

WATER SUSTAINABILITY SYSTEM WORTH OMR24MN LAUNCHED

Nama Water Services launched a water sustainability system in the Governorate of Musandam to the tune of more than OMR24 million. The launch ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Ibrahim Said Al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam. **>A4**



TRA CONDUCTS TRIAL OF EARLY WARNING SERVICE IN AL MUSSANAH

Acting in cooperation with the Civil Aviation Authority and telecommunications service providers, the Communications Regulatory Authority (TRA) conducted the first real trial of an early warning broadcast service in the Wilayat of Al Mussanah, South Al Batinah Governorate. **>A3**



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CRACKDOWN

Unattended vehicles to invite hefty fines

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Governorate is ramping up its crackdown on dirty cars that have been abandoned on streets.

Owners of unattended cars and other vehicles parked on streets for long periods will face a fine ranging from OMR200 to OMR1,000 and then their vehicles will be impounded, an official at the Muscat Municipality said.

A fine of OMR5 per day will be levied if the owners do not collect the vehicle from the impounded site. Municipal officials said a warning notice sticker shall be placed on abandoned vehicles after close monitoring. If no action has been taken within the grace period for 14 days, the vehicle will then be towed away.

The crackdown on vehicles abandoned in car parks, outside villas and elsewhere has been launched recently.

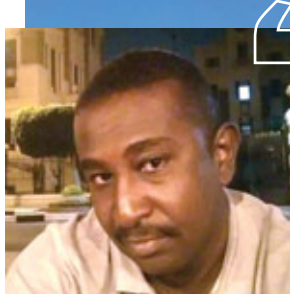
The municipality said notices to owners of unattended vehicles are part of efforts to improve



Muscat's appearance.

The municipality cracked down on unattended vehicles as part of its efforts to keep the city clean, improve its appearance, improve safety and security and reduce pollution.

The municipality also revealed that it had begun its campaign with 66 vehicles being towed away and a total of 167 warning stickers slapped on the vehicles in various wilayats of Muscat Governorate for abandoning vehicles in public areas. **>A2**



I HAD BEGUN MY JOURNEY FOR MUSCAT FROM MY CITY ON APRIL 15 BUT MY FAMILY CALLED ME UP AND ASKED ME TO RETURN AS THEY TOLD ME THAT THE SITUATION IS TOO DANGEROUS TO TRAVEL

EHAB ELTAYEB HASSAN, SUDANESE RESIDENT

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN

Discussion on student-parents' councils

1 Tasks of a symposium on the roles of student-parents' councils kicked off at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday under the theme of Social Partnership in Promoting Education. **>A2**

OMAN

ODB approves loans worth OMR26.7 million

2 ODB achieved high growth rates in credit performance during the first quarter of 2023. The value of approvals issued for loans of various categories amounted to OMR26.7 million. **>A4**

SPORTS

Arsenal beat Chelsea, claim top spot again

3 Arsenal found their way back to the top of the Premier League after surpassing their arch-rivals Chelsea by 3-1 in the North London derby on Wednesday. **>B6**

Times News Service

MUSCAT: It was a sense of relief and joy for people who arrived in Muscat via Saudi Arabia from conflict-stricken Sudan.

Hundreds of people have died since fighting broke out between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), sparked by plans to integrate the

TIMES OF OMAN **EXCLUSIVE**

RSF into the armed forces.

Among the several Omani citizens and Sudanese residents who safely landed in Muscat after an anxious wait was 46-year-old Ehab Eltayeb Hassan.

Hassan, was visiting his family in his native city of Shendi in

northern Sudan, situated on the southeastern bank of the Nile river, 150 km northeast of capital Khartoum.

In an exclusive chat with *Times of Oman*, Hassan recounted the ordeal of his escape but was relieved to have made it back to Oman without any harm.

Hassan was among the thousands who managed to flee Sudan with the assistance of Saudi Arabian authorities, who organised large-scale evacuation on ships and ferries from Port Sudan to Jeddah.

Two days after his arrival in Muscat, Hassan recollected his journey. He said: "I was scheduled to return on April 18, but

fighting began three days before my return. I live in the city of Shendi, which is far from Khartoum. We got to know that the airspace has been closed to April 30 initially, which has been extended to May 13.

"I had begun my journey for Muscat from my city on April 15 but my family called me up and asked me to return as they told me that the situation is too dangerous to travel."

Hassan hoped that things would improve but it didn't and then he received a message from his friend informing about the evacuation plan arranged by Saudi Arabian authorities from Port Sudan. **>A2**

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Efforts to make Muscat a friendly city for disabled

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality is committed to enhancing facilities in public places to ease access to care for people with disabilities.

Muscat Municipality works to ensure that people with disabilities receive equal access to services and promote their integration and inclusion in a broader way.

Efforts have been made to make Muscat a friendly city for the disabled. From putting attention on the usability of spaces or facilities to designing parks, constructions have been designed to ease the lives of people with disabilities. For Muscat Municipality, the keyword is accessibility for persons with special needs.

As part of its moral obligation towards people with disabilities, Muscat Municipality recently participated in the first forum dedicated for persons with disabilities which was opened on Monday under the patronage of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat.

The municipality has a number of laws and legislations that take



into account the needs of persons with disabilities before approving and granting the license for construction of projects and public buildings in Muscat Governorate.

Ramps are one of the key technical requirements during construction of buildings for easier movement and mobility, and should include adequate safety measures with the provision of guidance boards.

Vehicle parking

Muscat Municipality, in coor-

dination with the concerned authorities, allocates parking spaces for vehicles of persons with disabilities in all public and private parking lots.

It ensures that the parking lots are near the entrances and exits of the places they visit, and the special parking space is marked by guide plates.

Also, while designing the sidewalks and pathways, the municipality takes into account that they are free from obstacles, and are non-slippery.



Restrooms

Public toilets also have facilities for people with special needs with the municipality ensuring that they are built in a way to provide them easy access.

Among the key requirements for each building is to have prominent guide boards and signs installed that are easier to read and see. A special sign for people with disabilities is put up where services are available in public and private buildings and public facilities.

The municipality also takes into

account the ease for people with disabilities where stairs and elevators are located. They should not hinder movement of people with special needs.

Public facilities

Necessary spaces, corridors and elevators, if needed, are part of technical requirements for mosques, ceremonial halls, hotels, hospitals, halls and public facilities to allow people with disabilities to move easily. In order to enhance the access of persons with disabilities to recreational facilities, Muscat Municipality has provided a set of recreational games in a number of parks and gardens in Muscat.

The design of Muscat Municipality website also takes into account the ease of navigation and accessibility for people with special needs, as it complies with the international standards and fits with the most commonly used internet browsers. Among the features that can be used for ease of navigation are: providing a text reader feature and the possibility of changing the text colour and size for visually impaired.

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Maghrib.....	6:41pm
Isha.....	7:57pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:10am

Workers' meet reviews labour practices

The conference's opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr Abdullah Mohammed al Sa'eedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs



MUSCAT: The General Federation of Oman Workers on Wednesday held its 4th conference at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC). The conference's opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Al Sa'eedi, Minister of

Justice and Legal Affairs. The conference included speeches by the three production parties: the General Federation of Workers of the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Labour, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman, in addition to a speech by the Arab and international labor organisations. It also included visual presentations related to the roles and practices of labour



unions that reflect the reality of workers in the private sector. And a review of a set of achievements made by the trade union system during the period (2019-2022). It was also attended by ministers, undersecretaries, representatives of the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It was also attended by representatives of some Arab, regional and inter-

national workers syndicates. The conference was participated by 291 members of various syndicates. The conference also included speeches delivered by the Three Parties to Production: The General Federation of Oman Workers, the Ministry of Labour and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). In addition, a speech was delivered by ALO and ILO. -ONA

E-ELECTION SYSTEM



Oman workers' federation election results announced

MUSCAT: As many as 291 members of workers syndicates yesterday elected the chairman and members of the General Federation of Oman Workers Board of Directors for the term 2023-2027. The process was carried out through an e-election system. The results of the election came as follows: Nabhan Ahmed Al Batashi was elected as Chairman of the Board of Directors of

the General Federation of Oman Workers. Meanwhile, the elected members of the board comprise the following: Ibrahim Hamad Al Balushi, Aida Shamis Al Hashemi, Is'haq Juma Al Kharousi, Ammar Salim Al Ghufaili, Hamid Saleem Al Ma'mari, Mahboob Mohammed Al Rahili, Suad Ali Al Sulaimi, Mohammed Hamad Al Hinai, Taiba Sulaiman Al Hasani and Nasser Said Al Aarimi. -ONA

YEAR 2022/2023

SQU Council holds meeting



MEETING: The meeting for the academic year 2022/2023 was held under the auspices of Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Chairperson of the Council. -ONA

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) Council on Wednesday held its 3rd meeting for the academic year 2022/2023 under the auspices of Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Chairperson of the Council. HH Sayyid Dr. Fahd Al Julanda Al Said, Vice Chancellor of SQU and Deputy Chairperson of

the Council, was present at the meeting. The council reviewed the progress of implementing various decisions and recommendations undertaken by the council in the previous meeting. It also approved several decisions, namely updating the degree of Master of Art in Arabic Language and Literature, among other decisions. -ONA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Role, importance of student-parents' councils discussed at symposium

MUSCAT: Tasks of a symposium on the roles of student parents' councils kicked off at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre under the theme of Social Partnership in Promoting Education. As many as 580 participants took part in the sessions of the six sessions of the symposium, which was organised by the Ministry of Education. The opening of the two-day symposium was held under the auspices of Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information. The symposium presents 10 working papers that explore the experiences of leading models of parent councils, in the local front and the global arena. The sessions also include dialogue sessions with the departments concerned. The parent councils' symposium, titled "Community Partnership and Pioneering Roles in Education", seeks to enable parent councils to consider the best practices in activating their status as channels of communication between schools and society. The symposium also studies means of enhancing integration between school communities and different establishments of local



communities. The symposium looks into ways of building positive attitudes in terms of collaboration and social partnership within the context of education. This calls for establishing direct communication and partnerships among student parent councils in Oman. On the sidelines of the symposium, the ministry felicitated two Omani students for winning first place, at Arab world level, in the "Competition of classical Arabic speaking, rhetoric, poetry recitation and intensive grammar study". The competition was held in the Arab Republic of Egypt from 25 to 30 April 2023. -ONA



FIGHTING

<FROM A1> Relief after escape

"Port Sudan is 650km away from my city and I was told that ships were lined up to evacuate foreigners and residents from Gulf nations. I coordinated with my friend and decided to take the journey and meet him in Port Sudan," said Hassan. He added: "I purchased my own ticket from Shendi to Port Sudan to travel by bus on April 27 and reached safely to meet my friend. On arrival, I was happy to see that there were Saudi officials in good strength to supervise the evacuation process. "We were told about the priority of evacuees and after a day of waiting, I was on board a ship Amana that had nearly 2,000 people on board, which included foreign nationals and Sudanese residents in different Gulf nations. Among the people on board Amana were elderly women and

babies. There were many difficult moments, all of which involved fear, tension, and anxiety. "Following a journey of 24 hours due to sea conditions, we finally landed in Jeddah on April 29. It was a tough journey as the ship was packed to capacity but on arrival we were given a warm welcome by the Saudi officials." Hassan said that he along with other Sudanese residents of Gulf nations were then put up in Roshan Hotel for two days after the Saudi Arabian officials granted a free visa for a month. "Finally, I purchased a flight ticket from Jeddah to Muscat and arrived safely on May 1, much to the relief and joy of my family. My wife and my six children were overjoyed on seeing me as they were worried throughout from the moment I left Shendi," said Hassan.

