

HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREET'S GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA
MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to David Hurley, Governor-General of Australia on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to Governor-General Hurley. His Majesty also wished the people of Australia further progress and prosperity. - **ONA**



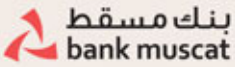
HM GREET'S PRESIDENT OF INDIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Ram Nath Kovind of the Republic of India on his country's Republic Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Kovind. His Majesty also wished the people of India further progress and prosperity. - **ONA**



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HM CONFERS OMAN MILITARY ORDER ON BRIGADIER SAID AL HATMI

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik conferred Oman Military Order (Third Class) on Brigadier Said bin Abdullah bin Humaid Al Hatmi. The conferment took place at Bait Al Barakah Palace yesterday. The order reflects His Majesty's recognition for the efforts exerted by Brigadier Said during his tour of duty at the Royal Guard of Oman. - **ONA**

KEY LESSONS THAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

For anyone who specialises in epidemiology, the COVID pandemic was predictable, said an expert in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Adequate preparation, resilient and reliable health-care system and self-reliance are the three main lessons that Oman and other countries around the world can learn from the COVID-19 pandemic.

While listing the lessons, Dr Zaid bin Al Khattab Al Hinai, a consultant on paediatric infectious diseases at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), said "almost two years have passed since the COVID-19 pandemic swept the whole world, killing millions of people, besides causing economic losses in billions."

"It has been considered the most critical pandemic in contemporary human history since the Spanish flu in 1918. However, it is the time to stop for a while and consider some key lessons that has to be learnt from the pandemic."

In his write-up in 'Scientific Insights', a periodical newsletter of Oman's Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MOHERI), Al Hinai said the first lesson to be learnt is that similar pandemics will occur in the future, and it is every government's duty to remain prepared for it.

"For anyone who specialises in epidemiology, the COVID pan-



*More than
2,000 cases
recorded on
Monday*

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate has recorded more than 2,000 cases of COVID-19 for the first time since June 2021, the Ministry of Health announced on Tuesday.

Ibrahim Al-Maimani, a data analyst and social activist, spoke to *Times of Oman*, about the increase in the number of Covid-19 infections over the past few weeks and its rising trend. **>A3**

demic was predictable," wrote Al Hinai, who also serves as an assistant professor at SQU. "I clearly remember a lecture titled 'What germ will cause the next pandemic?' by Dr Anthony Fauci at an infectious disease conference that I attended four years ago.

"Dr Fauci emphasised at the time that a future pandemic is inevitable," he added. **>A4**

Four-page special supplement on Indian Republic Day with this edition



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24°
MUSCAT



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Research helps map traffic crash hotspots

1 The 8th National Research Award, organised by MoHERI, celebrated some of the brightest and innovative minds in the Sultanate. Among the 13 winning projects, 'Mapping road traffic crash hotspots using GIS-based methods: A case study of Muscat Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman' by principal investigator Dr. Amira Al Aamri, and her team took the award in the PhD category. **>A3**

WORLD Police to probe UK PM house parties

2 The London Metropolitan Police force on Tuesday said that it would investigate a series of events held at Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Downing Street offices during strict coronavirus lockdowns. The criminal probe follows allegations surrounding Downing Street parties that the British police force had previously declined investigating. **>A6**

MARKET OAB announces bonds redemption

3 Oman Arab Bank (OAB) announced the redemption of the Perpetual Subordinated Bonds (OAB PERPET. SUB OAB1) on December 27, 2021, in MSX (Muscat Stock Exchange). The bonds for a total amount of OMR30 million were issued by the bank on December 29, 2016, at an interest rate of 7.75 per cent p.a. and listed on the MSX Bonds market. **>B1**

HERITAGE

New archaeological discovery in Rustaq

MUSCAT: Archaeological excavations in the Wilayat of Rustaq, South Al Batinah Governorate, have revealed a large and sophisticated settlement, dating back to more than four thousand years ago, which includes a large number of huge buildings and tombs.

This was revealed in a site known by the locals as Al-Tekha, and located on the outskirts of the Al-Hajar Mountains on the western bank of Wadi Al-Ghashab, near the confluence of Wadi Al-Sahtan with Wadi Al-Ghashab.

It was excavated by the joint archaeological mission of the Department of Archeology at Sultan Qaboos University represented by Dr. Khaled Douglas and the Italian University of Pisa represented by Dr. Sara Pizzimenti, under the supervision of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.



The archaeological mission began its excavations at the site in early January 2022, as the first season of this mission at the site, with a plan to follow up the research and excavation work for

many years in the future.

The results of the archaeological excavation showed that the site was inhabited for the first time in the third millennium BC during the Early Bronze Age, representing

one of the settlements of the Umm an-Nar culture, which witnessed great and wide prosperity in the Omani Peninsula.

The site spreads over a vast area of land of more than 70 hectares, which makes it one of the largest settlements of Umm an-Nar culture in the Omani Peninsula.

A large number of domestic buildings of various sizes were found in its central area, in addition to several circular tombs that spread on the western side of the settlement, whose outer walls were elaborately built of white well-cut limestones.

It was also revealed that there are some huge circular towers in different areas of the settlement, some of which are more than forty meters in diameter, built of mud bricks walls based on huge stone foundations. **>A2**

**MIND POPPING
NEW LOOK!**





Dhuhr.....	12:24pm
Asr.....	3:32pm
Maghrib.....	5:54pm
Isha.....	7:07pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:31am

Dhofar taking all steps to check spread of COVID

Statistics indicate that active COVID-19 cases in the Dhofar Governorate have gone up to 513

Times News Service

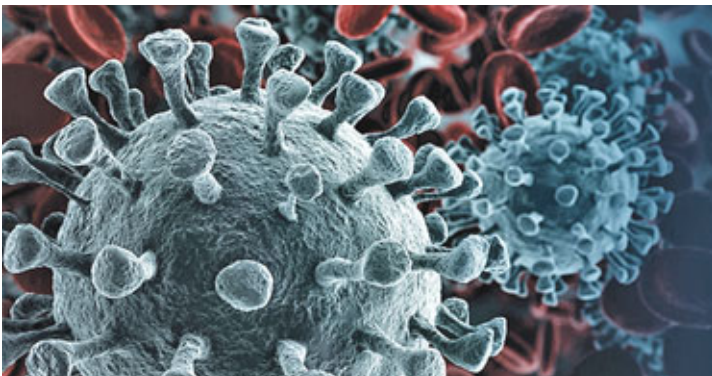
MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, including the Governorate of Dhofar is currently witnessing an increase in cases of COVID-19, including infections by the Omicron variant.

Statistics indicate that active COVID-19 cases in the Governorate of Dhofar have gone up to 513.

The number of cases since the beginning of the pandemic stands at 20,584, while the number of in-patients in the governorate has currently reached 16, including two in the ICU. The number of inpatient cases since the beginning of the pandemic has reached 1,990.

In view of this, the Directorate General of Health Services in the Governorate of Dhofar is implementing a number of plans and procedures to limit the spread of the infection. The steps include spread of awareness among the citizens about the risks and steps to prevent the infections.

Oman News Agency (ONA), in a statement, said the directorate is working with various players to put the decisions of the Supreme Committee on COVID-19 into effect, besides providing free vaccination in various wilayats of the governorate.



THIRD/ BOOSTER DOSE: 9.2 percent of the population in the Sultanate of Oman had received the third/ booster dose, most of them expats.

Dr Khalid bin Mohammad Al Mashikhi, Director-General of the General Directorate of Health Services in the Governorate of Dhofar, said : "All the facts at the global and regional level confirm the escalation and spread of the current wave of the new Omicron variant."

The Director-General said that negligence in taking preventive relating to travel requirements, immunisation, quarantine, social distancing, the use of masks and other measures, at the global or the national level, is a major factor aiding the spread of the disease.

Al Masikhi pointed out that appropriate and preventive measures had contributed greatly in checking the earlier waves of the pandemic, and reducing the damage caused to the health and lives of many people in various countries, and this applies to the Sultanate of Oman as well.

The Director General clarified that out of the 338,024 people above 12 years in age, eligible to receive the vaccine in the Governorate of Dhofar, 242,869 people had received the first and second doses taking the rate to 71.8 per cent.

The percentage of expats who were vaccinated was 76.5 per cent, while Omanis vaccinated with both doses, accounted for 66.1 per cent .

"9.2 percent of the population in the Sultanate of Oman had received the third/ booster dose, most of them expats," Al Mashikhi said.

The latest statistics from the Ministry of Health also indicate that about 90 per cent of those who have been hospitalised since January 9, 2022, have not received the vaccine at all. Seven per cent of them have received just one dose and 2.5 per cent have received two doses.

"Despite the good vaccination coverage in the governorate, we are striving to achieve a higher percentage of coverage with the second dose," the doctor added.

He emphasised the importance of taking the third dose after an interval of not less than three months of the second dose.

The third/ booster dose, is available free of charge to all target groups of citizens and residents in all wilayats of the Dhofar Governorate, he said.

26 JANUARY



ROP marks International Customs Day today

MUSCAT: The Directorate General of Customs at the Royal Oman Police (ROP) will join other departments of customs all over the world in marking the International Customs Day, which falls on 26 January every year.

The event celebrates the anniversary of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) formed in 1953. The CCC was renamed in 1994 as the World Customs Organization (WCO).

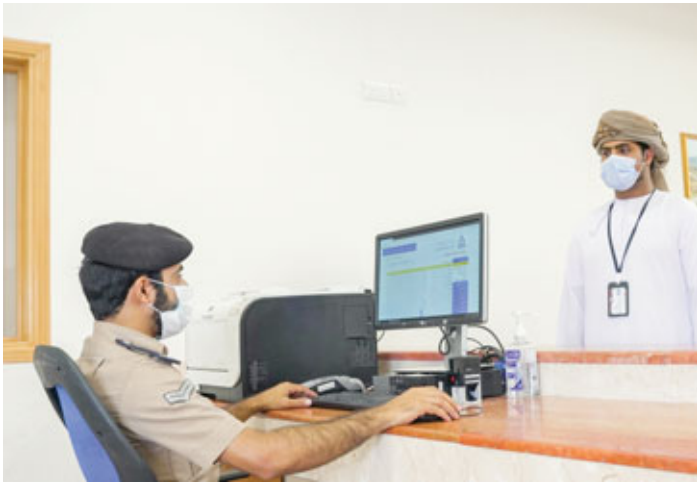
The WCO is an intergovernmental organisation that deals with governments instead of companies and private institutions.

