

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE OF MIRBAT CASTLE

Mirbat Castle is a popular tourist attraction for people who visit Oman. Mirbat is located less than an hour's drive from Salalah, it is a tourist attraction famous for its fascinating archaeological sites. **>A4**



QATARI EMIRI NAVAL FORCES COMMANDER ARRIVES IN OMAN

Rear Admiral Abdullah Hassan Al Sulaiti, Commander of the Qatari Emiri Naval Forces arrived on Sunday on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman which lasts for several days. **>A5**



Founded 1975 · Volume 46 No. 252 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

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BUSINESS CLIMATE

Over 5,600 firms benefit from package of corporate incentives

MUSCAT: More than 5,600 companies have benefited from a package of corporate incentives offered by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in a period of about six months, according to official numbers.

As many as 5,672 companies took advantage of the government's package for corporates between 15 June 2021 to the end of December that year.

The services enabled desirous companies to clear, merge, cancel or adjust their commercial registers. Among the total, 3,703 companies cancelled their registers after, following conducting clearing tasks to facilitate the rectification

of their status during the above-mentioned period.

Khalis Khamis Al Masroori, Director of Commercial Establishments Monitoring Department at the Ministry, said that the clearing or merger of commercial registers helps address the issue of multiplicity of commercial registers.

The process enables firms to rectify their market conditions, improve the business climate, enhance competitiveness and support the development of small and medium enterprises, he added.

He also noted that this empowers entrepreneurs to cancel their old, non-functional registers and merit fee cancellation benefits. **-ONA**



Oman's first
electric car
launched **A2**

SAI RECOVERS OMR580 MILLION DURING NINTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The report, which briefs the community about the tasks undertaken by the SAI during the fiscal year, states that the SAI handled 207 cases in coordination with the Public Prosecution Department



handled 207 cases in coordination with the Public Prosecution Department and that verdicts in some cases were issued, while the rest were being processed.

This was unveiled during the first issue of the State's Financial and Administrative Audit Institution (SAI), termed Community Brief or community summary, which is undertaken in realisation of the 10th Five-Year Plan's requirements to consolidate transparency and disclosure in a manner that serves the development process in the Sultanate of Oman.

The brief indicates that the total number of notices during

the timeframe 2011-2020 stood at 33,096. As many as 1,861 audit missions were conducted, among them 1,210 pertained to financial and administrative audit, 624 performance audit and 27 pre-monitoring.

The Brief indicated that a total of 4,544 complaints and reports were filed during 2011-2020, of which 94 per cent were settled. In 2020, the number of complaints and reports soared by 51 per cent, compared to 2019, according to the Brief. The complaints and reports constituted 2,767 administrative and financial irregularities that included, 1,063 reports

of delayed transactions, 232 staff grievances, 116 reports of misuse of power, 122 instances of inadequate awarding of bids and 244 other reports.

SAI's 2020 annual inspection plan checking the performance of the State's Administrative Units covered various areas of audit. These included 96 missions giving rise to 124 reports on checking financial and administrative tasks of government departments, income-tax tiers, assessment of electronic systems, checks on projects, contracts and usufructs, as well as the study and analysis of the Oman's trade balance, the

State's final account and impacts on export mineral ores.

The 2020 annual inspection plan monitoring authorities and public institutions and companies covered the implementation of 24 missions, among them 21 reports on the assessment of Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company, as well checks on financial and administrative tasks of authorities and public establishments, cross-checking of operation and maintenance contracts of Oman Environmental Service Holding Company (be'ah) and some financial and administrative tasks of the telecommunications sector.

SAI's annual inspection plan for investment and commercial companies saw the execution of 24 missions that produced 25 reports that included a study on the performance of some direct government investments after their conversion into holding companies and checks on the tasks of the former Oman Investment Fund.

The plan also covered checks on some financial, administrative and investment activities of the Civil Service Employees Pension Fund, the Public Authority for Social Insurance, some hotel establishments and some projects delegated to Omran, the assessment of performance of Oman Air and Oman Dry Dock. **-ONA**

Al Isra'a Wal Miraj holiday announced

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour announced that Thursday 27 Rajab 1443 AH corresponding to 1 March 2022 is an official holiday for employees of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other legal entities, as well as establishments of the private sector on the occasion of the blessed anniversary of Al Isra'a Wal Miraj.