ON STREETS

Abandoned vehicles

<FROM A1> The new campaign also aims to educate the community about how abandoned cars are affecting their surroundings and guide them on how to keep their vehicles in good condition, the authorities said. Leaving abandoned vehicles for long periods is a violation of regulations and laws with

the provisions of Administrative Resolution No. (171/2018) issued regarding the organisation of abandoned vehicles in public places in Muscat Governorate, as Article No. (2) of the regulations stipulates that it is forbidden for the owner of the vehicle to leave it in the public place in any way lead to distortion of the public view.

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MINISTERIAL DECISION

Decision issued to form Omani Hajj delegation

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs issued a ministerial decision to form the Omani Hajj delegation for 1444 AH, headed by Sultan Said Al Hinai, Director General of Administrative and Financial Affairs at the Ministry.

The ministerial decision also stipulates that Abdulaziz Masoud Al Ghafri, Assistant Director General for Endowments shall be deputy head of the delegation. -ONA



TRA conducts trial of early warning system

The experiment targeted the governorates of South Al Batinah, South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta, Muscat, Dhofar, Musandam and North Al Batinah

AL MUSSANAH: Acting in co-operation with the Civil Aviation Authority and telecommunications service providers, the Com-



munications Regulatory Authority (TRA) yesterday conducted the first real trial of an early warning broadcast service in the Wilayat of Al Mussanah, South Al Batinah Governorate.

The service was launched via mobile phones. Sub-committees were distributed in various coast-

al areas of the Wilayat to ensure that warning messages were received. The committee checked whether the warning messages reached subscribers of Omani Telecommunications Company (Omantel) and Omani Qatari Company (Ooredoo) in the same wilayat.

The experiment targets a number of coastal wilayats and regions. It covers the governorates of South Al Batinah, South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta, Muscat, Dhofar, Musandam and North Al Batinah.

As per the trial service, warning messages about a specific emergency situation are sent to subscribers' phones in record time and in accordance with international standards. They are sent in the form of specific tones that appear automatically on a subscriber's phone. -ONA

AIR CARGO EUROPE 2023

Oman Air Cargo to showcase growing reach in Munich



LEADING PLATFORM: The four-day event, considered the leading platform for international networking in the air freight industry, is anticipated to bring in over 2,000 exhibitors from 125 countries and regions.

MUSCAT: Oman Air's Cargo division is gearing up for the upcoming Air Cargo Europe 2023, set to take place in Munich, Germany from 9-12 May.

The four-day event, considered the leading platform for international networking in the air freight industry, is anticipated to bring in over 2,000 exhibitors from 125 countries and regions. Oman Air Cargo will participate with a dedicated booth, where it will showcase its innovative solutions and upcoming plans, including its first freighter that is expected during Q4.

"The air cargo industry is ex-

periencing a remarkable surge and Oman is well-positioned to capitalise on this trend with its strategic location and its focus on logistics as a cornerstone of economic diversification.

"Our efforts to transform Oman into a global logistics hub have yielded impressive results, and we continue to achieve record growth, a testament to our unwavering commitment to keeping pace with emerging technologies and meeting the ever-increasing demand for air cargo services," said Jaffar Al Lawati, Vice President - Commercial Cargo at Oman Air. -ONA

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NEW SYSTEM

Water sustainability project worth OMR24mn launched in Musandam



ODB approves loans worth OMR26.7 million in 2023

The total approved financing for the tourism sector during the first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR4.9 million

MUSCAT: Oman Development Bank (ODB) achieved high growth rates in credit performance during the first quarter of 2023. The value of approvals issued for loans of various categories amounted to OMR26.7 million, constituting an increase of 77% compared to the first quarter of 2022 when it stood at OMR15 million.

The converting industries sector is considered among the sectors most benefited from ODB financing during the first quarter of 2023, with a total amount of OMR8.4 million

distributed over 485 loans. Those include industrial light workshops.

The total approved financing for the tourism sector during the first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR4.9 million, benefiting 78 projects, with a growth rate of 386% compared to the same period in 2022 when the total amounts approved for tourism projects loans amounted to OMR1 million.

Moreover, the approved loans for the fisheries sector increased by 10% compared to 2022, bringing the value of financing to the

sector to OMR4.3 million, distributed over 586 loans, to be ranked third in terms of the value of lending during the first quarter of 2023. Meanwhile, vocational and general services came fourth with a lending value of OMR3.1 million distributed over 299 loans. The loans approved for the agricultural and livestock sector surged by 100% in terms of value and the number of beneficiaries. As many as 311 agricultural and livestock loans were approved, with a total value of OMR2.7 million.

Approved loans for the health sector registered the highest growth rate in terms of value, amounting to a significant increase of 509% compared to the first quarter of 2022 to stand at OMR1.8 million distributed over 14 loans. The total approved amounts in 2022 reached OMR300,000.

Loans for the educational sector achieved a slight growth of 3%, bringing the total value of loans approved

for the sector to OMR1.4 million, distributed over 32 educational loans.

The bank financed a mining project with a total value of OMR100,000. ODB also seeks to increase its contribution to financing this promising economic sector, especially in mining projects that contribute to the localization of industries and projects based on innovation in converting raw materials into high-value products that have a big demand in the local and international market.

Hamad Salem Al Harthy, Acting CEO of ODB, underscored that the bank seeks to be a prominent contributor to the national economy and boosting value-added projects. He added that the bank targets high growth rates during its short-term operational plan (2023-2025). It is hoped that the size of the lending portfolio of ODB at the end of the plan will reach OMR300 million, with an annual rise of more than 15 percent. - ONA



KHASAB: Nama Water Services yesterday launched a water sustainability system in the Governorate of Musandam to the tune of more than OMR24 million.

The launch ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Ibrahim Said Al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam.

The new system will provide 70 seaside villages with fresh water to be transported onboard ships (at a cost of OMR6.6 million), the opening of a desalination plant in the Wilayat of Khasab and the construction of desalination units in Musandam Governorate at a cost of more than OMR17 million.

The overall production capacity of the desalination units in the Governorate of Musandam stands at more than 18,000 cubic metres per day. - ONA

SHOWCASING HISTORY

National Museum launches cultural corner at Muscat International Airport to promote Oman



MUSCAT: The National Museum has launched a special corner in the departure hall of Muscat International Airport with the aim of enriching the cultural experience of travellers.

The cultural corner will showcase tales of communication between Oman and its civilized surroundings, with emphasis on Muscat International Airport as an additional chapter in the history of communication between Oman and the world. The corner is divided into several sections for the Omani dagger, the culture of perfumes, the Omani cultural impact in East Africa, the Daba treasure

and the Samad period in Omani heritage.

The corner includes 23 artefacts that will be displayed for a period of 5 years, subject to extension and renewal. The artefacts date back to different historical epochs.

It also includes a group of archaeological finds that reflect the culture of perfumes, which bear historical depth in Oman through the ages. The corner highlights the Daba Treasure which consists of thousands of artefacts recently discovered at a mass burial site in that area in the eastern tip of the Musandam Peninsula. - ONA



OBITUARY



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H H Sayyid Shabib Bin Taimur Al Said

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and the entire family on
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MYANMAR

Military junta pardons over 2,000 prisoners

YANGON: The junta in Myanmar said those who violate the “humanitarian” gesture will have to serve the rest of their sentence with an additional penalty.

The military junta in Myanmar released over 2,000 prisoners on Wednesday who were jailed for dissenting on the occasion of a festival marking the birth of the Buddha.

According to a statement by the military junta, 2,153 prisoners serving sentences were pardoned “to mark Kasone Full Moon Day,” a festival marking the birth of the Buddha.

The prisoners were convicted under Section 505(a) of the penal code, which criminalizes comments that could cause fear or

spread false news and is punishable by up to three years in jail.

The military junta said the gesture was meant to “pacify the spirit of the population” and was intended for “humanitarian reasons.”

The statement also mentioned that those who violate the law again would have to serve the rest of their sentence with an additional

penalty.

Authorities in Myanmar often announce large-scale amnesties to mark national or Buddhist holidays. In April, the junta had released more than 3,000 prisoners to mark the Buddhist New Year.

More than 21,000 people have been detained since the military coup in 2021. -ANI

Boy kills 9 in Serbia school shooting

The 14-year-old schoolboy who allegedly targeted his own school has been arrested



BELGRADE: Eight children have died after a 14-year-old school boy allegedly opened fire in his elementary school in Serbia's Belgrade, CNN reported citing officials. According to Serbia's Ministry of Internal Affairs, a security guard was also killed.

Six children and one teacher have been admitted to hospital, Serbia's Ministry of Internal Affairs said. The ministry further said that the 14-year-old schoolboy who allegedly targeted his own school has been arrested, according to a CNN report.

In a statement released on Facebook, the department said that it was informed about the school shooting at 8:40 am.

According to the department, the school shooting occurred at the Vladislav Ribnikar Elementary School in the Vracar region of Serbia's capital Belgrade.

The Ministry in a statement said that all available police patrols have been dispatched to the site. It further said that the minor

who is suspected to have fired several shots from his father's gun has been apprehended, as per the CNN report. In a statement, the Ministry said, “All available police patrols were dispatched to the scene, where they immediately went onto the school grounds and apprehended a minor, a seventh-grader who is suspected to have fired several shots from his father's gun at students and the school security

guard,” according to CNN.

According to the ministry, the injured are undergoing treatment and the police are working to find the facts and circumstances that led to the incident.