It is mandated to tackle the challenges that come in the way of customs departments worldwide as they embark on enhancing systems, technologies and legislations related to customs.

Global trade

The WCO works towards boosting global trade and encouraging international cooperation, notably in the field of customs.

On this occasion, Colonel Said Khamis Al Ghaithi, Director General of Customs, said that the World Customs Organization launches every year a new logo that represents the methodology of customs work, and this year's celebration comes under the slogan of expanding the digital transformation of customs by adopting a data culture and building a data



ecosystem that focuses on how to work in a complete digital environment and the creation of an operational model that captures and exploits data from various aspects of the trade ecosystem.

Colonel Saeed Al Ghaithi added that the General Administration of Customs at the Royal Oman Police, under the directives of the police leadership, has adopted the scientific administration in carrying out all its functions and carrying out the tasks entrusted to it.

It is a miniature window through which all government agencies related to foreign trade are linked, and through which everything related to incoming and outgoing deals is completed, including procedures and permits for all parties.

The World Customs Organization praised this window as one of the best customs computing systems, and it resulted in outstanding results, as records were recorded in customs performance, as the fastest government permit issued through a statement system of only 12 seconds, and the fastest shipment cleared through seaports.

It was within only 21 minutes, and at the airports (24 minutes), and the percentage of the goods released within the first hour of arrival reached nearly 90 percent of the shipments, and it was not limited to the use of computing only, but the strategic planning methodology was followed by the General Administration of Customs. -ONA



AL-TEKHA

< FROM A1 Residents relied on copper

The presence of public buildings and huge towers indicates the importance of the cultural role played by the inhabitants of the settlement during the Early Bronze Age, which may have represented a major and important cultural centre in the north of the Sultanate in general and the Al Batinah Plain region in particular.

The pottery sherds and archaeological finds uncovered by the

expedition also indicate that the inhabitants of the settlement had close commercial relations with neighbouring civilizations such as the Harappa civilization in the Indus Valley and the Mesopotamian civilization. The remains of copper furnaces found inside the settlement indicate that the residents relied heavily on copper production, smelting, and trading in their subsistence economy.

Copper mines from which copper was extracted have not yet been found, but the archaeological mission is seeking to search for it in the coming seasons.

The site of Al-Tekha is the first settlement from the Early Bronze Age to be excavated in the South Al Batinah. Therefore, the site will be added to the tourist map of the Wilayat of Rustaq to give it a new cultural dimension. -ONA



"Tender Announcement"

Supply of Food Parcels for the "Ramadan Iftar Program" for the Year 1443 AH / 2022 AD for Al Mahrah Governorate and Surrounding Areas in the Republic of Yemen

Tender No. 1/2022

Oman Charitable Organization (O.C.O.) announces a tender for the supply of 27,900 (twenty seven thousand and nine hundred) food parcels for the "Ramadan Iftar Program" for the year 1443 AH / 2022 AD, and distributing them to all the districts of Al Mahrah Governorate and the surrounding areas according to the attached list of locations (16 locations).

Specialized merchants and suppliers wishing to submit their bids for this tender can obtain the terms and conditions from the Financial Department of Oman Charitable Organization against payment of nominal fees, during the period from Sunday 23 January 2022 to Thursday 27 January 2022. The last date for bid submission and acceptance shall be Monday 31 January 2022.

Bids shall be deposited in the tender box at the Financial Department, O.C.O. Headquarters Building at the Wilayat of Baushar, Muscat Governorate, Al Khuwair 33, Southern Street No. 47, near Sultan Said bin Taimur Mosque.

Bids shall be placed in closed envelopes sealed with red wax and addressed to H.E. the Chairman of the Projects and Tenders Committee of O.C.O. before the specified date.

O.C.O. is not obligated to award the tender in whole or in part or to consider the lowest price.



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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Research work to map traffic crash hotspots wins top award

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The 8thNational Research Award (NRA), organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), celebrated some of the brightest and innovative minds in the Sultanate of Oman.

Among the 13 winning NRA projects, 'Mapping road traffic crash hotspots using GIS-based methods: A case study of Muscat Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman' by principal investigator Dr. Amira Al Aamri, Specialist of Statistics at the MoHERI, and her team took the award under the PhD category in the Cultural, Social and Basic Sciences filed.

Dr. Amira Al Aamri elaborated that the research project aimed to evaluate the spatial and temporal dimensions, identifying the high-risk areas or hot-zones where RTCs are more frequent using the geocoded data from the Muscat governorate.

The study focused on identifying high density crash zones in the Muscat Governorate, exploring the characteristics of crash hot zone, and examining the spatio-temporal patterns of road traffic crashes (RTCs) in the study area. The analysis considered an



WINNER: Dr. Amira Al Aamri, Specialist of Statistics at the MoHERI

adjacency network analysis integrating GIS and RTC data using robust estimation techniques including: Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) of both 1-D and 2-D space dimensions, Network-based Nearest Neighbour Distance (Net-NND), Network-based K-Function, Random Forest Algorithm (RF) and spatio-temporal Hot-zone analysis.

As for the findings, Dr. Amira stated that the study demonstrated evidence of spatial clustering of RTC hot-zones on long roads demarcated by intersection and roundabouts. The analysis

highlighted evidence of spatial clustering and recurrence of RTC hot-zones on long roads demarcated by intersections and roundabouts in Muscat. Hot-zones appeared to be more dominant on road segments where highest level of traffic interactions exists, especially along Sultan Qaboos highway. Conversely, low crash densities observed along roads locating outward from the core market and workplace areas, and Muscat Expressway is one example of such roads. The findings confirmed that road intersections elevate the risk of RTCs than other effects attributed to road geometry features.

The results, according to Dr. Amira, also demonstrated systematic quantitative evidence of spatio-temporal patterns associated with the crash risk over different locations on road network in Muscat.

The spatio-temporal analysis provided evidences of the consistency in the positions of crash hot-zones in the study area. Comparing the mean of ranking of the same locations over five years of the study period, the results indicated that RTCs are inclined to cluster in the same locations within the study period. The in-

ference of such result could be attributed to the same road and traffic related features existing on these zones.

The findings clearly pinpointed the importance and influence of the road and traffic related feature in road crash spatial analysis. Therefore, Dr. Amira suggested that further safety inspections and engineering studies should be carried out to investigate the possible contributing factors, and identify the potential countermeasures such as engineering improvements to reduce the crash risk at these sites.

She further recommended that future research should systematically address potential effects of the socio-economic, population, and land use factors in identifying road crash hot-zones in Oman.

The research team included Dr. Amira Al Aamri (MoHERI), Dr. Abdullah Al Maniri (CEO of Data Academy in Muscat), Dr. Graeme Hornby (University of Southampton), Prof. Sabu S. Padmadas (University of Southampton) and Prof Li-Chun Zhang (University of Southampton). The research project was published in the *Spatial Statistics Journal*, and was presented in international conferences in Thailand and Spain.

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PANDEMIC

<FROM A1> Number of new COVID-19 cases likely to peak soon

"The first time, that the Sultanate recorded more than 2,000 cases was on July 13, 2020, when 2,164 cases were recorded. We also recorded 9 instances of more than 2,000 cases a day in June 2021," Al Maimani said.

"The highest number of infections (2,529 new cases) was

recorded on June 21, 2021, and we expect this number to be exceeded within the next two days or the beginning of next week."

The Ministry of Health also stated that the Sultanate of Oman has recorded one death, and that the total number of deaths has reached 4,130. The

total number of people recovered has reached 307,003, it added.

With the registration of 2,079 cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the Sultanate during the past 24 hours, the total number has gone up to 326,164.

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA



31,873 REACH Oman

The United Kingdom on Monday said it has removed all COVID-19 testing requirements for fully vaccinated travellers.

Story on UK opening for travel reached 31,873 people and had 2,093 engagements on Facebook.



991 VIEWS

Road project pact gives a flip to tourism

Morning Minute video
The Morning Minute video had 991 views and 51 likes on Instagram.



3,300 VIEWS

Maghrib Minute video in Hindi had 3,300 views and reached 13,600 people on Facebook.





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JOINT ACTION

Oman, Bahrain hold talks

MUSCAT: Foreign ministries of the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain held a session of official talks on Tuesday.

The Omani side was headed by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, while the Bahraini side was headed by Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Ahmed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary for Political Affairs.

Cooperation

The two sides reviewed aspects of cooperation between the two countries and affirmed their keenness to enhance joint action in various fields.



They also exchanged views on regional and international matters of common concern. The session was attended by Dr.

Juma Ahmed Al Ka'abi, Ambassador of Bahrain to Oman, and other officials from the foreign ministries of the two countries. -ONA

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Oman, Colombia sign visa waiver pact

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Colombia signed at the Foreign Ministry here yesterday an agreement on mutual visa waiver for holders of diplomatic, special and service passports.

The step comes within the framework of promoting bilateral relations between Oman and Colombia in various fields.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the governments of the two countries by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs and Ana Munoz de Gaviria, Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia to the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA



ONLINE EVENT

Oman chairs ILO meet on impact of digitalisation on financial sector



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Labour, chaired the meeting of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the impact of digitisation on the financial sector.

The online event was attended by member states' representatives of the three parties to the production process (employers, workers, labour unions).

Through its membership in the

ILO Board of Directors during 2021-2024, Oman is contributing to the promotion of international action in order to achieve the objectives of the organization.

The meeting discussed chal-

lenges and opportunities towards advancing the financial sector. It also reviewed policies and practices for addressing the impact of digitalization on the financial sector. -ONA

COVID

< FROM A1 Pandemic strongly affected many supply chains

"The questions is: When? How severe will it be? What germ would it be? Dr Fauci listed a slew of viruses and said that he expected the pandemic to be due to one of these viruses, mentioning corona and influenza among them. He said these viruses are characterised by their quick mutation and that they are found abundantly in animals."

Al Hinai explained that all that is required for a pandemic to occur is for one of these viruses to pass from animal to human, having a mutation that allows it to be transmitted between humans. The occurrence of future pandemics is expected and natural, he said, and everything we can do must be done to ward off their occurrence.

