



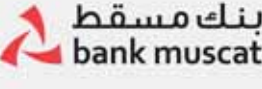
OMAN GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES 72ND ISSUE OF DEVELOPMENT BONDS

On behalf of the Oman government represented by the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announces the new issue of Government Development Bonds (GDB). The size of the new issue stands at OMR75 million with an option to exceed the announced amount (Greenshoe option), with a maturity period of 5 years and will carry a coupon rate of 4.75% p.a. **>B1**



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ACCIDENT

Tributes pour in as long time Indian businessman and his wife passes away

DUQM BOASTS FIVE OUT OF EIGHT RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS WORTH \$49BN

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The city of Sur in the Sultanate of Oman is in mourning following the tragic death of long-time resident and respected Indian businessman, Purshottam Bhatia, and his wife, Padmini, after a partial wall collapse at their home in Sur Market on Saturday.

Bedroom wall collapses
Purshottam, aged 89, and Padmini, aged 85, lost their lives when the side wall of their bedroom collapsed while they slept past midnight.

The couple had been residents of Sur for decades, with Purshottam, affectionately known as 'Vald Hera' among locals, running the popular Hiranand Kishandas and Company, a well-known textile shop that has served both Omanis and expatriates for over



70 years.

His warm personality and enduring dedication to the com-

munity earned him a cherished place in the hearts of many in the region. **>A3**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Dates and honey exhibition kicks off

1 The second edition of the "International Dates and Honey Exhibition" kicked off on Sunday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. It aims to introduce the latest products in the fields of dates and honey, expand commercial prospects and enlighten the participants. **>A5**

WORLD Celebs lend support to Kamala Harris

2 US Vice President Kamala Harris who is running for the post of president in the US polls has received support from America's leading music industry pop stars during her rallies. At Harris' first stop, in Detroit, the singer and rapper Lizzo warmed up the crowd with a passionate appeal. **>A6**

SPORTS NZ secure first win in India after 36 years

3 A fine bowling performance from Matt Henry and William O'Rourke, coupled with brilliant batting from Rachin Ravindra, helped New Zealand secure an eight-wicket victory over India in the first Test at Bengaluru on Sunday. This is the Kiwis' first win in India in over 36 years. **>A8**

Duqm forum reviews the investment opportunities in blue economy, food security, logistics



MUSCAT: The total investments in the Duqm Special Economic Zone amounted to more than OMR6 billion in the third quarter of 2024, said Sheikh Ahmed Musallam Al Kithiri, Governor of Al Wusta.

In the field of renewable energy, the governorate hosts 5 projects out of 8 national projects in the Sultanate of Oman, with an investment value of \$49 billion in green hydrogen projects and the fields of solar energy, wind energy and related projects, added Sheikh Al Kithiri.

The 5th Duqm Forum reviewed the most important investment opportunities available in the blue economy, food security, logistics, tourism and renewable energy sectors in the Sultanate of Oman in general and Al Wusta

Governorate in particular.

The event, held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Sunday, was organised by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Al Wusta Branch), in partnership with the Foreign Ministry and the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of HH Sayyid Harib bin Thuwaini Al Said, Assistant Secretary General

of the Council of Ministers for Conferences.

During the event, Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs explained that the Sultanate of Oman's ancient history linked to the sea and its strategic location on the open seas have enabled it to communicate and establish trade and cultural relations with many countries and peoples in the world throughout ages. **>A5**



BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The Times of Oman 'Business Leadership Summit 2024' will explore the innovative leadership practices driving business success and sustainability. The premier event will bring together senior government officials, international experts, top business owners, leading CEOs, SMEs and industry leaders. Attendees can look forward to thought-provoking discussions, invaluable networking opportunities and the celebration of outstanding leadership achievements.



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be found in which
governorate of
Oman?

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flag has 12
stars placed in
a circle on a blue
field, representing
the constellation
of Corona
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TRAGEDY

‘House became vulnerable after recent heavy rains’

<FROM A1 Their son, Pradeep Bhatia, 67, shared the heartbreaking details in an interview with *Times of Oman*: “It’s a tragedy that has shattered our family. My parents went to bed as usual, and sometime after midnight, we heard a loud crash. When we rushed to check, we found that the side wall of their bedroom had collapsed, burying them under the rubble. We called emergency services immediately, but it took several hours to clear the debris and recover them.”

Pradeep explained that their home, a four-room one-storey building, had undergone partial renovation, but the older part of the house had become vulnerable following recent heavy rains, which had caused significant waterlogging in Sur.

“The rains in Sur have been relentless, and the older part of the house couldn’t take it anymore,” explained Pradeep. Thankfully, the ground-floor shop remained unaffected.

Since news of the tragedy spread, friends, relatives, and long-time customers have been paying their respects at the family home. “My father was incredibly popular with the locals. They lovingly called him ‘Vald Hera,’

meaning ‘son of Hiranand,’ in honour of my grandfather who first established our family’s presence in Sur,” Pradeep added.

“Even at 89, my father was very active, regularly sitting in the shop and interacting with customers.”

In recent times, Purshottam had gained further attention when a video of him with a well-known Omani figure went viral, showcasing his longstanding ties with the community.

He was also recently honoured by Indian Ambassador to Oman Amit Narang during a visit to Sur, in recognition of his contributions to the region.

Adding to the outpouring of love and grief, the couple’s grandchildren shared a touching tribute online, posting a photo of their grandparents standing proudly in front of the iconic dhow - an emblem of Sur’s centuries-old ship-building tradition. Alongside the photo, they wrote: “We love you dear Dada (grandfather) and Dadi (grandmother).”

The heartfelt message has resonated deeply with the community, serving as a poignant reminder of the family’s ties to Sur’s history and spirit.

Tributes have poured in from across the country. One promi-

nent Indian business figure, Rajendra (Rajubhai) Ved, Director of Lakhoos, remarked, “Purshotambhai’s family has been one of the cornerstones of Sur’s business community. His warmth, humility, and dedication made him beloved by all who knew him.”

H. Vijay, a long-time resident of Sur now settled in India, recalled his fond memories of visiting the shop. “He was a treasure trove of stories from his early days in Sur. Listening to him was always an enlightening experience.”

Purshottam leaves behind his son, three daughters, and ten grandchildren. With two of his daughters arriving on Sunday night, the cremation is scheduled to take place in Sohar on Monday.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) confirmed the deaths, stating: “Rescue teams from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Department in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate responded to the collapse of an old building in the Wilayat of Sur. The bodies of two Asian nationals were later recovered from the rubble.”

The entire community grieves the loss of two beloved figures who contributed so much to the fabric of life in Sur.



COMMENTARY

Guess who turned up at the coffee shop?



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

Coffee shops are usually for regular people who sit together to share their ordinary stories and even to unwind their daily stresses.

Last week, I noticed one of the richest men in the country walking his way in and sitting on one of the tables of my regular coffee shop. It was peak time and the place was busy as usual. He was hoping to blend in with the rest of the drinkers. Heads started to turn to look at his direction but everyone kept their distance.

Once they knew who he was, they gave him the space and privacy. Ordinary people with few rials in the bank, always rallied together by sitting somewhere for idle talk. But it is more than just that. They really share things and it is the best way to

relieve stress. Stresses build up all the time and they need a channel to exit on daily basis.

So what about this rich person who suddenly just turned up at a place normally all the regulars are just getting by financially?

What was he really looking for? Was he experimenting how it felt to sit with the rest of us? Or just like the rest of us, he was looking to unwind all the anxieties building up in him on regular basis?

I think we all realize that it is the people who ‘make or break’ our pleasures in life. It all starts from home surrounded by family members and end up back at home.

However, the streets that take us to our routines are full of people and also the offices or even shops we go. But we rarely think this routine is really a support system.

Let me repeat it. The support system for our well-being is not how much wealth we are accumulating but our contacts with people. Don’t get me wrong. We don’t necessary need to have hundreds of friends and acquaintances.

Just a few will do. Right here in Oman, we need to drive to commercial areas to get into coffee shops to meet friends. Nothing wrong with it. But in

small towns and even in villages, they just meet under a shade of a tree.

They sit down on a simple mat where coffee is served around while they talk about everything under the sun. They have no restrictions in their discussions.

They just talk. It is the sharing of sentiments, emotions and experiences which matter most among them. It is not about what car you are driving, how many bedrooms you have in your house or the shops you buy your clothes from. The financial status has nothing to do with these daily sittings. Everybody in the group is on the same level of discussion. That’s how they cope with their inner turmoil on every day basis. So group talking is a stress buster, which is good for both the mental and physical health. Mind you, what weighs in your mind is much heavier than what you carry on your shoulders.

So, going back to our millionaire friend who just landed in the midst of ordinary people talking ordinary conversation, was not a coincidence. He wanted to be there to ‘feel’ the ordinariness where money does not pull the strings between our minds and hearts. He just wanted to be ‘ordinary’ while sipping his coffee.

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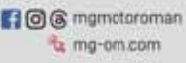
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AL MUSANNAH

IS AN AMAZING TOURISM DESTINATIONS DURING WINTER SEASON



AL MUSANNAH: The Wilayat of Al Musannah, in South Al Batinah Governorate is one of the amazing tourism destinations in the Sultanate of Oman, during the winter season.

The Wilayat of Al Musannah has several tourism sites and varied topography coupled with rich cultural heritage.

Dr. Al Mutassim bin Nasser Al Hilali, Director of Heritage and Tourism Department in South Al Batinah Governorate, said that the location of Al Musannah in the coastal area has made it famous with heritage derived from its old buildings, craft industries and marine art that document different aspects of its history and cultural diversity.

Al Musannah Castle is the key castle in Al Musannah along the coastal line, he said, adding it is built with stones brought from areas far from the coast. He also pointed out that the coast of the Wilayat of Al Musannah covers fascinating beaches extending from Widam Al Sahil to the Wilayat of Barka. The most famous beach is the beach extending from the sports city area to Al Owaid area.

The beach accommodates spacious areas for exercise and marine sports, relaxation and camping, he added.

Al Khamis Wall and Tower

He said that the Ministry of Heritage has awarded a tender for investment in the Al Khamis Wall and Tower in the Wilayat of Al



Musannah from private sector's companies specialised in the field.

The award of this project comes within the efforts of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for employment of the cultural heritage and for providing direct and indirect job opportunities through empowerment of the SMEs.

The Al Khamis Wall and Tower are well-known historic landmarks in the Wilayat with a fort and two towers. The ministry renovated the fort in 2016 and the management of the fort is awarded to an investing company.

The number of visitors to the castle since it opened on 1 January to end of June 2024 amounted to 11, 522 from different nationalities, according to the statistics of the fort management, he added. — **UNA**



Dates and honey exhibition begins

More than 35 countries are taking part in the week-long exhibition which ends on 26 October

MUSCAT: The second edition of the “International Dates and Honey Exhibition” kicked off on Sunday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The exhibition aims to introduce the latest products in the fields of dates and honey, expand commercial prospects and enlighten par-



ticipating countries and exhibitors about quality of dates and honey products available in the Sultanate of Oman.

More than 35 countries are taking part in the week-long exhibition which ends on 26 October. The opening ceremony was held

under the auspices of Dr. Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The week-long exhibition sees the participation of 167 local companies and 71 international companies producing honey and dates, packaging companies and food processing companies specialised in dates and honey products.

The exhibition presents the latest modern technology applications used in the field of dates and honey products, a system for checking the quality of products offered by commercial companies and investment opportunities in the field.

The exhibition also aims to enhance communication between GCC states and other Arab countries, boost international relations, develop production mechanisms,

benefit from global expertise and increase public awareness about the significance of these products to the local economy.

Dr. Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Habib, Executive Director of the International Date Council, said: The Sultanate of Oman is one of the founding countries of the International Date Council, as the palm sector here is very important, and it is one of the countries exporting dates, whether as fruits or in processed forms.”

He added to the Oman News Agency: “The International Dates Council supports the establishment of such exhibitions to market dates to the private sector, indicating that the Council’s participation in the second session of the International Dates and Honey Exhibition in the Sultanate of Oman includes a number of producing

countries, namely: Palestine, Jordan, Sudan and Egypt.

He stated that there is interest in the Arab region about the health benefits of dates as a fruit. The FAO has recognised that dates are exceptional fruits and that 2027 will be celebrated as the International Year of Dates.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Omani Agricultural Association, Al Batinah Branch, said: “The exhibition is witnessing good progress and provides added value to Omani dates by manufacturing them in various and modern ways, which indicates the efforts made by the government and private institutions in addition to investors in this field.”

