

ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN STARTS NAVAL DRILL 'SHARP DAGGER'

The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) yesterday began implementing a naval drill "Sharp Dagger" at Al Batinah naval site. The drill is conducted with participation of friendly countries' navies and assistance of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) jets. **>A5**



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HM RECEIVES THANKS CABLE FROM KSA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable to him on the occasion of the Founding Day. In the cable, King Salman expressed his utmost appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's sincere sentiments and prayers. He also wished His Majesty good health and happiness and the Omani people further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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TELECOM OPERATOR

Vodafone celebrates official launch in Oman



MUSCAT: After commencing its trial operations on December 30, 2021, Vodafone commemorated the official launch of its operations in the Sultanate of Oman on March 6. The event took place in a festive ceremony held at the Royal Opera House Muscat, under the auspices of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, alongside the presence of several guests, as well as members of the company's Board of Directors and Executive Management in attendance.

In his speech during the ceremony, Bader Zidi, CEO of Vodafone in Oman, stated: "Today, we mark the

official opening of a new chapter in the history of the country's digital mobile communications. We officially, inaugurate the launch of one of the biggest brands in the world right here in Oman, which will mark a revolution in the technology sector. We will do things differently and digitally from the start and, we are exactly that different and we are truly digital."

He continued, "We strive to be a key contributor towards In-Country Value, through our philosophy of utilising and capitalising on existing infrastructure and enhancing partnerships with local entities where we cannot build." **>A2**



Sayyid Shihab receives Chief of UK Naval Staff

A6

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Indian, Pakistani currencies weaken

1 As Indian and Pakistani currencies struggle against the US dollar, expats from those countries remitting money home are getting more for every Omani Rial they send. PKR was at all-time-high earlier this month at PKR464.92. **>A3**

WORLD Taliban's Haqqani in public for first time



2 Afghanistan's Taliban government has for the first time published clear photos of acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani. He made the rare public appearance at a graduation ceremony for Afghan police officers. **>A6**

MARKET CMA: Online meetings widen participation

3 The Omani capital sector acted with adequate resilience to convene the annual general meetings during the pandemic to ensure continuity of business via the reliable e-platform for convening such meetings. **>B1**

METRO RAIL SURVEY TO BEGIN THIS MONTH



METRO NETWORK TO RUN FROM SEEB TO RUWI

MUSCAT TO HAVE ONE MILLION PEOPLE BY 2040

The structural plan for the metro will also include the urban plan of the city

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A feasibility study for a metro rail network in Muscat Governorate will begin this month.

According to Eng. Ibrahim bin Hamood Al Waili, the director of the Office of the Follow Up Unit for the Implementation Plan for the National Urban Development Strategy at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MOHUP), "It is likely that by 2040, the population of Oman will reach about 7.5 million. Based on estimates under the urban development strategy, there will be about one million people in Muscat Governorate. From this point of view, it is important that we diversify the means of transportation. This includes a metro network, which will serve as an alternate means of

ing and Urban Planning (MOHUP), "It is likely that by 2040, the population of Oman will reach about 7.5 million. Based on estimates under the urban development strategy, there will be about one million people in Muscat Governorate. From this point of view, it is important that we diversify the means of transportation. This includes a metro network, which will serve as an alternate means of



ENGINEER IBRAHIM HAMOOD AL WAILI, Director of the Office of Follow-up to the Implementation of the National Urban Development Strategy at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning

transportation for people."

The feasibility study for the metro project will begin this month, he added, and will run for 12 months, after which the routes for the metro will be determined.

"The metro will run from the Wilayat of Seeb to Ruwi in the Wilayat of Muttrah, passing through several wilayats of the capital," he added.

"The structural plan for the metro will include the urban plan of the city, and how that will affect the metro route. Following this study, we will also be able to decide whether the metro will be built above ground or underground."

The committee charged with the feasibility study is headed

by Khamis Al Shammakhi, Undersecretary of Transport at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT). This committee will decide how the metro will be built and also look into its economic feasibility.

Greater Muscat plans

The metro's arrival comes as part of the plans for Greater Muscat, a capital city that will have top-of-the-range facilities, good accessibility, excellent infrastructure and easily accessible transport. "The most important portion of the restructuring project is Wilayat of Seeb, as we believe most of the people living in Muscat will be based there," explained Al Waili. **>A5**

WEATHER

It's beginning to get hot as summer approaches

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People in parts of Oman have started feeling the hot weather conditions over the past few weeks with temperatures crossing 30 degrees Celsius.

Many areas in the country recorded temperatures of 30 degrees or more on March 6, 2022. They include Ibri, Nizwa, Ibra and Al Mudhaibi (all 31 degrees); Fahud, Samail, Muhut and Thumrait (32 degrees); Bahla and the Hallaniyat Islands (30 degrees); Adam, Ras Al Hadd and Marmul (33 degrees) and Haima (34 degrees).

According to figures from the Department of Meteorology at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), a number of towns and cities in Oman recorded maximum temperatures just short of 30 degrees. Seeb and Amerat in capital



Muscat showed temperatures of 28 and 29 degrees. Yanqul, Suwaiq, Sur, Masirah and Salalah, all recorded temperatures of 29 degrees. Meanwhile, Khasab, the capital of the northern Musandam governorate and a number of other settlements, including



Duqm were at 28 degrees.

Some parts of the country, however, are still cooler. The mountainous regions of Jabal Samhan (26 degrees) and Jabal Qamar and Jabal Akhdar (22 degrees) are more pleasant during the day.

Night-time weather in many

areas of the country is still very pleasant with temperatures under 20 degrees. With the exception of Sur, Ras Al Hadd, the Hallaniyat Islands, Salalah and Salalah Port, which posted temperatures of 21 degrees on Sunday, 6 March, the rest of the country recorded night

time temperatures of 20 degrees or under.

Both today and tomorrow, low cloud cover and patches of fog are expected over some areas of the country.

Pleasant nights

There is a "chance of late night to early morning low level clouds or fog patches over governorates of South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta, Dhofar and along the coastal areas of Sea of Oman," said the Civil Aviation Authority. "Visibility may reduce during fog formation."

"The nights are still very pleasant to go out for a walk," said Sulaiman, an Omani in Muttrah. "Whether you walk on the Corniche, by the beach in Qurum, or Al Shatti Street, the evenings - when the sun is setting - and the nights are great time to go for a walk."





VODAFONE CELEBRATES OFFICIAL LAUNCH IN OMAN



< FROM A1 Vodafone launched its operations with the opening of its Experience Hub in the Mall of Oman, late last year, alongside an exclusive launch offer for its subscribers. Customers looking to join the Vodafone network can simply register and receive the service, quickly and easily.

Highlighting the results of the past few weeks, Jan Holzborg, Commercial Director of Vodafone in Oman, said: “We were expecting a huge response from subscribers who were looking for an operator with global experience when it comes to telecommunications

within the local market. However, we were still pleasantly surprised by the large inflow of customers, since our application received tens of thousands of download requests during the first initial days of the offer. This is a positive indicator for the future of Vodafone and we look forward to providing a state-of-the-art and digitalised experience for telecommunication subscribers here in Oman, in the upcoming period.”

Vodafone is one of the largest international companies in the world of communications and technology and profoundly believes that the partnership between technology and society

can build a better future. Under its slogan, “Together We Can”, Vodafone showcases its approach towards extending the most innovative and best possible products and services to its customers.

In this context, Al Zidi remarks: “Enhancing connectivity and utilising innovative technology to create a brighter future is one of Vodafone’s primary objectives. With this in mind, we seek to be pioneers in digital innovation and sustainable growth within the local society and promote digital progress, through the introduction of the latest 5G networks and services. Vodafone has established itself as a leading

technology provider which reinforces its integral role in achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Vodafone strives to deliver meaningful in-country value, either through employment opportunities for local talents within its team, which currently stands at 95% Omanisation as of today or by extending opportunities to small and medium enterprises and other local companies.

Vodafone is available across the Sultanate through the My Vodafone Application on Google Play Store and the App Store and in more than 3,500 outlets across Oman. The full list can be found on www.vodafone.om







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الخدمات المالية الشخصية

More remittance value per Omani Rial for Indian, Pakistani expats

While PKR saw an all-time-high earlier this month at PKR464.92 against one OMR and currently standing at PKR461, INR too is losing its value, currently at INR197.82

MADIHA ASIF

madiha@timesofoman.com

MUSCAT: As the Indian and Pakistani currencies continue to struggle against the US dollar, expats from those countries remitting money back home are getting a higher value for each Omani Rial

(OMR) they send.

While the Pakistani Rupee (PKR) saw an all-time-high earlier this month at PKR464.92 against one OMR and currently standing at PKR461, the Indian Rupee (INR) too is losing its value, currently at INR197.82.

Therefore, Indian and Pakistani citizens residing in the Sultanate of Oman can send more money as



the exchange rates against OMR remains high for both the currencies. Talking exclusively to the *Times of Oman* on why both PKR and INR are falling, Boban MP, CEO, Unimoni Exchange, Oman said that it was due to various factors

faced by both the countries, including the oil prices, sanctions against Russia, etc.

"INR has been under pressure and fallen steeply from 193.60 on 23rd Feb to 197.82 on the last closing day which is 4th March due to

escalation in geopolitical tensions and rapid increase in international crude oil prices.

"The likelihood of stronger sanctions against Russia further worsened the conditions," he said.

He also said: "The high crude oil prices will have an adverse impact on India's trade deficit which may lead to further fall in the value of INR and may take it to 199 level in the near future."

Explaining the decline in PKR, the expert pointed to the rising inflation and debts owed by the government which is affecting the exchange rates and putting more pressure on the currency.

"Pakistani rupee has been under pressure on account of rising inflation and mounting debt. The currency dropped by almost 12 per cent in this year. If the current situation continues, PKR may further

fall to the level of 485 from the current level of 461," he added.

Although the current situation for PKR and INR looks bleak, expats who remit money home are finding it favourable as they are now sending relatively less for their families to receive more.

However, an expat, who remits money each month to support his family back home, says "it is giving me a great relief at a time when the world is facing a financial crunch. Now, I can send a bit less of what I would send earlier," Pakistani expat Asma, based in Oman, said.

Similar sentiments were shared by an Indian expat, Mohan, living in Muscat. He said, "Although the exchange rates are amazing right now, I think some people will wait to see how the rates behave in the days, before remitting some money back home."

ACHIEVEMENTS OF OMAN AIRPORTS

Muscat, Salalah airports get COVID-safe tag once more

Times News Service

MUSCAT: For the second time in a row, Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport have obtained COVID-19 prevention accreditation from the Airports Council International Organisation.

The accreditation was granted after an thorough audit by the Airports Council International team, during which the effectiveness and strictness of the health standards and procedures related to COVID-19 applied by the world's airports, from check-in of passengers at the airport until departure were evaluated.

"Oman Airports" said that Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport obtaining this modern international accreditation for the

second year in a row for the health procedures, is an addition to the achievements made by both Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport in the past period, and within the efforts made by "Oman Airports" to provide the best safety services for passengers to implement the highest levels of health and safety at its airports, in line with the national efforts to limit the spread of "COVID-19".

"Oman Airports" expressed its happiness with this accreditation achieved by Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport, in recognition of the procedures followed at the two airports on the implementation of the "COVID-19" policies. This is a milestone in safety measures achieved in co-operation with the concerned authorities



in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is based on auditing a set of practical proficiency checks and visual observation analysis, where adherence to standards was taken as a major determinant in the final approved classification.

