0.095	0.097	0.098	-0.001	-1.020	0.097	0.095	0.098	0.100	19,400,000
OM0000003661 VOLTAMP ENERGY	187,654	22,355	25	0.116	0.120	0.116	0.119	0.121	-0.002	-1.653	0.120	0.120	0.123	0.100	9,686,927
OM0000008710 BARKA DESALINATION	57,307	8,357	5	0.146	0.146	0.144	0.146	0.149	-0.003	-2.013	0.146	0.145	0.150	0.100	11,028,212
OM0000004420 BANK NIZWA	463,390	44,942	21	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.099	-0.002	-2.020	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.100	216,984,444
Total	35	21,477,371	1,886,933	724											

Asian shares gain as BOJ defends ultra-easy stance

HONG KONG: Japanese shares led gains in Asian stocks on Tuesday as the Bank of Japan (BOJ) defended its ultra-easy stance, while oil slid on fears of lower demand from China as Shanghai applied a “zero-COVID” strategy by locking down despite a relatively modest caseload.

Japan's Nikkei gained 0.91 per cent in early trade, while MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.64 per cent. The BOJ vowed to keep monetary policy ultra-loose, offering to buy unlimited government bonds for the first four days of this week, to prevent yields in Japan from rising as they are doing elsewhere following the US Federal Reserve's moves to hike interest rates in the face of mounting inflationary pressures, Reuters reported.

Japan's 10-year government bond yields hovered near the 0.25 per cent upper limit of the Bank of Japan's yield target even after the central bank made a rare move to step into the market for a second day.

Trading remained choppy, how-

ever. Investors will favour markets that are lagging behind the Fed's rate hike, trading on “a day to day trading mentality” and market noises and short term development, Chi Lo, senior market strategist APAC at BNP Paribas Asset Management said.

“There is not really even a medi-

um term direction that the market is following,” he added.

The BOJ's action left the yen fighting for footing on Tuesday, following its worst session in 16 months. The Japanese currency weakened by as much as 2.4 per cent to 125.10 to the dollar overnight, its lowest since August 2015,

before recovering to 124.24 in volatile morning trade in Tokyo.

Meanwhile, oil further weakened on Tuesday as the market expects China to suffer from a slowed economy while it fights against a renewed outbreak of coronavirus.

Oil US crude fell 1.04 per cent to \$104.86 per barrel and Brent was at \$111.09, down 1.24 per cent on the day. Its financial hub of Shanghai reported a record 4,381 asymptomatic COVID-19 cases and 96 symptomatic cases for March 28 - a caseload that remains modest by global standards.

“Certainly commodity markets will not be comfortable in the short term with China shutting down,” Lo said, adding that many of the players estimate less than 5 per cent growth this year for the economy, which he said is “too pessimistic” against the expectation of stronger stimulus.

The country's stock benchmark CSI300 fell 0.52 per cent, while in the offshore market, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index advanced 0.54 per cent. -BNA

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FOUR AWARDS

UNIQUE PLATFORM

Majan College wins accolades at Ghedex

Air Expo to showcase latest technology and equipment in general aviation

MUSCAT: Majan University College (MUC) excelled at the annual Ghedex event, which took place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre from March 27 to 29, under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Fahar bin Fatik Al Said.

MUC claimed four awards: three in the specific areas of advanced technology, student support, and best exhibitor, plus a fourth in the 'best of the best' category. Majan's well-designed and strikingly colourful stand at-

tracted the eyes of large numbers of attendees, many of whom were also aware of the college's reputation and achievements since it was founded in 1995.

A wide range of MUC staff attended Ghedex, mingling with prospective students and colleagues from other institutions so as to promote the College's attractive portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and the bespoke training opportunities it can offer.

MUC also took a prominent

part in Ghedex's International Conference on Quality in Higher Education, under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Nasr bin Amer Al Hosni, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour, on 28th March.

The College's Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, Nabila Al Macki, and its Head of the Faculty of Business Management, Dr Ammar AlBalushi, both gave well-received presentations that stimulated interest and provoked debate.

The continuation of this event, the tenth in the series, reinforces the position of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as a key regional hub for general aviation and of Al Bateen Executive Airport as a catalyst for its ongoing development,” said Sharreef Al Hashmi, CEO, Abu Dhabi Airports. “We're confident it will enable the forward-thinking, networking and business discussions that will power the sector's growth.” -WAM



PRUNES CAN PREVENT BONE LOSS, PROTECT AGAINST FRACTURE RISK

Daily prune consumption can prevent bone loss at the hip and protect against increased fracture risk in postmenopausal women, cites a new study. The findings of the study led by the Pennsylvania State University have been published in the journal, "The Advances in Nutrition".