He added that the exhibition is an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences between the participating countries. -ONA

Forum discusses investment opportunities

<FROM A1 Therefore, the government said Al Harthy is investing and strengthening this field by constructing modern ports and a network of expressways that provide distinguished logistical services in the field of distributing and transporting containers in the region, which qualifies it to be a major link in the global transportation network.



He pointed out that holding such seminars provides an opportunity to exchange global expertise, benefit from new research and developments, and explore more opportunities in the field of investment, tourism, environmental safety, and navigation in the seas and oceans.

He affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman has many components and resources related to the blue economy, which constitute promising opportunities for foreign investments.

He further added that the Foreign Ministry, by activating economic diplomacy, forms a link between the parties concerned and countries, entities, and individuals wishing to invest in the Sultanate of Oman.

Sheikh Al Harthy said that the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Foreign Ministry, will host the 8th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference, in Muscat in February 2025, with the aim of strengthening international partnerships and developing innovative solutions that contribute to the sustainability and stability of the Indian Ocean region.

The first session of the forum addressed the pillars and strategies of investment in the blue economy, with the participation of Naif Humaidi Al Fayed, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority in Jordan, Abdullah Sul-

tan Al Owais, First Vice President of the Federation of UAE Chambers and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sharjah Chamber, Dr. Nasser Rashid Al Maawali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy, Shafi Taleb Al Ajmi, CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International, Dr. Aflah Said Al Hadhrami, Director General of Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) and Dr. Alaa Al Din Abdeen Bukhari, Senior Influence and Achievement Officer at the General Organization for the Conservation of Coral Reefs and Turtles in the Red Sea.

The second session discussed investment opportunities in the food security, logistics, tourism, and renewable energy sectors. Eng. Yagoub Khalfan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries, Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Heritage for Tourism, Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, Eng. Khamis Mohammed Al Sham-makhi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Transport, Dr. Ibrahim Bakhit

Al Nadhiri, CEO of Asyad Shipping and Drydock, and Dr. Salah Hafiz Al Dhahab, Director General of Investment at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals took part in the session.

The third session addressed the theme of technologies and global experiences that enhance investments in the blue economy. International experts presented insights into innovations and successful experiences in this field, highlighting the available opportunities and stressing the role of the blue economy as a major driver of growth and development in the Sultanate of Oman.

The expert list in this session comprised Betsy Mathoni Nagaji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs for the Blue Economy of the Republic of Kenya, Saleh Hamoud Al-Hasani, Advisor to the Chairman of the General Authority for Economic Zones and Free Zones, Luis Lumbana, Founder and CEO of Vicostera in Spain, Karl Schloeglbauer, General Manager of Asia and China at Andritz Hydropower Austria, Maurice Benoache, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the French Port of

Lorient and Board Member of the Duqm Marina Investment Company, Captain Ezzedine Kacem, International Maritime Expert and Arbitrator, Chairman of the Tunisian National Maritime Cluster Organization, and Orkhan Vidadioglu Mamadog, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The 5th Duqm Economic Forum reflects the Sultanate of Oman’s commitment to enhancing the investment environment and developing the blue economy, as it brings together the public and private sectors to exchange ideas and visions on the future of investment in this field.

This event represents a unique platform for entrepreneurs and investors to discover available opportunities and build strategic partnerships that contribute to achieving sustainable growth. The forum is expected to achieve positive results that support national efforts towards achieving Oman Vision 2040, making the blue economy one of the vital factors in the economic development process of the Sultanate of Oman.

Meeting reviews development projects in Dhofar



SALALAH: The Ministry of Economy on Sunday organised a joint meeting in Salalah with the departments concerned to discuss the requirements of projects that use Dhofar Governorate’s comparative and competitive advantages, among other matters.

The meeting dealt with ways to support the governorate’s efforts in implementing vital projects in different sectors in line with national plans and programmes related to Oman Vision 2040 and the 10th Five Year Plan.

Visual presentations were made about Al-Hafa area devel-

opment project, the Wadi Anaar Dam project, nature reserves around Salalah Port, the new Qaboos Hospital project in Salalah, Al Najd farms, Raysut industrial zone, Salalah Port and housing and urban planning projects in the governorate.

The joint meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Eng. Badr Salim Al Maamari, Secretary General of the Tender Board, officials from relevant authorities in the governorate. -ONA



Omani women are emerging as confident and assertive leaders

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman celebrated Women’s Day on October 17, which reflected on women’s indispensable role in country’s development.

A recent study by The Consultants MEA in collaboration with Küdi, an association of female leaders in the Middle East, reveals significant advancements Omani women make across various sectors.

This comprehensive study, which interviewed approximately 400 women in leadership roles across the Middle East, underscores a positive shift toward reducing the persistent gender disparities that have historically affected the region.

The findings illustrate that Omani women are emerging as confident and assertive leaders, committed to fostering inclusive workplace environments.

They are not only serving as role models but also capitalising on educational and leadership opportunities to advance their careers.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), Omani women are making significant strides in higher education, with a 57% enrollment rate.

However, they still face challenges such as gender bias and underrepresentation in sectors like banking and finance. Despite these obstacles, Omani women are resil-



ient and optimistic about the future of women in business, as evidenced by the growing number of female entrepreneurs who own and manage over 32,000 SMEs in Oman.

Nielsen predicts that by 2028, women will make up 75% of discretionary spending, making them the most powerful influencers in the world.

However, analysis suggests that only 35 percent of creative advertising directors in the US are women. The study aims to provide research-based recommendations to support women’s career growth, an initiative by the women’s group Küdi.

Marise Assaf, the Founder & CEO of Kudi says, “Empowering women in leadership is essential for fostering innovation and driving sustainable growth in our organisations.

“Time and again, crises have revealed women as the most empathetic and influential leaders. It’s imperative we translate this reality to the business world, championing women’s advancement. The path ahead is long, but the potential for transformative leadership is immense.”

The data revealed that 87% of women leaders have made changes to be more inclusive of women

in managerial positions, demonstrating a proactive approach to addressing gender inclusivity within these organisations.

Women leaders are at the forefront of Oman’s drive towards gender equality, actively shaping a more inclusive future. Data from NCSI shows that women make up 47% of the public sector workforce, while 11.1% of managerial positions in the private sector. This data emphasises the need for continued efforts to address these disparities and create more opportunities for women to advance into leadership roles in the private sector.

Many organisations recognise the value of having more women in managerial positions and are actively taking steps to create an environment that supports and encourages their advancement.

There is room for improvement, and further investigation could be warranted to identify potential barriers to implementing inclusive practices.

Najla Al Jamali, CEO of Alternative Energy at OQ, said, “Workplaces need to adapt; there are two competing needs for women: the career and the biological clock. A successful workplace can navigate both, ensuring that one does not sacrifice the other.”

Leadership styles and challenges

The study revealed that women leaders are less inclined to prioritise leadership styles that heavily rely on emotional states and personal support. Instead, they focus on fostering an environment where professional success is recognised and rewarded and where employees are supported in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

Despite studies demonstrating that firms with a higher representation of women in senior leadership positions tend to exhibit better performance, these same studies reveal a disheartening trend: women in such roles often earn significantly less than their

male counterparts. This paradoxical finding raises critical questions about the persistence of gender-based pay disparities and the underlying factors contributing to this inequity within organisations.

The recognition of gender bias as a top challenge reflects the persistence of stereotypes, preconceptions, and unequal treatment based on gender within the workplace.

This bias can manifest in various forms, including disparities in opportunities for career advancement, unequal pay, and limited representation in leadership roles.

Another challenge is the reintegration of mothers into the workforce, which is notably hindered by significant work challenges, particularly those arising from family responsibilities related to childbearing and childcare.

Küdi is an association of female leaders in the Middle East with a purpose to accelerate women’s learning and personal development.

With global networking opportunities, events, speaking opportunities, mentorship programmes, and training initiatives, they aim to expedite the learning and personal growth of women. At Küdi, leadership is in the soul, embodied in the mantra “She Leads, She Stands, She Shares, She Impacts”, a clarion call that resonates in the actions and aspirations of every woman.

NEW REPORT

Lebanon death toll mounts to 2,448

BEIRUT: The death toll from Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon since the beginning of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict has reached 2,448, with injuries up to 11,471, according to a report on Saturday.

The report, released by the Disaster Risk Management Unit at the Lebanese Council of Ministers, said that 30 people were killed and 135 others wounded by Israeli air-

strikes on Lebanon in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, 82 airstrikes and shelling were recorded in different areas, mostly concentrated in southern Lebanon, bringing the total number of attacks since the beginning of the Israeli "aggression" to 10,415, it said.

According to the report, 1,094 accredited shelters have been

opened to accommodate and receive displaced persons, and the number of certified shelters having reached their maximum capacity has reached 901.

The report said that the Lebanese General Security had recorded 337,972 Syrian nationals and 138,005 Lebanese crossing into Syria since Sept. 23, the time when the Israeli army launched an un-

precedented, intensive air attack on Lebanon, dubbed "Arrows of the North," in a dangerous escalation with Hezbollah.

Since Oct. 8, 2023, Hezbollah and the Israeli army have been exchanging fire across the Lebanese-Israeli border amid fears of a broader conflict as the war between Hamas and Israel continues in the Gaza Strip. — Xinhua



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Palestinians in northern Gaza suffer ‘unspeakable horrors’: UN

for the fifteenth consecutive day, Israeli occupation forces are continuing aerial, ground, and naval bombardments of northern Gaza, blocking supplies of food, water

NEW YORK: UN Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Msuya said that news coming from northern Gaza is horrifying, with Palestinians continuing to suffer unspeakable horrors under the siege imposed by Israeli occupation forces (IOF).

"In Jabaliya, people are trapped under the rubble and first responders are blocked from reaching them. Tens of thousands of Palestinians are being forcibly displaced. Essential supplies are running out. Hospitals, overwhelmed with patients, have been hit," the UN's acting humanitarian chief said. "These atrocities must stop," she added.

She underscored the necessity of respecting international humanitarian law and stressed that



the Israeli entity "must comply with the provisional orders of the International Court of Justice."

She emphasised that overcrowded hospitals are being targeted, calling for an immediate end to these atrocities in accordance with international humanitarian law. Msuya stressed the need to protect civilians, the wounded, the sick, healthcare workers, and healthcare facilities.

To be noted, for the fifteenth consecutive day, Israeli occupation forces are continuing aerial, ground, and naval bombardments of northern Gaza, blocking sup-

plies of food, water, medicine, and fuel, while destroying homes and entire residential blocks.

Dozens of casualties as Israeli warplanes attack housing complex in Beit Lahiya

Dozens of innocent Palestinian civilians were killed and injured tonight in an Israeli airstrike that targeted a residential complex in the town of Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza.

Local sources reported that Israeli warplanes carried out intense bombing raids on Beit Lahiya,

completely destroying a residential complex while civilians were inside, resulting in at least 73 fatalities and numerous injuries.

Many individuals are still trapped under the rubble, with rescue teams unable to reach them.

Additionally, Israeli quadcopter drones fired on tents housing displaced families in the courtyard of Al-Awda Hospital and directly targeted an ambulance.

The ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza since October 7, 2023, has so far resulted in 42,519 documented Palestinian fatalities, with an additional 99,637 individuals



sustaining injuries, the majority of whom are women and children.

Thousands are also feared dead under the rubble of destroyed structures across the war-torn enclave, with civil defense teams and emergency services unable to reach several areas due to safety concerns amid the indiscriminate Israeli attacks.

Over 30 Palestinians detained by Israeli troops in West Bank in last two days

In the past two days, Israeli occupation forces have detained at least 30 Palestinians, including former prisoners, in various locations across the West Bank.

According to a joint statement from the Palestinian Prisoners' Society and the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, the detentions were carried out in several governorates, including Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin, Jericho, Jerusalem, and Salfit.

These operations were accompanied by widespread raids, assaults, threats against detainees and their families, field interrogations, and the destruction of

homes.

The statement highlighted that since the onset of the ongoing offensive against the Palestinian people in October 2023, more than 11,300 detentions have been documented in the West Bank, including Jerusalem.

Additionally, the report noted that Israeli forces continue to detain civilians from Gaza, particularly from the northern regions, including women, children, and medical staff, committing acts of enforced disappearance.

According to the statement, the occupation authorities have refused to fully disclose the identities and locations of these detainees, with organisations unable to ascertain the total number of detentions in Gaza, which is estimated to be in the thousands.