The Ministry pointed out that employers may agree on terms to engage employees on the said holiday—if deemed necessary due to the nature of their work—provided they compensate the workers for the holiday. **- ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Taha wins three golds

1 Omani swimmer Hussain Taha won three golds at a Dubai championship. **>A3**



WORLD

NATO warning to Russia

2 NATO chief has accused Russia of "planning a full-scale attack on Ukraine". **>A6**

MARKET

Asyad Ports-Duqm

3 Asyad Ports-Duqm is set to manage three commercial berths in Port of Duqm. **>B1**



WORLD WHALE DAY

ESO to launch conservation, training effort to protect Arabian Humpback Whale

Times News Service

MUSCAT: To conserve and spread awareness about the importance of protecting the Arabian Humpback Whale, which is largely found only in the waters off the coast of Oman, the Environment Society of Oman aims to launch two programmes this year.

The first project aims to implement a conservation management plan, working with local authorities to implement alternative solutions to harmful marine practices that threaten the whales' survival.

Complementing the conservation plan, ESO will also be launching a two-year capacity building programme designed to develop



the next generation of cetacean researchers and activists.

The Arabian Sea Humpback whale is one of the 20 species of marine mammals found in Oman's waters. Classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List of threatened species in 2008, it

is estimated to be the smallest and potentially most vulnerable whale population in the world, numbering fewer than 100.

Research supported by ESO has also proven Oman's humpback whales to be the only known population in the world not to migrate

between high and low latitudes, staying instead to breed and feed in the waters surrounding Oman.

"Since its inception in 2004, ESO has focused on developing a better understanding of the distribution and ecology of different whales found in Oman's waters," said the organisation in a statement.

"Among its achievements last year, the country's only non-profit organisation focusing on environmental preservation, launched the Marine Mammal Atlas of Oman, a publication that is the culmination of 20 years of scientific research and serves as an important reference for studies on environmental diversity, while also raising awareness on the species. **>A5**





Dhuhr.....	12:26pm
Asr.....	3:43pm
Maghrib.....	6:10pm
Isha.....	7:21pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:19am

Oman launches its first indigenous electric car

The car is produced by Mays Motors, a company funded by the Oman Technology Fund

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman has launched its first electric car, as part of its ambitions to become a significant player in the e-vehicle sector.

The car is produced by Mays Motors, a company funded by the Oman Technology Fund.

Bookings for the first 100 vehicles have already been completed, with the company expected to produce 300 cars as part of its first batch that rolls off the production line. Less than 150 cars out of that total are yet to be produced.

Maximum speed of 280 km/hr

The car claims to go from nought to 100 km/hr in just 4.9 seconds, and boasts a maximum speed of 280 km/hr. Featuring a range of 500 kilometres, it also features



Photos by OK Mohammed Ali

a rear-wheel drivetrain, 14.5 cubic feet of storage, and has a body completely built from carbon fibre. The company also features designers with experience at some of the most well-known high performance car brands in the world, including Italdesign, Tesla, BMW, Maserati and Porsche.

Concepts from these companies are also incorporated into

their factory and manufacturing processes.

As part of its expansion plans, the company is open to partnering with more investors. People who are interested in ordering a Mays can do so on www.drivemays.com.

To create partnerships with others involved in e-vehicles and sustainability, the team from Mays also recently took part at

one of the biggest tech events in the world, the Web Summit in Lisbon, Portugal.

The signing of the investment agreement between Mays Motors and Oman Technology Fund took place at the Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 in Dubai. The company expects to sell their e-vehicles across both Omani and global markets.



DEVELOPMENT WORKS



Community projects unveiled in Shinas

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A 28,000 square metre public park, a migratory bird viewing platform, and an arena theatre are among the many community projects recently launched in the northern Omani town of Shinas.

These facilities will be complemented by a three kilometre walkway, 11 family rest areas and barbecue sites, a crossing bridge to help people safely navigate waterways, children's play areas, green fields for families to relax, and a café. The development works also included the establishment of a park gate, mosque, security booth, toilets and parking lot.

The projects were carried out by the Jusoor Foundation, with funding totalling OMR 345,000 from various sources. Key providers of funds include Sohar Aluminium and OQ, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior represented by the Municipality of North Al Batinah. Jusoor Foundation recently celebrated the launch of four projects as part of the organisation's social investment programme. The ceremony was held in Al Qurm Natural Park in Shinas, under the auspices of Sayyid Khalifa bin Al-Mardas Al Busaidi, secretary general for governorates' affairs at the Ministry of Interior.