In course of the Airports Council International's COVID-19 audit, the practical application and feasibility of physical distancing protocols within both airports were evaluated and verified. The quality and availability of personal

hygiene facilities in the passenger terminals at Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport were also evaluated. The audit also included assessing the effectiveness of cleaning and identifying any potential sources of contamination to ensure that both airports' hygiene and sterilisation standards comply with the most stringent requirements.

It is worth noting that the airport health accreditation assessment has been performed by inspection of the personal protective equipment's standards for employees and their commitment to using them, in addition to implementation of thermal examination procedures to measure temperature, controls for wearing face masks, and standards

of general hygiene and sterilisation in all airport halls.

Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport provide a safe environment for passengers and employees, as strict procedures are applied in the areas of hand hygiene and physical distancing, and both airports also meet high standards of sterilisation through high-density contact points.

"Oman Airports" has also worked to facilitate procedures for examining arriving and departing passengers according to the requirements of the concerned authorities to deal with the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus, and to take the necessary preventive measures to ensure the safety of all passengers, aircraft crews and airport employees.

Trending

ON SOCIAL MEDIA



26,972 REACH



234 ENGAGEMENTS



Story on Indian politician Shashi Tharoor praising Oman's beauty

A story on Indian politician Shashi Tharoor praising Oman's beauty reached 26,972 people and had 234 engagements on Facebook.



3,200 VIEWS



14,400 REACH

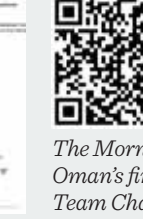


Morning Minute video on fighting Covid together

Morning Minute video on private sector helping reduce Covid impact in Oman had 3,200 views on Facebook reached 14,400 people.



455 VIEWS



19 LIKES



Morning Minute video on World Race Walking Team Championships

The Morning Minute video on Oman's first World Race Walking Team Championships had 455 views and 19 likes on Instagram.



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SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CORE OF OMAN’S FIRST WORLD RACE WALKING TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS



Gautam Viswanathan

MUSCAT: Sustainable practices were the mainstay of the first World Race Walking Team Championships being held in Oman.

As part of the event, which took place on 4 and 5 March, all athletes taking part were encouraged to take the UN Clean Seas pledge and reduce or eliminate single-use plastics in their daily lives.

“Oman Sail, World Athletics and OCEC are committed to ensuring the Race Walking Team Championships Muscat 22 are an environmentally friendly, educational and sustainable event,” said organisers of World Athletics in a statement.

“The local organising committee and World Athletics will also be working with the Environment Society of Oman (ESO), a beneficiary of the event, to jointly roll out environmental awareness training in local schools to contribute to the long-lasting legacy of the World Athletics Race Walking Team Championships,” added the statement.

The championships began a day after World Wildlife Day and will be followed by Oman Sustainability Week from 13 to 17 March 2022. Both occasions will provide extra opportunities to promote the need to care of the environment and ways to be more sustainable.

The tournament saw many of the world’s best racewalkers take part in the event, which was held

at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

“This competition has undergone some changes since it was last held in Taicang, China in May, 2018,” said Sebastian Coe, president, World Athletics, before the start of the event. “The most notable is that the men’s and women’s 50km walk has been replaced by a 35km event, mirroring the change to the race walking programme for this year’s World Athletics Championships,” which are to be held in Oregon later this year.

“The races, over 10km, 20km and 35km distances, will be held over a flat two-kilometre loop course centred around the splendid new Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, which should offer ideal conditions for close racing,” he added.

As is the case with most sport, the race walking championships also proved to be a great leveller, providing opportunities to those from even the humblest of backgrounds to succeed: Ecuadorian Glenda Morejon’s mother sells fruit at a local market in the northern city of Ibarra, while her father dedicated himself to raising the three children in the family.

Morejon started out as a distance runner before her racewalking ability was identified at the age of 13, but her parents struggled to afford training gear. Coached by Giovanni Delgado at the Tarquino Jaramillo Athletics School, Morejon did most of her



sessions on a dirt track. Often she wouldn’t wear shoes. The one pair of racing shoes she did have were patched up and in desperate need of repair.

In Muscat, Morejon won on her 35km race walking debut, as the 21-year-old both scooped the individual title, and led her country to a team victory – Ecuador’s first at the Race Walking Team Championships.

“We didn’t have a lot of time to train for this event, in fact we’ve been training for the 35km for only three weeks,” said Morejon, the 2017 world under-18 champion who finished second in the under-20 race at the 2018 edition of these championships. “Together with my coach and federation president, we decided to enter the 35km

here and honestly, it’s crazy, I still cannot believe what has happened.

“I believe the most important thing is to believe in oneself,” she added. “Anything can happen and everyone can win. The power of the mind is really incredible.”

The championships feature three race categories: 10km, 20km, and 35km. China won both the men’s and women’s 10km race walk, with strong performances from Hongren Wang and Yunyan Jiang. Chinese race walker Zhenxia Ma also won the women’s 20km event.

Japan’s Toshikazu Yamanishi finished first in the men’s 20km race walk, while Sweden’s Perseus Karlstrom, himself the son of elite-level race walkers, won the 35km men’s edition.







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MEETINGS

ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN

Al Nu'amani receives UK Chief of Naval Staff

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received at his office here yesterday Admiral Sir Benjamin Key, Chief of Naval Staff of the United Kingdom (UK).

The British guest expressed his appreciation for Oman's efforts in promoting cooperation to achieve the joint interests between the two countries.

The two sides reviewed the march of historic relations between Oman and the UK. They also discussed several matters of common interest.

Commander of RNO

Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison Admiral Sir Benjamin Key, Chief of Naval Staff of the United Kingdom (UK).

The two sides discussed several military topics between the two countries. They also exchanged views of common interest.

Admiral Sir Benjamin Key, Chief of Naval Staff of the United Kingdom (UK) arrived on a two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman.



Upon the guest's arrival, he was received at Muscat International Airport by Commodore Jassim bin Mohammed Al Balushi, Director of Operations and Plans in the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), and the military attaché at the British Embassy in Muscat. -ONA

Naval drill 'Sharp Dagger' starts

MUSCAT: The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) yesterday began implementing a naval drill "Sharp Dagger" at Al Batinah naval site. The drill is conducted with participation of friendly countries' navies and assistance of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) jets. The drill lasts till 10 March 2022.

The drill comes within the framework of the RNO's annual training plans, besides exchanging experience with friendly countries to sustain the readiness levels of the RNO fleet and personnel on various marine disciplines in



line with their national tasks.

Participating ships

The naval drill began when the participating ships set off from

Said Bin Sultan's Naval Base yesterday to the site designated for the drill according to the outlined plans.

-ONA

SMART ARCHIVE SYSTEM

Oman News Agency launches website to boost quality content

MUSCA: Oman News Agency (ONA) yesterday launched its brand new website to enhance the quality of media form and content.

The new website can easily be browsed in Arabic and English. It uses a smart archive system which organises electronic content.

The website is also secured through a smart system compatible with privacy policy and the

protection of personal data. It applies the necessary browsing standards for the use of people with disability.

The website is accessible for users of different phones (with different screen sizes), as well as PC devices. Sharing news stories on social media is made easy on the website. Browsing the site is also data-efficient.

The website utilizes the latest methods of communication

with the audience. It introduces important local, Arab and international news in a fast manner enhanced by pictures.

The website includes categories for the 11 governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, highlighting the development taking place across Oman, as well as the social, cultural and youth events.

The website can be browsed via the following link: www.oman-news.gov.om. -ONA

METRO PROJECT

<FROM A1 National Urban Development Strategy

The urban strategy is a spatial map of business trends that are focused on development based on various aspects and capabilities of the 11 governorates of Oman. Muscat, Salalah, Nizwa and Sohar have been earmarked as the major future cities of the country. They represent the first real launch of the National Urban Development Strategy.

"These strategic programmes will be carried out all over the regions of Oman, with the aim of giving them a competitive advantage,

based on the resources of each governorate," said Al Waili. "For example, in terms of civilisation and cultural heritage, Al Dakhiliyah will be a centre for innovation because we have a number of universities located there, and it is one of the main centres of knowledge in Oman."

Likewise, South Al Sharqiyah will have a blue economy, owing to its relationship and legacy with the sea.

Al Wusta, on the other hand, because of its vast size, will have

projects relating to solar, wind and renewable energy.

"Sessions were held with each governor to explain the development plans for each governorate," said Al Waili.

"The last discussion we had was with the governor of Musandam, while in mid-March, we will be meeting with the governor of Dhofar. In less than six months, we sat down with all the governors to explain the development mechanisms and the support offered to manage the related projects."

Invitation to Tender

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C (DISC) invites reputable contractor for carrying out following works in Dhofar Region.

Tender Reference	DISC/E/Tender/2022/030
Subject	UNE - LOT 02 J - 2022
Tender Fee	RO. 52.500 Inclusive VAT (5%) Note: Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tender should collect the tender document from DISC's office or send an e-mail to below mention mail id for tender document.
Experience	The tenderers shall be registered electrical contractor with Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) Oman (Minimum C-Grade for 11 kV jobs and D-Grade for LV jobs) and should have performed similar UNE jobs in Sultanate of Oman.
Pre-qualification	Bids to be attached along with valid "DCRP Registration Certificate" and valid "CEP Authorized card copy issued by DISC" Shall only consider for evaluation, Further, Tenderers will be evaluated as per the pre-qualification criterion specified in the Tender documents.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 21 st March 2022
Site Visit	N/A
Last date for seeking pre Bid clarification	N/A
Last date for Response for pre bid clarification	N/A
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 28 th March 2022
Any Queries Please Contact	Phone 23232554, purchase@disc.nama.om

Tenderers are requested to note that the bids accompanied with Tender Bond (1% of the quoted bid price and having 90 days validity) shall only be considered for evaluation.



شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة
Dhofar Integrated Services Company

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بيت الخبرة
للمشاريع المتكاملة

Tender Announcement
(LV2022/SSC/T/01)
March 2, 2022

Tender Invitation

The House of Expertise for Integrated Projects & Trading would like to invite Experienced, Excellent and First Grade Contractors for the construction of School and Staff Accommodation at AlKhoud with a full built-up area around **16,000.0 SQM**. The selected bidder will be appointed as the main contractor for the project.

The following are the tender purchase details:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Deadline for last day Tender Documents Purchase	Deadline for Tender Documents Submission	Tender Fee
LV2022/SSC/T/01	Construction of School and Staff Accommodation	Sunday March 13, 2022	Wednesday April 10, 2022 Not later than 12 pm	500 OMR

Interested bidders are to submit an official "Expression of Interest" letter to the following email addresses, indicating their willingness to participate in the said tender:

To: Tender@linesandvisions.com

Cc: rashid@sapsoman.edu.om

Interested bidders shall transfer the tender fee to the following bank account and must attach the fee transfer receipt with the EOI letter and NO CASH will be accepted:

MEETHAQ Islamic Banking -Bank Account Number:

0614-50020449-000-1

HOUSE EXPERTISE AND INTEGRATED TRD PROJ

Full Tender Documents will be issued to the interested bidders via email as a link (digital copy) and the bidder must acknowledge the receipt of the same.

Interested bidders will be requested to sign a NDA after purchasing the tender

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AL MURTAFA'A GARRISON

Sayyid Shihab meets Chief of Naval Staff of the United Kingdom

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs received Admiral Sir Benjamin Key, Chief of Naval Staff of the United Kingdom (UK) and the military delegation accompanying him at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Sunday.

During the meeting, the areas of existing military cooperation

between the two friendly countries and ways to enhance them were reviewed. The meeting also discussed a number of matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by the Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman, and the United Kingdom's ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

— ONA

FIRST APPEARANCE

Taliban govt's Interior Minister Haqqani makes rare appearance

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government for the first time published clear photos of acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani on Saturday.