The ongoing systematic campaign of detentions has intensified significantly since the beginning of the ongoing Israeli genocide, not only in terms of the sheer number of detainees but also regarding the level of violence and violations committed during these operations.

EIGHTH PRESIDENT

Indonesia's new president takes oath of office

JAKARTA: Indonesia's former defence minister, Prabowo Subianto on Sunday took oath as the eighth President of Indonesia along with Gibran Rakabuming, son of former President Joko Widodo who was elected Vice President of the country.

Prabowo, 73, and Gibran, 37, took their oaths of office at around 10:30 a.m. local time during an inauguration held at the Nusantara Building in the Senayan legislative complex in the capital city Jakarta.

Dignitaries from 33 countries, including India were present at the swearing-in ceremony, Antara news agency reported.

India was represented by Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita.

This year is significant as both countries celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations and mark a decade of India's 'Act East' policy, of which Indonesia is an important pillar.

The External Affairs Ministry stated that Margherita's participation in the inauguration ceremony reaffirms India's commitment to further strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Indonesia.

Prabowo won the Presidential elections with a margin of 59 per cent votes in the polls held on February 14 earlier this year.

He is popular amongst the young voters of the country and has gained their support through his active campaign on social media platforms. During his campaign rallies earlier this year, Prabowo



and Gibran promised to continue the policies of Joko Widodo.

Subianto, was the Defence Minister in former President Widodo's government, brings with him the experience of serving both the political and military scene of the country.

During the Presidential Election in Indonesia, citizens get to vote for their President and Vice President directly. These occur every five years and according to the country's laws, the same person cannot be elected into power for more than two terms.

The outgoing President Joko Widodo, who had been in power since 2014, saw the implementation of policies and significant advances in infrastructure development, healthcare and the education sector.

Under his presidency, Indonesia also hosted a successful G20 summit, which saw global consensus to de-escalate the violence taking place in Russia and Ukraine.

However, Indonesia is currently facing issues such as climate change, which has led the country to develop and start plans to shift to a new capital, Nusantara.

DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE

Celebs extend support to Kamala Harris during US Presidential election campaigns

MICHIGAN: US Vice President Kamala Harris who is running for the post of President in the upcoming US elections has received resounding support from America's leading music industry pop stars during her presidential campaign rallies.

In the final weeks before November's presidential election, two of the Democratic nominee's events were headlined by prominent musicians from the American music industry.

Al Jazeera noted that at Harris's first stop, in Detroit, Michigan, the singer and rapper Lizzo warmed up the crowd with a passionate on-stage endorsement.

"I already voted early and I voted for Harris," the musician, a Detroit native, told the crowd.

Michigan is one of about seven key swing states in the presidential race, which could tilt either towards the Democrat or her Republican rival, former President Donald Trump.

Later in the day, Harris visited state of Georgia, another prominent state for the US Elections. In Georgia, musician Usher, sang with the crowd before starting his speech.

"It's really great to be home. I'm here, home, for my Past Present Future Tour but took a quick break from that to come here, share a few words with you about the significance of this moment," he said.

"I feel that this is a momentous opportunity for each and every one of us. It's just 17 days away from a very important election, as we all know, and we have the opportunity to choose a new generation of leadership for our country."

Al Jazeera noted that Harris's visit to Michigan on Saturday



coincided with the first day of in-person early voting in Detroit. Michigan's online "voting dashboard" indicated that, by Saturday morning, more than one million mail-in ballots had been received.

It was one of several strong showings across the country, indicating a possible surge in voter enthusiasm.

States like North Carolina and Georgia have notched records for early-voting turnout this week, according to officials.

The chief operating officer for Georgia's secretary of state, Gabriel Sterling, posted on social media that turnout continues to be high. Georgia's first day of early voting was October 15. "Congratulations to the counties and especially our great Georgia voters. Y'all have broken another RECORD. Biggest turnout ever for a General Election Saturday," Sterling wrote.

"Georgia started early voting, broke historic records. North

Carolina started early voting, broke historic records in North Carolina. Now, who is the capital of producing records?" Harris told supporters in Detroit, with a winking reference to the city's music industry.

"So we are going to break some records here in Detroit today."

During her campaign in Michigan, Harris also took the opportunity to repeat her call for a ceasefire in Gaza.

She told media, "This creates an opening that I believe we must take full advantage of -- to dedicate ourselves to ending this war and bringing the hostages home,"

Barack Obama calls Kamala Harris "most prepared nominee ever"

Former US President Barack Obama at a campaign event in Las Vegas endorsed Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and emphasised her preparedness for the

presidency.

He praised Harris as a "champion for those in need, steadfastly committed to the values that have shaped America."

Obama also said that Americans have an opportunity to shape the country's future by choosing a new generation of leaders, which will help in building a better, stronger, fairer, and more equal America.

Addressing the rally, Obama said, "America is ready to turn the page... We are ready for President Kamala Harris. And the good news is that Kamala Harris is ready for the job. This is a leader who has spent her entire life fighting on behalf of people who need a champion, somebody who believes in the values that built this country and she is as prepared for the job as any nominee for the president has ever been. In the White House, she will have an outstanding partner, Governor Tim Waltz." — Agencies

WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION

Italy, France grapple with flash floods as heavy rainfall continues

PARIS: Severe weather has brought widespread disruption to Italy and central France, with storms and heavy rainfall causing flooding and destruction, according to media report.

Italy's Emilia Romagna region has borne the brunt of the bad weather, with over 160 millimeters of rain falling in Bologna alone. The heavy downpour has resulted

in tragic consequences, including the death of one person whose car was swept away by floodwaters in Pianoro. The situation remains critical, with red and orange weather alerts in place until Tuesday. The Italian military has been deployed to support rescue efforts in Castel Maggiore, where residents are stranded, as per Euro News. Firefighters have responded

to over 300 emergencies in Emilia Romagna, primarily in Bologna, where several rivers and streams have burst their banks.

Further, the residents were also evacuated in the municipality of Cadelbosco di Sopra after the Crostolo torrent, a tributary of the river Po, overflowed.

On the Italian island of Sicily, emergency services rescued people

from roofs of buildings and stranded vehicles, as heavy rain caused flash flooding.

According to Euro News, in the province of Agrigento, the swollen Salto River breached its banks in several locations, inundating part of the coastal city of Licata.

In Florence, Tuscany's river Elsa also burst its banks, and residents have been advised to avoid

non-essential travel.

Meanwhile, in central France, severe flooding has caused widespread damage and power outages.

Meawhile, Central France has been hit by severe flooding, causing widespread destruction and power outages.

The small village of Limony, in southeastern France, has been particularly affected by massive

floods. Limony en Ardeche lies on the banks of the Rhone and at the foot of vineyards. Over 1,000 residents were evacuated on Friday as floodwaters rose, prompting a massive rescue response. According to French Prime Minister Michel Barnier, emergency teams, including firefighters, conducted around 2,300 operations to ensure public safety. — **ANI**



شركة بركاء للمياه والطاقة ش.م.ع.ع

BARKA WATER AND POWER COMPANY S.A.O.G

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MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS REPORT (Q3 2024)

Overview

We are pleased to present Barka Water and Power Company SAOG (BWPC) operational performance and the un-audited financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2024.

BWPC has entered into Power and Water Purchase Agreement (PWPA) with Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP) which includes Power plant for 8 years and 9 months and multi-stage flash evaporator (MSFE) water plant for 3 years term with extension option at PWP's discretion for a further term of 3 years and another term of 2 years & 9 months (total 8 years and 9 months term). The Company has achieved the annual performance test for Power plant and the MSFE on 30 September 2024.

BWPC's Water Purchase Agreements for both RO-1 and RO-2 facilities completed their contractual terms on 29 September 2024 inclusive of force majeure extended period due to abnormal seawater conditions.

The Company completed PWPA "Acceptance Test" for both power and MSFE water on 30th September 2024, and is in process of refinancing its loan as per PWPA term.

The financial results of the period are summarized as under:

Figures in Thousands Riyal Omani

	Period Ended 30 September 2024
Gross Revenues	16,582
Gross Profit	3,635
Profit after tax	2,036

HSE

Safety continued to be the highest priority for the Company. No safety incident was reported during the period while executing the power plant commissioning and utilizing the scheduled outage time available to perform various maintenance activities for RO plants. The team continued to demonstrate vigilance and implementation of international best practices related to safety. Similarly, the focus on environment resulted in no exceedances during the period. There were no environmental exceedances during the period.

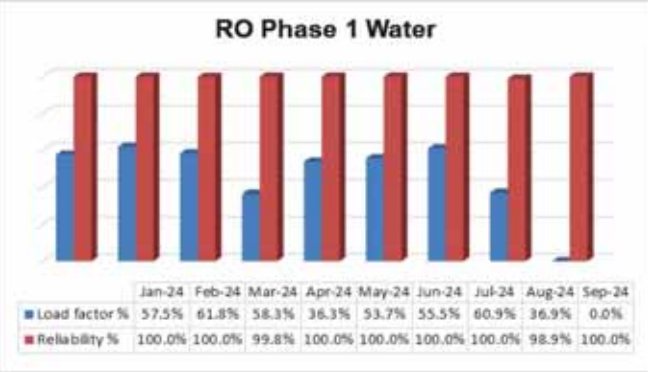
Operations

From an operational perspective, the reliability of the power plant and two RO Plants remained the focus. The RO plants continued to be affected by seawater quality failure during the quarter. Further the Power plant had faced trips due to equipment failure, however the repair works have been completed and plant is back to full availability.

Reverse Osmosis (RO) Phase 1 Facility			
Period 30 Sep	Water Delivered (MMm3)	Load Factor	Reliability Factor ¹
2024	5.8	46.8%	99.9%
2023	7.3	58.8%	99.8%

RO Phase I was made available to the grid during the entire reporting period, and it achieved a reliability factor of 99.9% and a load factor of 46.8% for the reporting period.

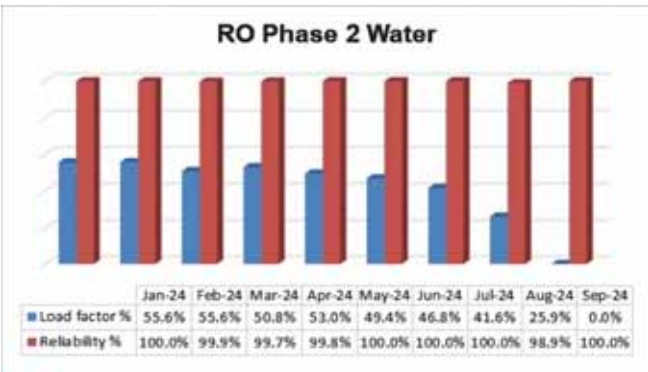
A graphical presentation of the load and reliability factors during the reporting period is shown below:



Reverse Osmosis (RO) Phase 2 Facility			
Period ended 30 Sep	Water Delivered (MMm3)	Load Factor	Reliability Factor ²
2024	6.6	42.1%	99.8%
2023	8.9	57.3%	99.8%

RO Phase II was made available to the grid during the entire reporting period, and it achieved a reliability factor of 99.8% and a load factor of 42.1% for the reporting period.

A graphical presentation of the load and reliability factors during the reporting period is shown below:



Power Plant			
Period ended 30 Sep	Electricity Delivered (MMWH)	Load Factor	Reliability Factor
2024	0.3	27.1%	76.7%

Power plant had achieved a reliability factor of 76.7% and a load factor of 27.1% for the reporting period. A graphical presentation of the load and reliability factors during the reporting period is shown below:



Maintenance

The team believes in a risk-based approach towards maintenance to create a viable balance between predictive, proactive and scheduled maintenance. Accordingly, all required predictive, proactive, scheduled, and corrective maintenance activities were implemented in well manner to assure the operations and availability of both RO plants under the obligation of the extended WPAs and power plant under PWPA.

The power plant gas turbine 2 (GT-2) got tripped on 23rd June 2024 due to generator differential current protection trip resulted in GT-2 unit to be out of operation. The repair works were completed and after other required maintenance, the plant was available for full dispatch capacity of 412 MW in first week of September.

Below are the maintenance activities undertaken by the Operator to ensure reliable operations of the plants during the period.