The ministry further said, “All police forces are still on the ground and are intensively working to shed light on all the facts and circumstances that led to this tragedy.” -ANI

TORRENTIAL RAIN

Flooding, landslides kill over 100 people in Rwanda

RWANDA: More than 100 people have died and many are missing after torrential rain caused flooding and landslides in western and northern Rwanda.

“Relief efforts began immediately, including helping to bury victims of the disaster and providing supplies to those whose homes

were destroyed,” the minister in charge of emergency management, Marie Solange Kayisire, told the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency.

But the task was hampered by heavy rain that continued to fall over large parts of the country on Wednesday.

Social media footage showed

houses destroyed, roads cut off by landslides and flooded fields.

Rescuers search for those trapped in their homes

“Our main priority now is to reach every house that has been damaged to ensure we can rescue any person who may be trapped,” Francois Habitegeko, governor of

Rwanda's Western Province, told Reuters news agency, adding that the death toll there stood at 95.

Another 14 people died in the Northern Province.

In May 2020, at least 65 people died in Rwanda as heavy rains pounded East Africa, causing at least 194 deaths in Kenya. -DW



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Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
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Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

RECONSTRUCTION



Iran president on 2-day trip to Syria

DAMASCUS: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi landed in Damascus on Wednesday for his first state visit since the Syrian civil war broke out over a decade ago.

Raisi was received at Damascus International Airport by Syrian Economy Minister Samer Al-Khalil.

The Iranian president is traveling with senior officials and an economic delegation and is set to meet Syrian President Bashar Assad during the two-day trip.

Before departing for Syria, Raisi told pan-Arab television station Al Maydeen his trip would “consolidate and develop” ties with Syria and other allies.

ed his rule when the Syrian war broke out in 2011.

Assad has relied on Tehran to stay in power, though he has never publicly acknowledged the role of Iranian fighters in Syria's civil war.

Iranian forces also later fought the “IS” group in Syria and its tactical military advisers remain deployed at military bases across the country.

Iranian leaders have spoken publicly about building a coalition. Besides military support, Tehran has also already supplied Assad's government with credit lines and Iranian businesses have won lucrative business contracts.

Raisi also called for reconstruction efforts and for refugees who fled the country's war to return to Syria.

The Iranian president is set to visit the Sayida Zeinab and Sayida Ruqayya shrines, both holy sites.

He will also visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a monument dedicated to Syrian soldiers killed in battle.

Raisi's visit comes as Iran and regional rival Saudi Arabia rebuild ties after years of tensions.

Tehran has been a key ally of Assad's government and defended

his rule when the Syrian war broke out in 2011.

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Arab leaders largely cut ties with Assad for years following his brutal crackdown on the Arab Spring uprising in the country. The breakdown in relations culminated with Syria being ousted from the Arab League.

But with Assad having control of most of the country and no clear threats remaining, leaders are slowly moving to normalize ties with Syria.

Saudi Arabia is hosting the Arab League summit later this month. Syria's membership is widely expected to be on the table. -DW

SHANGHAI COOPERATION

Indian foreign minister in Goa to review preparations for SCO meet

DABOLIM: A day before the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers' meeting, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar arrived at Dabolim international airport in Goa on Wednesday.

Jaishankar reached here to inspect the preparations for India's presidency of the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting. India took over the rotating presidency of the SCO at the Samarkand SCO Summit in 2022.



This year India is hosting several important SCO meetings including the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Goa from May 4-5. India had sent formal invitations to all SCO members and the foreign ministers of China, Pakistan and Russia have confirmed their participation in the meeting.

On its Foreign Minister's visit to India, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday that at the meeting Qin Gang will exchange views with other SCO member states' foreign ministers on the international and regional situation.

“At the meeting, State Councillor and Foreign Minister Qin

Gang will exchange views with other SCO member states' foreign ministers on the international and regional situation and SCO cooperation in various fields, among other topics, to make full preparation for this year's SCO summit,” the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov will also

take part in the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting on May 4. Regarding the same, the Russian Embassy in India said, “On May 4-5, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will take part in the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states in India.”

A Russian official release said that deliberation over “topical issues of the international and regional agenda” will also be raised by Foreign Minister Lavrov.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is also elated to attend the SCO foreign ministers' meeting in Goa. On this, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said that Bhutto-Zardari will lead the Pakistani delegation to the meeting of SCO foreign ministers in Goa.

Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during a weekly presser on Thursday stated that Bhutto-Zardari is attending the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting at the invitation of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Bilawal will be the first foreign minister to visit India after a gap of nearly 12 years, reported Business Recorder. In 2011, then Pakistan foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar visited India.

The members of the SCO include Russia, India, China, Pakistan, and four central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. -ANI

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Man held after cartridges thrown into Buckingham Palace

LONDON: A man was arrested after he approached the gates of Buckingham Palace and threw a number of items, suspected to be shotgun cartridges, into the Palace grounds on Tuesday evening, the Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

According to Metropolitan

Police, the man was arrested on suspicion of possession of an offensive weapon after a knife was recovered from him. The police said that he was not in possession of a firearm. The suspected items have been recovered and will be taken for specialist examination.

Cordons were in place after the

man was found with a suspicious bag. Specialists attended, and after assessment, police carried out a “controlled explosion” as a precaution.

“Officers worked immediately to detain the man and he has been taken into police custody. There have been no reports of any shots

fired, or any injuries to officers or members of the public,” Chief Superintendent Joseph McDonald, said in a statement.

“Officers remain at the scene and further enquiries are ongoing. At this time we are not treating the matter as terror-related,” he said. -ANI



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Tender Notice
Tender Ref No :ISS/013 - 10/05/2023

Sealed Tenders are invited from authorized service providers for :-

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2. Construction - Admin Cabin

Interested parties shall remit non refundable Tender fee of OMR 10/- each at school fee counter (Main Building) and can collect the Tender document between 9 am to 3: 30 pm (Sunday to Thursday) from 7th May 2023 to 17th May 2023.

Last Date for submission
17-05-2023 03:30 PM



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for Closure of Al-Khuwair Branch,
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This is to inform the public at large and our valued customers that effective 05 July, 2023 (the “Closure Date”), Habib Bank Limited Al Khuwair branch located at Main street, Madinat Sultan Qaboos, Al Khuwair, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman (the “Branch”) will be closed along with its entire business activities, including customer accounts. After the Closure Date, the Branch will not be open to its customers or the public.

All customers of the Branch are requested to take note of the Closure Date and take necessary actions to withdraw their deposits from the Branch and close their bank accounts before the Closure Date. With respect to any uncollected deposits, we will liaise with the CBO and act in accordance with its directives in this respect.

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India maintain top spot in ICC T20I rankings



Oman slide down by two places to 20th place

T20I RANKINGS (TOP-FIVE)
1. India (267 rating)
2. England (259)
3. New Zealand (256)
4. Pakistan (254)
5. South Africa (253)

DUBAI: India continue to reign as the top-ranked T20I team in the annual rankings update, running further away from England in second spot. The annual rankings see India add further two points, thus increasing their lead to 267 as they go eight points clear of world champions England (259). India had a below-par T20 World Cup in 2021 but bounced back with a semi-final appearance in 2022. The Men in Blue have been terrific in T20Is since May 2020, having lost just the one bilateral series (against Sri Lanka in 2021),

emerging victorious in 13 other series while one ended in a draw (against South Africa in 2022). The new rankings reflect all T20I series completed since May 2020, with those completed prior to May 2022 weighted at 50 per cent and every subsequent series weighted at 100 per cent. New Zealand (256) benefit from the latest rankings update as they make a two-spot jump from No.5 to No.3. They now breathe down the neck of England, with just three points separating the two sides. Pakistan and South Africa, the

two teams that the Black Caps leapfrogged to No.3 complete the top 5. Hong Kong and USA were the biggest victors, with both teams jumping three spots each, the biggest climb in the annual rankings update. Hong Kong enter top 20 from No. 21 to No.18 while the USA ascend to No.22. Among the biggest fallers are Oman (140 rating) and PNG, each down two places to 20th and 21st respectively while Singapore fell six places to No.36. A total of 84 teams are now ranked in the T20I team rankings after having played the minimum 6 T20I matches in the past three years. Unfortunately, six countries — Turkey, Brazil, Chile, Iran, Mexico and Peru — drop off the table after failing to fulfil the criteria of a minimum of six games played, with the latter five countries not playing a single T20I since May 2020. - [icc-cricket.com](#)

DELHI CAPITALS VS GUJARAT TITANS

Our bowlers were amazing: Warner

AHMEDABAD: Delhi Capitals skipper David Warner credited his bowlers in the team's win over defending champions Gujarat Titans on Tuesday. Warner said: "Our bowlers were absolutely amazing. Our batters struggled early up. "Credit to the way that Shami [Gujarat Titans] bowled, always presents a good seam and took early wickets. But a great anchor role with Aman [Khan] and Rival [Patel] and it was a fantastic way to finish our innings. That was a nail-biter. We just keep finding ways to lose wickets in clumps. Another runout. I just don't know what's happening with our



batting at the moment." The Australian added: "We tried to have positive intent today. It didn't come off. But look, we won and got the two points. We

wanted to come out and swing the ball and take early wickets. Khaleel [Ahmed] was on the sideline last game. He was fit last game and unlucky to miss out. "With Ishant [Sharma] forever getting younger and coming out and delivering, it's amazing to see him. How much did he hold his nerves there at the end, credit to him. I was nervous there when Tewatia was going off. He's renowned for that, he always hits the ball nice and clean towards the back end. Our best death bowler at the end has been Anrich [Nortje]. I passed the ball to him. Ishant was so clear with what he wanted to execute and he was able to do that." - **ANI**



SULTANATE OF OMAN

TENDER NOTICE

The Tenders committee of Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender: -

Tender no.	Description	Tender documents price (R.O)	Class	Last date for collection of documents	Last date for Submission of documents
558/2022/MAFWR/HQ-68-Recall-1	MAINTENANCE OF METAL ROOF FOR FISH MARKET AT SUWAIQ FISHERY HARBOUR	25/-	Specialized	Wednesday 10/05/2023	Monday 22/05/2023
308/2023/MAFWR/HQ-23	Design and Build Services for Development of Fish Landing Centre at Tiwi, Sur State, South Sharqiyah Governorate	295/-	Excellent	Sunday 21/05/2023	Tuesday 13/06/2023
309/2023/MAFWR/HQ-24	Rehabilitation and Maintenance of the Fish market in Samad AL-Shaan in wilayat of AL-Mudhaibi	25/-	Third	Sunday 21/05/2023	Tuesday 13/06/2023

- **Website:** <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, And the bidders can contact the Esnad technical support team at the number listed below to find out how to request electronic guarantees from local banks.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: **+96824402200 or tenderhd@mtcit.gov.om**.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

DELHI CAPITALS

Wanted to grab my chance at any cost: Aman



NEW DELHI: Delhi Capitals all-rounder Aman Khan, who smashed a match-winning half-century during the IPL match against Gujarat Titans on Tuesday, said that he wanted to grab his opportunity at any cost and feels that he carried out his role really well. Aman Khan, who scored 51 runs off 44 balls after walking into bat at 23/5, was eager to utilise his opportunity. "I wanted to grab my opportunity at any cost. We reached a fighting total through my innings, so I am really happy about that. My main aim was to carry out a role that my team required. I feel I was able to do my role well and most importantly we clinched a win."