The research was the first to demonstrate a favourable effect of prune consumption on bone mineral deposit (BMD) at the hip and points to prunes as a food-based therapeutic option for protecting bone health.

Bone mineral density (BMD) is known to decrease rapidly after menopause and women over the age of 50 are more likely to experience hip fractures, which commonly lead to hospitalisation, diminished quality of life, loss of independence and shortened life span.

"Just a handful of prunes can easily be added



to anyone's life," said California Prune Board's Advisor, Andrea N. Giancoli, MPH, RD.

"Prunes pair with so many flavours and textures and work well for individualised nutrition plans. Mix them into salads, trail mixes, smoothies, savoury dishes--you name it. the naturally sweet flavour of prunes makes them a versatile ingredient or convenient snack for anyone," he added.

Under 100 calories per serving, prunes are a nutrient-dense fruit that packs a powerful punch of vitamins and nutrients known to influence bone status, namely boron, potassium, copper, and Vitamin K.

They are also rich in phenolic compounds which act as antioxidants. Enjoyed globally, prunes are always in season, require no refrigeration, and are an accessible and nutritious snack for overall well being. - ANI



FEATURE



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AT ADANA'S ORANGE-THEMED FESTIVAL,

RAHUL DAS
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ADANA (TURKEY): Around the world, whether in the form of fruit or colour, the orange is always known for being bright, exciting and full of life.

Small wonder then, the Adana's International Orange Blossom Carnival in Turkey is a one-of-a-kind experience that is flavoursome and lively, and attracts visitors from all corners of the globe.

Don't be taken aback by the sea of orange-clad people out and about Adana: The locals of the city know the importance the fruit brings to them...it is, after all, intricately enmeshed with the region.

Take a stroll down the Atatürk Park, and you might see a child licking happily on a delicious scoop of orange ice cream, his parents keeping a close but loving eye on him from nearby...his mum tucking into a pasta dish liberally studded with oranges, his dad savouring a kabab that is centred around oranges, both in terms of colour and flavour.

Walk into any of Adana's amazing hotels and prepare to sample a veritable feast of orange-themed goodies. Walk past the specially planted orange trees in the lobby to begin your gastronomic journey with orange-flavoured soup before starting on a mandarin salad, and then take an epicurean experience around the world with its beating heart firmly founded on the other spherical object we've been talking about for so long.

The feast for your senses of course is all-encompassing, in a whirl of colour, excitement and most importantly, joy!

Immerse yourself in the flavourful orange parade in the streets of Adana, where the locals festoon their dresses with real oranges and build massive, festive floats, soak in the juices of an enthralling performance featuring sing-



ers, dancers, acrobats and other talented artists from Turkey and the world beyond, and inhale deeply the scents of a world that aims to take you away from your own...at least for a while.

And, as you walk along the streets near Adana City Center with the warm and sincere people, the wonderful smell of orange flowers brought by the wind from time to time will leave you with a picture book's worth of memories that you can cherish for the rest of your life.

Situated in the middle of the Cukurova Plain, Adana is the sixth-largest city of Turkey with over 2.2 million, nestled in the most fertile agricultural area of the whole country which is fed by the life-giving waters of the Seyhan river. So we can easily say, Adana is a city – much like the orange – has an array of flavours that everyone can enjoy.

Times of Oman was invited to check out the amazing four-day carnival, which is replete with culture, provides visitors the perfect opportunity to reconnect (with both family and nature), and soak in some much needed sun, sand and surf.



Organised annually in Adana every spring when the oranges of the region blossom, the Orange Blossom Festival is the most popular local event in the city. Having drawn approximately 1.5 million people, 100,000 of whom came from outside Adana in the previous years, Adana Orange Blossom Festival heralds the arrival of spring in Turkey. During the festival, street performances, dance performances, concerts of university music groups, folk dance performances, band performances, sports competitions and individual street performances take place almost everywhere in the city. Additionally, stands on the streets showcase Adana's exclusive delicacies and handicrafts. One of the main venues of the festival is Atatürk Park. Commissioned in 1933 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk Park is one of the oldest and largest parks of Türkiye. Located in the Seyhan district of Adana, Atatürk Park hosts a ceremonial ground where important events and celebrations are held.

So it is time to explore Adana!