Lesson number two for countries to learn is that a nation's healthcare system is an essential part of a country's national security system and infrastructure.

"Countries take a risk when they reduce the capability of the health system, while relying on the private sector," revealed Al Hinai, pointing to the United States being the country that has had the most number of people who died from COVID, despite being an advanced country where the best treatment and medicines against the pandemic can be found. According to the John's Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, the US has reported 866,540 deaths from COVID.

"The reason for the failure is

that the United States lacks an integrated public health system," he said. "The public health system needs to be significantly legalised at the federal level, and infected people must be prohibited from entering the international borders. All these factors hindered the ability of this great country to properly confront the pandemic."

"Learning from what happened in the US is of great significance," he went on to add. "A key lesson to be learnt is that the public health system is a foundation to be strengthened at all times as achieving health security is an essential step towards national security."

The third lesson Al Hinai want-

ed to emphasise is the need for countries to be more self-reliant. Economic disruptions caused by the pandemic strongly affected many supply chains. In this regard, he used the example of the slow rollout of vaccines to many parts of the world to corroborate his reasoning.

"There have been a lot of talks recently about food security and medicine security," he said. "This means that every country must secure its needs for food and medicine, preferably through using internal sources so that it does not find itself in a predicament if a crisis occurs and external supply is cut off."

"Indeed, we experienced this

predicament at the beginning of the pandemic when we faced difficulty in importing diagnostic solutions, and again in the delay in obtaining anti-COVID vaccines," he revealed. "These delays greatly hindered the control of the pandemic. Without a diagnosis, it was difficult to detect and isolate infections. While we waited for vaccines, the Delta strain has spread and claimed thousands of lives."

Al Hinai urged countries to focus on investing in scientific knowledge and research so that vaccine research and live-saving medicines could be developed faster, leading to easier availability and better distribution of these vital supplies.

"If we look at Oman today and ask ourselves: what is the area in which we suffer from a severe shortage or deficit? In my view, we fall behind mostly in the scientific field," said Al Hinai. "The pandemic has made this deficiency and the complications arising from it apparent to those who see it."

"We have to foster our intellectuals and invest in developing scientific outputs, aiming to be one of the leading countries in this area," he said. "We have to reach a level of science that secures the economy and industries of the future, gives us the confidence needed to face all kinds of challenges and empowers us to exert our best efforts to achieve scientific security."

ARCHEOLOGICAL LANDMARK

Ibri, a delight for history buffs



Ibri is known for its archeological landmarks including forts, castles, and towers.



IBRI CASTLE was built 400 years ago, is located in the centre of Ibri, adjacent to its old market, in A'Dhahirah Governorate. According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "This castle contains an old-style mosque, characterised by its roof made of compressed gravel. The castle contains four gates: Sabah Al Hara, Sabah Al Barzah, Sabah Al Sinsilah and Sabah Al Awsat. The mosque on its western side is the castle's most important feature and occupies a large area." The mosque is one of the oldest mosques and

the castle has many gates.

Al Sulaif is another castle located in Ibri, Al Dhahirah Governorate. It was built by Al Emam Sultan bin Saif Al Yarubi. It consists of several buildings and houses surrounded by a wall with high towers, a mosque, a well, and falaj, which passes below the castle.

There are the remains of the town of Bat, which is the second archaeological site to be classified by UNESCO on the list of world heritage and culture sites.

According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism: "A must-see attraction

in the Al Dhahirah region, the Al Ayn and Bat Beehive Tombs are not only recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but also boast the title of the most complete collection of necropolises and settlements in the world, dating back to the 3rd millennium BC. More than 100 tombs stand definitely on the hilltops of Northern Oman, all shaped like beehives. Little is known about the tombs, or the culture that constructed them, but they are thought to date from 3000 to 2000 BCE.

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Saber, dagger of Imam Saif bin Sultan Al Yarubi displayed at National Museum

The saber and the dagger are from the collections of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour

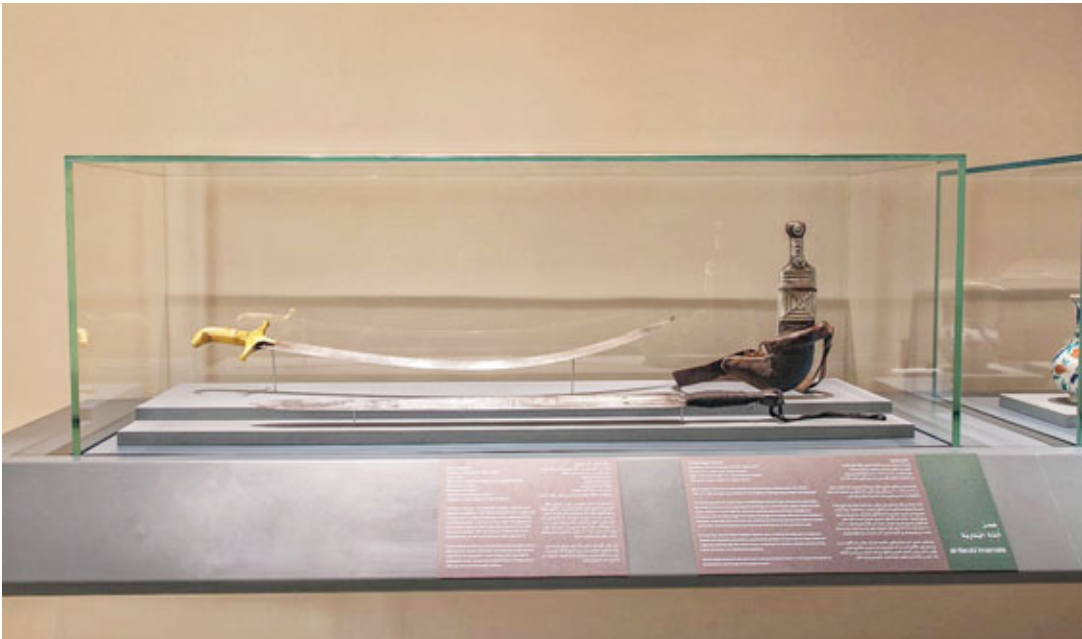
MUSCAT: The National Museum is displaying in the splendours of Islam gallery the Saber(shamshir) and the al-Haswah dagger(khanjar), which are attributed to Imam Saif bin Sultan Al Yarubi I(Qaid al-Ard') to the visitors.

The saber and the dagger are from the collections of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour.

Damascus steel

The blade of this saber, made of Damascus steel, patterned with the most complex design, known as the "Forty steps".

The signature of the swordsmith appears in the middle gold cartouche on the blade "the work of Asadallah 186", which was made by Asadullah of Isfahan, one of the



SPLENDOURS OF ISLAM GALLERY: The blade of this saber, made of Damascus steel, is patterned with the most complex design, known as the "Forty steps". - ONA



RIYADH

SAI takes part in GCC anti-corruption meeting



MUSCAT: The State Audit Institution (SAI) on Tuesday took part in the 21st specialists' committee meeting of the GCC Anti-Corruption and Integrity Protection Agencies, hosted in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The online meeting discussed the draft guiding law for public money protection in the GCC countries, and its alignment with the general frameworks for issuing laws at the GCC level, among other topics. -ONA

ONLINE FORUM

Oman takes part in global forum

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources took part in the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture 2022.

The online forum is hosted by Germany's Ministry of Food and Agriculture, in collaboration with the Bundesrat, from 24 to 28 January 2022. Oman's delegation is headed by Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al Bakri, Under-secretary for Agriculture.

This year's forum is themed, "Sustainable Land Use: Food Security Starts with Soil". -ONA

ARAB REGIME



NDC hosts Arab League Secretary General Gheit

MUSCAT: The National Defence College (NDC) on Tuesday hosted Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League to give a lecture themed "regional and international variables and their influence on the joint Arab action."

The lecture was given within the

framework of the general curricula for the eighth batch of the NDC.

During the lecture, the Arab League Secretary General highlighted the influence of the current Arab regime on the joint Arab action and the extent of the regional and international devel-

opments on the march of the Arab League's work.

He also touched on the major obstacles facing the joint Arab action. The lecture was attended by a number of senior officials and officers.

EXCHANGE VIEWS

Defence Secretary General meets Arab League Secretary General



MUSCAT: Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Zaabi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence on Tuesday received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison Ahmed

Aboul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League.

The two sides exchanged views and discussed several matters of common interest. -ONA



Ministry of Defence
TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defence invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in the following tender:

Subject	Tender Number	Last Date for Inquiries	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Documnet Price per copy (RO)
Supply and installation nucleic acid amplification testing equipment with cassette printer for armed forces hospital	02/2022	24/02/2022	28/02/2022	25 RO

1. Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs on the working days.

3. Payment of Tender documents to be made by using of any Visa Electron Cards or "Visa credit" Cards or through Smart Card issued from all the banks are operated in oman.

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INDIA MAHARAJAS TO PLAY THEIR LAST MATCH ON JANUARY 27

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Howzat Legends League Cricket announces the change in schedule for the remaining two league matches being played at Al Amerat cricket stadium in Muscat, Oman. Raman Raheja, CEO & Co - Founder, Legends League Cricket informed that the decision was taken considering the advice from the league medical team and the Apex Council after evaluating the player injuries in a particular team and therefore the inability to safely field a full team on January 26 and play a match. Each match is assessed on

a number of factors including the ability of a team to field a full team ; keeping in mind the severity of injured players and the ability of the team to safely prepare for and play a match. The health and safety all players remains our priority and hence the league will continue to act accordingly for the betterment of cricket and be able to deliver great and exciting games for all our fans and viewers. Recently Howzat Legends League Cricket (LLC) announced its partnership with Sony Pictures Network. Sony Pictures Networks India (SPN) to live telecast all the

matches of the league to be played in January 2022, on Sony Ten 1 and Sony Ten 3 channels as well as livestream the matches in India on SPN's premium OTT platform, Sony LIV. The first season of Howzat LLC will have former cricketers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Australia, England, among other cricket nations divided into three Teams representing India, Asia and Rest of the World. Cricket fans all across the world will get to see the Legends of Cricket sweat it out at their competitive best. Asian Lions vs. World Giants on January 26, India Maharajas vs World Giants on 27.