Haqqani, wearing a black turban and white shawl, made a rare public appearance at a graduation ceremony for newly recruited Afghan police officers. They are the first class to graduate from the police academy under the Taliban's rule.

Images were blurred

He last appeared in the public eye in October, though his images were blurred by the Taliban at that time.

Haqqani told officers in a speech that he was appearing in the media for "your satisfaction and for building your trust."

He added he was showing his face so "you could know how much value we have with our leadership."

What did Haqqani say?

Haqqani said in a speech in front of reporters, his first since being named Interior Minister, that Taliban security officials who committed crimes against Afghan civilians were undergoing criminal proceedings.

He said that "some misconduct" happened as Taliban fighters transitioned into their new roles of governing a country. He added they were undergoing training.

Men and women graduated

Around 377 men and women graduated as police officers on Saturday.

Haqqani also commented on the graduating women, saying

"today our sisters are with us in this ceremony, they are receiving their graduation diplomas and are being appointed in different jobs."

Restrictive rules

Since returning to power in August 2021, The Taliban have imposed restrictive rules on girls' education and women's participation in public life. It is not clear how many women graduated as officers on Saturday.

Haqqani also added that the Taliban were committed to the Doha agreement, a confidence-building deal signed with the US in February 2021. The deal set into motion the drawdown of US troops that had been a key Taliban demand.

Haqqani said the international community should not see his government as a threat and foreign aid was needed to revive the country.

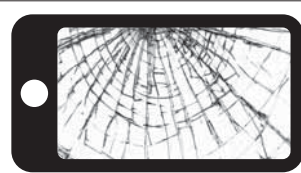
Haqqani, a designated US terrorist

Haqqani, believed to be in his 40s, is the son of the founder of the Haqqani network, a powerful subset of the Taliban that was established in the 1970s.

The US has designated Haqqani as one of its most-wanted terrorists, offering a reward of up to \$10 million for information for his arrest.

The US said he maintains "close ties" to Al Qaeda and has accused him of masterminding a string of terror attacks.

Before the Taliban took power in 2020, Haqqani was the most senior of the three deputies to the Taliban's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada. **mw**



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NATIONAL LIFE AND GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY SAOG AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Company's Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2021, including the Financial Statements, Auditor's Report, the Management Discussion & Analysis Report and the Corporate Governance Report.

During 2021, the Company had major achievements on business and operational front such as increase in Gross Written Premiums by 9% as compared to previous year and technological milestone achievements. At the same time, the profitability of the Company was affected due to several external factors such as increased death claims in life insurance portfolio on account of the Covid-19 pandemic and increase in medical and motor claims during the year.

NLIG achieved Net profit after tax of RO 7.5 million for the year 2021 as compared to RO 15.0 million in 2020. The previous year 2020 was an exceptional year with emergence of Covid-19 and the ensuing lockdowns and restrictions on hospital visits. While it caused operational challenges to the company, it resulted in low claims being reported, making it the most profitable year to date for NLIG.

I would like to highlight NLIG's operating environment during 2021, the Company's performance, key achievements, and its future strategic direction in the following sections.

Economic Environment in Operating Markets:

2021 has been a challenging year as the world and Oman adapts to life with Covid. For Insurance companies, in terms of income from insurance underwriting operations (especially the companies with larger presence in the medical and motor insurance market), the year 2021 has not been favourable as benefits of low claims in 2020 have reversed its trend in 2021. On the positive side, equity markets have recovered in GCC which has helped boost investment income in the Insurance industry.

Oman: As per Fitch Ratings, Oman's crude oil production is projected to rise 9.8 percent to 1.1 million barrels per day in 2022 which coupled with the increasing oil prices will help narrow the country's current account deficit to 0.2 percent of the GDP for the year. Oil industry is expected to be the main driver for the continued widening of the surplus in the trade in goods balance in 2022. IMF too has projected strong recovery of 7.4% in 2022 for Oman amidst benefits of structural reforms and diversification.

UAE: UAE consumer confidence index is hitting a 10 year high as firms continued to enjoy increased economic activity driven by Expo 2020. The government has announced an array of policies in recent weeks, including an easing of visa rules in Dubai, labour market reforms and new funds to support SMEs. Growth prospects appear to improve with a high vaccination rate and the relaxation of Covid 19 curbs.

Both Oman and UAE's economic outlook remains positive for the coming year and the rising oil prices during initial months of 2022 further strengthens the outlook for both the economies.

Company's financial performance:

Oman and UAE are the Company's key markets with minor contribution from Kuwait branch. In terms of gross written premiums, the motor market in Oman has experienced deep growth of 10% in 2021 while medical market in Oman has stagnated as compared to the previous year. In UAE too, as per latest data available for the year 2020, the medical market shows deep growth of 2%. There are positive indicators for the industry for 2022 which can boost the market such as introduction of mandatory medical insurance in Oman, positive shift in the pricing trend in the Oman motor and higher levels of economic activities in both UAE and Oman.

During 2021, NLIG has increased its market share in both motor and medical segments in Oman and retained its number one ranking in Oman market in terms of overall Gross written premium and its leadership in the motor and medical segments in Oman. Capitalizing on the strong broker and customer relationships and its enhanced digital capability, the Company has achieved 9% growth in Gross written premiums in 2021, i.e. RO 146.5 million in 2021 as compared to RO 134 million in 2020. Overseas premiums have increased by 13% from RO 71.8 million in 2020 to RO 81.4 million in 2021. Oman premiums have also risen by 5% from RO 62.2 million in 2020 to RO 65.1 million in 2021. The growth is mainly from the medical portfolios in Oman and abroad.

Due to high claims in motor, medical and death claims in life portfolios, the Company's net underwriting result (NUR) was impacted and the Company was able to achieve NUR of RO 16.4 million which is 38% lower as compared to RO 26.5 million in 2020. This was partially offset by the growth in investment income which rose by 26% to RO 5.8 million in 2020 to RO 4.6 million in 2021. This coupled with controlled management expenses, have resulted in the Company achieving Net profit after tax of RO 7.5 million for FY 2021 as compared to RO 15.0 million in FY 2020.

Significant Achievements

- **Business Initiatives:** - Opened four new branches in Oman (Falaj Al Qabail, Halban, Jalen Bari Bu Ali and Yengul) and the launch of new products in individual medical in the UAE.
- **Successful implementation of major projects** such as medical system in Oman, VAT implementation in Oman, Oracle cloud application for Human Resource and Oracle Fusion implementation for finance and procurement modules.
- **Implementation of Information Technology initiatives** by making available motor insurance through Omantel kiosks, self-service portal and broker portal for medical, developing cyber and data security layer and cloud infrastructure related implementations.
- **Slew of awards and recognitions** received in 2021 including the prestigious "The Best Performing Company in Large Cap segment Oman" awarded by AIWA (Alam al-Ikhsad Wal Amaal), consecutively for the fourth year.

Developing Human Capital

The Company continues to endeavor in its pursuit of excellence through best practices to acquire, develop and retain Human Capital. All developmental initiatives are being done with an aim to ensure versatile talent is available for the Company's futuristic growth. This is done through capitalizing digital initiatives for learning & development, employee engagement as well as talent development. The Company has also made conscientious effort in ensuring precautionary measures on Covid-19 pandemic to keep the workplace safe for its employees. The Company has received two awards for the best practices in this area i.e. "Best employer award, Oman 2021" (for promoting health in the work place) and "Dream employer award, 2021" by World HRD congress. The Company actively supports and nurtures nationalization mandates with Omanization percentage of 79% and achievement of mandated points in Emiratization for the year 2021.

Supporting our communities

The Company has always demonstrated high level of commitment towards the society and contributed to causes that were challenging the nation. In 2021, the nation was hit by Cyclone Shabeen which impacted the nation and especially the people of North Batinah region. Continuing in its values of teaching lives through its community initiatives, the Company contributed RO 150,000 to Oman Charitable Organisation for this cause. The Company also contributed toward supporting trips to Expo 2020 Dubai for 150 youths from low income families of Oman. The Company continues to support charitable works during the Ramadhan and Dar Al Atta by providing free medical insurance coverage to their staff.

Future Outlook of the Company

The Company aims to maintain its leadership position in Oman in the medical and motor business along with establishing itself as one of the top medical insurance companies in the UAE. The Company seeks growth avenues to enter other markets and emerge as a leading insurance brand through both organic and inorganic opportunities. Digital transformation and innovation remains at the core of the Company's strategy which includes protecting the Company from possible disruptions arising from technological advancements, simplifying customer journeys and digitalisation of insurance processes. With the increase in oil prices and the positive outlook of the economies of Oman and UAE, we expect it to give an impetus to the Insurance industry as a whole and the Company in the coming year.

The Company is a market leader in Oman and continues to explore suitable growth opportunities in other markets. The strategic direction is to transform NLIG into a robust regional insurance player from Oman. Accordingly, the Board has proposed to retain profits within the Company to achieve its growth plan and enhance shareholders' value.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Company and the Board of Directors, I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his dynamic and progressive leadership. Under His Majesty's visionary leadership, we pray for the steady growth, stability, and enduring prosperity of our great country.

I thank all the Regulators, the Government Bodies and Ministries in Oman, UAE and Kuwait for their support. I thank the management team and all our employees for their performance, hard work and commitment. I also thank our customers, and partners for their patronage, confidence and commitment to our company.

Khalid Muhammad AlZubair
Chairman

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Group		Parent Company	
	2021 RO	2020 RO	2021 RO	2020 RO
Assets				
Cash and bank balances	14,431,408	10,233,957	13,222,586	9,721,522
Bank deposits	47,393,330	41,596,096	47,393,330	41,596,096
Investments carried at fair value through profit or loss	1,363,031	-	1,363,031	-
Investments carried at amortised cost	11,197,834	14,204,940	11,197,834	14,204,940
Investments carried at fair value through other comprehensive income	38,110,950	37,034,234	38,110,950	37,034,234
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	949,759	861,521
Insurance and reinsurance receivables	49,382,592	43,155,850	49,382,592	43,155,850
Reinsurance share of outstanding claims and IBNR reserve	6,284,674	5,867,158	6,284,674	5,867,158
Reinsurance share of actuarial / mathematical and unexpired risk reserve	11,230,415	10,307,915	11,230,415	10,307,915
Other receivables and prepayments	8,623,931	5,698,261	8,230,823	5,327,977
Loans to policyholders	70,204	113,873	70,204	113,873
Property and equipment	6,619,588	6,943,707	6,498,056	6,791,099
Deferred tax asset	259,592	197,262	240,122	186,453
Intangible assets (including goodwill)	449,051	472,647	449,051	472,647
Total assets	195,416,600	175,825,900	194,623,427	175,641,285
Equity and liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	26,500,000	26,500,000	26,500,000	26,500,000
Legal reserve	8,833,333	8,261,717	8,833,333	8,261,717
Contingency reserve	15,147,024	12,970,009	15,147,024	12,970,009
Revaluation reserve	352,345	447,420	352,345	447,420
Fair value reserve	259,524	438,638	259,524	438,638
Foreign exchange fluctuation reserve	(21,976)	(23,710)	(21,976)	(23,710)
Retained earnings	15,357,050	18,826,386	15,357,050	18,826,386
Total equity	66,427,300	67,420,460	66,427,300	67,420,460
Liabilities				
Gross outstanding claims and IBNR reserve	28,717,762	23,171,076	28,717,762	23,171,076
Gross actuarial / mathematical and unexpired risk reserve	57,250,770	51,541,513	57,250,770	51,541,513
Due to reinsurers	8,277,998	8,088,029	8,277,998	8,088,029
Other liabilities	25,969,292	23,039,850	25,176,119	22,855,235
Short term loan	7,500,000	-	7,500,000	-
Income tax payable	1,273,478	2,564,972	1,273,478	2,564,972
Total liabilities	128,969,300	108,405,440	128,196,127	108,220,825
Total equity and liabilities	195,416,600	175,825,900	194,623,427	175,641,285
Net assets per share	0.251	0.254	0.251	0.254

The consolidated financial statements were authorised for issue in accordance with a resolution of the board of directors on 24 February 2022.