- Power Block:**
 - Gas Turbine # 1 air intake filters were replaced.
 - Gas Turbine # 1 & # 2 fuel oil pumps, lube oil pumps, hydraulic pumps and evaporative cooler system were inspected.
 - HRS# #1 & #2 flame scanner, forward control valves for leg A & B, feed water control valves leg A & B were inspected, and issues were rectified.
 - Boiler Feed Water Pumps, Condenser Extraction Pumps and Chemical Dosing Pumps were inspected.
 - Annual Performance Test was completed successfully.

- Water Block MSFE:**
 - Seawater intake screening system mechanical cleaning activity was conducted.
 - Sew water pump no.2, drive bearing was replaced with new set and pump was tested and kept in service.
 - Remineralization plant chemical dosing system repairing work was carried out and system made available.
 - MSFE unit# 11, 12 and 13, welding activities, pumps overhauling, tubes cleaning and valve stroking were completed.
 - MSFE commissioning completed for all three units and Annual Performance Test performed successfully.

- RO-1 plant:**
 - RO racks membrane inspection was conducted.
 - Dosing Pumps PM was performed.
 - Ultra Filtration faulty valves inspection was conducted.
 - Rack # 3 HP pump suction GRP lamination work carried out and leakage arrested.

- RO-2 plant:**
 - RO trains DWEER system, PM was performed.
 - Auto strainers routine inspection was carried out.
 - RO trains membrane inspection was conducted.
 - Dosing Pumps PM was performed.

Financial Highlights		
Figures in RO '000		
Income Statement	Period Ended 30 Sep 24	Period Ended 30 Sep 23
Total revenues	16,582	9,852
Operating costs	(12,948)	(8,244)
Gross profit	3,635	1,608
Other costs / Other Income	(1,637)	(1,587)
Taxation	38	38
Net profit after tax	2,036	58
Earnings per share	0.013	0.000

Revenue
The increase in revenue is due to commissioning of power plant from 6 June 2024.

Gross Profit
The gross profit increased mainly due to commissioning of power plant operations.

Other Costs / Other Income
Other costs (net of other income) for the current period are higher by RO 0.05m. In the prior year, the gain of RO 0.2 million was recognized on sale of diesel inventory. It has been marginally netted off with lower finance cost on account of principal repayment of loan.

Taxation
Higher tax expense due to deferred tax impact of impairment reversal.

Cash Flow Statement '000	Period Ended 30 Sep 2024	Year Ended 31 Dec 2023
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	2,788	2,097

Balance Sheet '000	As at 30 Sep 2024	As at 31 Dec 2023
Total assets	77,094	69,846
Net shareholder's equity	36,708	34,671
Paid up capital	16,000	16,000
Current ratio	0.58:1	0.33:1
Gearing ratio	28:72	32:68
Net assets per share – Riyal Omani	0.229	0.217

Outlook
The Company is striving to maintain its safety record in future without safety or environmental incident and to remain in compliance of local regulations.

The Company will continue its proactive and scheduled maintenance activities to assure uninterrupted operations and availability of Power plant. Further the Company is reconstructing a new Water Connection for MSFE, planned for completion by end October 2024.

For RO plants, the Company is exploring new business opportunities, and the possibility of asset sale in the event of no firm RO's capacity utilization.

The Company will continue its efforts to conclude the refinancing process with local banks by 4th Q 2024.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2024 (EXPRESSED IN OMANI RIAL)

	30 September 2024 Unaudited	31 December 2023 Audited
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	59,410,135	61,300,910
Intangible assets	-	3,710
Right-of-use assets	371,738	388,348
Total non-current assets	59,781,873	61,692,968
Current assets		
Inventories	4,164,649	3,899,653
Trade and other receivables	10,359,491	2,155,969
Cash and cash equivalents	2,788,374	2,097,400
Total current assets	17,312,514	8,153,022
Total assets	77,094,387	69,845,990
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	16,000,000	16,000,000
Legal reserve	5,333,333	5,333,333
Special reserve	85,555	85,555
Retained earnings	15,288,641	13,252,339
Total equity	36,707,529	34,671,227
Non-current liabilities		
Deferred tax liability	5,320,700	5,473,773
Provision for site restoration	4,273,651	4,087,562
Employee benefit liabilities	12,733	9,851
Lease liabilities	805,019	779,027
Total non-current liabilities	10,412,103	10,350,213
Current liabilities		
Long-term loan - current portion	13,468,078	15,236,374
Trade and other payables	14,333,024	8,042,748
Lease liabilities - current portion	10,767	11,267
Taxation	1,637,511	1,534,161
Deferred Revenue	525,375	-
Total current liabilities	29,974,755	24,824,550
Total liabilities	40,386,858	35,174,763
Total equity and liabilities	77,094,387	69,845,990
Net assets per share (RO)	0.229	0.217

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 16 October 2024.

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE NINE MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024 (EXPRESSED IN OMANI RIAL)

	Nine months ended 30 September 2024 Unaudited	Nine months ended 30 September 2023 Unaudited	Three months ended 30 September 2024 Unaudited	Three months ended 30 September 2023 Unaudited
Revenue	16,582,453	9,851,551	9,657,457	3,118,020
Direct costs	(12,947,938)	(8,243,675)	(6,555,852)	(3,057,169)
Gross profit	3,634,515	1,607,876	3,101,605	60,851
Other income	8,844	185,403	3,325	-
General and administrative expenses	(716,840)	(770,729)	(239,405)	(240,737)
Profit / (loss) from operations	2,926,519	1,022,550	2,865,525	(179,886)
Finance costs	(928,640)	(1,001,898)	(317,925)	(324,455)
Profit / (Loss) before tax	1,997,879	20,652	2,547,600	(504,341)
Income tax	38,423	37,634	(25,672)	12,261
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income /(loss) for the period	2,036,302	58,286	2,521,928	(492,080)
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.013	0.0004	0.016	(0.003)

SPORTS



NZ claim first Test win in India after 36 years

Young and Ravindra led the visitors to a dominant 8-wicket triumph in Bengaluru

BENGALURU: New Zealand secured their first Test victory in India in 36 years on Sunday, overcoming a fierce challenge under overcast skies on the fifth day of the first Test in Bengaluru.

With the ball seaming appreciably, Jasprit Bumrah posed a constant threat, nearly taking a wicket with every second delivery, while the crowd erupted in appeals after nearly every ball. Despite the pressure, New Zealand weathered the storm, eventually settling down to chase their target of 107.

Will Young provided the composure New Zealand needed after Bumrah removed Tom Latham on the second ball of the day. Alongside him, Devon Conway absorbed the pressure, braving body blows and jumping around the crease, but



crucially avoided any rash shots.

Although Bumrah eventually dismissed Conway for a gritty 17 off 39 deliveries, his fiery spell had already begun to fade, and New Zealand had edged to 35 runs. India's fielders worked hard, saving at least 11 runs by then, but it wasn't enough. Young and Rachin Ravindra calmly completed the chase, sealing the eight-wicket victory with relative ease.

New Zealand captain Latham said it was a "proud moment" after his side claimed their first Test victory in India for 36 years - and only their third ever.

It gives New Zealand a 1-0 lead

in the best-of-three series.

New Zealand's previous Test victories in India came in 1969 at Nagpur and at Mumbai in 1988.

Latham's side set up the victory by bowling India out for 46 - their lowest Test total on home soil - on the first day. "There have been a lot of teams that have come here over that long period of time, so obviously it's a special feeling," Latham said.

"The work we did in that first and second innings with the ball and with the bat set up the game for us."

It was a resounding first win as full-time captain for the 32-year-old, who replaced Tim Southee earlier this month.

India skipper Rohit Sharma took positives from the way his side battled back in the second innings, as they attempted to become the first team to win a Test after conceding a first-innings lead of more than 350.

"We didn't think we'd be 46 all out but due credit to New Zealand - it set us back and games like this will happen," he said.

Sarfraz Khan's 150 and 99 from wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant helped India to 462 in their second innings to give the home bowlers a small total to defend on a final-day pitch that had to be covered overnight due to rain.

And Bumrah gave India a glimmer of hope when he removed Latham and Conway, but that was India's last breakthrough. First-innings centurion Ravindra hit six fours in his unbeaten 39 and was named player of the match, while Young hit the winning runs with his seventh four as he finished on 48.

"We have got to take the good things forward," added Rohit, with the second Test scheduled to begin in Pune on Thursday.

Brief scores: India 46 (Henry 5-15, O'Rourke 4-22) & 462 (Sarfraz 150, Pant 99) lost to New Zealand 402 (Ravindra 134, Conway 91) & 110-2 (Young 48*). - Agencies

Lanka and Ransika power Sri Lanka A to facile victory

MUSCAT: Sri Lanka A cruised to a convincing 42-run victory over Hong Kong in a lop-sided Group A contest in the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Sunday. It also marked their first win in the tournament after a narrow 11-run opening game loss to Afghanistan A on Friday.

In the first match of the day, batting first, Sri Lanka A posted an imposing total of 178/5 in their 20 overs.

Yashoda Lanka anchored the innings with a measured 56 off 44 balls, while Nuwanidu Fernando's brisk 25 off 18 and Ramesh Mendis' explosive 24 off just 12 balls, including two sixes, propelled the side to a competitive score past 175.

Hong Kong's bowlers struggled to contain the middle-order flourish, with Aizaz Khan emerging as the pick of the bowlers, taking 2 wickets for 30 runs in his four overs.

Hong Kong's chase never truly gathered momentum, despite a valiant effort from Yasim Murtaza, who top-scored with 44 off 31 balls. Babar Hayat contributed 38 off 42 deliveries, but their partnership struggled to keep up with the climbing required run rate.

Sri Lanka A's disciplined bowling, highlighted by 42 dot balls, strangled Hong Kong's scoring opportunities. Nipun Ransika was the standout performer with the ball, taking 3 wickets for just 17 runs in his 3 overs.

His breakthroughs kept Hong Kong under constant pressure, preventing them from establishing any significant partnerships.

He was well-supported by Shiran Fernando, who took 2 wickets for 28 runs. The disciplined bowling and tight fielding ensured Hong Kong could only manage 136/7 by the end of their 20 overs, falling well short of the target.

Hong Kong's only notable partnership came between Murtaza and Hayat, but it wasn't enough to challenge Sri Lanka A's total.

In contrast, Sri Lanka A's innings was built on three solid partnerships of 30+ runs, which laid a strong foundation for their commanding total. Their all-around performance ensured a comprehensive win.

The victory is a crucial one for Sri Lanka A, restoring their confidence after a disappointing start to the tournament with a defeat against Afghanistan A.

With this win, they now have momentum heading into their final group fixture against Bangladesh A, while Hong Kong will need to regroup against Afghanistan A after suffering their second consecutive loss in the tournament.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka A 178/5 in 20 overs (Yashoda Lanka 56, Nuwanidu Fernando 25, Ramesh Mendis 24; Aizaz Khan 2/30) beat Hong Kong 136/7 in 20 overs (Yasim Murtaza 44, Babar Hayat 38; Nipun Ransika 3/17) by 42 runs.



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Saturday Showroom Timing: Muscat, Al Mawelah, Barka, Sohar & Salalah from 9.00 AM to 1.00 PM

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QUARTERLY EARNINGS

In the absence of any major triggers in the Indian stock market, investors are set to focus on the upcoming quarterly earnings of corporates and US economic data for direction, starting from Monday, as per experts.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,810.13 points, up by 0.21% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.19% at 433.30 points. Construction Materials, up 6.52%, was the top gainer while Muscat Gases, down 7.41%, was the top loser.

Oman to raise OMR75 million through development bonds

The size of the new issue stands at OMR75 million with an option to exceed the announced amount (Greenshoe option), with a maturity period of 5 years and will carry a coupon rate of 4.75 percent per annum

MUSCAT: On behalf of the government of the Sultanate of Oman represented by the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced the new issue of Government Development Bonds (GDBs).

The size of the new issue stands

at OMR75 million with an option to exceed the announced amount (Greenshoe option), with a maturity period of 5 years and will carry a coupon rate of 4.75 percent per annum. The issue will be open for subscription from 27th October to 31st October, 2024 while the auction

will be held on 3 November, 2024.

The issue date will be on 5 November, 2024. Interest on the new bonds will be paid semi-annually on 5 May and 5 November, every year, until the maturity date on 5 November, 2029.

Noteworthy, the 72nd GDP issue is offered to all investors, residents and non-residents (irrespective of their nationality). Investors may apply for these bonds through the competitive bidding process only and may submit bids through commercial licensed banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman during the subscription period.