FORMER TEAM INDIA HEAD COACH

Shastri: Don't know what communication happened between Kohli, Ganguly

MUSCAT: Former Team India head coach Ravi Shastri said that one's captaincy should not be judged by the number of ICC titles won, rather it should be on how the cricketer played and whether it was with integrity. Shastri's comments come two weeks after Virat Kohli stepped down as India's Test skipper. Last year, Kohli stepped down as the T20I captain and then he was removed as ODI captain as the selectors wanted just one white-ball captain. "Many players have not won the World Cup, Sourav Ganguly has not won it, Rahul Dravid has not won it, Anil Kumble has not won it, Laxman has not won it. Even Rohit Sharma has not won it but it does not mean they are bad players. You go and play, there are just World Cup-winning captains -- MS Dhoni and Kapil Dev. Sachin Tendulkar took six World Cups to lift his first title," Shastri told ANI in an exclusive interview. "It is not a question that you are judged by the World Cup, at the



end of the day, you are judged on how you play, whether you play the game with integrity. That is how you judge the players at the end of the day," he added. BCCI President Sourav Ganguly and Kohli gave different versions on how the ODI captaincy was taken away from Kohli. Ganguly had also said that he had asked Kohli to not leave the T20I captaincy, but the 33-year-old said that nothing like that was conveyed to him. "I do not know what communication happened between both parties (Sourav Ganguly and Virat Kohli). I

have not spoken to them, when I get the chance to talk to them, then I can speak to give my viewpoint. When you have half-knowledge, then you should be quiet. When you have full knowledge, then you should speak," said Shastri. When asked whether Rohit Sharma is fit enough to be the next Test captain, Shastri said: "I have not watched cricket for three months, when I see the cricket then I can give my judgment. If I have not seen then I will not give my verdict." In his note while announcing his decision to step down as Test captain, Virat Kohli had thanked Ravi Shastri and MS Dhoni for their continuous support. Talking about Virat's decision to leave Test captaincy, Shastri said: "There is a time for everything, you have to respect Virat's choice. Many players in the past have left the captaincy to focus on their batting or cricket, be it Sunil Gavaskar or anyone. I have not seen anything, I do not think there will be much change in Kohli." -ANI

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Berrettini beats Monfils, sets up semis clash with Nadal

MELBOURNE : World number seven Matteo Berrettini beats Gael Monfils of France 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 3-6, 6-2 in a match that lasted for three hours and 49 minutes to enter the men's singles semi-final here at the Rod Laver Arena on Tuesday. The Wimbledon finalist will now face 20-time grand slam champion Rafael Nadal for a place in the final. The seventh seed Italian Berrettini started off on a confident note breaking the Frenchman Monfils in the fifth game of the first set to take the lead. From there on Berrettini held his serves to win the opening set 6-4. Matteo Berrettini got a great opportunity

in the second set to take an early lead as he had two break points taking a 15-40 lead. But Gael Monfils held his nerve save those breakpoints and the Frenchman saved three break points in the game to win it. In the fourth game, Berrettini saved four breakpoints and the game went to 10 duece. Finally, there was a break of serve in the seventh game Berrettini broke Monfils to take a lead and went on to win the set by a similar score of 6-4 taking a two-set lead. Just when it seemed that Berrettini could take away the match Monfils made a comeback. In the fifth game, Berrettini conceded

a double fault to give Monfils a break as the Frenchman took a 4-2 lead and went on to win the set 6-3 as the match went to the fourth set. Gael Monfils got the momentum and the Frenchman broke Berrettini in the fifth and ninth game to win the set 6-3 and make it two sets apiece as his wife. The fifth and final set the Italian made a roaring comeback breaking Berrettini twice in the first and third game to take the race to a 4-0 lead ultimately winning the set 6-2 as well as the match. The Italian will now face 20-time grand slam champion Rafael Nadal in the final. -ANI

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SPORTS

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Shonal's excellent run this season continues

The Indian School Ghubra fifth grade student was second in all but one race and finished behind Greek racer Leonidas Peruzzi

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Shonal Kunimal's excellent run this season continues as the ten-year-old Muscat-based go-karting racer claimed a creditable runner-up finish in micro-max category of the highly-competitive 2022 Dubai O'Plate Championship that concluded at the Dubai Kartdrome on Sunday.

The championship features some of the best racers in the region and Shonal, who finished second in the recent fourth round of the the UAE Rotax Max Championship Series, proved that he is one of the in-form racers.

A former champion (Bambino class) in the Dubai O'Plate race, Shonal had a consistent



GO-KARTING: The championship features some of the best racers in the region and Shonal proved that he is one of the in-form racers.

run in the three heats, pre-final and the final race. The Indian School Ghubra fifth grade student was second in all but one race and finished behind Greek racer Leonidas Peruzzi.

Lebanon's Jayden Hidding came third to complete the podium. It was a gritty comeback by Shonal, who was pushed to third place in the pre-finals but displaying good speed and track sense, he fought back to claim the second spot, the second podium finish in recent weeks.

Shonal has had good memories of the Dubai O'Plate, hav-

ing won the Bambino class title in 2019, and was determined to do a repeat but according to him 'technical hiccups' stalled his progress for the win.

"I would have wished to win the race as I did in 2019 but I experienced problems with my kart and that proved to be a stumbling block in my bid to repeat the win. It was a tough grid with some of the best racers in the region lined up. I am glad that I could get my second straight podium finish in the past two races," said Shonal.

Mentored by former Oman international Sanad al Rawahi,

Shonal expressed thanks to his coach Sanad and his dad, Shojai Kunimal, for their strong support.

"I owe a lot to my father and my mentor along with my technical team of Carlo John Bariquit and Mark Rose," he added.

Shonal believes that he has in him to 'win races regularly' but need a bit of luck and strong corporate support to back his ambition to become a top-class go-karting champion. The senior Kunimal was all praise for the support of Oman Automobile Association (OAA) managing director Suleiman al Rawahi.

Al Muthla Golden, Earn Trust book easy wins

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Muthla Golden got the better of Y Horizon in an E Division T20 Cricket League game at OAC 3 ground in Seeb on Friday. Y Horizon posted 154 for 2 on the board thanks to superb 51 by Nareesh Sudhakar and 47 by Jatin Patel. Sajith Chenganassery bowled well, taking 2 for 10.

Al Muthla raced to the target in only 16.4 overs, scoring 160 for 6 thanks to major contributions from Ruwan Rupa (35), Jeason Jacob (34) and Shyam Lekshman (27).

Brief Scores (E Division): Y Horizon 154 for 2 in 20 overs (Nareesh Sudhakar 51 - 4x4, Jatin Patel 47 - 6x4. Sajith Chenganassery 2-10, Aravinthan Raja 2-35) lost to Al Muthla Golden CT 160 for 6 in 16.4 overs (Ruwan Rupa 35 - 3x4, Jeason Jacob 34 - 5x4, Shyam Lekshman 27 - 4x4, 1x6, Sanjay Makwana 2-27) by 4 wickets.



Mohamed 2-15, Zaheer Abbas 2-25) lost to Earn Trust CT 119 for 5 in 16 overs (Arif Hussain 43 - 7x4, Fizan Tufail 26 - 3x4, Husnain Ali 2-28) by 5 wickets.

Karnik ton steers MCCC Red to victory

Young Karnik Samir's excellent 103 was the highlight of MCCC Red's thrilling win over MCCC Blue in a Junior League Under-13 match at Muscat Municipality ground 3.

Sujay bats ISAS to big win

Sujay struck a magnificent 109 not out to pave the way for Indian School Al Seeb's (ISAS) impressive 104-run victory against Indian School Wadi Kabir. ISAS openers Sujay and Jitendranath (95 not out) powered their side to 228 without loss in 20 overs. ISAS then bowled superbly to restrict ISWK to just 124 for 6 in 20 overs.

NEW COURSE

Oman Cricket to organise digital scoring course on January 31

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket (OC) has a good news for all new scorers tired of using pen and paper to record their matches: A digital scoring course will be held on Monday, January 31 to put them on their way to becoming online scoring experts soon.

The one and half hour course will be held at Oman Cricket Academy in Al Amerat, starting at 6.30 pm.

According to an OC official, only 25 participants will be allowed to

attend the course on a first come, first served basis.

"All they have to do is register and pay a fee of OMR10 for the course directly at the link t.ly/Lsch. All applications must be submitted by Sunday, January 30," he added. Further information can be had by calling Oman Cricket office at 24970018 and 24970331.

Oman Cricket has an excellent pool of match officials including qualified umpires, match referees and scorers who are regularly called to officiate in ACC and ICC international tournaments.

CRICKET

Samiksh XI capture Ruwi Cup 2022

MUSCAT: Ruwi unit of Kairali Arts Club Oman organised the Ruwi Cup 2022 cricket tournament at Amerat Ground on January 14, 2022. Unit Secretary Riyaz Kottappurath welcomed the teams and its players and President Sugathan presided over the function. Indian Social Club Oman Kerala Wing convener Santhosh Kumar inaugurated the event. Kairali Oman General Secretary Balakrishnan greeted the gathering.

Sixteen teams from different parts of Oman competed in the tournament. In the final, Samiksh

XI defeated Desert XI. Ashok of Samiksh XI was named Man of the Series, Man of the Match, Best Batsman and Desert XI's Rahul was adjudged the best bowler.

The organising committee said that the Ruwi Cup will be organised in the future too. Balakrishnan, General Secretary, Kairali Arts Club, Oman and Supin James, General Manager, Purushottam Kanchi Exchange presented the trophies to the winners and runners-up Abhilash Sivan thanked all players and sponsors on behalf of the organising committee.



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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by March 2022 reaching \$85.28, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.71 from the price of Monday, which was \$86.94. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,178.99 points, down by 0.55 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.03 per cent at 512.81 points. Aman Real Estate, up 6.67 per cent was the top gainer while, Dhofar Cattle Feed down 9.52 per cent, was the top loser.

OAB announces redemption of perpetual subordinated bonds

The bonds for OMR30 million were issued by the bank on December 29, 2016, at an interest rate of 7.75 per cent p.a. and listed on the MSX Bonds market

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) announced the redemption of the Perpetual Subordinated Bonds (OAB PERPET. SUB OAB1) on December 27, 2021, in MSX (Muscat Stock Exchange).