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IN PICTURES



China: Spring farming in full swing

An aerial picture of the field in Changping Village, Moudao Township of Lichuan City, Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, central China's Hubei Province. **Xinhua**



Siwa Oasis in Matrouh Governorate, Egypt
Picture shows a view of the ruins of Shali Fortress at Siwa Oasis in Matrouh Governorate, Egypt. Siwa Oasis, in Egypt's Western Desert, is a renowned tourist destination in Egypt for its natural landscapes, historical ruins and cultural traditions. **Xinhua**



Book on vascular plants in Tianshan Mountains released
Picture shows Pan Borong, a scientist, doing investigation on the plants of the Tianshan Mountains in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. **Xinhua**



Salman Khan with Ananya Panday at a press conference
Bollywood actor Salman Khan with actress Ananya Panday at a press conference for the announcement of the 22nd edition of International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Weekend and Awards 2022, in Mumbai on Monday. **ANI Photo**



World Theatre Day marked in Kampala, Uganda
Artistes perform at the Uganda National Cultural Centre during an event to mark World Theatre Day in Kampala, Uganda. **Xinhua**

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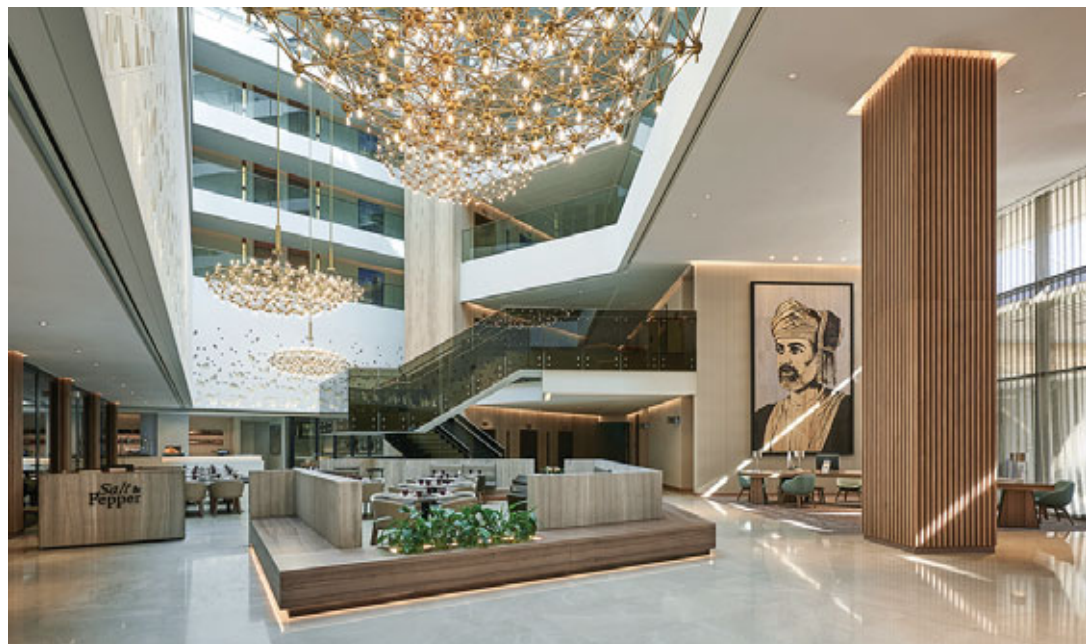


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Mysk Al Mouj gears up for holy month with delightful packages



The menus chosen for Iftar have been inspired by the Silk Route that would take the diners on a culinary journey of flavours



MUSCAT: The flagship hotel of Mysk by Shaza is a contemporary and trendy theatre of life. This Ramadan, Mysk Al Mouj by Shaza gears up to welcome its

guests for a lavish Iftar at its Salt & Pepper restaurant. The menus chosen for Iftar have been inspired by the Silk Route that would take the diners on a cu-



linary journey of flavours. At Mysk by Shaza food is a culture and a passion. It is a satisfying culinary performance with character and motifs from the East and West. Iftar at Mysk by

Shaza isn't just a meal, rather it is an experience that would reflect the values like Karam/ generosity. Priced at OMR15 including taxes and beverages for Iftar and OMR 8.5 Net for Suhoor. During the holy

month, to express our gratitude, we would also be donating a part of the revenues earned to a charitable organisation. Be a part of the ever-evolving theatre of life and experience an Iftar like never before.

DEVICE

ELAF Technology Centre launches new innovation towards sustainable energy

DUBAI: A launching ceremony of 'ELAF-HI' technology was held at Oman's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai in the presence of Mohsin bin Khamis Al Balushi, Commissioner-General of the Sultanate at Expo 2020, and Ahmed bin Saud Al Salmi, general manager of Oman Educational Services (OES).