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QUOTE OF THE DAY



“When we started T20 format, 140-150 was a winning score. But look at this one [today]. I just checked that the average score this IPL is 180.”

Rohit Sharma

TODAY'S MATCH



VS



Sunrisers Hyderabad

Kolkata Knight Riders

6pm, Hyderabad

POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	NR	NRR	PTS
GT	9	6	3	0	+0.532	12
LSG	10	5	4	1	+0.639	11
CSK	10	5	4	1	+0.329	11
RR	9	5	4	0	+0.800	10
RCB	9	5	4	0	-0.030	10
MI	9	5	4	0	-0.373	10
PBKS	10	5	5	0	-0.472	10
KKR	9	3	6	0	-0.147	6
SRH	8	3	5	0	-0.577	6
DC	9	3	6	0	-0.768	6

CSK: Chennai Super Kings, DC: Delhi Capitals, GT: Gujarat Titans, KKR: Kolkata Knight Riders, LSG: Lucknow Super Giants, MI: Mumbai Indians, PBKS: Punjab Kings, RCB: Royal Challengers Bangalore, RR: Rajasthan Royals, SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad

MOHALI MADNESS

Ishan Kishan-Suryakumar Yadav hit fifties as Mumbai Indians chase down mammoth target of 215; Liam Livingstone and Jitesh Sharma heroics go in vain for Punjab Kings

MOHALI: Quickfire half-centuries from Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav powered Mumbai Indians (MI) to a four-wicket win over Punjab Kings (PBKS) at Mohali on Wednesday. Chasing a mammoth target of 215 runs, MI were rocked early as they lost their skipper Rohit Sharma for a duck. Ishan Kishan and Cameron Green then built a partnership as MI crossed the 50-run mark in 5.2 overs. The 54-run stand ended after Green was dismissed by Nathan Ellis for 23 off 18 balls. Suryakumar Yadav was next up at the crease and took

the chase forward with Kishan. At the end of 10 overs, MI were at 91/2, with Kishan (43*) and Suryakumar (20*) unbeaten at the crease. The 100-run mark was up for the visitors in 10.4 overs with the duo hammering the rival attack. Kishan reached his fifty off 29 balls and soon the duo brought up their rollicking fifty-run stand. In the 13th over Sam Curran was hit for two fours and two sixes by Suryakumar, who brought up his third fifty this season off just 23 balls. Punjab's miserable bowling display continued as Arshdeep leaked 21 runs in the 15th over as MI raced

to 150-run mark in 14.2 overs. PBKS made a brief comeback into the match as Ellis dismissed Suryakumar for 66 off 31, an innings studded with eight fours and two sixes. Arshdeep then got Kishan out in the next over for 75 off 41 balls, comprising seven fours and four sixes. MI were reduced to 178/4 in 16.1 overs. Tilak Varma announced his arrival by smashing Arshdeep for two sixes and a four. He cut down the deficit to 21 runs in 18 balls. Tim David (26*) and Varma (19*) finished off the match with seven balls to spare in 18.5 overs. Ellis was the pick of the bowlers for PBKS, taking 2/34 in four overs. Arshdeep got one wicket, but gave away 66 runs in 3.5 overs. Earlier, an explosive half-century by Liam Livingstone and his century stand with Jitesh Sharma powered PBKS to a massive 214/3. PBKS were off to a shaky start as they lost Prabhsimran for 9. Following the early hiccup, skipper Shikhar Dhawan was joined by Matthew Short and the duo

smashed some fours and sixes as PBKS brought up their 50-run mark in six overs. The 49-run stand ended after Dhawan was stumped by Ishan off Piyush Chawla for 30 off 20 balls, with five fours. Livingstone and Short smashed Akash Madhwal for 16 runs in the 11th over, including a four and six by Livingstone. But in the next over, Chawla castled Short for 27 off 26 balls. In-form Jitesh Sharma and Livingstone then sent the bowlers on a leather-hunt as Jofra Archer conceded 21 runs in an over. The 50-run stand between the duo came up in 23 balls. Punjab continued to punish MI bowlers, hitting Arshad for 14 runs in the 17th over. Livingstone brought up his fifth IPL fifty in 32 balls, consisting of seven fours and a six. Archer was punished in the penultimate over, giving away 27 runs, including three successive sixes by Livingstone and a four on a wide ball. PBKS crossed the 200-run mark in 19 overs as Jitesh and Livingstone brought up their



century stand in just 42 balls. Livingstone was unbeaten on 82 in 42 balls (seven fours and four sixes) while Jitesh was unbeaten on 49 off 27 balls (five fours and two sixes). MI gave away 69 runs in the final five overs. **Brief scores:** Punjab Kings 214/3 (Liam Livingstone 82 n.o., Jitesh Sharma 49 n.o.; Piyush Chawla 2/29) lost to Mumbai Indians 216/4 in 18.5 overs (Ishan Kishan 75, Suryakumar Yadav 66; Nathan Ellis 2/34). -ANI

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LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS VS CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

LSG and CSK share points after rain plays spoilsport

LUCKNOW: A fighting half-century by 23-year-old batter Ayush Badoni guided a struggling Lucknow Super Giants to 125/7 in 19.2 overs against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in their IPL 2023 match before the match was called off due to rain

in Lucknow on Wednesday. Both teams were awarded a point each. CSK spinners ran through the home team's line-up to leave LSG at 44 for 5 in the 10th over. But Badoni and Nicholas Pooran (14) steadied the innings as they added 59 for the sixth wicket

before rain arrived. Moeen Ali (2/13) was the pick of the bowlers for CSK. Maheesh Theekshana (2/37) and Matheesha Pathirana (2/22) also got two wickets while Ravindra Jadeja took the important wicket of Marcus Stoinis.

GUJARAT TITANS

We lost because I could not get my rhythm, says Hardik

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Titans skipper Hardik Pandya shouldered the responsibility for his team's last-over loss against Delhi Capitals in the IPL on Tuesday.

Hardik played the anchor role as GT kept losing wickets at regular intervals on the other end. Pandya played an unbeaten knock of 59 (53) but it wasn't enough in the end.

Chasing 131, Titans needed 33 off the last 12 balls and then 12 off six, thanks to Rahul Tewatia, who hit three sixes off Anrich Nortje in the penultimate over. But when Hardik got strike in the last over against Ishant Sharma, he managed only a double and a single before Tewatia fell on the fourth ball, and Ishant brought it down to seven needed off the last ball before giving Capitals their third win.

"I tried my best but could not capitalise. It boils down to me," Hardik said.

"Obviously, we would have taken 129 [131-run target] on any given day. [We] just lost a couple of wickets and at the end, Rahul got us back in the game."

Hardik struck seven fours in his knock but not a single six, and no boundaries in his last 13 balls when the asking rate kept shooting up. Titans had lost three wickets inside the powerplay.

Despite not being explosive, Ti-



tans were steady thanks to a 62-run partnership between Hardik and Abhinav Manohar. However, the pair consumed 63 balls in the process with Manohar falling for 26 off 33.

Hardik said that Manohar's inexperience showed and once again asserted that it was his own inability to close the game that cost them. "We were hoping to get a couple of big overs in the middle but at that point of time we could not get rhythm," he said. "It was new for Abhinav as well. It boils down to how I was not able to finish the game. Full marks to their bowlers as well and full ownership on my side where I could not finish the game I should've."

Hardik also said that the pressure on them was due to the early loss of wickets and that made it

difficult for them to keep going with intent. "It was more about the pressure of [losing] wickets," he said. "I don't think the [track] played much role. It was a tad slower than what we are used to here. But they bowled really well. We lost a couple of early wickets and then we had to take some time. We could not get the rhythm in the middle. Rahul brought us back into the game. Otherwise, they were quite ahead.

"Intent had to be there. It's just that we lost a couple of wickets where if you keep losing wickets, it's difficult to keep the intent as well. We lost because I could not get my rhythm and we kept losing wickets at the start and that put us under pressure. We like to take it deep and hope to get a couple of big overs which we could not get." - Agencies

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by July 2023 reaching \$73.57, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$4.98 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$78.55. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,728.33 points, up by 0.05 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.42 per cent at 484.77 points. Oman Fisheries, up 2.86 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 9.66 per cent, was the top loser.

Middle Eastern carriers see 5.5% drop in March cargo volumes

The demand on Middle East-Europe routes has been trending upward in recent months with capacity increasing by 9.7 percent compared to March 2022, IATA said in its latest report

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle Eastern carriers experienced a 5.5 percent year-on-year decrease in cargo volumes in March 2023, according to a new report.

"This, however, was also an improvement to the previous month's decline (-7.1 percent) and the demand on Middle East-Europe routes has been trending upward in recent months with capacity increasing by 9.7 percent compared to March 2022," the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in the report released on Wednesday.

It further added that according to released data for March 2023 global air cargo markets showed a continued decline against the previous year's demand performance globally and this trend began in March 2022.

Elaborating on the report IATA

said that global demand, measured in cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs), fell by 7.7 percent compared to March 2022 (-8.1 percent for international operations). "This was a slight improvement over the previous February's performance (-9.4 percent) and half the rate of annual decline seen in January and December (-16.8 percent and -15.6 percent respectively), the report further added.

At this point, it is unclear if this is a potentially modest start of an improvement trend or the upside of market volatility. Irrespective of this, March's performance slipped back into negative territory compared to pre-COVID levels (-8.1 percent).

The report further said that capacity (measured in available cargo tonne-kilometres, ACTK) was up 9.9 percent compared to March 2022. The strong uptick in ACTKs reflects the addition of belly ca-



capacity as the passenger side of the business continues to recover.

The IATA report cited several factors in the operating environment and noted that even with record-low unemployment rates, the global economy continues to decelerate due to a combination of factors such as tightening global financial conditions, high levels of global debt, and supply chain problems including those linked to the war in Ukraine.

In line with the weakening global trade, the Purchasing Manager Indices (PMIs) for new export orders at the global level remained below the 50-critical line for a full

year as of March. China's PMI retreated to below the 50-mark in March, following a slight improvement observed in February.