The bonds for OMR30 million were issued by the bank on December 29, 2016, at an interest rate of 7.75 per cent p.a. and listed on the MSX Bonds market.

Commenting on the notice, Sulaiman Ali Al Hinai, General Man-

ager - Treasury, Investment and Government/FI Banking Group, said, "In order to attract foreign direct investment in the country as well as diversify funding sources the bank had successfully completed first international issuance of AT1 Perpetual bonds of \$250 million in June 2021, which are listed in the International Securities Market of London Stock Exchange. Upon the completion of this issuance, the capital posi-

tion of the bank has strengthened significantly. We are also happy to redeem the bonds issued in 2016, at the first call option, which will enhance the investor confidence and prove the bank's permanent ability to service its obligations."

Irrevocable notice

As per the terms and conditions of the OAB PERPET. SUB OAB1 bonds, the bank has issued an irrevocable notice to the holders of these bonds on December 27, 2021, that it will fully redeem all the bonds on the redemption date, January 29, 2022, by paying the principal amount together with the interest accrued for the period.

The Muscat Clearing and Depository Company will carry out the process of transferring the amounts to bondholders, based on their investor records. The bonds will be delisted from the MSX Bonds Market post redemption.



“

In order to attract foreign direct investment in the country as well as diversify funding sources the bank had successfully completed first international issuance of AT1 Perpetual bonds of \$250 million in June 2021, which are listed in the International Securities Market of London Stock Exchange

Sulaiman Ali Al Hinai

General Manager - Treasury, Investment and Government/FI Banking Group,

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN



CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR125 million

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR125 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 182 days, from January 26 until July 2, 2022.

The average accepted price reached OMR 99.611 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.580 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.78094 per cent

and 0.78399 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 inter-

est 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 promote 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**

CONTRIBUTES TO FOOD SECURITY

Al Morooj Dairy to develop Oman's livestock sector



DISTRIBUTION NETWORK: On a daily average, the company collects 6,000 litres of cow milk. Next month, the company will launch a camel milk collection and distribution network averaging 12,000 litres a day under the 'Watani' trademark. - **ONA**

MUSCAT: Al Morooj Dairy project, a venture of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Oman Holding Company seeks to develop the livestock sector, enhance family income and contribute to food security in the Sultanate of Oman within the context of Oman Vision 2040 programmes. The company is undertaken under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. Since the end of December 2021,

Al Morooj Dairy Company began to receive cow milk at three centres that the firm set up and started to operate. The centres are known as Zeik Centre at Daisam Bar-al Madhi, Niyabat Ghadou Centre and Niyabat Hajeif Centre, all in the Wilayat of Salalah, Governorate of Dhofar.

On a daily average, the company collects 6,000 litres of cow milk. Next month, the company will launch a camel milk collection and

distribution network averaging 12,000 litres a day under the 'Watani' trademark. The company will operate each centre separately. This includes signing contracts with herders, determining milk quality, setting time and place for milk collection, specifying payment methods, conducting on-the-job training for field workers and looking into the cons and pros of operations with the prime aim of ensuring top efficiency. - **ONA**

GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS

Oil prices rebound

TOKYO: Oil prices bounced back on Tuesday, recovering some of the previous day's losses, as growing tension in Eastern Europe and the Middle East fuelled concerns over possible supply disruptions.

Brent crude futures rose 60 cents, or 0.7 per cent, to \$86.87 a barrel at 05:28 GMT, reversing a 1.8 per cent fall in the previous session.

US West Texas Intermediate crude futures climbed 45 cents, or 0.5 per cent, to \$83.76 a barrel, having slid 2.2 per cent on Monday.

Oil prices reached seven-year highs last week, bolstered by tight worldwide supply and resurgent global demand.

"The market tone stays strong, supported by heightening geopolitical risk," said Chi-yoki Chen, chief analyst at Sunward Trading, Reuters reported.

"We see profit-taking when the prices move higher, but buying appetite for oil remains solid as investors are worried about supply disruptions in the event of a Russia-Ukraine conflict," he said. - **BNA**

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Aman Real Estate, up 6.67 per cent was the top gainer while, Dhofar Cattle Feed down 9.52 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,178.99 points, down by 0.55 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.03 per cent at 512.81 points. Aman Real Estate, up 6.67 per cent was the top gainer while, Dhofar Cat-tle Feed down 9.52 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Ominvest were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 454 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.62 million, with more than 10.6 million shares changing hands. Out of 46 traded securities, 8 advanced, 12 declined and 18 remained un-changed. At the session close, foreign investors were net sell-ers for OMR30,000 while GCC

& Arab investors were net buyers for OMR29,000 followed by do-mestic investors for OMR1,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 6672.35 points, down by 0.48 per cent. Prices of Bank Muscat, Vi-sion Insurance, Muscat Finance, Ahli Bank, and Sohar Internation-al Bank were up by 0.39 per cent, 0 per cent, 0 per cent, 0 per cent, and 0 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Omaniya Financial Services, Al Anwar Investment, Ominvest, Global Financial Investments, and Taageer Finance were down by 2.26 per cent, 2.22 per cent, 1.95 per cent, 1.49 per cent, and 1.19 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5822.52 points, down by 0.66 per cent. Services Index was down by 0.61 per cent before closing at 1637.38 points. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,202.40	4,178.01	4,178.99	4,202.15	-23.16	-0.55
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,703.73	6,668.99	6,672.34	6,704.31	-31.97	-0.48
Industry Index	5,859.11	5,822.51	5,822.51	5,861.32	-38.81	-0.66
Services Index	1,647.36	1,634.23	1,637.38	1,647.36	-9.99	-0.61
MSX Shariah Index	514.19	512.81	512.81	512.98	-0.17	-0.03
MSX TR INDEX	5,058.63	5,029.27	5,030.45	5,058.32	-27.88	-0.55

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,621,375	2,618,957	454	22,334,741,254	3	21	22	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 25

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000002226	16,042	5,422	5	0.338	0.338	0.338	0.338	0.330	0.008	2.424	0.338	0.330	0.338	0.100	20,687,944
OM0000002786	1,282,808	660,912	15	0.520	0.524	0.520	0.522	0.520	0.002	0.285	0.524	0.522	0.524	0.100	1,865,572,541
OM0000001087	3,000	1,080	2	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.376	0.376	0.000	0.000	0.360	0.360	0.400	0.100	37,600,000
OM0000001160	22,252	2,826	4	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.127	0.124	0.130	0.100	10,795,000
OM0000001400	14,429	10,216	10	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.000	0.000	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.100	111,510,000
OM0000001590	325,307	18,868	19	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.056	0.058	0.100	17,814,487
OM0000001749	4,554	1,070	1	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.244	0.244	0.000	0.000	0.235	0.235	0.244	0.100	80,732,941
OM0000002200	218,558	25,786	9	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.000	0.000	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.100	230,056,581
OM0000003398	222,604	25,370	9	0.114	0.114	0.112	0.114	0.114	0.000	0.000	0.114	0.112	0.114	0.100	340,867,101
OM0000005005	50,000	22,000	7	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.000	0.000	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.100	24,200,000
OM0000006920	423,700	97,204	7	0.084	0.086	0.084	0.086	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.100	8,800,000
OM0000003224	423,050	188,680	16	0.446	0.446	0.446	0.446	0.448	-0.002	-0.446	0.446	0.430	0.446	0.100	105,438,860
OM0000001525	295,000	46,927	10	0.157	0.160	0.156	0.159	0.160	-0.001	-0.625	0.160	0.154	0.160	0.100	37,685,000
OM0000003026	12,402	9,568	7	0.772	0.772	0.768	0.772	0.780	-0.008	-1.028	0.768	0.772	0.780	0.100	578,000,000
OM0000002440	50,460	4,625	8	0.092	0.092	0.091	0.092	0.093	-0.001	-1.075	0.091	0.091	0.093	0.100	8,280,000
OM0000002188	385,000	165,350	13	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.436	-0.006	-1.378	0.430	0.428	0.430	0.100	94,600,000
OM0000001533	1,796,323	542,849	46	0.306	0.306	0.300	0.302	0.306	-0.006	-1.948	0.300	0.298	0.306	0.100	201,846,359
OM0000001772	93,600	8,228	15	0.088	0.089	0.087	0.088	0.090	-0.002	-2.222	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.100	17,600,000
OM0000002077	90,135	11,718	6	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.133	-0.003	-2.256	0.130	0.125	0.131	0.100	37,951,572
OM0000001418	58,575	11,124	12	0.192	0.192	0.190	0.190	0.196	-0.006	-3.061	0.190	0.190	0.198	0.100	38,000,000
Total	22	6,694,932	2,152,415	282											

Parallel Market

OM0000007910	14,530	1,395	2	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.090	0.006	6.667	0.096	0.090	0.096	0.100	19,200,000
OM0000001020	33	120	2	3.630	3.630	3.630	3.640	3.640	0.000	0.000	3.630	0.000	3.640	1.000	10,920,000
OM0000001152	697,000	75,416	25	0.107	0.109	0.107	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.100	14,940,000
OM0000001517	850,000	86,700	13	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.100	204,031,905
OM0000001681	12,148	728	5	0.060	0.060	0.058	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.060	0.060	0.100	3,318,500
OM0000002275	18	16	1	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.920	0.920	0.000	0.000	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.100	87,400,000
OM0000002549	317,430	39,044	7	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.122	0.125	0.100	368,551,227
OM0000002572	405	437	1	0.888	0.888	0.888	0.904	0.904	0.000	0.000	0.888	0.840	0.888	0.100	15,392,600
OM0000003521	284,076	21,022	9	0.074	0.076	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.072	0.076	0.100	15,020,997
OM0000003711	2,950	112	2	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.042	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.038	0.038	0.000	0.100	9,282,420
OM0000004788	125	12	1	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.095	0.097	0.100	16,800,000
OM0000004776	3,000	210	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.069	0.000	0.100	7,000,000
OM0000004825	51,020	2,450	3	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100	32,394,597
OM0000004833	17,800	855	5	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	34,291,504
OM0000001483	859,650	180,327	11	0.210	0.210	0.208	0.210	0.212	-0.002	-0.943	0.210	0.210	0.214	0.100	341,448,735
OM0000004420	90,498	9,066	11	0.101	0.101	0.100	0.100	0.101	-0.001	-0.990	0.100	0.100	0.101	0.100	223,695,303
OM0000002981	93,878	7,803	7	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.083	0.084	-0.001	-1.190	0.083	0.082	0.084	0.100	21,047,070
OM0000003125	203,300	13,512	21	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.065	0.066	0.100	13,200,000
OM0000007407	315,000	18,862	21	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.100	13,334,400
OM0000001319	34,202	3,994	3	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.116	0.118	-0.002	-1.695	0.115	0.110	0.115	0.100	3,884,288
OM0000005963	28,300	1,359	3	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100	70,204,870
OM0000004735	2,444	713	3	0.079	0.079	0.078	0.077	0.079	-0.002	-2.532	0.078	0.072	0.078	0.100	73,502,040
OM0000001566	29,431	1,508	10	0.052	0.052	0.050	0.051	0.053	-0.002	-3.774	0.051	0.048	0.056	0.100	6,373,000
OM0000001301	12,105	690	4	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.063	-0.006	-9.524	0.057	0.057	0.063	0.100	4,608,450
Total	34	5,926,143	4,662,542	172											

ABU DHABI NATIONAL OIL COMPANY

Adnoc announces new dedicated debt capital markets issuing entity and inaugural credit rating

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) announced today that it has created a new, wholly owned subsidiary, Adnoc Murban RSC Ltd (Adnoc Murban), which will become the primary debt capital markets issuing and rated entity for Adnoc Group.