The device was developed by GUtech in collaboration with Oman Hydrogen Centre and the sister company known as ELAF. The device is 100% Omani owned, created by Omani scientists, and is patented making it an Omani national asset. It is the first device of its kind able to detect hydrogen reservoirs underground leading the future to sustainable energy.

Dr Hussain bin Suleiman Al Salmi, the Acting Rector of the German University of Technology in Oman, "GUtech" (owned by OES), said: "The university's undertakings are following the guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham



bin Tariq and his 2040 vision for Oman. We are proud of the university's inauguration of the Oman Hydrogen Centre as a research and scientific centre two years ago. The royal orders came a few days ago to emphasize the importance of the green hydrogen sector and to facilitate its implementation in the Sultanate."

Dr Sausan bint Saeed Al Riyami, Director of Oman Hydrogen

Center, emphasised the centre's role in technology localization and its reliance on scientific research and development methodology to serve the energy sector in the Sultanate of Oman. She said: "The use of fossil resources from oil and gas is subject to a global structural change as renewable energy will increasingly replace fuels and aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and preserve the envi-

ronment. Green hydrogen will play an important role and may create a great opportunity for the Sultanate of Oman to be a leader in global change in the energy industry. We will not be content with this success and will work hard side by side with ELAF to test this technology locally and to develop the work to expand its future use."

According to Salim Al Salmi, Senior Technical Advisor of ELAF, "ELAF-HI is only our first initiative to be deployed in Oman and exported to the world later. Similar initiatives will follow once ELAF-HI achieves commercial status as ELAF has many innovative ideas in the pipeline for the renewable energy sector, simply awaiting funding."

As ELAF Technology Centre is working to meet United Nations Sustainable Development Goals towards sustainable energy with innovations that would lead Oman to economic growth and sustainability, not only locally but also globally.

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP



Toyota GAZOO Racing shines at 1000 Miles of Sebring

MUSCAT: The GAZOO Racing (GR) team kicked off the 2022 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) with a podium finish at the recently held 1000 Miles of Sebring. Sébastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley, and Ryo Hirakawa claimed second place following a valiant battle in their No. 8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Hypercar in the race at the 6.019-km Sebring International Raceway, the birthplace of American sportscar racing.

Following a successful debut season in 2021, which saw the GR010 Hybrid Hypercar winning the Le Mans 24 Hours at WEC and both World Championships, an updated hybrid electric-powered, 700 PS Hypercar has returned to action for this year's season. The 2022-specification GR010 Hybrid has seen minor modifications to the bodywork, including tire and wheel size compared to its predecessor. In addition, the settings of its 3.5-litre engine have been adjusted to accommodate a new 100% renewable fuel introduced to WEC, which contributes to ongoing efforts to increase sustainability in motorsport.

Akio Toyoda, President and

CEO of Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "As the second year of the Hypercar challenge gets underway with a stunning performance from GAZOO Racing, I congratulate Sébastien, Brendon, and Ryo on their hard-earned podium finish amid a challenging race. Our learning from this race will help us to create vehicles that can be driven with confidence. The strict balance of performance adopted this season will contribute to the evolution of technology and skills as we strive to make ever-better cars in pursuit of victory. For the fans, I am confident that this team will continue to evolve; the stronger the team, the stronger and faster the car. Thank you for your warm support this season!"

With Sébastien at the wheel, the No. 8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid started the race with the fourth position on the grid and quickly moved up to third within four laps. The vehicle was in second place after its first pit stop for a fuel top-up just before the hour mark. The race was red-flagged for 34 minutes because of an accident, which proved to be unfortunate timing for the No. 8 Toyota GR010 Hybrid.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Bank Muscat participates in SQU Career Fair



MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to creating rewarding internship and job opportunities for Omani youth, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate, is participating in the 22nd Career and Training Opportunities Fair organised by Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) from March 28-30.

Annual event

The three-day annual event is being held with participation from 30 different institutions from both the government and private sectors under the patronage of Dr Nasser Musabah Al-Zidi, Deputy Vice Chancellor For Administra-

tive & Financial Affairs.

Bank Muscat is keen to participate in the annual career fair organised by The Centre for Career Guidance at SQU. As the nation's leading bank, Bank Muscat attaches great importance to national initiatives, especially human resources development aimed at contributing to Oman's future. Investing in human resources and talent is the real wealth of the nation. Bank Muscat makes use of every opportunity to extend support to Omani nationals seeking career development and training opportunities by regularly participating in career fairs organised by leading educational institutions.



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