Furthermore, investors with applications of OMR1 million and above may submit their bids directly to CBO, at their own discretion, after getting them endorsed from their banks. - **ONA**



PROMOTE INVESTMENTS

Opaz presents paper on blue economy at Duqm Forum

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) presented a key paper during the third session of the 5th Duqm Forum, held yesterday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This participation comes as part of the authority's efforts to promote investments in the blue economy, which is a fundamental pillar of sustainable economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman.

The paper, presented by Saleh bin Hamoud Al-Hsani, Advisor to the Chairman and the official spokesperson of the Opaz, provided a comprehensive overview of the investment policies and plans set by Opaz to develop the blue economy and strengthen its role in supporting the national economy.

The paper highlighted several investment projects localized in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm Sezad, such as the Al Wusta Fisheries project and Simak, a private company specialising in canning, which is considered one of the largest fish canning projects in the Middle East. It also covered the fish farming project, while shedding light on encouraging sustainable investments in blue economy-related projects such as marine aquaculture, renewable energy, and water resource management. Opaz emphasized the provision of incentives to attract more investments in these areas, enhancing the sustainability of natural resources and creating new growth opportunities.



The paper also addressed stimulating innovation by establishing research and development centers to support marine technology, develop sustainable fishing techniques, and improve quality control systems, contributing to increased efficiency and sustainability in utilizing marine resources.

Among the topics covered was improving marine and logistical infrastructure, with Opaz working on upgrading ports and logistical facilities to support transportation and trade activities related to the blue economy. This upgrade is

a critical step in attracting investments and enhancing operational efficiency in this vital sector.

The paper also reviewed Opaz's efforts in developing environmental policies by setting stringent environmental standards aimed at preserving marine biodiversity and reducing pollution, ensuring that economic activities remain sustainable while protecting the marine environment.

It further outlined the training and awareness initiatives adopted by the Opaz, where training programs are organized for local communities to raise awareness about the importance of the blue economy and train them in sustainable fishing methods. These efforts contribute to enhancing awareness and building local capacities in this sector.

The paper also explored Opaz's role in improving legal policies governing marine activities, stressing the importance of updating legal frameworks to ensure the sustainability of economic activities related to the blue economy, contributing to long-term sustainable development.

In conclusion, the paper reviewed the most notable achievements in the development of special economic zones and free zones, which have become major investment attraction hubs thanks to tax incentives and a flexible legal environment. These zones have also contributed to economic diversification and the development of new sectors, such as renewable energy, green hydrogen, technology, and innovation.

STATISTICS

UAE emerges as leading regional hub for start-ups

ABU DHABI: The UAE has solidified its regional standing as one of the foremost hubs for start-ups, thanks to its attractive and integrated investment environment, flexible business policies, and innovation-driven legislation. According to international institutions, the UAE leads global indicators related to start-ups due to its continuous efforts in creating a supportive investment environment for innovation. These efforts have also reflected positively on the country's ranking in global competitiveness indices.

Recent statistics from Statista reveal that the UAE topped the GCC countries as the leading incubator for start-ups, with over 5,600 start-ups registered across the country by the second quarter of 2024. - **WAM**

OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION

OQEP IPO to set record as largest IPO in Oman's history

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ Exploration and Production SAOG (under transformation) ("OQEP" or the "Company") announces that, following the successful completion of the bookbuilding and public subscription process for its initial public offering ("IPO" or the "Offering"), it has set the final offer price at Bzs 390 per share.

The final price is at the top of the price range of Bzs 370 to Bzs 390, reflecting strong demand from local, regional and institutional investors, including irrevocable commitments from six high-profile anchor investors to subscribe for an aggregate of 20% of the Offering at the final subscription price, high quality investor participation and very limited price sensitivity in the order book. The IPO raised a total of OMR 780 million (equivalent to c. USD2,025 million), pre-discount for Omani Individuals and OMR750 million (equivalent to c. USD 1,947 million), including the discount for Omani Individuals in the Category II tranche (based on FX rate used: 1 USD = 0.3851 OMR).

Ahmed Al-Azkawi, Chief Executive Officer of OQEP, said: "We are delighted to announce the excellent results of the subscription process for our IPO. We are pleased that investors have recognised our exceptional track record in value creation, operational excellence, and financial performance and we look forward to the next phase of growth as a publicly traded company."

The broad support received from both institutional and retail investors across both the Category I and Category II offerings is a



testament to our business model, the high quality of our portfolio and our ambitious growth strategy, the combination of which presents a compelling value proposition now endorsed by the global investor community."

The company's Category I and Category II offerings were oversubscribed by c. 3.4x and c. 2.2x respectively with limited order inflation and significant support and participation by a wide range of high quality international, regional and local investors orders. Investors in Category I offering will be allocated 29.8% of their demand. Investors in Category II offering (small retail) will be allocated 100% of their demand up to 8,000 shares and then c. 23% of their demand above this level. Investors in Category II offering (large retail) will be allocated c. 32.6% of their demand.

A total of c. 2.0 billion ordi-

nary shares, representing 25% of OQEP's issued share capital, were offered to investors. OQ SAOC ("OQ") will continue to own the remaining 75% of the Company's share capital immediately following completion of the IPO.

Upon listing, OQEP will have a market capitalisation of OMR 3,120m (c. USD 8.1bn), making it the largest company on the MSX by market capitalisation, representing c.25% of the entire market capitalisation of the MSX, in addition to the offering size making it the largest IPO in Oman's history. The IPO is 2.6x larger than the previous largest offering by OQ Gas Networks in 2023, and establishes a new benchmark on the MSX.

OQEP shares are expected to commence trading on the MSX on or around 28 October 2024 under the symbol "OQEP" and ISIN OM0000009759.



جهاز الضرائب
TAX AUTHORITY

Announcement

The Tax Authority invites all auditors who are legally licensed to practice the accounting and auditing profession in the Sultanate of Oman to apply no later than **31/12/2024** to register in the registration established for the purpose of the following:

- Register their data.
- Attach the license to practice the profession issued to them by the Financial Services Authority pursuant to

***Income Tax Law no. (28/2009).**
***Excise Tax Law no. (23/2019).**
***VAT Law no. (121/2020).**

For the importance, you have to adhere of the above, in order to ensure that the tax system accepts the audited accounts and to be able to exercise your duties towards the Tax Authority, starting from the first of January 2025.



For Registration:
Scan the QR code.



 taxoman

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MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Construction Materials, up 6.52%, was the top gainer while Muscat Gases, down 7.41%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,810.13 points, up by 0.21% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.19% at 433.30 points. Construction Materials, up 6.52%, was the top gainer while, Muscat Gases, down 7.41%, was the top loser. Shares of OQGN were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 444 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 1.27 million, with more than 6 million shares changing hands. Out of 40 traded securities, 16 advanced, 11 declined, and 13 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 52K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 36K, followed by domestic investors for RO 15K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,970.31 points, up 0.47%. Prices of United Finance, Ominvest,

Muscat Finance, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Anwar Investment were up by 3.51%, 2.54%, 2.17%, 1.39%, 1.35% respectively. Prices of National Finance, Al Madina Takaful, Global Financial Investments, Bank Muscat were down by 2.22%, 1.25%, 1.24%, 0.75% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,571.52 points, up 0.39%. Prices of Construction Materials, Galfar Engineering, Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 6.52%, 1.92%, 1.43% respectively. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Salalah Mills were down by 2.86%, 2.02% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.02% before closing at 1,841.09 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Al Suwadi Power, Ooredoo, Oman Telecom, Abraj Energy were up by 1.55%, 1.27%, 0.73%, 0.51%, 0.34% respectively. Prices of Muscat Gases, Renaissance Services, Sembcorp Salalah, OQ Gas Networks were down by 7.41%, 1.27%, 0.91%, 0.68% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,812.10	4,790.29	4,810.13	4,800.15	9.97	0.21
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,970.31	7,921.68	7,970.31	7,932.72	37.59	0.47
Industry Index	5,571.52	5,550.08	5,571.52	5,550.08	21.44	0.39
Services Index	1,845.24	1,831.95	1,841.09	1,840.72	0.37	0.02
MSX Shariah Index	433.30	430.61	433.30	434.10	-0.81	-0.19
MSX TR INDEX	6,688.06	6,657.75	6,685.32	6,671.45	13.86	0.21
FINANCIAL TR IDX	9,055.09	8,999.84	9,055.09	9,012.38	42.71	0.47
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,428.21	6,403.48	6,428.21	6,403.48	24.73	0.39
SERVICES TR IDX	2,147.23	2,131.76	2,142.39	2,141.96	0.43	0.02
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,066.88	1,066.88	1,066.88	1,066.88	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
6,004,870	1,267,689	444	24,734,500,924	16	11	13	40

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PREV VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	200	12	2	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.057	0.002	3.509	0.059	0.056	0.060	0.100	21,011,511
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	459,902	164,129	36	0.355	0.364	0.354	0.364	0.355	0.009	2.535	0.364	0.364	0.366	0.100	243,285,015
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	2,000	285	2	0.143	0.143	0.142	0.142	0.140	0.002	1.429	0.142	0.142	0.140	0.100	14,448,900
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO	100	7	1	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.001	1.389	0.073	0.071	0.072	0.100	6,570,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	83,407	7,471	10	0.080	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.001	1.266	0.080	0.080	0.086	0.100	57,152,507
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	4,000	1,108	1	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.275	0.002	0.727	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.000	180,311,552
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,109,623	161,464	27	0.145	0.146	0.145	0.146	0.145	0.001	0.690	0.146	0.137	0.154	0.100	814,277,955
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	255,914	253,903	28	0.990	0.995	0.990	0.995	0.990	0.005	0.505	0.995	0.995	0.995	0.100	746,250,000
OM0000000893	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	217,578	63,975	15	0.294	0.295	0.294	0.294	0.293	0.001	0.341	0.294	0.294	0.294	0.100	226,438,800
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	7,556	1,971	4	0.250	0.250	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.000	0.000	0.247	0.243	0.250	0.100	24,700,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	4,000	1,552	1	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.000	0.000	0.388	0.000	0.388	0.100	128,378,611
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	15,342	1,215	4	0.080	0.080	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.079	0.079	0.081	0.100	53,316,107
OM0000000907	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,901,477	276,865	179	0.146	0.147	0.145	0.146	0.147	-0.001	-0.680	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.100	632,271,092
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	680,759	181,005	17	0.266	0.266	0.265	0.266	0.268	-0.002	-0.746	0.266	0.265	0.266	0.100	1,996,701,618
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	14,670	1,599	6	0.106	0.112	0.106	0.109	0.110	-0.001	-0.909	0.109	0.105	0.110	0.100	104,048,343
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	20,000	1,600	1	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.235	0.080	0.080	0.085	0.100	16,000,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	86,112	6,703	5	0.078	0.079	0.077	0.079	0.080	-0.001	-1.250	0.079	0.079	0.083	0.100	13,825,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	84,899	33,280	18	0.386	0.394	0.386	0.390	0.395	-0.005	-1.266	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.100	92,199,900
Total	18	4,957,939	1,158,144	357												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	31,300	1,535	2	0.050	0.050	0.049	0.049	0.046	0.003	6.522	0.049	0.045	0.050	0.100	3,062,500
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	100	5	1	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.001	2.174	0.047	0.044	0.046	0.100	14,435,877
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	617,200	64,447	37	0.105	0.106	0.104	0.106	0.104	0.002	1.923	0.106	0.106	0.107	0.100	21,516,565
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	8,200	2,643	5	0.322	0.328	0.322	0.328	0.323	0.005	1.548	0.328	0.320	0.327	0.100	65,480,477
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	89,600	6,640	4	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.074	0.074	0.100	15,913,500
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	75,301	8,057	6	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.106	0.001	0.943	0.107	0.107	0.115	0.100	239,933,974
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	260	975	1	3.750	3.750	3.750	3.900	3.900	0.000	0.000	3.750	3.700	3.800	1.000	12,870,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,000	482	1	0.482	0.482	0.482	0.482	0.482	0.000	0.000	0.482	0.000	0.482	0.100	75,915,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	5,000	1,350	1	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.280	0.280	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.100	44,800,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,750	720	5	0.410	0.415	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.000	0.000	0.410	0.400	0.412	0.100	33,375,128
OM0000003260	OMAN ARAB BANK	1,315	197	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.149	0.150	0.100	250,411,500
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	4,650	326	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.068	0.077	0.100	15,556,800
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	130,200	8,463	8	0.065	0.066	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.064	0.066	0.100	33,061,034
OM0000001899	SALALAH MILLS	2,054	996	1	0.485	0.485	0.485	0.485	0.485	0.000	-2.030	0.485	0.480	0.485	0.100	30,294,586
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	2,336	308	1	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.135	-0.003	-2.222	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.100	75,728,965
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	25,334	2,917	3	0.117	0.117	0.115	0.115	0.130	-0.005	-4.167	0.115	0.115	0.120	0.100	58,431,908
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	1,570	164	3	0.108	0.108	0.100	0.100	0.108	-0.008	-7.407	0.100	0.100	0.104	0.100	3,000,000
Total	17	997,170	100,226	81												

INDIAN STOCK MARKET

Investors to focus on upcoming quarterly earnings

MUMBAI: In the absence of any major triggers in the Indian stock market, investors are set to focus on the upcoming quarterly earnings of corporates and US economic data for direction, starting from Monday, as per experts.