The PMI for supplier delivery times indicates high inventory levels, which tends to have a negative impact on air cargo.

"Air cargo had a volatile first quarter. In March, overall demand slipped back below pre-COVID-19 levels and most of the indicators for the fundamental drivers of air cargo demand are weak or weakening. While the trading environment is tough, there is some good news," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

"Airlines are getting help in managing through the volatility with yields that have remained high and fuel prices that have moderated from exceptionally high levels. Looking ahead, with inflation reducing in G7 countries, policymakers are expected to ease economic cooling measures and that would stimulate demand," he further added.

March regional performance
Asia-Pacific airlines saw their air cargo volumes decrease by 7.3 percent in March 2023 compared to the same month in 2022. This

was a slight decrease in performance compared to February (-5.4 percent). "The drop in demand suggests that air cargo traffic in the region has not yet stabilised following China's reopening in January. Available capacity in the region increased by 23.6 percent compared to March 2022 as more belly capacity came online from the passenger side of the business" the IATA report said.

North American carriers posted the weakest performance of all regions with a 9.4 percent decrease in cargo volumes in March 2023 compared to the same month in 2022. This was a decrease in performance compared to February (-10.3 percent). The transatlantic route between North America and Europe saw traffic declining at an accelerated pace throughout March. Capacity increased 0.4 percent compared to March 2022, the report said.

European carriers saw the most substantial improvement in demand in March over the previous month.

Airlines in the region saw their air cargo volumes decrease by 7.8 percent in March 2023 compared to the same month in 2022. This was an improvement in performance versus February (-15.9 percent). Airlines in the region continue to be most affected by the war in Ukraine. Capacity increased 8.8 percent in March 2023 compared to March 2022.

FUTURE OF GREEN ECONOMY

Oman hosts panel discussion on GCC economic and development integration prospects



MUSCAT: The 3rd panel discussion to explore prospects for GCC economic and development integration kicked off yesterday. The event is hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Economy. The two-day event is entitled "The Future of Green Economy and Renewable Energy in the GCC".

The panel discussion deals with several working papers that cover a range of topics, such as carbon neutrality, the green economy, best practices to promote green investment and the future of renewable energy in the GCC.

The second day of the discussion panel comprises presentations and working papers on Oman's strategy for energy transition, the role of green hydrogen, prospects for investing and rationalising natural resources to achieve economic sustainability and applications of behavioural sciences in stimulating the rationalisation of energy consumption.

The panel discussion was attended by representatives of GCC countries, as well as representatives of relevant public and private establishments in Oman. - **ONA**

NEW OFFICE AT SOHAR FREEZONE

A.P. Moller - Maersk strengthens its footprint in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A. P. Moller - Maersk (Maersk), a global integrator of logistics, inaugurated a new corporate office at Sohar Freezone in Oman. Present at the inauguration were Christopher Cook, Managing Director, Maersk UAE, Oman, and Qatar; Omar Al Mahrizi, Chief Executive Officer, Sohar Freezone, and senior leaders from Maersk and Sohar Freezone.

Christopher Cook said, "Oman is a significant market for us where we are committed to serving our important customers by bringing world-class integrated logistics solutions closer to them. Our ambition is to simplify the supply chains, make them efficient and transparent, and thus contribute towards the Oman Vision 2040



that aims at making Oman a competitive economy."

He added, "Sohar Freezone was a natural choice for us to set up our new office because of its strategic location at the port and the world-class infrastructure of road network and air connectivity on offer."

The new office in Oman, the third

one in the country after Muscat and Salalah, will allow Maersk to get closer to its customers and create meaningful interfaces with them. Besides ocean transportation, Maersk will offer a host of services and solutions to its customers in Oman such as landside transportation, including cross-border move-

ment of cargo, customs clearances, warehousing & distribution, cold chain logistics and air freight.

Omar Mahmood Al Mahrizi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar Freezone, said, "As a fully-integrated logistics and industrial hub enabling global business partnerships, we are pleased to welcome Maersk, a global integrated logistics company, as our latest tenant at Sohar Freezone. This partnership will enable us to streamline our operations further as we continue to focus on logistics and supply chain optimisation and strengthen our position as a smart logistics hub. Together with our partners, Sohar continues to support Oman's ambitions to further expand the transport and logistics sector, as per the objectives laid out in the Oman Vision 2040."

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority will conclude today the compliance and anti-money laundering (AML) programme in insurance companies, which comes within the series of annual training programmes of the national initiative Tamkeen.

The CMA seeks to empower the national cadres in the insurance sector to achieve a sustainability strategy based on strengthening the sector's role in providing an investment environment appropriate to enhance the economic and financial stability in the Sultanate of Oman through qualified and trained national human cadres in various technical aspects of the insurance sector capable of replacing

and occupying various technical and senior administrative positions in the various categories of the sector's companies.

The programme was held to acquaint the participants with all the laws and legislations related to achieving compliance in insurance companies, as well as introduce to them the global systems and approaches used in combating money laundering. It is considered one of the most important training programs in the Tamkeen plan for the year 2023, due to the importance the CMA attaches to corporate governance of the regulated entities to achieve full compliance with all regulations, laws and legislations regulating the sector, and the optimal combating of money laundering and terrorist financing crimes.

WORKSHOP

Opaz outlines its initiative to improve services provided to investors



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) held a workshop to discuss the initiative to improve the services provided to investors in the industrial zones and unify the incentives and advantages offered.

The workshop was attended by representatives from Opaz, the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and the

Irish International Development Company (IDI).

This initiative aims to enhance the business environment in the industrial zones and adopt Opaz's experience in developing the same services in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) and free zones. It also intends to improve the services provided to investors to attract more investments and promote economic growth.

Other objectives of this initiative include simplifying licensing

procedures and expediting service delivery and efficiency at the same time, as well as examining opportunities to standardise incentives and benefits offered to investors in these zones.

In addition, the plan of execution timeline was decided to be during the second half of 2023.

Moreover, the participants exchanged different opinions and suggestions, highlighting the importance of improving the investment environment and developing

logistical services and infrastructure in the industrial zones.

Further, Opaz initiatives that are being conducted with an international house of expertise to develop the investment environment in Opaz-affiliated zones were also highlighted.

Such initiatives include the implementation of a one-stop shop system and the provision of an advanced care system for investors backed by a flexible legislative environment.

IS MODERATE EXERCISE SAFE WHILE TAKING STATINS?



Wondering if moderate exercise is safe for people who experience muscle pain from taking statins? Well, as per research published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, statin therapy does not worsen muscular damage, discomfort, or tiredness in patients who engage in moderate-intensity exercises, such as walking.

The findings are reassuring for patients who feel muscular discomfort or exhaustion from statins but still need to exercise to keep their cholesterol levels low and their hearts healthy. Statins have long been the gold standard for lowering LDL or “bad” cholesterol and preventing cardiovascular disease (CVD) events, but while generally well-tolerated, they can cause muscle pain and weakness in some. Physical activity is also a cornerstone of CVD prevention, especially when combined with statins; however, studies have shown vigorous exercise can increase muscle damage in some statin users, which can lead to decreased physical activity or cause people to stop taking their medication. Less is known about the impact of moderate exercise.

Researchers sought to compare the

impact of moderate-intensity exercise on muscle injury in symptomatic and asymptomatic statin users, plus non-statin using controls. Symptomatic vs. asymptomatic was determined by the presence, localization and onset of muscle cramps, pain and/or weakness using the statin myalgia clinical index score. Researchers also examined the association between leukocyte CoQ10 levels on muscle injury and muscle complaints, since statins may lower CoQ10 levels and reduced levels can predispose people to muscle injury.

All study participants walked 30, 40 or 50 km (18.6, 24.8 or 31 miles, respectively) per day at a self-selected pace for four consecutive days. Statin users had all been on the medication for at least three months. The re-

searchers excluded those with diabetes, hypo- or hyperthyroidism, known hereditary skeletal muscle defects, other diseases known to cause muscle symptoms or those using CoQ10 supplementation. There were no differences in body mass index, waist circumference, physical activity levels or vitamin D3 levels (low vitamin D3 levels have been associated with statin-induced myopathy and therefore may be a risk-factor for statin-associated muscle symptoms) among the three groups at baseline.

Researchers found that statins did

not exacerbate muscle injury or muscle symptoms after moderate-intensity exercise.” Even though muscle pain and fatigue scores were higher in symptomatic statin users at baseline, the increase in muscle symptoms after exercise was similar among the groups,” said Neeltje Allard, MD, first author of the study and researcher at the Department of integrative physiology, Radboud University Medical Center in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

“These results demonstrate that prolonged moderate-intensity exercise is safe for statin users and can be performed by statin users to maintain a physically active lifestyle and

to derive its cardiovascular health benefits. “Researchers did not find a correlation between leukocyte CoQ10 levels and muscle injury markers at baseline or after exercise nor was there a correlation between CoQ10 levels and muscle fatigue resistance or muscle pain scores.

In an accompanying editorial comment, Robert Rosenson, MD, Director of Metabolism and Lipids for the Mount Sinai Health System in New York, said patients experiencing statin-associated muscle symptoms will often avoid exercise because of muscle pain and weakness and concerns of making the pain worse; however, exercise is essential for restoring and maintaining fitness in people at increased risk for cardiovascular disease or who have had a cardiovascular event.” [Based on the study], many patients who develop statin-associated muscle symptoms may engage in a moderately intensive walking program without concern for worsened muscle biomarkers or performance,” he said. -ANI

SPORTS



Real Madrid title hopes all but over after defeat

MADRID: Real Madrid's slim hopes of regaining the Spanish La Liga title were all but extinguished by a 2-0 defeat at Champions League hopefuls Real Sociedad.

After a tight first half, Real Madrid fell behind when Eder Militao sold Thibaut Courtois short with a backpass and Takefusa Kubo slid into an empty net.

Madrid's frustrations spilled over as right-back Dani Carvajal was sent off for two bookings in quick succession. The home side, made to tick by veteran midfielder David Silva, sealed a deserved win when substitute Ander Barrenetxea fired in a late second.

The loss leaves Carlo Ancelotti's side 14 points behind rivals Barcelona with just five games left to play.

Earlier on Tuesday, Barca overcame 10-man Osasuna's stubborn resistance to earn a 1-0 win through Jordi Alba's late strike.

In a match where they needed to win to keep pressure on Barca, Madrid were without a host of key players - striker Karim Benzema, winger Vinicius Junior,

midfielder Luka Modric and centre-back David Alaba - against fourth-placed Real Sociedad in San Sebastian.