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Group		Parent Company	
	2021 RO	2020 RO	2021 RO	2020 RO
Statement of profit or loss				
Gross written premium	146,458,990	134,027,845	146,458,990	134,027,845
Gross premium earned	140,749,733	140,889,513	140,749,733	140,889,513
Reinsurance share of ceded premium	(23,372,284)	(27,087,738)	(23,372,284)	(27,087,738)
Net premium earned	117,377,449	113,801,775	117,377,449	113,801,775
Commission income	2,699,046	2,707,917	2,699,046	2,707,917
Income from policy fees	1,117,558	928,549	1,117,558	928,549
Gross claims expense	(116,929,034)	(104,777,917)	(116,929,034)	(104,777,917)
Reinsurance share of gross claims expense	24,312,425	24,700,432	24,312,425	24,700,432
Commission expense	(12,214,986)	(10,875,954)	(12,214,986)	(10,875,954)
Net underwriting income	16,362,458	26,484,802	16,362,458	26,484,802
Investment income - net	5,791,613	4,601,541	5,878,117	4,682,560
Expected credit losses on financial assets	(25,693)	(85,832)	(25,693)	(85,832)
Other operating income - net	51,068	14,239	76,352	26,881
Third party administration fees	(1,033,280)	(964,535)	(2,323,730)	(2,017,259)
General and administrative expenses	(12,399,641)	(12,387,849)	(11,240,580)	(11,444,029)
Finance cost	(76,855)	(108,223)	(76,855)	(108,223)
Amortisation of intangible assets	(23,596)	(23,596)	(23,596)	(23,596)
Profit before tax	8,646,074	17,530,547	8,626,473	17,515,304
Income tax expense	(1,172,512)	(2,524,586)	(1,152,911)	(2,509,343)
Profit for the year	7,473,562	15,005,961	7,473,562	15,005,961
Other comprehensive income				
<i>(Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss):</i>				
Exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	1,734	(1,753)	1,734	(1,753)
Changes in fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income - net	(397,351)	350,162	(397,351)	350,162
<i>(Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss):</i>				
Changes in fair value of equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income - net	1,298,970	(211,506)	1,298,970	(211,506)
Other comprehensive income	903,353	136,903	903,353	136,903
Total comprehensive income for the year	8,376,915	15,142,864	8,376,915	15,142,864
Earnings per share - basic and diluted	0.028	0.057	0.028	0.057

Items in other comprehensive income above are disclosed net of tax.

Note:

1- The financial statements are available in the website of Muscat Securities Market. However, the same will be sent to any shareholder who requests them either in Arabic or English, within 7 days from the receipt of request at the company's address: National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG, P.O. Box:798, Wadi Kabir, PC 117, Sultanate of Oman.

2- The above Director's report and Audited financial statements would be presented for approval of the shareholders at the forthcoming Ordinary Annual General Meeting proposed to be held on 30th March 2022.



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Oman beat UAE in the opener of five-match series

An 85-run fourth-wicket partnership between Shoaib Khan and Ayaan Khan provided the foundation for Oman to build on

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman beat the United Arab Emirates by 12 runs in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2.

Put to bat after losing the toss, an 85-run fourth-wicket partnership between Shoaib Khan and Ayaan Khan provided the foundation for Oman to build on. Shoaib top-scored with an 89 ball 61 and the pair consolidated remarkably well after the early dismissals of both openers.

However, both were sent back in the space of four overs to place the UAE in command once again. Rohan Mustafa provided the initial breakthrough with Ayaan's wicket and Zahoor Khan claimed the prized scalp of Shoaib. The two of them were UAE's top performers with the ball, picking up two and three wickets respectively. A 35-run contribution from captain Zeeshan Maqsood to go with Sandeep Goud's 22 took Oman past the 200 mark. They eventually finished on 225/7 after



50 overs. In response, the hosts were bundled out for 213. Vriitya Aravind, who claimed three catches along with a stumping in the first innings, top scored with a 65-ball 44.

Kaleemullah was imperious in the powerplay for Oman. He sent the dangerous opening pair of Muhammad Waseem and Chirag Suri packing for a combined score of 12. Ayaan Khan, Mohammad Nadeem and Khawar Ali all

picked up one middle-order wicket apiece but undoubtedly the star with the ball was Bilal Khan, who cleaned up the UAE lower order all on his own. He finished with figures of 5/31 in 9.5 overs.

A lack of meaningful partnerships proved costly for the UAE. Chundangapoyil Rizwan. Asif Khan and Rohan Mustafa all got starts but none of them crossed the 25-run mark. Basil Hameed and Ahmad Raza did so but were

unable to play a match-defining knock like Shoaib Khan had done in the first innings. Oman on the other hand were disciplined in the field and with the ball in hand, clinching a deserved victory in the end.

Brief scores: Oman 225/7 in 50 overs (Shoaib Khan 61 (89) 3 x 4 ; Zahoor Khan 55/3) beat UAE 213/10 in 48.5 overs (Vriitya Aravind 44 (55) 5 x 4 ; Bilal Khan 31/5) by 12 runs

Akshay helps Oman Stallions to victory, Ganesh bowls Muscat to easy win

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Akshay Kumar Patel was the hero of Oman Stallions' exciting 3-wicket win over Yalla Shabab in a 50-over Premier Division League clash at Oman Cricket Turf 1 in Amerat on Friday.

Stallions bowled exceptionally well to dismiss Yalla Shabab for 184 in 47.3 overs, Akshay and Hemalkumar Tandel taking three wickets each and Mehran Khan picking up two. Wasim Ali was topscored with a fine 72.

Akshay led the chase with a solid 45 with other notable contributions from Prasad Sankata (40) and Pratik Athavale (30). Jitenkumar Ramanandi and Sanuth Ebrahim bagged two wickets each.

Brief Scores (Premier Division): Yalla Shabab 184 all out in 47.3 overs (Wasim Ali 72 – 6x4, 1x6, Hassnain Ali 39 – 2x4, 4x6, Akshaykumar Patel 3-31, Hemalkumar Tandel 3-37, Mehran Khan 2-28) lost to Oman Stallions 188 for 7 in 38.2 overs (Akshaykumar Patel 45 – 4x4, 4x6, Prasad Sankata 40 – 5x4, Pratik Athavale 30 – 5x4, Jitenkumar Ramanandi 2-24, Sanuth Ebrahim 2-47) by 3 wickets.



Akshay Patel of Oman Stallions

Ganesh bowls Muscat to victory

In another Premier Division game on Saturday, Ganesh Chandrashekhar picked up 4 for 34 to help Muscat CT to a 6-wicket victory against Ibn Abdul Samad Engineering & Construction Co (IAS) at OC Turf 1. IAS was bundled out for a lowly 137 in the 50 th over, Haythim Bahar top-scoring with 71. Apart from brilliant bowling by Ganesh, Samay Shrivastava and Chonira Aiyappa were equally impressive, taking two wickets each.

Muscat raced to the target in only the 24 th over, scoring 143 for

4 thanks to Hashir Dafedar's unbeaten 41 and Chonira's 15-ball 30 not out.

Brief Scores (Premier Division): IAS (Ibn Abdul Samad Eng & Cons) 137 all out in 49.1 overs (Haythim Bahar 71 – 8x4, Ganesh Chandrashekhar 4-34, Samay Shrivastava 2-20, Chonira Aiyappa 2-24) lost to Muscat CT 143 for 4 in 23.3 overs (Hashir Dafedar 41 – 5x4, Chonira Aiyappa 30 – 3x4, 2x6) by 6 wickets.

Nishad stars in Zawawi win

Top class all-round show by Nishad KS lifted Zawawi Powertech to a big 112-run win over Ernst and Young (E&Y) in a 50-over A Division League encounter at OC Turf 2 on Friday. Opening the batting, Nishad topscored with a solid 72 as Zawawi posted a robust 296 all out on the board in 47 overs with other notable scores coming from Nalaka Pathum (53) and Mohan Kumar (46). Masud Parvez claimed 3 for 68.

E&Y could not respond with equal force, folding up for 184 in the 40 th over due to excellent bowling by Nishad (3 for 33) and Vijeesh Chennangaden (3 for 46). Shrey Wilson was the main scorer with 49.

INDIA VS SRI LANKA

India beat Sri Lanka by an innings and 222 runs to take lead

MOHALI: India beat Sri Lanka by an innings and 222 runs as Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin bagged four wickets in 2nd innings here at the Punjab Cricket Association IS Bindra Stadium, Mohali on Sunday to take an unassailable 1-0 lead in the two-match Test series.

Resuming post Tea session at 120/4 the Indian spinners continued their wicket-taking spree as Ravichandran Ashwin dismissed Charith Asalanka in the third ball post-tea caught by Virat Kohli making him his 435th Test victim and going past Kapil Dev to become India's second most successful Test bowler behind Anil Kumble who has 619 Test scalps to his name. Ashwin is now ninth in the list of all-time highest wicket-taker in Tests. Five balls later Sri Lanka lost Angelo Mathews for 28 to Ravindra Jadeja's leg before wicket and then two balls later Suranga Lakmal hold out by Jayant Yadav in mid-over without troubling the scorers. Jadeja got two wickets in one over to take his innings tally to three wickets and match tally to eight to leave visitors tottering at 121/7.

Wicket-keeper batter Niroshan Dickwella and Lasith Embuldeniya tried hard to delay the



inevitable striking a small partnership and taking their team's total beyond the 150-run mark. Jadeja once again broke the partnership picking up his fourth wicket of the innings dismissing Embuldeniya for 2.

Dickwella was losing partners at the other end so he started playing shots but Mohammed Shami dis-

missed Vishwa Fernando for a duck to leave the Islanders at 170/9.

Dickwella went on to score his half-century and was the only Lankan batter to do so in 2nd innings. Ashwin finally dismissed no.11 batter Lahiru Kumara for 4 caught by Shami as he took his fourth scalp and Sri Lanka was bowled out for 178 in 2nd innings

to succumb to a defeat by an innings and 222 runs.

Earlier, resuming Day 3 at 138/4 in the first innings, overnight batters Pathum Nissanka and Charith Asalanka added 53 runs more to the total, and this saw Nissanka going past his half-century.

India finally got the breakthrough in the 58th over as Jas-

prit Bumrah got the better of Asalanka (29).

Niroshan Dickwella (2) failed to impress with the bat and he managed to score just 2 before being sent to the pavilion by Ravindra Jadeja. In the same over, Jadeja removed Suranga Lakmal (0) and Sri Lanka was reduced to 164/7.

In the end, Sri Lanka was bundled out for 174, handing India a lead of 400 runs and the hosts enforced the follow-on.

At lunch break on Day 3, Sri Lanka's score in the second innings read 10/1 -- still trailing by 390 runs. Dimuth Karunaratne (8*) and Pathum Nissanka (1*) are currently at the crease.

After being asked to follow on, Sri Lanka once again got off to bad start as the side lost opening batter Lahiru Thirimanne (0) in the third over of the innings. Dimuth Karunaratne and Pathum Nissanka then ensured that the visitors do not lose any more wickets.