The analysts say that investors are expected to react to results of banking heavyweights such as

HDFC Bank and Kotak Bank and market participants will be watchful for the second quarter results of companies like ITC, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, BPCL, HPCL, and Ultratech Cement.

"Despite the ongoing positivity in the US markets, the Indian markets have been largely unresponsive, a divergence likely to

persist due to continued foreign fund outflows.

"Any change in the fund flow pattern would also be on the participants' radar," as per Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

"Investors are awaiting more economic data for guidance," the Pantomath Capital Advisors Pri-

vate Limited added in its observed citing the economic data of US and rate cut hopes of the investors which was indicated by Federal Reserve Chief Jerome Powell.

The Indian stock markets remained under pressure for the third consecutive week, losing nearly half a percent as the corrective phase continued." -ANI

INTELLIGENT CONNECTED VEHICLE INDUSTRY

China's auto industry accelerates toward intelligent transformation

BEIJING: The SU7 series, Chinese tech firm Xiaomi's first self-developed new energy vehicle (NEV) model, has attracted considerable attention at the just concluded 2024 World Intelligent Connected Vehicles Conference (WICV) in Beijing, thanks to its sleek design and impressive capabilities in motors, batteries, intelligent driving and smart cockpits.

Xiaomi ventured into the NEV market in 2021, establishing a factory spanning over 700,000 square meters in Beijing's Economic-Technological Development Area, also known as Beijing E-Town -- a hub for innovation in China's autonomous driving industry. The market newcomer unveiled its SU7 model in late March.



"These models are produced at the Xiaomi auto factory, about 7 kilometers from the conference venue, where a new car rolls off the production line every 76 seconds," Ou Wantong, an auto retail consultant for Xiaomi, said at the event.

According to Zeng Qinghong, chairman of GAC Group, more than half of the top 100 chip design companies in China, and over 40 percent of the country's top 50 internet firms have entered the automotive industry.

In recent years, with the continuous innovation of technology and the strong support of policies, China has been accelerating the formation of an intelligent automobile industry chain.

From vehicle manufacturing, hardware and software support, to intelligent connectivity and charging services, upstream and downstream enterprises are working closely to develop and apply intelligent vehicle technology.

"China has achieved phased results in the fields of new energy, intelligent cockpit and intelligent driving, but in terms of the upstream of the industrial chain, especially chips with high performance, high process and high security, there is still a gap between us and the global advanced level," said Li Shufu, chairman of Geely Holding Group.

However, the good news is that many carmakers and tech firms in China are revving up the development and production of domestic chips.

Qiu Xiangdong, chairman of FAW Group, revealed at the WICV that the company will focus on 460 key technologies in the future, especially developing an SoC chip with multi-domain integration. A total of 42 models of intelligent connected vehicles (ICVs) are expected to be launched by the company in the next five years.

Founded in 2022, tech company Huixi released its first high-performance intelligent driving chip, based on 7-nanometer automotive-grade process, during the event. It will provide strong computing support and solutions for promoting automatic driving and intelligent applications, and accelerate the large-scale application of intelligent driving technology.

SemiDrive, another leading tech firm focusing on automotive-grade chip products covering intelligent cockpits and smart vehicle control, has also become an eye-catcher at the event.

Its entire product series has achieved mass production of over six million units, and served more than 260 customers, covering over 90 percent of Chinese car manufacturers and several major

international auto firms, according to Chen Shujie, vice president of the company.

"The development of chips requires close collaboration between upstream and downstream enterprises, and it is believed that in the next 15 years, Chinese automotive chips will occupy an important position in the global market like today's power batteries," said Dong Yang, chairman of the China Automotive Chip Industry Innovation Strategic Alliance.

According to the Minister of Industry and Information Technology Jin Zhuanglong, a comprehensive industrial system for China's ICV sector has basically taken shape, covering products and technologies such as basic chips, sensors, computing platforms and chassis control.

The country's ICV sector currently boasts nearly 400 "little giant" firms, or novel elites of small and medium-sized enterprises that are engaged in manufacturing, specialize in niche markets and hold cutting-edge technologies, Jin noted.

"We must master the core competitiveness and build a stable, reliable and competitive industry chain system of ICVs, which is the basis for sustainable and high-quality development of the industry," Li Shufu of Geely said. -xinhua

EXPERTS IN

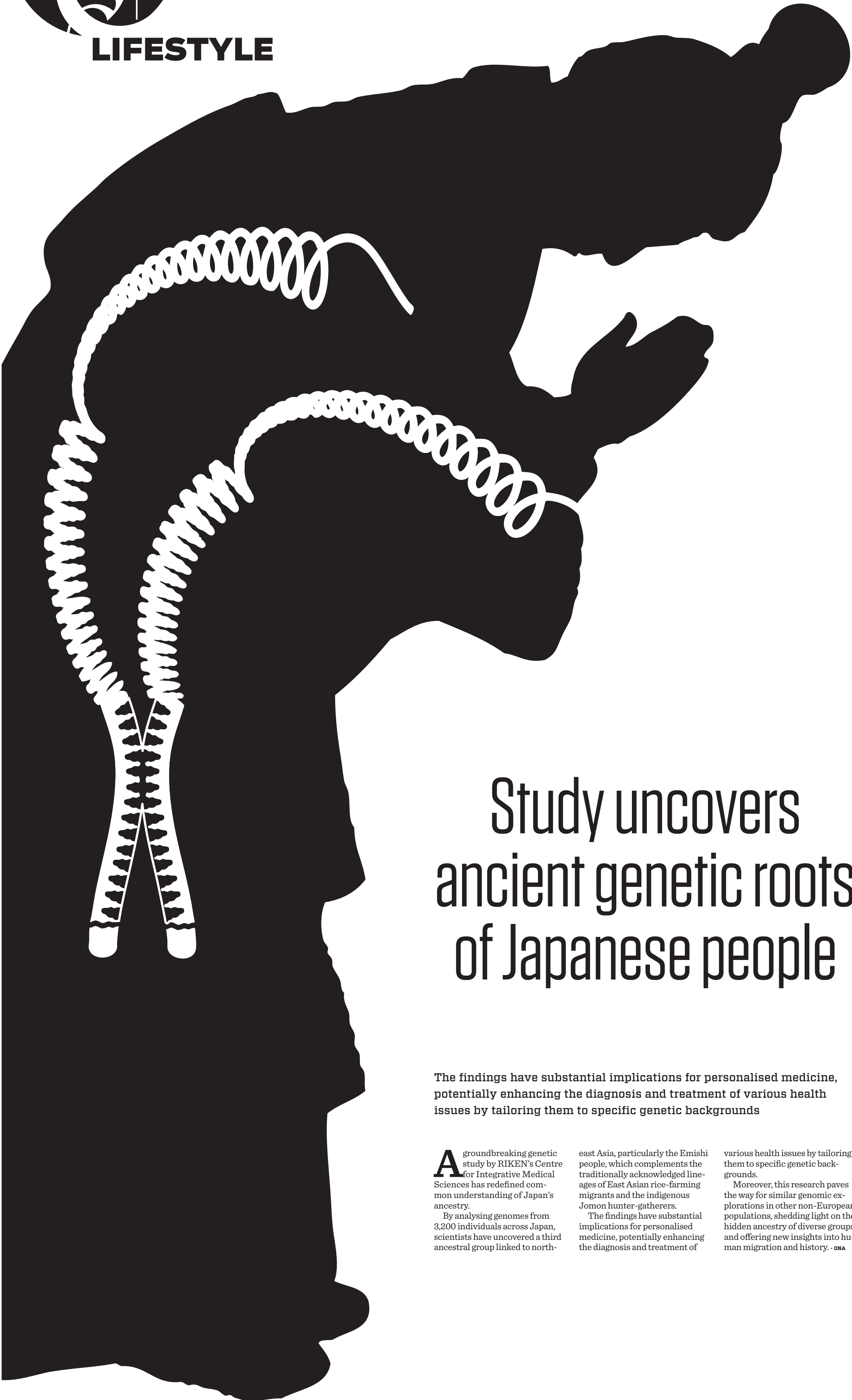
All Kinds of home automation/Integration like Audiovisual, Lighting Control System, CCTV/ Access Control along with product consultation & expert advise on the above being taken care. Also all kinds of Electrical installation & maintenance taken care with at most professionalism.

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Study uncovers ancient genetic roots of Japanese people

The findings have substantial implications for personalised medicine, potentially enhancing the diagnosis and treatment of various health issues by tailoring them to specific genetic backgrounds

A groundbreaking genetic study by RIKEN's Centre for Integrative Medical Sciences has redefined common understanding of Japan's ancestry. By analysing genomes from 3,200 individuals across Japan, scientists have uncovered a third ancestral group linked to north-

east Asia, particularly the Emishi people, which complements the traditionally acknowledged lineages of East Asian rice-farming migrants and the indigenous Jomon hunter-gatherers. The findings have substantial implications for personalised medicine, potentially enhancing the diagnosis and treatment of

various health issues by tailoring them to specific genetic backgrounds. Moreover, this research paves the way for similar genomic explorations in other non-European populations, shedding light on the hidden ancestry of diverse groups and offering new insights into human migration and history. - **ONA**

Verstappen wins US sprint to extend Formula One title lead

The Red Bull driver took the top honours with a controlled drive in Austin

AUSTIN: Red Bull's Max Verstappen took his first Formula 1 victory for nearly four months with a controlled drive in the sprint race at the United States Grand Prix on Saturday.

Verstappen's win extends his championship lead over McLaren's Lando Norris to 54 points.

Norris was running second going into the final lap but a lock-up at the first corner allowed Ferrari's Carlos Sainz to slip by in Austin, Texas.

The Briton then had to fend off the second Ferrari of Charles Leclerc, which he managed to do to the flag, helped by a mistake by Leclerc into Turn 15.

Verstappen's victory was his first in F1 since the sprint event at the Austrian Grand Prix in June, and could be a decisive development in the title race on a weekend where Red Bull have introduced a major upgrade to their car.

Dutchman Verstappen converted his pole position into a lead at the first corner and was able to keep Norris at bay for the full 19 laps.

"It was not too bad," Verstappen said. "It feels a bit like old



times. The whole race, Ferrari was always very quick, but for us we were finally racing again. We had good pace."

Norris jumped up from fourth on the grid to second on the first lap with a superb first four corners, sweeping past Mercedes' George Russell into the fast Esses after passing Ferrari's Charles Leclerc at Turn One.

Sainz and Leclerc staged a race-long battle in the Ferraris in a sprint that was engrossing throughout.

The Ferraris staged a frantic scrap over the first five laps in which they seemed to spend almost as much time side by side as in line astern. Sainz time and again attempted moves only to be rebuffed, often as he ran into corners

too deep.

Once ahead on lap five, with a dive down the inside at Turn 15, the Spaniard attacked Russell as the Mercedes driver started struggling with front tyre wear, and moved ahead at Turn 15 on lap nine, Leclerc following him through at the same place next time around.

Leclerc came back at Sainz in the closing laps as the Spaniard himself tried to attack Norris for second.

And Norris' error into Turn One, locking his inside front wheel, allowed Sainz to slip by and reduced the pressure from Leclerc, who had been lining up for a move on his team-mate.

Norris said: "It was a good race. I am pretty happy with how things ended up. "It was a tough one, I

thought I could maybe hang on to second but Carlos did a good job.

"My front tyres were completely finished and there was not a lot I could do. Whether I'd stayed straight or defended, I am pretty sure I would have lost the place.

"I did the most I could, I don't think we had the pace on Max and the Ferraris so I am happy to finish third."