With the title looking out of reach, Madrid realise their best chances of silverware this season come elsewhere and already seemed to have an eye on Saturday's Copa del Rey final against Osasuna.

Three days after that, they host Manchester City in the first leg of their Champions League semi-final.

Real Sociedad's three points consolidates fourth place for the Basque club, who are eight points clear of fifth-placed Villarreal as they close in on Champions League qualification.

Meanwhile, Elche's relegation from the Spanish top flight was confirmed with a 2-1 defeat at Almeria.

Goals from Leo Baptistao and Adri Embarba, either side of half-time, put the hosts in control before Ezequiel Ponce pulled one back in the closing stages for the bottom team. - Agencies

Arsenal return to top of Premier League

Gunners outclass Chelsea 3-1 in North London derby on Tuesday night

LONDON: Arsenal found their way back to the top of the English Premier League after surpassing their arch-rivals Chelsea by 3-1 in the North London derby at Emirates Stadium on Tuesday.

The Gunners had gone four league games without a win and were heavily beaten last time out at reigning champions Manchester City, who replaced them at the summit with victory at Fulham on Sunday.

Arsenal responded by producing a magnificent first-half display, racing into a 3-0 lead inside 34 minutes courtesy of two neat strikes by captain Martin Odegaard and a scrambled finish by Gabriel Jesus.

Chelsea, who fell to a sixth straight loss under interim manager Frank Lampard, were thankful to goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga that the scoreline was not even more embarrassing and even pulled one back through Noni Madueke.

Arsenal, however, were never in serious danger and are now two points clear of City having played two games more than their title rivals.

The team is back to its best: Arteta

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta was happy with his team's display

"We wanted to have a very different approach to the game, and we did it right from the beginning. The team is back to its best. There was a lot of energy, determination, quality, and movement, and we were really going for it. We connected with our crowd straight away, we scored two magnificent goals, got control of the game and fully deserved to win," Mikel Arteta was



quoted by www.arsenal.com.

"We wanted to prove we had that fire in the belly. I could see that in the last few days, and we prepared the game well. Mentally we arrived in the right mood and

with the right level of energy. Everything went for us as well, which is important.

"We've had a couple of difficult weeks with very different games with a lot of emotions involved.

Today we're back to the top of the league - let's see what happens," Arteta added.

Chelsea's interim manager Frank Lampard said: "The first-half performance was not good enough, in every way."

"We were too nice to play against, nice off the ball, passive, things we talked about before the game defensively we did not do. We did not restrict the space between lines, we did not get the line up as much as we needed to, we did not affect pressure on the ball, and we did not make contact with Arsenal players."

"On the ball the same, passing short, playing to position, not playing longer, not making forward runs. Things that we spoke about and if you play like that, you get what you deserve." -ANI

LIFTING OF VACCINE MANDATE

Djokovic to compete at US Open

WASHINGTON: The 22-time Grand Slam champion and world No. 1 Novak Djokovic will be able to compete at this year's US Open after the United States announced it is lifting its vaccine mandate on international travellers, as reported by Sky Sports.

The world No. 1 is not vaccinated against COVID-19 and had previously been unable to enter America. The United States on Tuesday announced that the COVID vaccine requirement for international travellers will end on May 11, the White House said in the statement adding that on the same day, the COVID-19 public health emergency will also end.

In a statement, the White House said, "Today, we are announcing that the administration will end the COVID-19 vaccine requirements for Federal employees, Federal contractors, and international air travellers at the end of the day on May 11, the same day that the COVID-19 public health emergency ends."

Due to his lack of vaccinations, Djokovic was unable to compete in the 2022 Australian Open and US Open events. According to Sky Sports, the Serb had requested a special exemption to compete in the



US last month at the Miami Open and the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells, but he was not granted it.

Djokovic participated in this year's Australian Open in January and won his most recent major singles championship since entry

into Australia is no longer conditional upon receiving a COVID-19 immunisation.

Djokovic has clinched the US Open title three times, with his triumphs coming in 2011, 2015 and 2018. -ANI

BADMINTON

Chong Wei, Lin Dan to enter Hall of Fame

KUALA LUMPUR: Lee Chong Wei has been elected into the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Hall of Fame for 2023 along with China's Lin Dan, as per the Olympics.com. There are few bigger names in badminton history than those of Lin Dan and Lee Chong Wei.

"Badminton legends Lin Dan and Lee Chong Wei have been elected to the BWF Hall of Fame. They will be inducted at an official ceremony on 26 May 2023," Badminton World Federation tweeted on Tuesday.

Lin was a two-time Olympic winner and a five-time world champion; Lee retains the record for the most weeks as world No.1 with 349. The old rivals will be inducted to the institution in a ceremony on 26 May 2023 in Kuala Lumpur.

Lin won gold in Beijing in 2008 and four years later in London 2012. Lin won five gold at World Championships while Lee won 47 BWF Super Series and World Tour titles during his career, as well as three Olympic silver medals. -ANI

OUT FOR TWO WEEKS

Messi suspended by PSG over trip to Saudi Arabia



PARIS: Argentina captain Lionel Messi has been suspended by Paris St-Germain (PSG) for two weeks after travelling to Saudi Arabia without the club's permission this week, BBC reported on Wednesday.

The trip followed the French club's home defeat by Lorient on Sunday, in which Messi played the full 90 minutes.

Messi will not train or play for PSG during the period of his suspension. It is understood the 35-year-old asked permission to make the journey to carry out commercial work but was refused.

Messi, who has also been fined by the club, has a role as a

tourism ambassador for Saudi Arabia.

The World Cup winner's two-year contract with PSG expires this summer.

Barcelona vice-president Rafael Yuste claimed in March that the Spanish club were in contact with Messi about a return to the Nou Camp.

Messi has scored 31 goals and contributed 34 assists in 71 games in all competitions for PSG, and won the Ligue 1 title last season.

He is set to miss matches against Troyes and Ajaccio as PSG, five points clear with five games to go, look to clinch a ninth league title in 11 seasons.

VISIT TO ST ANDREWS

OGA members attend R&A conference

MUSCAT: A delegation from the Oman Golf Association (OGA) recently attended The R&A International Golf Conference 2023 held at St Andrews, Scotland.

Last staged in 2017 the three-day conference was attended by 170 delegates from The R&A's overseas affiliates with representation from 65 countries.

The R&A along with the United States Golf Association (USGA) govern the sport of golf worldwide. OGA general secretary and head

of delegation Ahmed Al Jhdhamy said: "We are grateful for the continuing support and guidance that the R&A have offered the Oman Golf Association. It was a pleasure to attend their international conference at St Andrews. We will continue to work closely with the R&A and their newly appointed regional development manager Neal Graham to ensure that golf in Oman continues to grow".

Jamie Wood, OGA technical director said, "As a golfer any visit to

St Andrews is inspiring and we have definitely come away with some valuable insights that we hope to be able to use here in Oman".

OGA represents amateur golf at all levels in the Sultanate of Oman as national teams compete at U13, U15, U18, men's and women's levels in tournaments regionally and internationally. In collaboration with the golf clubs in Oman, OGA have several initiatives to develop and grow the game, specifically amongst children and women.





DESIGNER BABIES ALREADY EXIST —THEIR CREATOR WENT TO JAIL

Gene editing in humans is not only possible, but a reality. Today, there are people with CRISPR-Cas9-edited genomes. Right or wrong, the treatment is here to stay. How do gene therapies work and what are their limits?

In 2018, a scientist called He Jiankui shocked the world when he announced the birth of two babies with edited genomes. Jiankui used the CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing tool on twin embryos to rewrite their individual CCR5 genes, creating a resistance to HIV. These two children, along with a third gene-edited child born a year later, represent the world's first gene-edited babies. Five years on, all three are reportedly living healthy, normal lives. The event sparked a major outcry among scientists and non-scientists alike, ultimately leading to Jiankui's three-year imprisonment in China for conducting "illegal medical practices." But although the three children may represent the first cases of embryo-stage genome editing, they are not the only humans with an edited genome. More than 200 adults have been treated in clinical trials using CRISPR-Cas9 to treat sickle cell disease. Gene editing therapies have completely changed their lives, curing the blood disorder that once disabled them. Right or wrong, new trials are in the pipeline for other genetic diseases.

CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing

The sudden explosion in gene therapies in the last decade comes down to the development of CRISPR-Cas9. While gene editing has existed since the 1990s, CRISPR was so revolutionary because of

its precise and programmable way of altering DNA. CRISPR-Cas9 is a two-part molecular system. CRISPR is the cluster of sequences you can program to find one specific section of DNA in a gene, while Cas9 is the editing element which cuts out a strand of DNA and adds a new piece in. Sounds simple enough, but the hard part is the delivery — the process must occur in trillions of our bodies' cells if we want to use it to treat a disease. As such, CRISPR is only suitable to treat diseases with "simple" genetic mutations in one cell type. If you know with certainty that a disease is caused by one error in one gene, like sickle cell anemia or certain forms of cancer, CRISPR has the potential to treat it.

The limits of gene therapy

What CRISPR can't treat are complex genetic disorders — anything with multiple mutations in multiple genes in different types of cells. "Very few patients have an identifiable genetic cause [of a disease] that you can target," said David Curtis, a professor of medical genetics at University College London, UK. Curtis is doubtful whether CRISPR can be used to treat any diseases that have more than one genetic mutation involved, at least for the time being. "If you take a complex genetic disorder like schizophrenia, gene therapy isn't going to help. The brain is an insanely difficult tar-

get to treat — you'd have to make multiple DNA changes in billions of brain cells to rewire brain cells that have developed in the wrong place. This doesn't seem likely to work," Curtis told DW.

Designer babies

There are two main approaches to gene editing: germline editing and somatic cell therapies. Germline editing is performed during embryonic development. If you edit the embryo when it's a single cell or a small number of cells, you edit all the cells that will divide from them, meaning the gene edit is in all the cells of the body. Great for curing diseases, but this treatment also affects sperm and egg cells, meaning the edited gene is passed down to children and grandchildren. So, by editing embryos, you alter the course of evolution for generations to come. It is precisely the use of this method, which sits at the heart of the "designer baby" debate, that put Jiankui in jail. Advocates say we could ensure that none of our kin developed diseases like HIV/AIDS or multiple forms of cancer, essentially eradicating them from existence. Critics raise issues with the notion of "playing God."