Adnoc Murban is expected to be rated "AA" by Standard & Poor's (S&P), "Aa2" by Moody's Invest-

or Services (Moody's) and "AA" by Fitch Ratings (Fitch) - aligned with ratings assigned to Adnoc's shareholder, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. These strong ratings reflect Adnoc's conservative and robust financial profile, resilient operations, and the low cost and low carbon intensity of Adnoc Murban's onshore production.

Adnoc expects to maintain the

"AA" instrument rating provided by Fitch of the 2024 Adnoc Distribution exchangeable bonds (ISIN: XS2348411062). Separately, Adnoc has requested the withdrawal of its Group-level credit rating, first assigned by Fitch in February 2019, given the establishment of Adnoc Murban as Adnoc's primary capital markets issuing and rated entity. -WAM

TECHNOLOGY

Meta says new AI supercomputer to be world's fastest by mid-2022

WASHINGTON: Facebook parent company Meta has said that its newly unveiled artificial intelligence supercomputer will be the fastest in the world by the middle of next year.

"Today we're introducing the AI Research SuperCluster (RSC), which we believe is among the fastest AI supercomputers running today and will be the fastest in the world once fully built out in mid-2022," Meta said in a statement on Monday.

"AI can currently perform tasks like translating text between languages and helping identify potentially harmful content, but developing the next generation of AI will require powerful supercomputers capable of quintillions of operations per second," it added.

According to the company, developing the next generation of AI will require supercomputers capable of "quintillions of operations per second".

RSC, the company said, will help build new and improved AI models and allow for work across hundreds of different languages.

Meta also said the RSC will help build technologies for the next major computing platform - the metaverse. -ANI

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STUDY EXAMINES HOW WE UNDERSTAND EMOJIS

A study was conducted to understand how people perceive emojis in their daily lives. The study has been published in the 'Computers in Human Behaviour Journal'.

Emojis are small image icons that originated in Japan: Japanese "e" means picture, "moji" means word.

"We set out to explore to what extent reading emoji is more similar to reading words or interpreting pictures," explained Tatjana Scheffler.

To this end, the researchers conducted an online study where participants read sentences in which some words were replaced by emoji, and measured the reading time for each word. Subsequently, they asked questions to test whether the participants understood the sentences.

"As we had suspected and as other studies suggest, our participants easily understood sentences with emoji instead of nouns," the researcher pointed out.

The comprehension questions were even answered correctly slightly more often – but not significantly so – following the sentences containing emoji than following the same sentences without any emoji.

Normal words, however, do not only lead to the meaning while they are being processed; they also have other properties that are activated during reading: for example their pro-

nunciation. And words can be homophones: when two words have the same pronunciation but different meanings, for example, the knight and the night. The researchers wanted to find out if emoji can also trigger this phenomenon.

"Therefore, we had our test participants read sentences in which the emoji doesn't show the intended object but its homophone," Tatjana Scheffler explained.

"We showed that the sentences were almost always un-

derstood correctly, even when homophones were used," points out Tatjana Scheffler.

"This indicates that an emoji can be broken down into a complete 'lexicon entry' that contains information about its pronunciation. Based on this information, the participants then derive the other meaning," Scheffler added.

Still, the team also showed that the reading times differed considerably. The average reading time for a written-out word is approximately 450 millise-

conds, for a corresponding emoji approx. 800 milliseconds and for an emoji depicting a homophone more than 900 milliseconds.

This leads the researchers to conclude that the image must be interpreted first when reading emoji. Emoji are generally less recognisable and more unusual, and therefore not as easy to read as written words.

"This is also supported by the fact that those test participants who self-assessed as using emoji often, read matching emoji more quickly," Tatjana Scheffler said.

Since readers can also derive a pronunciation for emoji just like for words, homophone emoji are also readily understood. This takes longer, however, because the visual information has to be suppressed and the meaning of the homophone word has to be recalled.

"In this case, the fact that someone is used to emoji is no longer helpful. Participants who use emoji more often read the homophone emoji just as slowly as the others," Tatjana Scheffler concluded.

Together with the team at Charite, she plans to conduct a similar study with people living with schizophrenia. Since some of them have difficulty identifying non-literal meanings, a comparison with a control group should provide additional insight into language processing, the linguistic structure of non-literal meaning and the linguistic effects of schizophrenia.



FEATURE

73RD REPUBLIC DAY

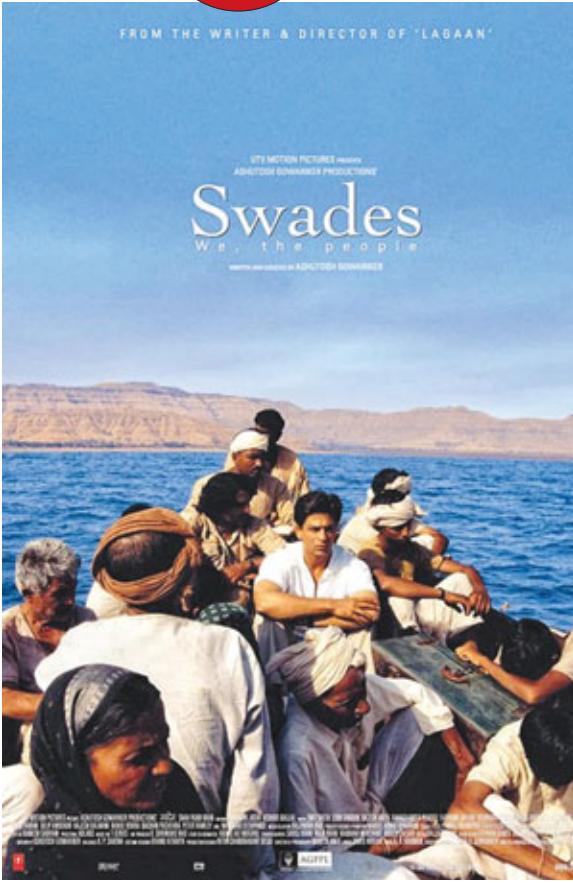
BOLLYWOOD FILMS THAT WILL
INSPIRE THE PATRIOT IN YOU

NEW DELHI: As India would be celebrating its 73rd Republic Day on Wednesday, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has once again altered the celebration a bit, but that can't affect the spirit of our fellow Indians.

As citizens of a democratic nation, everyone celebrates this day of national importance with great fervour and enthusiasm. The special occasion focuses on cherishing the ideals which formed the basis of the Indian Constitution. Hence, even if there are restrictions on the Republic Day celebrations, we can be part of India's patriotic spirit by watching films that mimic this emotion.

There are plenty of patriotic movies made in Bollywood that can leave you teary-eyed with their stories. So you can celebrate Republic Day 2022 by watching any or all of these films to inspire the patriot in you.

1



‘Swades’ (2004)
Directed by filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker, Shah Rukh Khan delivered one of his best performances of all time with ‘Swades’. The plot revolved around how a NASA scientist falls in love with his motherland all over again. He decides to relocate to India and dedicates his life to developing his childhood hometown.

The movie proved to be a commercial failure despite positive reviews. However, many feel that it was a celebration of the ‘real India’ that is synonymous with warmth and tranquillity.

2



‘Rang De Basanti’ (2006)
The Aamir Khan-starrer, which was released almost 16 years back, revolved around the journey of a group of close friends and high-lighted the need to question those in authority.

The film, which featured tributes to freedom fighters like Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh, among others, emerged as a major hit at the box office while receiving rave reviews.

4



‘Raazi’ (2018)
This Meghna Gulzar directorial added yet another feather of success to Alia Bhatt's film career. Adapted from Harinder Singh Sikka's novel ‘Calling Sehmat’, the movie is an inspirational story of a young Kashmiri girl Sehmat Khan, who marries Iqbal Syed, a Pakistani army officer (Vicky Kaushal), and moves to Pakistan as an Indian spy.

Her grit and resilience to help her country by finding out important information from Pakistan makes this movie a brilliant watch.

3



‘Airlift’ (2016)
This movie, which had Akshay Kumar and Nimrat Kaur in the lead, showed the story of a successful businessman stranded in the city of Kuwait set during the time when it got invaded by Iraq and resulted in thousands of Indians getting stuck in the warzone.

The storyline of the movie was inspired by true events and depicted an actual picture of what the Indian citizens went through before being rescued and brought home with the help of the authorities.

5



‘Uri: The Surgical Strike’ (2019)
Starring Vicky Kaushal and Yami Gautam, this movie is no doubt one of the best films one can watch on Republic Day. It's based on true events and revolves around the surgical strike conducted by India on terrorists after the Pulwama attack. The movie became immensely popular among the masses and was a blockbuster.