Russell faded to fifth place, struggling with his front tyres wearing out, but managed to hold off team-mate Lewis Hamilton, who had the same problem with his rears, on the final lap.

Haas drivers Kevin Magnussen and Nico Hulkenberg took the final points in seventh and eighth places. - Agencies

Norris takes US pole with 'best lap of my career'

AUSTIN: McLaren's Lando Norris beat title rival Max Verstappen's Red Bull to pole position at the United States Grand Prix with what he said was "the best lap of my career" on Saturday.

Norris was helped by Mercedes driver George Russell crashing late in the session, which prevented any driver improving on their second laps.

Norris had been 0.031 seconds quicker than Verstappen on their first laps, but the Dutchman had started his final lap much better than the Briton, only for both to have to abort.

Although luck played its part, the result was just what Norris needed.

By taking pole position, Norris has given himself an opportunity to claw back some of that gap in the grand prix, although Verstappen's pace has looked formidable all weekend after Red Bull introduced some upgrades on to their car.

"It was a beautiful lap," Norris said. "I was not going to go much quicker than I did.



"When you just do a lap and you think it's going to be tough to beat... I put everything on the line, I needed to do it.

"We've not had the pace of the Ferraris or Red Bulls so I had to do something, and I did that.

"It was a very good lap. I can probably say quite confidently the best of my career."

McLaren's Oscar Piastri took fifth, 0.620secs slower than Norris, while Russell was still sixth despite his crash. For team-mate Lewis Hamilton it was a terrible day. The seven-time champion qualified 19th, Mercedes saying he had "messy balance and front locking". - Agencies

LA LIGA PRIMERA DIVISION

At 39, Modric becomes Real's oldest player ever

MADRID: Luka Modric, 39, became the oldest player to ever feature for Real Madrid as his side beat Celta Vigo 2-1 in La Liga on Saturday.

The Croatian provided the assist for Vinicius Jr's match-winning goal soon after coming on as a second-half substitute, and helped guide Real to victory in a tough encounter. Real are now level on points with Barcelona - who play Sevilla on Sunday - at the top of Spain's top flight but trail them on goal difference and have played a game more.

Manager Carlo Ancelotti called Modric a "top professional and a great guy". "It's a pleasure to coach Modric, to work with him. Everything he's been able to achieve and is achieving, he deserves," Ancelotti told Real Madrid TV.

They went ahead after just 20 minutes thanks to a wonderful long-range strike by Kylian Mbappe, who took one touch



and whipped the ball into the top corner after a pass from Eduardo Camavinga.

Celta eventually got their reward for their attacking intent just five minutes after the restart when Swedberg turned home after Oscar Mingueza whipped a low delivery into the box. Vinicius managed to get Real back in front 10 minutes later though, when he connected with Modric's well-weighted pass. - Agencies

TENNIS

Djokovic beats Nadal as 'amazing rivalry' ends

RIYADH: Rafael Nadal reflected on an "amazing rivalry" with Novak Djokovic and said he "would not be the player he is today" after losing their final meeting as professionals.

Nadal, 38, announced earlier this month that he will retire from tennis at the end of the season.

Serbia's Djokovic beat the Spaniard 6-2, 7-6 (7-5) in their third-place match at the Six Kings Slam exhibition event in Saudi Arabia.

The pair shared a warm embrace at the net at the end, while Nadal was presented with a golden tennis racket as part of a post-match presentation in Riyadh.

"Thank you very much for all of the moments we shared on court during all of our careers - we have had an amazing rivalry," said Nadal in an interview conducted on court.

"You helped me to go over my limits so thank you for that, because without that, I would probably not be the player that I am today."

Nadal will represent Spain in his final appearance at next month's Davis Cup Finals in Malaga.

"What I will miss is almost every-



thing," added Nadal, who won a record 14 French Open titles and 22 Grand Slams in total.

"It has been a dream come true to have been able to play for almost 20 years, being competitive and having the chance to play at the best places in the world.

"I realised my dream to become

a professional tennis player and be a successful one. I can't thank people enough for the support and the love I've received all around."

Djokovic, with 24 Grand Slam titles, is the only male player to have won more than Nadal's tally of 22.

The reigning Olympic champion had won 31 of their 60 ATP

Tour and Grand Slam meetings before Saturday's contest.

Speaking after the match, he told Nadal: "I have the utmost respect for you - an incredible athlete and an incredible person.

"The rivalry has been incredible, it has been very intense, so I hope we will have a chance to sit on the beach somewhere and have a drink reflecting on life and talking about something else.

"It was a beautiful legacy."

World No.1 Jannik Sinner beat Spain's Carlos Alcaraz in Saturday's final, earning a first prize of \$6m (about £4.5m). Italy's Sinner, 23, lost the first set on a tie-break but recovered to beat 21-year-old world No.2 Alcaraz 6-7 (5-7), 6-3, 6-3. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Bournemouth stun Arsenal; Man United down Brentford

LONDON: Bournemouth ended 10-man Arsenal's unbeaten start to the season with a 2-0 win after William Saliba was shown the first red card of his career at Vitality Stadium on Saturday.

France international Saliba was dismissed inside the opening half an hour, having tripped Evanilson close to the centre circle after being put under unnecessary pressure by Leandro Trossard's poor pass.

Gunnners' stubborn resistance was finally broken when Ryan Christie fired brilliantly in to the top corner following a clever cor-

ner routine with 20 minutes remaining, substitute Justin Kluivert flicking on Lewis Cook's low pass into the penalty area.

Kluivert then put any hope of a recovery beyond Arsenal by confidently converting his penalty nine minutes later, after club record £40m summer signing Evanilson was brought down by David Raya.

Victory ended a dismal run in this fixture for the Cherries, who had lost the last four league meetings by an aggregate score of 13-2, and moved them up to 10th in the table.

At Old Trafford, Manchester United came from behind to se-

cure a crucial 2-1 victory over Brentford at Old Trafford and ease the pressure on manager Erik ten Hag. United trailed at the break thanks to Ethan Pinnock's controversial injury time header which came while Matthijs de Ligt was off the pitch being treated for a head wound.

But at the start of the second half, Alejandro Garnacho ended the home side's 316-minute Premier League goal drought as he applied a magnificent first-time finish to Marcus Rashford's cross.

Striker Rasmus Hojlund won it for the hosts in the 62nd minute

when he ran onto Bruno Fernandes' sensational flicked pass with the outside of his boot to calmly chip the ball over Brentford keeper Mark Flekken, who slid out to block it.

Elsewhere, at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, the hosts' spectacular second half-display saw them run out dominant Premier League 4-1 winners over local rivals West Ham in north London.

Other results: Fulham 1 Aston Villa 3, Newcastle United 0 Brighton & Hove Albion 1, Southampton 2 Leicester City 3, Ipswich Town 0 Everton 2. - Agencies



USA TO HOST IN 2025



Messi's Inter Miami to play in FIFA Club World Cup

MIAMI: Major League Soccer side Inter Miami have been named as the latest addition to the FIFA Club World Cup in 2025.

The expanded 32-team tournament will be held in the United States in 2025 from June 15 to July 3 next year. The tournament will be made up of 12 teams from Eu-

rope, six from South America, 12 from Asia, Africa and North America with the final two spots going to one club from Oceania and another from the US - the hosts.

Inter Miami, who are co-owned by David Beckham, have been awarded that spot after the club won the MLS Supporters Shield - which

is given to the club in the MLS with the best regular game season. The announcement came after Lionel Messi scored a hat-trick to help Inter Miami break the MLS's regular-season points record.

"You have shown that in the United States, you are consistently the best club on the field of play,"

FIFA president Gianni Infantino said. "Therefore, I am proud to announce that as one of the best clubs in the world, you are deserved participants in the new FIFA Club World Cup 2025."

Messi, Sergio Busquets and Luis Suarez could come up against Chelsea and Manchester City,

who have already qualified for the tournament.

Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Paris Saint-Germain, Inter Milan, Porto and Benfica are other representatives from Europe. The 32nd spot in the tournament will be awarded to the winner of the 2024 Copa Libertadores. - Agencies

Head for an off-road adventure with all-new 4x4 Ford Bronco

Step into the driver's seat of Ford's legendary Bronco and feel the thrill of adventure as it makes its iconic comeback

MUSCAT: Fans of Ford SUVs can now own the powerful Bronco and enjoy exclusive benefits. 5 years/100,000 km of free service, a 5-year/100,000 km manufacturer's warranty, 5 years/100,000 km of roadside assistance and 1-year free registration. This limited-time offer is valid until November 7.

Step into the driver's seat of Ford's legendary Bronco and feel the thrill of adventure as it makes its iconic comeback. Built tough and packed with power, the all-new Bronco line-up—featuring the classic two-door, the first-ever four-door and the rugged Bronco Sport—invites you to explore without limits.

Every Bronco model is engineered to deliver exhilarating



off-road experiences, staying true to the spirit of the original 1966 Bronco and its rich racing heritage. With state-of-the-art technology and features tailored for today's explorers, it's a vehicle designed for those who seek thrilling adventures.

Built Wild™, the Bronco brand offers much more than just a drive. Its heritage-inspired design, cut-

ting-edge engineering and smart off-road technology make it the ultimate companion for outdoor enthusiasts looking to conquer uncharted territories. Whether you're venturing deep into the wilderness or navigating your everyday commute, Bronco is all about unleashing your adventurous spirit.

Like its legendary predecessor, the new Bronco delivers ultimate

4x4 capability with confidence. Equipped with the exclusive Terrain Management System™ featuring G.O.A.T. Modes™ (Go Over Any Terrain), it empowers drivers—beginners and experts alike—to tackle any landscape. From Normal and Eco modes for daily driving, to Baja, Mud/Ruts and Rock Crawl for off-roading, Bronco ensures every journey is as

thrilling as it is effortless.

At the heart of Bronco's off-road prowess lies its advanced 4x4 system, available in two configurations. The base system uses a two-speed shift-on-the-fly transfer case, while the advanced setup includes a two-speed electromechanical transfer case with an auto mode for seamless 2H and 4H transitions. Bronco's Trail Toolbox takes off-road driving to the next level, featuring technologies like Trail Control™ for low-speed cruising, Trail Turn Assist for tighter cornering, and Trail One-Pedal Drive for precise rock crawling.

Bronco doesn't just go off-road—it dominates. With best-in-class ground clearance of 11.6 inches, a break over angle of 29 degrees, a departure angle of 37.2 degrees and water-fording capabilities up to 33.5 inches, Bronco is ready to tackle the most extreme terrains. Its legendary Baja racing DNA guarantees a high-speed, heart-pounding off-road experience with modern style and comfort.

Under the hood, Bronco offers race-bred EcoBoost® engines and an array of transmission options, including a segment-first 7-speed manual and a 10-speed automatic. The 2.7-liter EcoBoost V6 delivers an impressive 310 horsepower and 400 lb.-ft. of torque, while the 2.3-liter EcoBoost offers best-in-

class four-cylinder torque with 270 horsepower.

Inside, the Bronco is all about purposeful design. Inspired by the original, its instrument panel combines heritage with modern tech, placing intuitive controls and a multifunction colour LCD instrument panel at your fingertips. The available 12-inch SYNC® 4 system offers seamless connectivity, keeping you in control no matter how far off the grid you go.

Safety is at the core of Bronco's design. A modern high-strength steel roll cage, integrated side curtain airbags, and advanced safety features like Ford Co-Pilot360™ driver-assist technologies ensure every adventure is as safe as it is exciting. With standard AdvanceTrac® with Roll Stability Control™ and Trailer Sway Control, you'll feel confident whether you're navigating tough terrain or towing gear for your next adventure.

The all-new Ford Bronco isn't just a vehicle—it's your key to endless adventures, blending the rugged legacy of the past with the technology of today to create unforgettable off-road experiences. Those interested in experiencing the Ford Bronco can visit their nearest Ford showroom.

In Oman, Ford vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN



Bank Muscat promotes its credit cards at Mall of Oman, City Centre Muscat

MUSCAT: To enhance its pioneering role in providing the best banking services catering to the needs of various customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues the launch of its promotional campaign for the Bank's range of credit cards and the associated benefits as well as offers available to customers.

The launch of the current campaign, which will run from 13 October until 11 November, came after the success of the campaign launched during the past period to promote the bank's credit cards.

To ensure ease of access for enquiring about credit card benefits and to be able to apply for them at a time convenient for its customers, the Bank is setting up dedicated booths at the Mall of Oman and City Centre Muscat which will be open to all visitors every day including weekends from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

To facilitate access to these benefits, Omani Nationals can apply for the Bank Muscat Oman Air Visa Platinum Credit Card or the Lulu Bank Muscat Titanium Mastercard Credit Card without the need for salary transfer provided that they hold an active account in Bank Muscat.