Somatic cell therapies have potential

In somatic cell therapy, genes are edited in cells removed from the patient (or donor), then returned to the patient. This is the method



Germline editing is performed during embryonic development. If you edit the embryo when it's a single cell or a small number of cells, you edit all the cells that will divide from them, meaning the gene edit is in all the cells of the body.

being used to treat sickle cell anemia, and it has potential for the treatment of multiple other genes with single point mutations. Most scientists argue that somatic cell therapies have more applications than germline editing. We have seen that it can work, and it sidesteps the awkward issues of designer babies. But somatic cell therapy has its problems, the most serious being potential off-target effects on the genome. "There's a chance you can introduce mutations into unwanted sites of the genome when you use CRISPR, changing or inactivating the function of other genes. The effects of this on the body are not really known," said Van Trung Chu, a CRISPR scientist working at the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in Berlin. Some random mutations in the genome could be harmless, but others could also run the risk of causing cancer or other genetic disorders. There are ways of combing the genome to look for mutations, but it is unclear yet what would happen if mutations were found. More gene editing to fix the first gene editing errors? "The mutations aren't completely random. Depending what Cas gene editing tool you use, you have an idea of where those mutations are likely to be," Chu told DW. All scientists can do now is perform deep sequencing analysis of genomes to find potential off-target mutations outside the gene

of interest. It's a bit of a needle in a haystack situation, if know roughly in which part of the haystack to look. "In the long-term, new forms of CRISPR-Cas9 technologies are being created that have less potential for off-target effects," said Chu.

The ethics of gene editing

Gene editing has not been developed in an ethical vacuum. Scientists and non-scientists alike have been challenging the technology before it was even feasible. In part, scientists have been monitoring themselves on the ethics front — most agree that editing embryos is off-limits. The legal disaster around Jiankui's HIV-resistant babies set the precedent for how seriously countries take gene editing. "It's pretty clear right now — you cannot edit germline DNA," said Chu. Gene editing is here to stay, but not without pushback. For many, there are issues of scientists "playing God." For others, there's a sense of discomfort, even disgust, with the idea of editing genes. After all, it interferes with nature. But then again, wouldn't people want their disease or their child's disease to be cured or even prevented with gene editing? We have the tool to treat and even eradicate some diseases. What is more ethical — to use the technology available to cure people, or to not use it at all? -nw

ROUND-UP

With EMI starting at OMR71, new Haval Jolion SUV is worthy bargain

Sales of this elegant SUV from Haval have been strongly buoyed by a package of incentives and freebies that have made the Jolion an eminently worthy acquisition for many price-conscious customers in Oman

MUSCAT: From the stable of global SUV specialist Haval is a new edition of Jolion – a compact SUV that is smart beyond its years. In addition to its bold architecture and masterful engineering, this smart SUV bristles with cutting-edge technology and safety features that simply outclass its peers.

Of late, however, sales of this elegant SUV from Haval have been strongly buoyed by a package of incentives and freebies that have made the Jolion an eminently worthy acquisition for many price-conscious customers in Oman.



across all three trims is a front grille, LED headlights, daytime running lights and automatic wipers, among other features.

The sides have body-coloured door handles and power-folding and adjustable body-colour side mirrors with turn signals. The rear includes an exhaust system, lift-gate cargo access, roof spoiler and LED taillights.

All trims share the same 1.5L turbocharged 4-cylinder engine that delivers 140 hp of power and 210 nm of torque.

The engine drives the front wheels with a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission.

Keeping in mind the Jolion's particular affinity with the younger demographic of customers, the SUV's interior is delightfully appointed

luxe and Luxury trims.

As with its siblings across the Haval line-up, the Jolion also benefits from innovative safety and drive assistance systems. Standard across all three trims are Anti-lock Braking System + Electronic Brakeforce Distribution, Hiss Descent Control, Rear Parking Sensors, Reverse Camera + Dynamic Assist Line. E-Parking is available on the Deluxe and Luxury trims, and so are Traction and Hill-Start Assist Control. Exclusive on the Luxury trim is a 360-degree camera Omniview System.

Although a compact SUV, the Jolion offers a perfect amount of space for the customer's needs. With 430 litres of boot space, there's enough room for anything and everything!

OTE Group is the exclusive dealer for the diverse product line-up of vehicles from Great Wall Motor, including the Haval range, in the Sultanate of Oman. Backed by a nationwide service network, OTE Group offers excellent sales and after-sales service support on par with global standards.

PROMOTION

ahlibank offers 10% cash reward on salary transfers

MUSCAT: Committed to enhancing customer experiences, while underscoring its intent to inculcate a savings culture, ahlibank continues its attractive 10% cash reward on salary transfers.

As part of this reward promotion, customers who transfer their salary to ahlibank will receive an immediate one-time cash reward of 10% of their monthly salary, with a maximum cash reward amount capped at OMR500.

The offer, open to both Omanis and expatriates, is structured to infuse a note of positivity while transferring salaries for the first time to ahlibank. All customers who transfer their monthly sal-

ary to the bank with an amount of OMR1,000 or above are eligible for this reward offer.

Muneer Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution, said, "This cash reward promotion is an extension of our gratitude to our customers who value our services and trust our products. We want our new salary transfer customers to experience the sense of gratification that is embedded in our scheme; we want each one of our customers to feel inspired to save and grow their money with our Bank. We are ready and excited to welcome all new salary transfer customers with this irresistible offer."

Pointing out that the promotion

will continue until further notice, he added that the Bank intends to forge positive relations with new customers while strengthening its ties with the existing ones. "It is important to note here that this scheme is an example of our leadership in implementing innovative products and services that are designed to enhance our customers' banking experiences. We have our fingers on the pulse of our customers and are open to their feedback, which is how we devise our new campaigns and offers. We will continue to initiate more such rewarding schemes throughout this year," he stated.

As the number of new entrants to the labour market increases,

ahlibank, looks to provide the best services that enhance its preferred status. This scheme is an effective step that reflects the Bank's contribution to supporting the financial stability efforts of beneficiaries, thereby enhancing the economic and social level for individuals and society at large.

ahlibank is keen to invest in high-efficiency banking solutions using the latest innovations to support its customers' goals and elevate its position in the market. The bank has earned a reputation for enabling its customers to benefit from the best services and products and to provide more easy and secure banking solutions.



MHD enhances its offerings with opening of new MG Service Centre, TyrePlus outlet and Jetour showroom

MUSCAT: MHD ACERE, a leading automotive distributor in Oman has announced the relocation and enhancement of its MG Service Centre, as well as the opening of a brand new TyrePlus outlet and a second Jetour showroom in Al Mabelah.

The MG Service Centre has been relocated to a new, more spacious location to better handle the ever-increasing demands of customers in Al Mabelah. The service centre will be of great benefit to MG owners in the area, offering them a more convenient facility to service their vehicles closer to home. The centre has also been upgraded to provide even better services to customers. With expertly trained professionals and a range of facilities to suit every need, including oil change service, wheel balancing and alignment, AC check, car battery replacement, brake service, tyre puncture repair, and general car checks, the MG Service Centre is equipped to meet all of the customers' automotive needs.

The launch of the new TyrePlus outlet in Mabelah is another exciting addition to MHD ACERE's lineup of offerings. TyrePlus is the only destination where customers can expect world-class brands like Michelin, BFGoodrich, Varta and

Optima and a range of facilities to suit every need. The expertly trained professionals at TyrePlus offer faster and superior services to customers, providing premium tyre brands, professional fitment, and a variety of other services to ensure that customers' vehicles run smoothly and safely.

The opening of Jetour's second showroom in Mabelah is the latest addition to the dealership's commitment to providing the ultimate automotive experience. The showroom features a fully-equipped after-sales service centre tailored to provide customers with the highest level of service and support. With a wide range of Jetour vehicles on display, customers can explore the latest models and take advantage of expert advice and support from the dealership's trained professionals.

"We are thrilled to be able to offer our customers even better services and experiences with our upgraded MG Service Centre, new TyrePlus outlet, and second Jetour showroom in Al Mabelah," said Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE. "Our goal is to provide a comprehensive range of world-class services and products to our valued customers, and we believe that these new additions will help us achieve this."

SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

International demand for SP Jain's BBA undergrads from Class of 2022

DUBAI: SP Jain School of Global Management, a Forbes #12 ranked business school, announced the successful placements for its Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students – Class of 2022.

The graduating class has achieved an impressive milestone, with students securing job offers across nine countries: Australia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, UAE, and the USA. Australia emerged as the top international destination with 45% of the graduates who secured jobs opting to stay in Australia after the completion of their degree.

Top recruiters this season include global companies such as Deloitte, Ernst & Young, PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Australian Marketing Institute, State Bank of India, ClickedOn, Dell Technologies, and British American Tobacco. The marketing, finance, sales and business development fields accounted for a majority of the overall offers. The average starting salaries for this latest class range from AUD 55,000 to AUD 65,000 per annum.

Speaking of the success of the Class of 2022, Dr Vaidyanathan "Vaidy" Jayaraman, Dean of Undergraduate Programs at S P Jain



Global said – "I am immensely proud of our BBA 2022 graduates for their remarkable achievements in securing job offers at the top global companies across nine countries. Their success is a testament to the high-quality education and comprehensive global learning that we provide through our multi-city model. By living, studying, and interning in leading business cities such as Singapore, Mumbai, Dubai, and Sydney, our graduates have developed the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in today's global business landscape."

"The multi-city model of our

program has equipped them with cross-cultural communication skills, the ability to work effectively in diverse teams, and a deep understanding of international business practices. We have no doubt that they will continue to make a significant impact in their respective industries and we are thrilled to have played a role in their success."

"Being able to spend four years of my bachelor's degree in four different cities – Mumbai, Dubai, Madrid (on an exchange partnership), and Sydney was very conducive to my personal development. The exposure to other cultures gave me the

space to explore things I wouldn't have otherwise – I ended up learning from legislators working with the EU during my exchange at IE, for example. SP Jain gave me a platform to start Girl Up Sydney, which culminated with me being invited to share my fundraising experience at the United Nations, and I'll always be grateful to have had the opportunity to go beyond my comfort zone at each step. Working in management consulting requires a certain level of comfort with ambiguity & an appreciation for variety – both of which I developed as a result of the dynamic nature of my BBA degree," shared Pooja Agrawal from the Class of 2022. On completing her BBA program last year, Pooja started working as a Graduate Consultant with Levant Consulting, Australia.

The BBA of SP Jain is a 4-year multi-city program that is accredited by Australia's Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency (TEQSA). Students travel to Singapore/Mumbai for Year 1 of the program, Dubai for Year 2 and Sydney for Years 3 and 4, graduating with an Australian degree. On completing the program, students may be able to continue to live and work in Australia by applying for a post-study work visa of up to two years.