Bollywood has never been behind in giving due respect to the nation and bringing out the patriotic side in the audience. These films have portrayed the love citizens have towards our nation and how they can do anything and everything for it. Happy Republic Day. -ANI

ROUND-UP

Alizz Islamic Bank announces restructured Bushra Account



This move comes in compliance with the Central Bank of Oman’s decision to withdraw the ‘prize scheme linked saving deposit schemes’ with effect from January 2022 in all banks operating in the Sultanate

MUSCAT: Adding a new set of monthly profits on customer deposits, Alizz Islamic Bank recently announced the restructuring of its Bushra Savings Account. This move comes in compliance with the Central Bank of Oman’s decision to withdraw the ‘prize scheme linked saving deposit schemes’ with effect from January 2022 in all banks operating in the Sultanate. Currently, Alizz Islamic Bank offers a Bushra Savings Account based on the Sharia principle of unrestricted ‘Mudarabah’, where the customer is the owner of the money, and the bank manages the ‘Mudarabah’ by investing the pool of customer funds in joint ‘Mudarabah’ transactions. All profits are divided between the customer and the bank, based on a profit-sharing ratio deter-

mined by the bank. Profit rates based on each category will be applied to the deposit balances kept in the Bushra Account. Based on each customer’s account balance, the bank will deposit their profit shares every month. Customers can get more details on profit rates by visiting the bank’s official website or walking into their nearest bank branch across Oman. For 2022, Bushra has been restructured to keep up with the changes in customer lifestyles, making the account bigger to secure the best possible profits for the customer. Alizz Islamic Bank continues to tailor-make products and services to suit the expectations and requirements of customers. Bushra customers, whether Omanis or expats, will enjoy many advantages and benefits including

monthly profit payment, same-day debit card issuance and collection, free online and mobile banking, and SMS alerts, to name a few. Mohammed Al Ghassani, Acting Chief Consumer Banking Officer at Alizz Islamic Bank said, “The benefits and incentives offered by the restructured ‘Bushra’ account comes in line with our plans to provide customers with tailor-made products and services to meet all their needs and requirements in today’s ever-changing world.” “The new Bushra account allows customers to grow their funds as we help them to save and invest and eventually get to their desired financial goals. We are always keen to offer the products and services needed by our valued customers and it is always our priority to offer banking with transparency,” Al Ghassani added.

UNIQUE TRIMS

Maserati Oman introduces three new MY2022 trims - GT, Modena and Trofeo

MUSCAT: Maserati Oman has launched the recently introduced exclusive new trims for Ghibli, Quattroporte and Levante as part of the range’s renewal for Model Year 22 (MY22). The three new trims - GT, Modena and Trofeo - have been developed not only to fulfil all customers’ demands and expectations but also to fully express the different yet complementary souls of innovation, performance and design of the Maserati range. The brand’s DNA is expressed through unique trims created by the synergy between Centro Stile Maserati and the Product Development Team, with in-depth research into dedicated materials, details and characterisations. A spokesperson for Alfardan Motors said, “Maserati has updated its 2022 line-up by adding three fresh trims to Ghibli, Quattroporte and Levante. Dubbed GT, Modena and Trofeo, the trims feature Maserati’s new Trident logo. The three new trim levels embody different personalities in sophistication, sportiness, and high performance. All three trims are overflowing with high-end standard amenities and equipment spanning the realm of comfort, convenience, safety, and technology.” GT highlights Maserati’s char-



acter, charm and elegance and embodies the Brand’s more urban, minimal, and contemporary spirit, suitable for the dynamic and curious global citizens who are fashion-conscious but with their own sophisticated, original style. The Ghibli GT and Levante GT are equipped with a 330 hp 4-cylinder mild-hybrid powerplant. The Quattroporte GT, on the other hand, is powered by a 350 hp V6 engine. On the exterior, this trim enhances the models in the range with chrome inserts, while the wheel rims in 18” (for Ghibli and Levante) or 19” (for Quattroporte) are in alloy. The interior look is completed by leather comfort seats with a Dark Mirror Trim for Ghibli GT, a radica trim for Quattroporte GT, and Levante GT features a Black Piano Trim.

Modena is for customers who are sports enthusiasts as a means to enjoying their time and the context to the full. For people looking for a balance of innate elegance, dynamism and fun-to-drive. Ghibli Modena and Levante Modena are equipped with the 350 hp V6 gasoline engine. Modena S trims with 430 hp are also available for Ghibli and Levante. Quattroporte Modena features the 430 hp V6 powerplant. The trim enhances the cars’ athleticism through sport bumpers with Black Piano inserts and 20” alloy wheel rims. In the interior, every detail evokes the Brand’s typical driving pleasure, with sporty wraparound leather seats and Black Piano Trim interiors for Levante and Quattroporte or Dark Mirror Trim interiors for Ghibli. The Modena S trim fea-

tures the Nerissimo Pack and red brake calipers. Trofeo represents the maximum performance of Maserati’s personality: the focus is firmly on performance, without sacrificing comfort. This trim is at the top of the range in terms of package and, above all, performance. This is thanks to the powerful 580 hp V8 Twin Turbo engine. A carbon fibre trim, 21” alloy wheel rims and red brake calipers complete the exterior. The interior is luxurious, with sport seats in full-grain “Pieno Fiore” natural leather. Ghibli, Quattroporte and Levante Trofeo move into an extreme dimension, even higher-performing and faster, but always unquestionably elegant and safe. In terms of styling, the exterior three new trims (GT, Modena and Trofeo) have the new Maserati logo (introduced with the launch of the MC20) on the bonnet, new Trident logo on the C pillar and updated rear lettering. The badges of the specific trim (with the names GT, Modena or Trofeo) will also appear just above the three iconic side air ducts. The interior also features the new Maserati lettering on the central screen and the new “Trofeo” logo on the headrests.

PROMOTION



Nissan X-Trail offers countless features to enhance city driving

MUSCAT: If you are looking for the best car for city driving, Nissan X-Trail, the highly customer-centric SUV, should be your choice. A great, practical option Nissan X-Trail is roomy, has solid capabilities, next-level technologies, and offers countless confidence-inspiring innovative safety technologies, including intelligent around view monitor, rear cross traffic alert, and blind spot warning technology. Customers of X-Trail can now avail low EMI rate starting from OMR 183. EMIs are calculated on the basis of 20% down payment and 3.25% rate of interest for 6 years loan tenure. Making city driving easy, X-TRAIL delivers with best-in-class front head room and the supreme comfort of fatigue-reducing Zero Gravity front seats. There is a second row that slides and reclines, so users can adjust for maximum leg room, more cargo space, or anywhere in between. And with available tasteful touches like Power Panoramic Moonroof, and leather-appointed seats, this is one natural, relaxed, and decidedly upscale environment. Hands full after a day of shopping? Nissan Intelligent Mobility makes everything easier. With just a swing of the foot under the centre of the bumper with the intelligent key in the pocket and the liftgate will open in seconds with the help of motion activated liftgate. Intelligent Around View Monitor uses four cameras to give you a virtual 360° view of your surroundings. Selectable split-screen close-ups of the front, rear and

kerbside make parking easier than ever. And since all obstacles aren’t stationary like shopping carts, the available Moving Object Detection system can warn you about moving objects detected in your vicinity. Unlike traditional systems that only maintain a set speed, X-TRAIL’s available intelligent cruise control also helps maintain an adjustable set distance between you and the car in front of you. As traffic slows down or speeds up, X-TRAIL will respond accordingly. A senior official of Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, “It is the ideal car for city driving. Nissan X-TRAIL offers space, muscular styling, solid capabilities, next-level technologies, comfort and flexibility to drive around the city.” He adds, “In addition, from staying in touch and connected wherever you go to filling the cabin with a rich, beautiful sound, you will experience city outing on a whole new level with X-Trail’s advanced technology.” “Nissan Intelligent Mobility transforms X-TRAIL from just a car into your responsive partner, always looking out for you and those around you.” Built for real family outings in the city and off-road, Nissan X-TRAIL is a popular SUV with the latest technologies, yet still has the traditional benefits of a crossover. Nissan X-TRAIL delivers an “Excellent” GSO rated mileage of 15.1km/litre. This mileage is obtained under laboratory test conditions conducted by GSO for the 2.5L SV variant.

SHARIA-COMPLIANT AUTO FINANCE

Ahli Islamic makes auto finance even more convenient; offers mortgage-free auto finance

MUSCAT: Ahli Islamic has been building on the success of its innovative product offerings and has announced the launch of a new Sharia-compliant auto finance facility under its Islamic finance umbrella. Ahli Islamic’s new offer allows customers to opt for auto finance without having to mortgage the vehicle, therefore giving customers the flexibility to sell or transfer Mulkiya of the vehicle as per their convenience. By opting for mortgage-free auto finance, customers reserve the liberty to use the vehicle at their discretion. “At Ahli Islamic, we believe in making finances hassle-free and convenient for customers. While our auto financing product has always been well-received in the market, we wanted to enhance the convenience for our custom-



ers by putting more power in their hands. By removing the mortgage requirement, we give our customers the freedom to manage the sale of their vehicle without any restriction, thereby giving them more control over how they choose to handle their assets,”

said Yousuf Al Rawahi – DGM, Head of Ahli Islamic. The mortgage-free auto finance is offered exclusively to those customers who transfer their salaries to Ahli Islamic and who fall under Ahli Islamic’s approved employer list at the public sector and the

private sector as well as expatriate employees. Auto finance is offered for a maximum period of 10 years. Under Ahli Islamic mortgage-free Auto Finance customers are assured of Sharia-compliant auto financing facilities that allow them to procure their desired car instantly. Based on the product, customers need to submit an application for auto finance for their desired vehicle which the bank purchases from a third party on a spot payment basis. The bank then sells it to the customer through Murabaha sale contract that is on a cost-plus profit basis where the customers can repay the amount in comfortable instalments. With the new auto finance being free of mortgage, customers will find it easier to honour the instalments even if they need to sell the car.