On this occasion, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, remarked: "We are committed to periodically offering value-added banking services and products that meet the various needs of our customers, in translation of the Bank's vision "To serve you better, every day." Bank Muscat's credit cards witness significant popularity and appeal to customers who may enjoy a suite of benefits and advantages when using these cards. The Bank is dedicated to enhancing its credit cards and introduces customers to the various benefits and offerings, aiming to elevate their banking experience."

Abdulnasir Al Raisi further

added: "The Bank periodically launches promotional campaigns aiming to familiarize customers with the offers provided to them through its credit cards. The campaign which the Bank launched earlier this year resulted in great success by witnessing high customer engagement. After the positive feedback received from customers, we are pleased to relaunch the campaign in select commercial centers where our staff will be introducing the Bank's credit cards and associated benefits to customers, as well as assisting them in selecting and applying for the credit card that suits their needs the best. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly invite our valued customers to visit these booths to learn more about the range of credit cards. I also extend my sincere gratitude for their ongoing support and trust in the offerings and services provided to them. The Bank will continue its commitment to enhancing services and facilities to cater the evolving needs and expectations of our valued customers."

Bank Muscat offers a wide range of credit cards. The Bank Muscat Asalah Visa Signature Credit Card offers various rewards and benefits, including 1% cashback on purchases, complimentary chauffeur service from and to Muscat International Airport and Salalah International Airport, airport lounge access at over 1,000 lounges globally and free travel insurance.

With the Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Card customers can enjoy 1% cashback on all local and international spends, complimentary travel insurance, access to 25 premium lounges around the world in addition to lounges at Muscat and Salalah airports. Customers who apply for the Al Jawhar Credit Card by the 30th November 2024 can also benefit from a first-year annual fee waiver.

CULINARY DELIGHT

Tomato, InterContinental Muscat's new menu blends classic Italian favourites with innovative new dishes

MUSCAT: At the InterContinental Muscat, Tomato, the renowned Italian restaurant, has unveiled a new menu, and it's nothing short of exceptional.

Curated by the talented Executive Chef Austen Reid, the menu seamlessly blends classic Italian favourites with innovative new dishes. The menu is refreshingly concise, with 5-6 choices per course, ensuring freshness and reducing waste—a testament to Chef Reid's commitment to quality over quantity.

The meal begins on a high note with appetizers like the FrittoMisto, a subtle and crisp seafood medley. Pair that with the Burrata, so fresh and creamy that it almost feels like it's straight from the Italian countryside. This is accompanied by freshly baked aromatic bread and a delicious sundried tomato dip.

For main courses, classics like the indulgent Cacio e Pepe and rich Risotto remain on the menu, providing familiar comfort for Tomato loyalists. However, it's the new dishes that truly intrigue. The Linguine al Pesto Bianco Rustico is a standout—white pesto made from walnuts, broccoli, ricotta cheese, and garlic oil, finished with a bright touch of lemon. It's a perfect marriage of earthy, nutty flavors with a fresh zing, a delightful twist on a familiar favorite.



Tomato also pays homage to local tastes with its inventive Chicken Tikka Pizza, offering a subtle yet flavorful kick for those seeking something with a bit of spice. If you're in the mood for tradition, the Pizza Napoli or the decadent Quattro Formaggi (four cheese) are sure to hit the spot, with every slice bursting with authentic Italian flavor.

No Italian meal is complete without a satisfying dessert, and Tomato does not disappoint. The

classic Tiramisu is rich and indulgent, while the Panna Cotta is perfectly set, creamy, and light. For a bit of citrus refreshment, the Lemon Meringue Tart adds a beautiful Italian twist, making it the perfect finish to a sumptuous meal.

The extensive beverage menu complements the dishes perfectly, with attentive yet unobtrusive service enhancing the overall dining experience.

Adding to the charm of Tomato is its newly designed indoor

space—a stunning greenhouse-like area flooded with natural light during the day, turning into a romantic escape at night. With air conditioning ensuring comfort even in Muscat's warm summers, it's an inviting space for any occasion, be it a lively celebration or a quiet evening spent savoring exquisite food with friends.

For anyone seeking a taste of Italy with a modern twist, Tomato at the InterContinental Muscat is a must-visit.

AT QS ARAB FORUM

MCBS awarded QS 5-Star Rating

MUSCAT: The Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) was officially awarded the prestigious QS 5-Star Rating for Excellence at the QS Arab Forum 2024, held between 15 - 17 October, in Amman, Jordan.

This recognition positions MCBS as the only Omani higher education institution to earn a comprehensive 5-star rating by QS for 2024, achieving a unique and exceptional status, and highlighting its commitment to delivering world-class education.

Representing MCBS at the forum were Prof. Rami Oweis, Vice chairman, Institutional Excellence and Advancement, and Dr. Al Mata'ni, Associate Dean for General Education and General Foundation (CEAP), who received the award on behalf of the college in the presence of Sheikh Fahad AbdulRahman Al Ajaili, the Omani Ambassador to Jordan. The QS Arab Forum 2024 is an annual gathering of university leaders across the Arab region, mod-



elled after United Nations-style discussions. This year's theme was "Fueling Collaborative and Ethical Research towards Building Knowledge Economies in the Arab World in the Era of AI." The forum promotes collaboration, knowledge sharing, and leadership among Arab universities, fostering progress in the region's higher education sector.

This award, achieved through a rigorous and meticulous process

of independent data collection and analysis by the QS Stars methodology, places MCBS among the world's elite institutes of higher education, enhancing its reputation as a leader in the region's educational sector. The thorough evaluation, which assesses universities globally across various categories, instills confidence in the quality of education at MCBS and aids prospective students in making informed decisions.

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

OAAAQA accredits Buraimi University

MUSCAT: Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) has now completed an Institutional Standards Assessment (ISA) of University of Buraimi (UOB). This ISA has resulted in a summative decision about the meeting of standards and associated criteria which are now made available on the OAAAQA website.

UOB submitted the ISA Application on 31 December 2023 and a Panel was formed to undertake the ISA process. The Panel comprised of experienced locally-based and international reviewers. During the visit, which took place between 2-6 June 2024 on UOB's premises, the Panel spoke with over 140 people, including representatives of the governing authorities, staff, students and external stakeholders.

The UOBISA resulted in an Accreditation Outcome of 'Accredited'.

ROUND-UP

Omantel’s Extended Reality Bootcamp ignites innovation and empowers Oman’s tech talent

Omantel’s Extended Reality Bootcamp was a hands-on immersion into the exciting world of Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mixed Reality (MR)

MUSCAT: Omantel successfully concluded its highly anticipated Extended Reality Bootcamp, a five-day event that brought together some of the brightest youth tech minds from across Oman. Delivered by the Omantel Innovation Labs, Omantel’s startup support arm, the bootcamp was held at Omantel HQ from October 6 to 10, with the aim to foster innovation and cultivate a thriving community of Extended Reality (XR) enthusiasts. Omantel’s Extended Reality



Bootcamp was a hands-on immersion into the exciting world of Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mixed Reality (MR). After an extensive selection process, 37 participants were selected

to take part in an intensive learning experience, designed to introduce innovative spatial computing technologies and their applications across multiple industries. “Omantel is proud to lead the

way in empowering our local tech community. This bootcamp is part of our contribution towards positioning Oman as a hub for digital innovation,” said HH Al Sayidda Ghada Al Said, Senior Manager at

Omantel Innovation Labs. “By offering opportunities like this, we aim to bridge the gap between emerging technologies and our talented innovators, propelling Oman into a future driven by immersive tech.”

Participants explored the tools and technologies behind AR, VR, and MR, creating early prototype concepts and interacting directly with industry experts. Among the featured speakers were Jawdat Shamma, a digital pioneer with over 25 years of experience in spatial computing, Tolgay Hickiran, a Unity-certified AR/VR professional, and Juan Gabriel Gomila Salas, a global leader in AR/VR education, along with other distinguished innovators. Their sessions offered in-depth knowledge and real-world insights into the future of immersive technologies. Aligned with Oman’s Vision 2040, the bootcamp underscored Omantel’s mission to nurture homegrown tech talent. By equipping participants with essential XR skills, Omantel is laying the foundation for Omani tech entrepreneurs to shape the future across industries such as gaming, education, and healthcare. In addition to hands-on training, the bootcamp provided a platform for future tech entrepreneurs, helping them develop early-stage ideas that could lead to transformative startups. As Omantel continues to drive Oman’s tech landscape forward, events like the Extended Reality Bootcamp will play a crucial role in shaping the next generation of Omani innovators.

SPECIAL OCCASION



InterContinental Muscat celebrates Omani Women’s Day

MUSCAT: On October 17, the Sultanate of Oman celebrated Omani Women’s Day, an annual occasion to honour the valuable contributions of Omani women to society. Basim Al Hasani, Director of Human Resources of InterContinental Muscat Hotel and Senior HR Leader – IHG Oman Hotels, said: “As we celebrate Omani Women’s Day, we honour the dedication, innovation, and hard work of Omani women, particularly in our hotel. We are proud to have distinguished Omani women leading key departments, contributing to our success.” Arwa Ahmed Al-Zadjali, Assistant Marketing PR Manager, added: “It is both an honour and a responsibility to lead the marketing department, where I strive to reflect the vision and values of our hotel. Through dedication and collaboration, we work to achieve excellence, showcasing the incredible potential of Omani women in leadership.

“Moreover, we take pride in the fact that many women are present in various departments of the hotel, such as finance, housekeeping, kitchen, reception, communications, administration, and security. Their diverse contributions are a vital part of the hotel’s success and align with Oman’s vision.” Al-Zadjali added: “We are all proud of the significant presence of women in various departments within the hotel, such as finance, housekeeping, the kitchen, reception, communications, administration, and security. Their diverse contributions are a vital part of the hotel’s success and align with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Human Resources department for organizing the Omani Women’s Day celebration and for attracting outstanding Omani ladies in the hotel, allowing them to share their achievements and highlight the role of Omani women in the hospitality sector.”

COMPETITION

Lulu in association with Dahabi hosts thrilling ‘Battle of Bakers’ Season 2

MUSCAT: Lulu Hypermarket Oman recently concluded the exhilarating ‘Battle of the Bakers Season 2’ contest, an electrifying competition held as part of its World Food Fest, powered by Dahabi Oman. From October 2 to 4, Nujum Mall in Al Amerat became the battleground for some of Oman’s most talented bakers, as they competed to earn the prestigious title of “Ultimate Baking Champions 2024.” The event’s star-studded judging panel included culinary heavyweights: Chef Abdullah Al Hashmi, Development Chef of the MENAT Region; Chef Issa Al Balushi, President of Oman Chef’s Guild and Brand Ambassador for A’saffa Foods and Shahi Foods and Spices; and Chef Achyutananda Das, Executive Pastry Chef at Sheraton Hotels & Resorts. The two-phase competition brought together six teams of five participants each, all passionate bakers and skilled cake decorators from across Oman. Open to individuals aged 18 and above, the contest kicked off with a thrilling mystery box challenge, featuring Dahabi Patent Flour as the secret and key ingredient. Teams were tasked with baking the perfect sponge at home using the mystery box ingredient before returning to face the next level. Phase two had the contestants racing against time with a high-speed trolley race to gather ingredients to be used while crafting final cake masterpieces. Contestants were judged on procedure, presentation, and taste. The final results were nothing short of spectacular, with the winning team’s taking home a gift voucher worth 250 OMR, 150 OMR and 100 OMR, respectively. Commenting on the success of



the event, Shabeer K A, Regional Director of Lulu Hypermarkets Oman, said, “I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the winners of the Battle of the Bakers Season 2. This contest was an exciting journey filled with creativity, passion, and enthusiasm. We are grateful to Dahabi Oman and Cake Talk for their invaluable partnership in making this event a

resounding success.” He continued, “From the mesmerizing cake creations to the intense final moments of judging, every aspect of the contest was packed with thrill and excitement. This event wasn’t just a showcase of talent, but also a chance for participants and spectators alike to enjoy an unforgettable experience.”

Through events like this, Lulu Hypermarket continues to build meaningful connections with its customers and the wider community. The Group remains committed to delivering unique, innovative promotions and events that cater to the evolving tastes and needs of their diverse customer base, both locally and globally.



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