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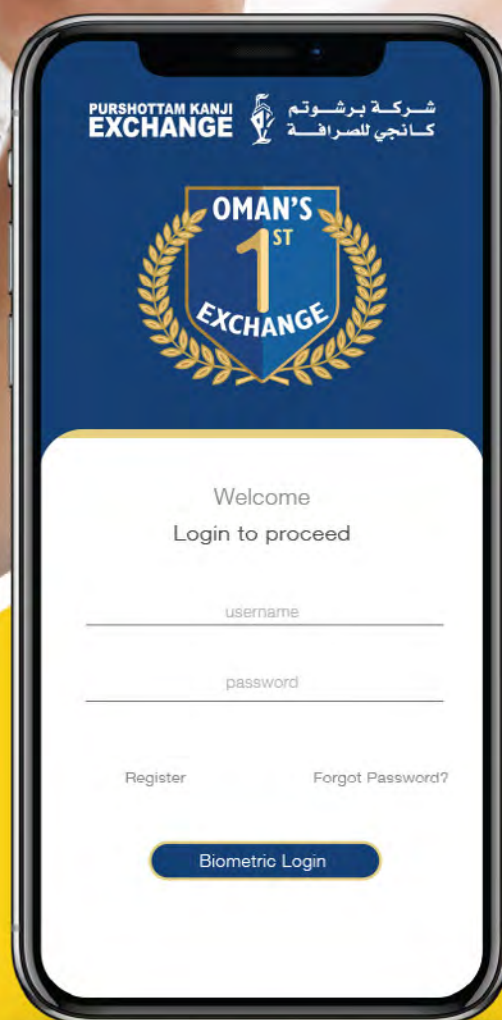
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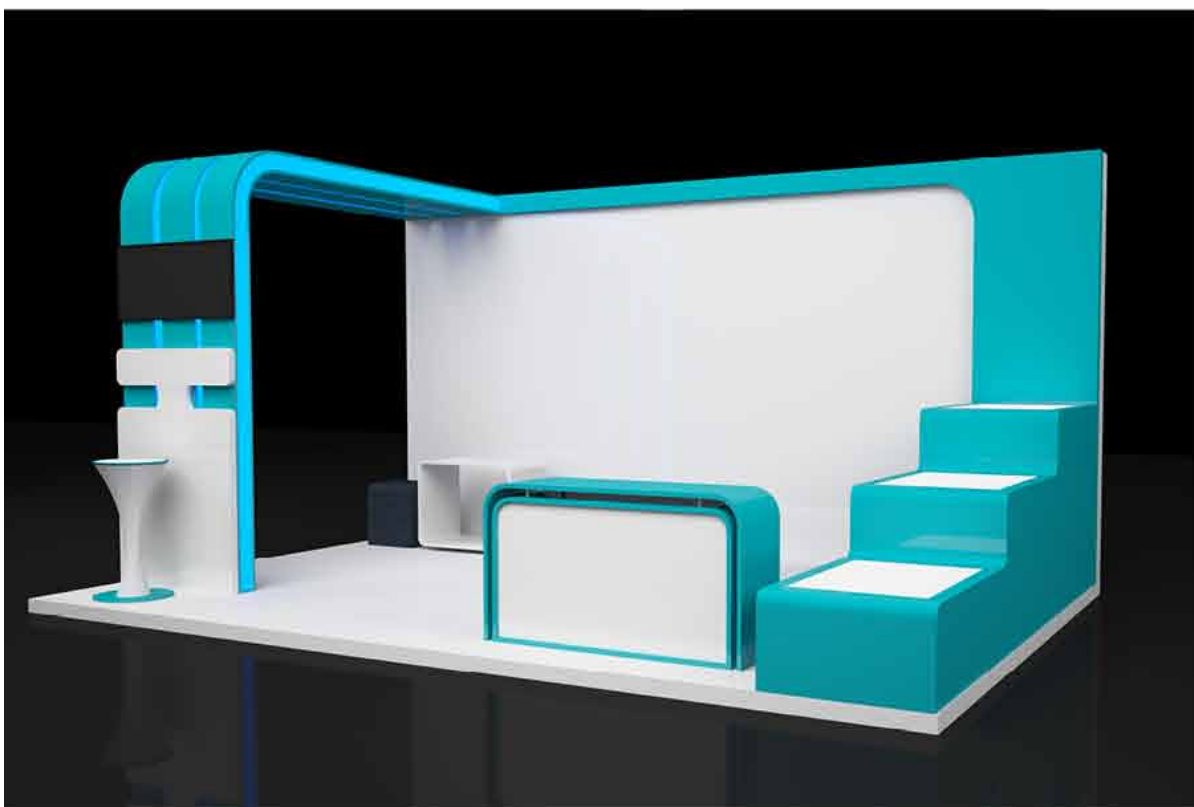
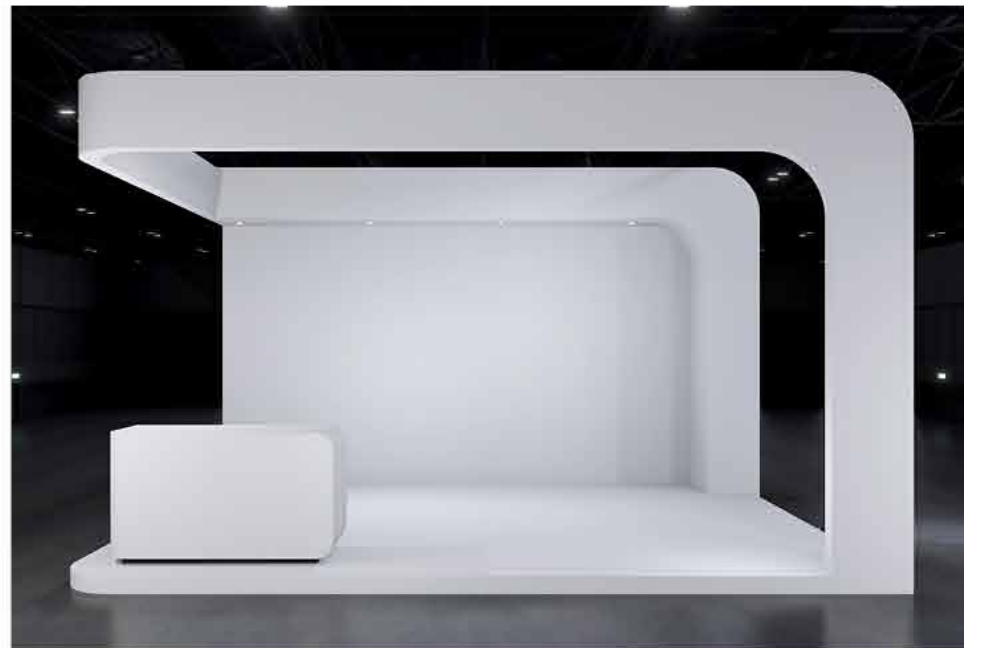
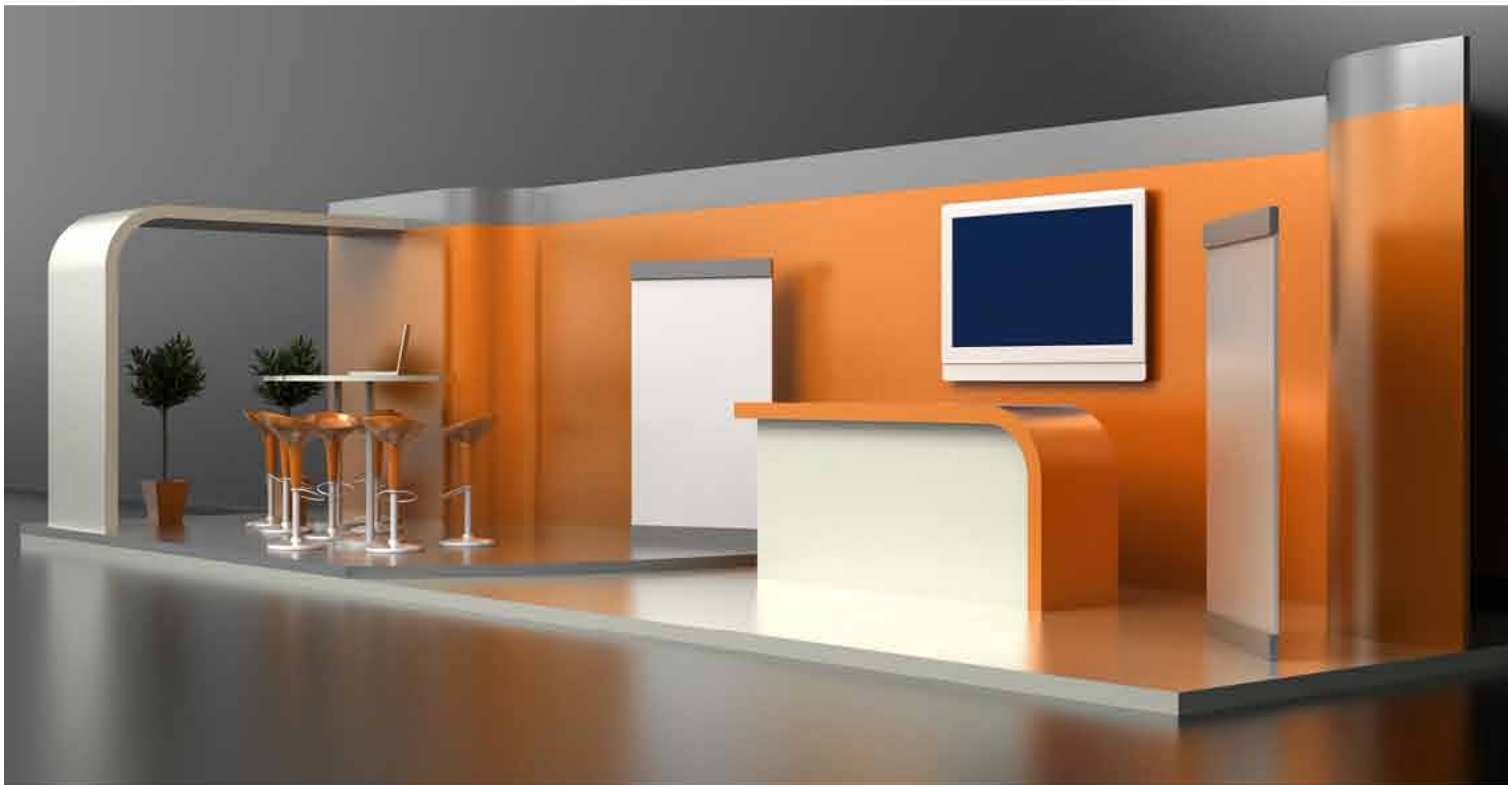
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