Resuming the post-lunch session at 10/1, Sri Lanka got off to a poor start losing Pathum Nissanka for six caught behind by wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant of Ravichandran Ashwin's bowling who bagged his 434th Test scalp equalling Kapil Dev's record and becoming India's second

most successful Test bowler.

Jayant Yadav managed to get the outside edge of Angelo Mathews on when he was batting on 1 but Virat Kohli dropped the catch in the slip.

Mohammed Shami was introduced into the attack and he dismissed Sri Lankan captain Dimuth Karunaratne for 27 caught behind by keeper Pant who took his second catch of the innings to leave visitors tottering at 45/3.

Dhananjaya de Silva and Angelo Mathews then struck a much-needed partnership but the 49-run stand was broken by Ravindra Jadeja who took his first wicket in 2nd innings and his sixth wicket in the match as Sri Lanka lost their fourth wicket for 94.

Charith Asalanka came in to bat after de Silva's dismissal and he played aggressively to score 20 runs in just 7 balls hitting two fours and two sixes as Sri Lanka went to Tea with 120 runs on board for the loss of 4 wickets trailing India by 280 runs. Brief Scores: India 574/8d; Sri Lanka 174/10 and 178/10 (F/O) (Niroshan Dickwella 51*, Dhananjaya de Silva 30; Ravindra Jadeja 4-46, Ravichandran Ashwin 4-47). **ANI**

T10 TOURNAMENT

Grand cricket off to a great start

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Grand cricket tournament 2022, a knockout tennis ball T10 tournament organised by the Grand Global Investment (GGI), began at the Al Hail Cricket Club grounds with the participation of 48 teams on the weekend.

On the first day on Friday, Karla Friends beat Qurum Tuskers by 72 runs, Bahmani CC beat Legends XI by 9 runs, Beagles CT beat Falcon by six wickets, Ruwi Smashers thrashed Rayyan Royals by 125 runs, Rebels XI beat United CC by 46 runs, Spartans beat Team 08 Muscat by 2 wickets and Desert Warriors defeated Muscat Zalmi by six wickets.

On Saturday, Tamil CC got a walkover against Jaguar Cricket-



ers to the next round, AHC 11 got the better of Abeer Warriors by 7 wickets, Proline Knight Riders beat Deccan Stars by 9 wickets, MIS Fighters beat Rising Star Sharadi by 71 runs, Kingstar Ghubra got a walkover against BLS International Service and Adrak Blasters prevailed over Chanks

Mabelah by 52 runs.

Ali Humaid al Alawi, Chairman of Grand Global Investment, opened the tournament in presence of the organising committee members. Al Alawi said it was exciting to watch the action with many families watching the event on the weekend. "The matches

were exciting and the teams brought out their best performance. There were some families enjoying the cricket also," he said.

Tournament director Sanjit Kanojia said there were some high scoring games as 14 teams advanced to the second round.

Altat from Ruwi Smashers became the first centurion of the tournament with a 34-ball 117 runs studded with 15 sixes.

Meanwhile, the Women's Cup matches will begin on March 12 with four matches and the remaining three matches will be played on March 26.

Indian Social Club Oman, Sun Shine International SPC, Seema Dance Academy (SDA), Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir and Aster Hospital will compete for the honours.

STATE FUNERAL

Australian spin great Shane Warne to receive state funeral

MELBOURNE: Shane Warne's family has accepted state funeral for Australian cricketing legend, Victoria state premier Daniel Andrews announced on Sunday.

Warne widely consider as 'King of Spin', passed away on Friday at the age of 52 after a suspected heart attack in Thailand. In the tweet, Australian MP Daniel Andrews said this will be a great opportunity for Victorians to pay tribute to the legendary cricketer.

"I've spoken with the Warne family again today and they have accepted my offer of a State Funeral to remember Shane."

"It will be an opportunity for Victorians to pay tribute to his contribution to his sport, to our state and the country. Details

will be finalised in coming days," Daniel Andrews wrote on his official Twitter account. Earlier on Saturday, Daniel Andrews took to Twitter to inform that the Great Southern Stand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) will be renamed the S.K. Warne Stand.

Tributes have since flooded in for revolutionary spinner across the world as the unfortunate demise of the sport's one of the most charismatic figures shocked the world. Warne finished his international career with 708 Test wickets and a further 293 in One-Day Internationals, placing him second in the list of all-time international wicket-takers behind his great friend and rival Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka (1,347). **ANI**



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BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,183.96 points, up by 1.21 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.24 per cent at 497.64 points. OIFC, up 5.52 per cent, was the top gainer while, Sharqiyah Desalination, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser.

Online meetings widen participation, says CMA

e-platform represents a reliable electronic platform for convening general meetings and related businesses prepared within the legal and procedural requirements



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani capital sector acted with adequate resilience to convene the annual general meetings during the pandemic to ensure continuity of business via the electronic platform. This was on the back of the issuance of rules for convening general meetings online that ensured the rights

of all stakeholders.

Mohammed Said Al Abri, Vice President of the Capital Sector, said the e-platform represents a reliable electronic platform for convening general meetings and related businesses prepared within the legal and procedural requirements.

He expressed happiness over the success of the Capital Market Authority (CMA) in convening general meetings online for the third

consecutive season and added that this move is a breakthrough in the process of evolution of the Omani capital market as part of the CMA's efforts to digitalise the services of the sector.

"The rapid response was in line with the legislations...stipulating technology in businesses of the companies and funds which are basic requirements to attract foreign and domestic capital into the

stock exchange," he added.

This will help economic entities achieve the Oman Vision 2040 and involve the private sector in the economic ecosystem as a real partner in the comprehensive development plans and programmes and to stimulate the role of the capital market in financing the economic development.

Al Abri further said that Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (MCD) continued with its partners the development of the platform whether it was new e-services or addressing the observations raised in the past years, emphasising that the development of the platform is continuing to ensure high quality and safety of the general meeting processes.

CMA emphasises that the public joint stock companies, investment funds, auditors and legal advisors must comply with the laws regulating the general meetings and the rules for convening general meetings, physically or online.

The CMA had issued last year circular No. 4/2021 which included a set of procedures to be taken into consideration while convening the general meetings of public joint-stock companies and investment funds.

'CALCULATE IT RIGHT'

Workshop aims to equip entrepreneurs with necessary skills in financial management

Times News Service

MUSCAT: National Finance - Oman's leading finance company - conducted the first workshop of 'Calculate it Right' programme in collaboration with the Fund for Development of Youth Projects, 'Sharakah'. The workshop took place in National Finance's main office in Muscat and it comes under the company's independent wing for sustainable initiatives - 'Imtidad'.

The initiative targets existing and potential entrepreneurs, and aims to equip business owners with the necessary skills set in financial management and resource planning. The workshop shed light on the basics of determining the required capital for projects, the mechanism for calculating sales projections, the availability of the required resources, factors affecting sales, calculating operating expenses, and other related fields.

Tariq Al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer of National Finance said, "Joining hands with Sharakah to develop the skills of local talents reflects the vision of the company's independent wing for sustainable initiatives - 'Imtidad'. Through Imtidad, we aspire to



form strategic partnerships with stakeholders to benefit the community as a whole. Moreover, Imtidad seeks to deliver effective and sustainable initiatives that resonate with our endeavours towards contributing to the development of local communities as well as developing the skills of its people."

"Through these workshops, we aim to uplift the capabilities of the upcoming generation of entrepreneurs, help them realise their potential and support in executing their projects. During this year, we will conduct another four workshops across the Sultanate," said Faris Mohammed Al Harthi, Senior Project Specialist at Sharakah.

OMANTEL

Agreement signed to benefit from robotic process automation solutions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Rihal, an Omani company specialised in providing data migration and management solutions, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Omantel for providing a comprehensive training programme in the field of robotic process automation (RPA) to a group of young people who are enrolled in the 'Generation Z' programme.

'Generation Z' is an annual training programme for graduates offered by Omantel to train a group of the programme members on robotic automation in various fields. The MoU aims to support the efforts made to empower Omani youth and enhance their skills in the field of future technologies.

The MoU was signed by Azzan bin Qais Al Kindi, CEO of Rihal, and Eng. Sami bin Ahmed Al Ghassani, Chief Operating Officer of Omantel, in the presence of officials from both sides.

Commenting on this MoU, Sami bin Ahmed Al Ghassani, Omantel's Chief Operating Officer said: "Omantel is proud of the capabilities of the Omani youth that qualify them to lead the next phase of the Renewed Renaissance and



achieve the ambitions set out in Oman Vision 2040."

"We at Omantel give special importance to the Omani youth because we believe that they have the capabilities and energies that push them to be creative and innovative in various fields. For this reason, Omantel has invested in creating a conducive environment that suits their aspirations and develops their skills. The "Generation Z" programme reflects Omantel's vision towards youth in terms

of empowering them, enhancing their leadership capabilities by providing an environment that helps them to gain hands-on experiences, identify challenges, and come out with practical solutions, he added.

"Life is moving at a fast pace due to rapid successive modern technologies and developments. Young people have proven that they are the best to keep pace with such developments and modern technologies. For this reason, we are pleased

to join hands with Rihal to train a group of trainees of the Generation Z programme in RPA to add to their experience and knowledge.

In turn, Azzan bin Qais Al Kindi, CEO of Rihal, said: "This cooperation between Rihal and Omantel aims to enhance cooperation, share practical knowledge and experiences and develop future skills among Omani youth."

In response to a question about Rihal's role in the training plan, Al Kindi noted that RPA is one of Rihal's core areas of expertise. The Process Automation department will provide the trainees with a comprehensive training programme that will help them gain knowledge and develop their careers in one of the booming industries in the current digital economy.

It should be noted that RPA technology, which is part of Omantel's operations, is one of the services provided by Rihal. The technology reduces time and effort with high efficiency. The training programme will help the training keep abreast with the developments in the field of information automation. It will also complete the RPA programme, which already started at Omantel.

NEW REPORT

Real estate transactions in GCC countries up by 42% at \$137.40 billion

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Real estate value transacted from the GCC in 2021 was 42 per cent higher at \$137.40 billion than the full-year figure of \$96.7 billion in 2019 driven by strong transactions growth in Dubai, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, according to a new report.

"The number of transactions in 2021 reached 663,323 from 570,080 in 2020. Saudi led all markets in terms of transactions and contributed to over 41 per cent of the aggregate value transacted, while adding 46 per cent to the region's 2021 transaction volumes," the Kuwait based investment, strategy and research firm Kamco Invest, said in its GCC Real Estate Update March 2022 report.

Dubai sales transactions witnessed higher growth as compared to the previous two years as higher transaction activity was largely due to opportunistic buying in the residential segment.

This benefitted the villa and townhouse segment and was also aided by mortgage investors who were keen to capture lower mortgage rates, as discus-

sions over the impact of potential rate hikes on loan rates continued to emerge

The average value per transaction in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) bottomed out in 2021 at \$207,000 and was only 7.1 per cent lower than the 2017 average. Markets such as Saudi Arabia and Dubai witnessed significantly higher average transaction values, pointing towards investment appetite for attractively priced real estate, the report said.

The real estate transactions market in Dubai was particularly active in 2021, as transactions levels reportedly surpassed levels last seen in 2014, while the third-highest transaction volumes in history were recorded, as per Property Monitor.

Value transacted in Saudi Arabia and Dubai combined reached \$97.6 billion in 2021 and surpassed full-year figures of the entire GCC from 2019.

Recovery in Saudi Arabia's real estate prices was driven by government support mainly, in the form of mortgage financing and housing initiatives.

INTERMODAL TRAINS

Land-sea trade corridor facilitates car imports from Middle East to China

NANNING: Carrying 100 imported cars from the United Arab Emirates, the rail-sea intermodal trains departed from south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on March 4 and are expected to arrive in the city of Lanzhou, northwest China's Gansu Province, on Wednesday, according to railway authorities in Nanning, the regional capital of Guangxi.