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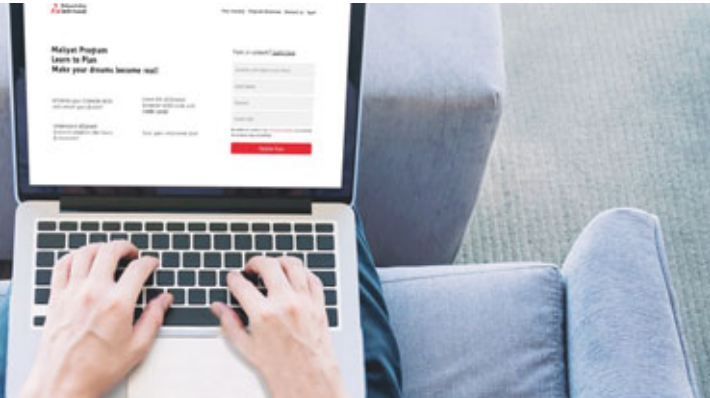
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With well-structured programme content that caters to different age groups, the key aspects of the programme include defining personal financial goals and financial planning to achieve one's goals

MUSCAT: Financial literacy is the ability to understand and apply financial skills effectively and includes personal financial manage-



ment, budgeting, and saving. Financial literacy is important because it equips us with the knowledge and skills we need to manage our money effectively. Global economic research has shown that financial literacy and awareness greatly help in reducing income inequality and facilitating equitable growth and development. Hence, in line with its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility, Bank Muscat

launched its free Maliyat financial literacy programme in 2019 to enable people in Oman to improve their financial literacy, knowledge, manage their income, and also save and invest wisely. The programme has seen steady growth in the number of participants and in 2021, the bank launched an upgraded website (<https://maliyatbankmuscat.com>). With well-structured programme content that caters to different age

groups, the key aspects of the programme include defining personal financial goals and financial planning to achieve one's goals. Speaking about the importance of improving financial literacy and awareness in the Sultanate, Talib Saif Al Makhmari, Manager, Community & Media Relations, Bank Muscat, said, “Financial awareness helps individuals manage income, save and invest wisely. Today, it is ever more important to be financially aware as financial products and services get increasingly diverse and complex. Since its launch in 2019, Bank Muscat’s groundbreaking Maliyat financial-literacy programme is helping equip participants with the skills needed to better manage their finances and take fiscally prudent decisions, thereby helping everyone, particularly the youth become financially independent. By empowering people in Oman, the Maliyat programme will contribute majorly to the socio-economic development and progress of the

Sultanate in the future.” When people are financially literate, they are better able to understand financial concepts like budgets, interest payments and plan for their future to be able to respond effectively to life-changing events such as economic downturns or a job loss. They are also able to choose various products like insurance and loans, based on their actual needs and financial abilities rather than be influenced solely by an advertisement or someone else who may not necessarily have their best interests in mind. The Maliyat curriculum comprises three main parts including: Oman’s economy, financial awareness and successful financial planning. To encourage completion of the course and to help participants apply the learnings in their personal lives, certification is provided upon successful completion of each module. The programme is also available in both Arabic and English to encourage maximum participation by everyone.

In addition to Maliyat, Bank Muscat also provides the Irshad financial coaching programme for the benefit of both individuals and entrepreneurs. The Irshad programme leverages the rich knowledge base of the bank’s executives for the benefit of those who seek mentoring. Coaching in several areas such as budgeting, managing financial debt, the importance of saving regularly, challenges for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and how to raise capital are available from experienced mentors and the programme is aimed at empowering participants with the relevant information they need for financial planning or running a sustainable business. The one-to-one Irshad sessions are conducted online and can be availed by Omanis and expatriates. Information about the Irshad coaches is available at the bank’s website and queries related to the programme can be sent to irshad@bankmuscat.com.

RECOGNITION

Bank Nizwa voted ‘Best Islamic Bank in Oman’ in Islamic Finance News Best Banks Poll 2021

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa has been voted the ‘Best Islamic Bank in Oman’ for the third year in a row, according to Islamic Finance News’ recognised survey and poll, cementing its status as Oman’s most trusted and leading Islamic bank. Bank Nizwa was given the title after a public vote. With 27,500 votes, the bank took first place, demonstrating its high levels of customer and stakeholder trust, as well as its role as a change leader with new Islamic finance products, and digital banking services. The IFN Best Banks Poll 2021 honours the best in the Islamic financial industry around the world, awarding institutions in a variety of categories from a variety of nations. On receiving the award, Khaled Al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa said, “This award honours Bank Nizwa’s dedication to creating new strategies, implementing cutting-edge technology, and prioritising digitalisation. We are thrilled to announce that we have been named the best Islamic bank in Oman for the third time by Islamic Finance News. We will continue to



strengthen our Sharia-compliant product and service range, as well as meet client expectations with new banking solutions, allowing the Bank to strengthen its position with dedication and commitment. Without a question, we want to continue to be in the forefront of raising awareness, and innovation, defining a qualitative leap in the Islamic finance sector.” The bank’s strategy has been drawn keeping in mind the next

phase of growth and expansion, aligned to the overall objectives of Oman Vision 2040. Not only did the bank show great resiliency during the pandemic, but it also exhibited a consistent financial performance that outperformed market expectations. With Islamic banking becoming more popular, Bank Nizwa is devoted to providing a wide range of Sharia-compliant financing solutions to meet the diverse needs of its clientele.

Bank Nizwa has established itself as a robust, innovative, and customer-centric Islamic banking institution, infusing innovation into all of its operations and creating a digital ecosystem to make Sharia-compliant solutions available throughout the Sultanate. Bank Nizwa has received a slew of local, regional, and worldwide awards since its inception as the country’s leading and fastest-growing Islamic bank.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

Occidental Oman honoured with Green Branch Award

MUSCAT: Occidental Oman (Oxy Oman) was recently honoured with the Green Branch Award, in recognition of the company’s work in service of environmental preservation and long-term investments in Oman’s environment. The award was given as part of the Oman Environment Forum, which coincided with Oman Environment Day. The event was held at the Grand Millennium Muscat under the patronage of Dr Saud bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Alya Saleh Al Maimani, Vice President of Block 9/27 Operations at Oxy Oman, accepted the award on behalf of the company. Oxy Oman has contributed to a variety of environment-focused projects, including the construction of two public parks, including the first public park in Hamra Al Doroa, Al Dhahirah Governorate, and a first-of-its-kind linear park in



Al Maabilah, Muscat governorate. The company has also sponsored the printing of the “Nature Reserves” Book in collaboration with the Environmental Authority, to raise awareness of Oman’s natural sights. Oxy Oman is also sponsoring the installation of mooring buoys at the Dimaniyat Islands Nature Reserves, in order to support marine life and coral reefs at the island. “We are proud to receive

the Green Award as part of the Award’s inaugural launch, in recognition of our collaborations to support environmental awareness and conservation,” said Stephen Kelly, President and General Manager at Oxy Oman. “Oxy Oman is committed to the preservation and sustainability of habitats and biodiversity through efficient use of energy, land, water and other natural resources where the company

operates,” he added. This programme falls under Oxy Oman’s umbrella of strategic partnerships and continuous collaboration with key stakeholders and is part of Oxy Oman’s endeavour and long-term commitment to support programs that enhance economic growth and sustainable development and that yield a positive impact in the neighbouring communities.



Lexus unveils exclusive benefits across range

MUSCAT: Here’s some fantastic news for Lexus enthusiasts looking forward to owning their favourite Lexus model. Lexus is offering exclusive benefits like 3 Years / 30,000 km (Whichever is earlier), and 1 Year Free Registration. The campaign is valid up to 23rd March 2022 (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details). In Oman, Lexus has a distinctive range that includes luxury SUVs, sedans and coupes too. The new NX is designed to meet the diverse lifestyles of customers around the world. Lexus has introduced two new petrol engines in the NX range, New NX 350 is introduced with a 2.4 L Turbocharged Gasoline engine with 275 HP/6000 Rpm - 8 Speed AT and 2.5 L HEV with 240 HP (Combined power) CVT. The NX’s luxurious interiors include the latest 14” NAV with touch screen / 10 premium speakers and with Digital inner view mirror for uninterrupted rear views. The Lexus UX has a front-wheel-drive configuration and is powered by a high-efficiency 2.0 litre, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT). The five-seat Lexus RX350 is equipped with a 3.5-litre V6 that is mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission. The RX is also available in a 3-row 7-seater option. Also available is the Lexus RX450h, a hybrid version featuring a 3.5-litre Atkinson-cycle engine. The Lexus GX460 is perfect for families who seek no-holds-barred adventure on their days off, yet also desire an easy-driv-

ing, comfortable and versatile luxury SUV for the workweek. 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 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 a 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. One of the most popular luxury sedans in the segment, the ES is available in options of 2.5L, 16 Valve, engine with a fuel efficiency of 17.2 km /L and a classy 3.5 Litre, engine paired to an 8-speed automatic transmission with a fuel efficiency of 13.6 km/L. The ES is also available in the Hybrid version with a 2.5-litre DOHC direct-injection Atkinson cycle 4-cylinder with intake VVT-i E and exhaust VVT-i with a total system output of 215 hp, offering 24.1 km/L mileage. In Oman, every Lexus vehicle comes with special benefits and privileges such as Manufacturer’s Warranty of 4 years/100,000 kms (whichever is earlier) and 24 hours on-road assistance from AAA.



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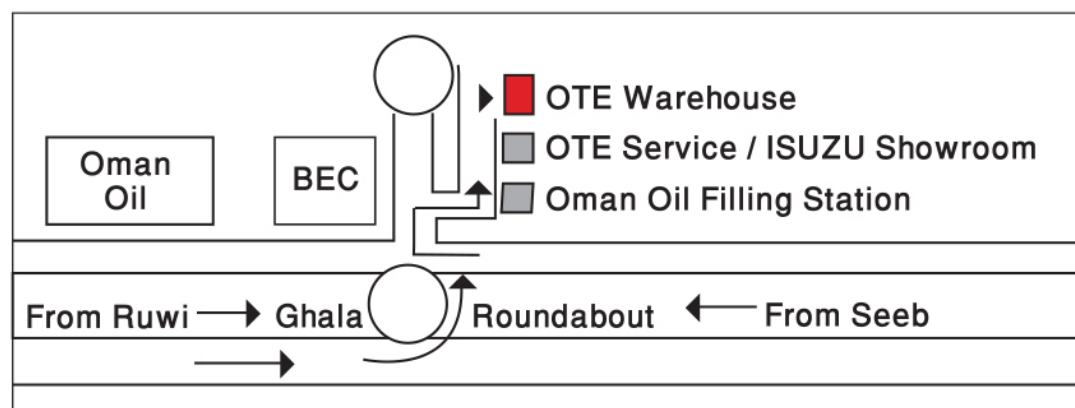
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