This is the first time cars from Middle Eastern countries have entered the Chinese mainland market through the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a trade and logistics passage jointly built by western Chinese provincial regions and Singapore, said the China Railway Nanning Group Co. For a smooth shipment this time, the railway authorities in Guangxi have strengthened co-operation with customs departments and intermodal transport enterprises. -Xinhua

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MARKET

MSX index ends higher

OIFC, up 5.52 per cent, was the top gainer while, Sharqiyah Desalination, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,183.96 points, up by 1.21 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.24 per cent at 497.64 points. OIFC, up 5.52 per cent, was the top gainer while, Sharqiyah Desalination, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Al Omaniya Financial Services were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat was most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 942 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR5.9 million, with more than 26.8 million shares changing hands. Out of 51 traded securities, 17 advanced, 8 declined and 26 remained unchanged. At the session close, Domestic investors were net buyers for OMR722,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for

OMR488,000 followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR234,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 6657.54 points, up by 1.25 per cent. Prices of Al Omaniya Financial Services, Sohar International Bank, Al Anwar Investment, HSBC Bank Oman, and Taageer Finance were up by 4.17 per cent, 3.7 per cent, 3.66 per cent, 3.03 per cent, and 2.35 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Batinah Development Company, DIDIC, National Life & General Insurance, and Financial Corporation were down by 2.08 per cent, 0 per cent, 0 per cent, and 0 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5900.38 points, up by 0.98 per cent. Services Index was up by 0.3 per cent before closing at 1646.82 points. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES						
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,183.96	4,136.09	4,183.96	4,134.06	49.90	1.21
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,657.54	6,578.37	6,657.54	6,575.38	82.16	1.25
Industry Index	5,901.70	5,858.72	5,900.37	5,843.17	57.20	0.98
Services Index	1,648.38	1,636.08	1,646.82	1,641.92	4.90	0.30
MSX Shariah Index	498.50	496.97	497.64	496.46	1.18	0.24
MSX TR INDEX	5,036.43	4,978.81	5,036.43	4,976.36	60.07	1.21

Trading Summary						
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal
26,805,410	5,990,856	942	22,160,082,131	17	8	26
						Sec. Traded

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 6

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	P/B VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001525	OMAN INVEST FIN	302,111	46,242	7	0.148	0.154	0.148	0.153	0.145	0.008	5.517	0.154	0.150	0.159	0.100	36,261,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANYTA FIN	4,499,000	674,850	109	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.144	0.006	4.167	0.150	0.150	0.149	0.150	0.100	43,790,276
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,251,914	573,703	54	0.458	0.460	0.458	0.440	0.018	4.091	0.452	0.440	0.452	0.100	100,760,000	
OM0000003298	SOULIMAN INVEST	86,000	10,976	5	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.108	0.004	3.704	0.112	0.112	0.116	0.100	334,886,776	
OM0000001772	ALANWAB INVESTMENT	4,007,482	342,247	115	0.084	0.086	0.084	0.085	0.002	0.003	3.659	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.100	17,000,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	422,885	218,097	28	0.500	0.520	0.500	0.516	0.000	0.016	3.200	0.514	0.514	0.520	0.100	28,380,000
OM0000002176	HAZZERA STEEL PROD	891,917	279,829	39	0.404	0.406	0.400	0.404	0.004	0.004	2.538	0.404	0.400	0.404	0.100	50,458,776
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	819,181	697,389	24	0.836	0.840	0.834	0.840	0.004	0.006	1.942	0.840	0.840	0.844	0.100	830,000,000
OM0000001533	JOZEEN	286,879	82,860	28	0.320	0.330	0.320	0.324	0.004	0.004	1.887	0.326	0.326	0.328	0.100	216,550,398
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	3,381,175	1,837,400	107	0.534	0.544	0.534	0.544	0.010	0.010	1.873	0.544	0.540	0.544	0.100	144,514,287
OM0000006920	INSURANCE	100,000	10,881	9	0.106	0.110	0.106	0.109	0.007	0.002	1.869	0.110	0.108	0.105	0.100	29,900,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	915,945	56,789	31	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.001	0.001	1.839	0.062	0.062	0.063	0.100	19,043,072
OM0000001087	OMANUNITED INSUR	62,750	24,048	11	0.380	0.384	0.380	0.384	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.384	0.380	0.384	0.100	38,400,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	77,855	52,950	14	0.684	0.684	0.680	0.680	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.680	0.680	0.748	0.100	107,100,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	23,970	4,326	6	0.180	0.182	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.182	0.182	0.186	0.100	36,000,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR	29,589	28,889	6	0.976	0.976	0.976	0.976	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.976	0.976	0.976	0.100	87,547,200
OM0000002226	ALJAZIRA SERVICES	25,800	7,470	8	0.288	0.290	0.288	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.288	0.290	0.100	17,749,239
OM0000002440	AL SHAHQIA UNIV	121,800	9,277	19	0.075	0.080	0.075	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	6,840,000
OM0000003000	AL MAHA MARKTING	7,060	4,857	4	0.688	0.688	0.688	0.688	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.688	0.684	0.688	0.100	47,472,000
OM0000003968	QOREDDO	661,500	230,933	38	0.356	0.356	0.344	0.350	0.000	-0.008	-2.235	0.344	0.340	0.344	0.100	227,830,481
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	25,210	3,403	3	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.000	-0.005	-3.571	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.100	11,475,000
Total		17,812,123	5,197,416	665												
21																

Parallel Market																	
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	1,087,811	111,348	18	0.100	0.104	0.100	0.102	0.099	0.003	0.036	0.104	0.099	0.104	0.100	204,031,905	
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	520,000	45,063	11	0.085	0.087	0.085	0.087	0.002	0.003	2.353	0.086	0.083	0.086	0.100	22,062,330	
OM0000002804	ASAFIA FOODS	25,000	3,200	2	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.002	0.002	1.587	0.128	0.114	0.128	0.100	15,360,000	
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	325,900	24,432	14	0.074	0.077	0.074	0.075	0.004	0.001	1.351	0.076	0.074	0.076	0.100	15,000,000	
OM0000001085	DHOFA INSURANCE	11,150	2,007	2	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.175	0.150	0.100	18,000,000	
OM0000001285	MINERAL WATER	3,094	159	1	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.100	2,430,274	
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	205	39	1	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.188	0.190	0.200	0.100	308,929,808	
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	16,000	1,166	2	0.072	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.067	0.072	0.100	9,125,000	
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	745	54	1	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.065	0.072	0.100	5,775,000	
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	1,665,000	141,625	28	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.100	29,677,275	
OM0000002372	OMAN OIL MARKETING	100	96	1	0.956	0.956	0.956	0.872	0.872	0.000	0.000	0.956	0.788	0.956	0.100	53,431,800	
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	10,000	1,180	1	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.116	0.118	0.100	63,865,194	
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	89,347	6,342	6	0.070	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071	0.075	0.100	14,412,038	
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	224	10	1	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.000	0.000	0.043	0.000	0.043	0.100	3,503,430	
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,646,881	162,977	44	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.086	0.098	0.099	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	21,000	1,702	2	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.000	0.000	0.081	0.081	0.082	0.100	77,320,328	
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	1,484,186	144,227	37	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.100	16,975,000	
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	100	7	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.000	0.070	0.100	6,900,000	
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	216,408	10,401	19	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.100	32,394,597	
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	129,295	6,296	16	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	35,005,911	
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	2,000	290	1	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.000	0.000	0.145	0.140	0.145	0.100	10,950,690	
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	17,614	1,620	2	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.093	0.093	0.001	1.075	0.092	0.092	0.100	7,489,053		
OM0000003319	ALUMINUM PROD.	793,180	63,354	28	0.078	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.081	0.001	1.235	0.080	0.079	0.082	0.100	2,685,716	
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	62,860	7,180	8	0.116	0.116	0.114	0.114	0.116	0.002	-1.723	0.114	0.114	0.116	0.100	14,820,000	
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INV.	707,848	33,269	13	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.046	0.049	0.100	32,900,000	
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	64,888	7,207	5	0.108	0.112	0.108	0.111	0.114	0.003	2.632	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.100	17,266,094	
OM0000004689	SHARQIYAH DESALIN.	33,000	4,166	6	0.126	0.130	0.126	0.126	0.130	0.004	-10.000	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.100	12,323,072	
Total		8,932,896	779,466	271													

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India, Bangladesh to soon finalise joint study for comprehensive economic partnership

NEW DELHI: India and Bangladesh will soon finalise a joint study for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that is expected to boost trade and further strengthen economic engagements between the two neighbouring countries. The issues related to the proposed Comprehensive Economic

Partnership Agreement were discussed in the commerce secretary-level meeting held between the two countries in New Delhi on March 4. In the meeting, the Indian delegation was led by Commerce Secretary, Government of India, B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, and the Bangladesh delegation was led by Senior Secretary, Ministry of

Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, Tapan Kanti Ghosh.

Trading partner Bangladesh is the sixth-largest trading partner of India. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement is expected to give a big boost to the trade between the two countries. —**ANI**

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TECHNOLOGY

Apple releases new update for Safari Technology Preview

WASHINGTON: American tech giant Apple on Saturday rolled out a new update for Safari Technology Preview, the experimental browser Apple first introduced in March 2016. The update titled Safari Technology Preview release 141 includes bug fixes and performance improvements for Web Inspector, CSS, Forms, JavaScript, Experimental Model Element, Payment Request, Web Animations, Web API, WebAuthn, and Content Security Policy, as per GSM Arena. For the unversed, Apple designed the Safari Technology Preview to test features that may be introduced into future release versions of Safari. The current Safari Technology Preview release is built on the Safari 15.4 update and it includes Safari 15 features introduced in macOS Monterey. The Safari Technology Preview update is available through the Software Update mechanism in System Preferences to anyone who has downloaded the browser. Full release notes for the update are available on the Safari Technology Preview website. —**ANI**

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CELEBRATE THE WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE WITH THESE SPECIAL GIFTING IDEAS



International Women's Day, which is annually celebrated on March 8, is an occasion that is dedicated to the women in our lives who go beyond their means to bring a smile to our faces.

It is a global day for commemorating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.

The women around us play a vital role in our lives by making us grow personally and professionally, and that too most of the time unknowingly. Hence, won't it be great if you appreciate them for their efforts and dedication. And for that, we have curated this special list of gifting ideas that will put a smile on her face, just like she brings to yours.

1. Dinner date/Lunch date
It's well known that time is an irreplaceable gift, hence, you can spend some quality time with the special women in your life by going on a lunch or dinner date with them. Take them out for an experience that lets her know that her presence is all that matters to you.

2. Books by a female writer
For those who are looking for something that's inspiring and makes her grow, then there is nothing better than a book. There are plenty of female writers who have written stories on women that are inspiring. On this day, go ahead, and look for the book that you want to give to the special woman in your life.

The women around us play a vital role in our lives by making us grow personally and professionally, and that too most of the time unknowingly.

3. Jewellery
Though a bit more inclined towards materialism, still, the efforts of women can be appreciated by gifting them a beautiful necklace or a pair of earrings. This will surely remind them that you are grateful for the efforts they put to make you happy.

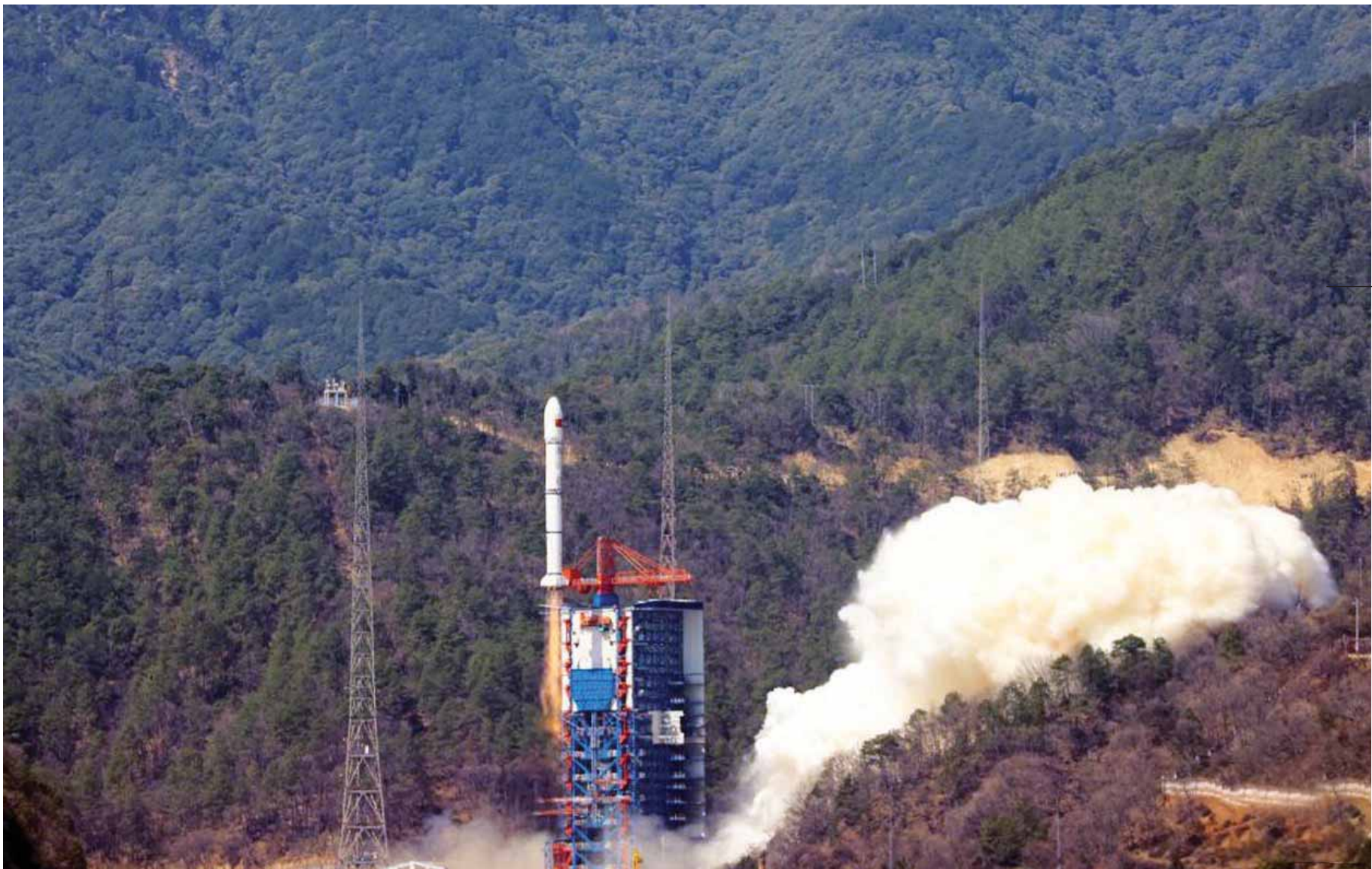
4. Earphones
Listening to music is an activity that is unanimously liked by everyone. Thus, gift her a pair of great earphones so that even on the days that she is feeling low, the beats of music can uplift her and bring back that lost joy on her face.

5. Spa day
There is one thing that most women have missed to death during the COVID-19 pandemic and that is the spa. However, now that the restrictions are being relaxed, you can book her a spa appointment delivered at home filled with rejuvenating massages and hot oil rubs instead of the usual traffic navigating hustle to work.

6. Personalised pen
You can add a personal touch to any average pen by simply engraving the name of a person on it. Be it your writer friend or partner, a personalised pen is one of the best ways to surprise her on International Women's Day and inspire her to write more and better.

Though women can sometimes be notoriously difficult to shop for, these excellent gift ideas from us are sure to impress every woman in your life and make International Women's Day memorable for them. - ANI

THE WORLD IN PICTURES



China launches seven new satellites

A Long March-2C carrier rocket carrying six satellites produced by Beijing-based GalaxySpace and a commercial remote sensing satellite blasts off from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. [xinhua](#)

Dragon Boat Festival held in southern California

Hundreds of people gathered in Marina del Rey in southern California Saturday for a Dragon Boat Festival featuring dragon boat racing, a live music show and family gatherings. Nearly 40 teams competed in the dragon boat racing in the harbour, with participants' age ranging from 10 to 70. Many participants were multi-generational families paddling together. [Xinhua](#)



Bollywood actress Urvashi Rautela spotted at Geetanjali Salon

Bollywood actress Urvashi Rautela spotted at Geetanjali Salon, Juhu, in Mumbai on Saturday. [ANI](#)



Coffee-planting festival celebrated in Sanaa, Yemen

Visitors taste coffee at a booth during a coffee-planting festival in Sanaa, Yemen. [xinhua](#)



Large number of Ukrainian people arrive at borders

Picture shows a temporary camp in Siret, Romania. Recently, a large number of Ukrainian people have arrived at the borders with neighbouring countries including Romania, due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. [xinhua](#)



Wildfires grow in the US state of Florida

Photo released by Bay County Florida Emergency Services shows a wildfire in Bay County, Florida, the United States. There are currently 148 wildfires burning more than 7,100 acres (roughly 2,873 hectares) across Florida. [Xinhua](#)



Bicycle consumer show kicks off in Vancouver

People look at a bicycle at the BC Bike Show in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The two-day bicycle consumer show features all latest products and services from over 70 exhibitors for cyclists to explore. [xinhua](#)

ROUND-UP

be'ah decommissions Cell 1 of Barka Landfill with rigorous safety measures

This process is the second-of-its-kind in the region and aims to control and extract biogas emissions to prevent future pollution and minimise risks to the environment and human health

MUSCAT: be'ah announced that it has successfully completed the closing process of Cell 1 in Barka Landfill, South Al Batinah.

This process is the second of its kind in the region and aims to controlling and extracting biogas emissions to prevent future pollution and minimise risks to the environment and human health. The goal of closing the landfill cell is to reduce the amounts of leachate produced from bioprocesses, control the odour, and begin the safe disposal of biogas by burning or re-directing it to industrial use.

As standard practice, be'ah initiates final closing and decommissioning procedures on all landfills that reach their capacity in line with the best international environmental practices in the industry. Before closing, be'ah had stopped receiving municipal waste and discontinued operations in engineering Cell 1. Closing



operations have been undertaken with the utmost care to ensure the long-term protection of the surrounding environment by using insulating geosynthetic lining materials that prevent rainwater and oxygen from leaking into the cell, and these layers were also covered with a proper layer of soil and riprap for added protection.

In order to reduce the environmental impact of biogas emitted from landfills and their risks to human health, biogas emitted after closure as a result of the vital processes in the engineering cell

are removed through an efficient extraction system. Chief among these gases is methane (CH4), one of the main greenhouse gases and a key driver of global warming with a far superior potency compared to carbon dioxide (CO2). Biogas is passed through a gas flaring unit designed to burn and dispose of gas emissions following the highest quality standards.

The extraction and collection of biogas are crucial after closing any engineered landfill cell to prevent gas accumulation and pressure build-up inside the cell. Specially designed wells are built and used to extract and transfer the gas through a network of pipelines delivering it to a 2000 m3/hour flaring unit (burning station). There, the energy recovery journey begins where, most commonly, biogas is used to generate electricity.

The design of the final cover of the closed cell is implemented in compliance with the requirements and design standards of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Additionally, the site and the surrounding area will be subject to 30 years of continuous environmental monitoring, including groundwater and leachate monitoring.

The post-closure phase includes long-term maintenance of closed landfills and cells to reduce their impact on the surrounding ecosystem. During this phase, the stability of cover materials is ensured and all gaps that may compromise proper sealing are filled to prevent stagnant water.

Prior planning is usually carried out, as early as the initial landfill design phase, to identify possible uses for the landfill after its closure, bearing in mind that the future use of decommissioned landfills is also affected by geography as well as their topography and shape. Future uses of landfills may include transforming them into recreational parks, golf courses, or other sports playgrounds.

ANNIVERSARY

Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals launches its 20 years celebrations

MUSCAT: Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals organised the launch event of its 20 years celebrations.

The glorious journey of 20 years, from a humble initiation in 2002, helped Badr Al Samaa to become the largest private healthcare group with 13 centres currently and many more to come.

It is the only group of Oman in private healthcare having all its hospitals accredited by international accreditation bodies like JCI (USA) and ACHSI (Australia). A special 20 years celebration logo was unveiled on the occasion and the audience went through the 20 years journey of Badr Al Samaa with a special movie made for this occasion

The event also witnessed ACHSI accreditation certificate presentation to the corporate and four recently accredited hospitals of Badr Al Samaa; Barka, Niawa, Sohar and Salalah.

Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Saedi, the Minister of Health, Oman was the chief guest of the event. Dr Shashi Tharoor, member of Indian Parliament, Former Undersecretary General - UN, was the guest of honour. The event was also attended by Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to Oman, Abdullah bin Saud Alanazi, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Oman, Dr Muhanne Bin Nasir A-Muslahi, Director-General -DGPHE, executive directors, senior management, all other staff of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals and various dignitaries from companies, corporate, media and many social organisation.

The programme began with the recitation of the Holy Quran.

In his welcome address, Abdul Latheef, Managing Director of Badr Al Samaa attributed the credit for the success of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals to the dedicated and selfless workforce, continuous support from the Ministry of Health, various ministries and all concerned stakeholders and above all the continuous trust of their patients in their healthcare services. He said Badr Al Samaa standardised its clinical and non-clinical operations with international accreditations since the beginning. He said 20 years of celebrations will witness many Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, the introduction of advanced clinical programs and awareness and training programmes for the general public on basic health issues like Cardio Pulmonary Re-



suscitation (CSR), etc.

Dr P A Mohammed, Managing Director of Badr Al Samaa said the theme of this 20 Years celebration is based on trust and care. The trust which, people have shown in Badr Al Samaa for two decades and the quality of care with which Badr Al Samaa has complemented that trust. He said Badr Al Samaa has aggressive future expansion plans and they are coming up with a premium hospital in near future along with some more multispecialty hospitals and medical centres in addition to super specialised centres for IVF, Ophthalmology and Oncology.

Dr Sashi Tharoor appreciated the management and staff of Badr Al Samaa for this remarkable achievement which is a testimony of providing valuable humanitarian services. He said Indian doctors and paramedics have achieved recognition of dedication and service excellence.

He said this talent coupled with the resources, capabilities and leadership of Oman has helped the healthcare sector of Oman to grow along with world standards and produce impressive results in a short time. He appreciated the commitment that everybody had made during the COVID pandemic and developed an environment that will safeguard our health against any such threats in future. He appreciated the impressive doctor to patient ratio of Oman which stands at 2.1 to 1,000 people which is closer to the USA, nurses' ratio of 4.5 to 1000 people. He said 95% population of Oman lives within 5 kilometres of a good primary healthcare centre. He attributed the credit of all this to the strong leadership of Oman. He chaired the interactive session after his speech; many attendees

were excited to interact with him during the event.

Ahmed Al Saedi in his address said he is delighted to celebrate the 20th-anniversary launch programme and ACHSI accreditation of four hospitals with everyone present. He said during COVID due to the well-equipped healthcare surveillance system the impact was not worse. He appreciated the private healthcare sector's support. He believed in equity not just for COVID treatment and vaccines but the overall healthcare sector and he said Oman has worked a lot in this direction. He said in Oman the outcomes in healthcare are way too ahead of the spending, which is exceptional. He said life expectancy in Oman in the 1970s was only 49 years which has grown to 78 years today due to reforms in the healthcare sector.

Dr Muhanne Bin Nasir A-Muslahi in his address said the accreditation process is a very important step in improving patient care and patient satisfaction. He said Badr Al Samaa has done exceptional work in getting international accreditations for all of its hospitals. He said it is a challenging job, but the dedicated team of Badr Al Samaa achieved this feat. He said the Oman government should move to have its own independent accreditation body.

Moideen Bilal, Executive Director of Badr Al Samaa said that it is the trust of the people that helped Badr Al Samaa to grow from a polyclinic in 2002 in Oman expanded its presence to UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait. He said growing with the trust and confidence of our patients, the group apart from geographical expansions is technologically upgrading with new diagnostic and therapeutic modalities from time to time.

PROMOTION

Scratch & Win 2 Kia at once and much more with Kia's exciting campaign

MUSCAT: Kia is offering winnings like never before in its latest campaign. As part of the campaign, customers purchasing a new Kia, have an unbelievable opportunity to scratch and win 2 Kia at one time. Additional scratch & win prizes include, Win your purchased Kia back, Win all-new Sportage, Win up to 20 per cent on display price, Win periodic service up to 1,00,000 km and VAT on us. The campaign is valid until May 1. (Conditions apply. Please visit the Kia showroom for details.)

According to a representative from Reliable International Automotive, "This is one of the most exciting offers from Kia! It gives customers an unbelievable opportunity to buy their favourite Kia and scratch and win exciting prizes. It could be a very rare opportunity where customers get



a chance to win not one, but two vehicles at once. An offer like this is like a dream offer, no one should miss it. So head to your nearest Kia showroom and experience winnings like never before."

People looking forward to owning a Kia can choose from a range of exciting models. They include the Kia Seltos. The Kia Seltos combines forward-looking technical features, class-leading space and a suite of world-class safety features, and is powered by a highly-efficient Smartstream petrol

engine. Powering the Seltos is a 1.6-litre gasoline engine producing 121 HP paired to a six-speed automatic transmission (6AT). The interior of the Seltos is impressive. The cabin is characterised by broad, sweeping shapes and highly technical details and is equipped with a range of technologies to maximise convenience, connectivity and ease of use. The Seltos is a technologically advanced and refined compact SUV equipped with a range of advanced features. They include a Smart Key with Button Start, Auto Cruise Control, Terrain Mode System (Snow, Mud, Sand), Electronic Stability Program (ESP) among many other advanced features and technology. The K5's powerful and angular design language represents another chapter of boldness and passion for the brand.

OMAN ARAB BANK

OAB staff graduate from Etimad programme

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) announced the graduation of several of its employees from the prestigious Etimad programme. The programme stems from a government initiative with the key objective of preparing qualified Omanis for leadership positions.

Highlighting the importance of this achievement, Essam Al Busaidi, Head of the Human Resources Division of OAB, said, "OAB has always strived to ensure that its employees are provided with the opportunity to be a part of programmes that support the enhancement of their leadership skills. Through this endeavour, we can play an integral role and contribute towards building the leaders of tomorrow by equipping them with the required skillsets. Moreover, the programme reinforces the bank's commitment towards training and upskilling Omani talent to build a dynamic team and strengthen its position as a leading banking institution in the Sultanate."

Etimad is a prestigious leadership programme aimed to empower Omanis in middle and senior management positions to



assume leadership roles within the private sector.

The programme's goals are aligned in collaboration with representatives from the private sector, as well as public sector policymakers, to prepare national talents for leadership positions in the private sector. Participants attend several classroom and distance learning courses that focus on acquiring leadership skills, over three weeks.

Graduates of the latest Etimad programme include Sumaiya Al Riyami from the Human Resources Division, Khalil Al Balushi from the Internal Audit Division, Saqar Al Harasifrom the Banking Operation Group, Hamida Al Balushi from the Credit Administration Department, Mohamed Al Abri from the Retail Banking Division, Khalil Al Balushi from the Internal Audit Division and Ammar Al Zadjal from the Corporate & Institutional Banking Division.

The Etimad programme saw the delivery of high-level training and qualifications to graduates, in collaboration with international and local institutions that specialise in management and leadership skill training.

"On behalf of OAB, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the graduates and wish them further growth and success for the future. Together, we can build a better and brighter future for generations to come," Essam Al Busaidi added.

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ROUND-UP

Motorola partners with MHD-ITICS to distribute its smartphone line in Oman

Under the terms of the agreement, MHD-ITICS will now serve as the official distribution partners for Motorola smartphones in Oman, beginning with the launch of three new models – the Motorola Edge 20, Moto G51 5G, and Moto G60s

MUSCAT: MHD-ITICS, the Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions cluster of Mohsin Haider Darwish, has signed a distribution agreement with Motorola, a leading global producer of mobile devices and solutions.

Under the terms of the agreement, MHD-ITICS will now serve as the official Distribution Partners for Motorola smartphones in the Sultanate of Oman, beginning with the launch of three new models – the Motorola Edge 20, Moto G51 5G, and Moto G60s.

Commenting on the partnership, Gokul Praveen, Deputy Director of MHD-ITICS said, “Motorola has a distinguished heritage as a global leader in the smartphone space, and their products deliver segment-defining experiences in terms of looks, user interface, features, and prices.



“We are proud to be associated with Motorola, bringing their unbeatable line-up of smartphones to our customers in Oman. We strongly believe that the MHD-ITICS core strengths of the widest distribution network in Oman and unparalleled customer service, combined with the great products from Motorola, will allow customers in Oman to have a better choice when buying a smartphone.”

Since 1928, Motorola has been fusing innovative technology with human insights to create experiences that simplify, connect, and enrich people’s lives. They have grown to be a global technology leader in driving Intelligent Transformation through smart devices and infrastructure that create the best user experience. Through their extensive portfolio of converged mobile devices, including smartphones, tablets, wireless accessories and more, Motorola strives to provide people with access to the intuitive mobile products needed to make everyday life easier, more uplifting, and more enjoyable for all.

“Our partnership with MHD-ITICS is part of our local business

growth strategy within the Middle East region. Oman is one of our key markets and we see great growth opportunities here due to the exponential growth in Oman’s telcoms market. We are fully committed to growing our presence in Oman and MHD-ITICS will allow us to bring our latest and greatest innovations to the hands of Omani consumers delivering on our Lenovo Group goal of providing Smarter Technology for All,” said Sharay Shams, General Manager, Motorola Middle East.

The first of the three smartphones being launched in Oman is the Motorola Edge 20. Despite being one of the thinnest 5G smartphones on the market at just 6.99mm, the smartphone delivers outstanding imaging, performance, and features.

The Motorola Edge 20 delivers a new 108MP main camera together with one of the company’s largest camera sensors ever at 1/1.5” optical format. Also on offer is an ultrawide-angle lens, which allows users to capture 4X more into their frame, while the built-in Macro Vision lets users get 5X closer to

The first of the three smartphones being launched in the Sultanate of Oman is the Motorola Edge 20. Despite being one of the thinnest 5G smartphones on the market at just 6.99mm, the smartphone delivers outstanding imaging, performance, and features.

their subject for extreme close-ups, as close as 3cm away. Finally, there is the 30X Super Zoom telephoto lens for capturing details from incredible distances.

The Edge 20 also comes with a 6.7” Max Vision display with OLED technology for a clear viewing experience. This display offers 10-bit colour, achieving the DCI-P3 colour space and meeting HDR10+ standards.

For the first time, Motorola is also offering a 144Hz refresh rate, the highest rate available on mainstream smartphones.

The Motorola edge 20 is packed with a powerfully efficient Qualcomm processor with up to 55% faster graphics and processing compared to the first-generation Motorola edge.

The ultra-fast Snapdragon 778G 5G Mobile Platform supports Wi-Fi 6E and is designed specifically for 5G phones. With up to 128GB of built-in storage, there’s tons of room for photos, movies, games, and music. And with up to 8GB of the latest generation memory, users’ apps and information stay ready in the background, so

everything runs smoothly. Users can even go beyond a full day without recharging thanks to the 4,000mAh battery, and if users do need a quick burst of power, TurboPower 30W gives them 8 hours of power in just 10 minutes.

The second smartphone to be launched is the Moto G60S. Designed for those that are always on the go, the Moto G60S features Motorola’s fastest ever TurboPower charging experience. The new phone is also packed with a huge screen featuring a 120Hz refresh rate, and ultra-responsive performance powered by the latest processor from MediaTek. All of this, combined with an amazing quad-camera system, including the dual capture mode to take photos or make videos using the front and rear camera at the same time, allows users to freely explore their content creator side.

The last of the three phones to be launched is the Moto G51 5G, designed to be future-ready with support for 12 5G Bands. Users can also create, collaborate, and multitask easily with its powerful Qualcomm Snapdragon 480 Plus processor. Movies, games, and video chats come to life on the 6.8” FHD+ ultra-wide Max Vision display with a super-smooth 120Hz refresh rate. Complementing the stunning display is the 50MP camera system with lens sensors that adjust to any vantage point, in any light, for perfect shots. Better still, users can go for over a day on a single charge thanks to the 5,000mAh battery, and then power up again quickly with rapid charging.

The Edge 20, in Frosted Gray and Frosted White colours, is now available at OMR 157.395.

The Moto G60s, loaded with a host of unbeatable features, is now available at OMR 94.900 in Iced Mint and Ink Blue colours.

The feature-rich, yet value for money model, Motorola G51 5G, is available in Indigo Blue and Bright Silver colours at an incredible price of just OMR 83.900.

Careers at Khimji Ramdas

Khimji Ramdas (KR) is one of the most respected and admired business conglomerates in Oman. Headquartered in Muscat, it partners with some iconic global brands, across FMCG-Retail, Lifestyle, F&B, Construction & Engineering, Shipping & Logistics, and various other business verticals. As an employer of choice, Khimji Ramdas fosters excellence and individual initiative. Experience a fulfilling career, and be a part of the KR workforce.

The below vacancies are for the Group's Consumer Products business which distributes renowned brands such as Nivea, Bel, Afia, Foster Clark, Britannia, and several others.

KEY ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

The candidate must hold a Diploma/Degree in Marketing with 3-6 years of experience in handling key FMCG customers with a strong track record of sales volume and maintain visibility of space and freshness of stock. He will be responsible for achieving sales including negotiations with clients and developing new customers, distribution and display of products, proactive in collecting outstanding dues, and enhancing customer relationships.

Candidates with good communication skills with a valid Oman driving license will be preferred.

VAN SALES EXECUTIVE

The candidate must be a graduate or an intermediate with a minimum of 2 years of experience. He will be responsible for maintaining stock levels in the van at all times and updating the PALM customer database, attending to sales inquiries and carrying direct sales activities, adhering to health & safety policies and requirements related to company equipment, managing van merchandising, and attending business meetings to ensure cash and stock controlled accurately. Candidates with good communication skills, the ability to speak Arabic, and a valid Oman driving license will be preferred.

All above positions are located in various parts of the Sultanate of Oman and carry industry-standard salaries and Incentives.

Get in touch to start your career at KR.

Email your resume to **hrd@kr.om** within one week.



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