This event was attended by Saif bin Hamiyar Al Malik Al Shehhi, governor of North Al Batinah, the chairman of the Jusoor Board of Directors, officials in the North Batinah Governorate, and officials

of the companies that funded the projects.

The second project was the construction of a park in the mountainous area of Al Hayleen in the Wilayat of Al Suwaiq on an area of 2,000 square meters, which is surrounded by a 320-meter walkway. The park is equipped with children's rides, as well as a café, toilets and family rest areas, with a social investment of OMR 55,000 funded by Sohar Aluminium.

The third project was to provide equipment to clean beaches in the wilayats of North Batinah, to filter, purify and remove all the waste left behind on beaches. This will lead to cleaner and purer beaches, which eventually result in the reduction of the number of injuries and accidents to beachgoers, as well as the reduction of the human manpower involved in the cleaning process. This project was funded with a social investment of about OMR 40,000 by OQ. The organisation also provided and installed 60 recreational rides for public parks in the Wilayat of Sohar with a social investment of about OMR 50,000.

Saif bin Hamiyar Al Shehhi, Governor of North Batinah, said, "The Board of Directors of Jusoor met with representatives from the government, private sectors and the local community to take into account projects that meet sustainability and provide public benefit."

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

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Young Omani swimmer bags 3 golds in Dubai

Taha showed the fastest results in his age group in the 200 metre and 100 metre breaststroke, and the 400 metre individual medley



GOLDEN BOY: Taha also finished second in the 400 metre freestyle, and third in the 200 metre individual medley.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Young Omani swimmer Hussain Taha won three gold medals thanks to his phenomenal showing at the Middle East Open & Junior Swimming Championship. Held at Hamdan Sports Complex in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Taha showed the fastest results in his age group in the 200 metre and 100 metre breaststroke, and the 400 metre individual medley. Taha, who was one of many young athletes representing Oman's Nautilus Swim Academy at the tournament, also finished second in the 400 metre freestyle, and third in the 200 metre individual medley. His five medals made him the most decorated swimmer from Oman at the tournament. Glory was also brought by another Nautilus swimmer: Ana Graciela – all of 12 years old – broke the 30 second barrier in the 50 metre freestyle event. She finished her dash in 29.24 seconds. "It was a great experience for

our swimmers, and much needed, as we were unable to enter many international meets because of COVID-19," said Coach Ivan Proskura. "Swimmers here had to face a battle that made them stronger." Many of the Nautilus athletes who travelled from Oman at the event were trained by Olympic and Paralympic-level coach Proskura, whose education, combined with their natural talent, saw many of them reach the finals of their respective competitions. With many of Nautilus' swimmers unable to travel because they were required to enter quarantine owing to COVID-related issues, the club could only field seven athletes at the event. Despite this setback, however, Nautilus managed to finish seventh overall. The championship featured 39 teams from countries such as England, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, the UAE and many others. Before qualifying

for the tournament itself, athletes had to earn the right to compete through a series of preliminaries across the 50, 100, 200, and 400 metre events. The fastest 20 women swimmers from the 800m race, and males from the 1,500 metre race, also earned qualification. Among the Junior Championships, winners were declared in the form of who had the best heats in their events. "The Middle East Open & Junior Swimming Championships are considered among the biggest and most attractive event for all competitive swimmers in the region," said Proskura. "Qualification timings needed to take part in the tournament are quite challenging, and reaching this championship is already quite an achievement for our young swimmers. "Qualification this time around was too tough...understandable, since this a prestigious event, where all the best swimmers aim to secure a place," he added.

24 AND 25 FEBRUARY



Royal Opera House Muscat set to present composer and pianist Omar Khairat

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) is all set to present Omar Khairat in concert with the Omar Khairat Group and the special participation of the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra this Thursday and Friday, 24 and 25 February 2022. Composer and pianist Omar Khairat has long held the Arab music world in thrall with his unique and compelling sound exploring ways in which to combine the old age, much loved classics of such artists as Umm Kulthum and Mohammed Abdel Wahab with his own voice so that it continues to

resonate with audiences from all around the world. The resulting style has garnered Omar Khairat widespread acclaim. His music bridges contemporary Egyptian and Western music. Audiences are invited to embrace a beautiful blend of cultures with a master of the art. Winner of awards both locally and regionally, most notably the Middle East Music Award and the 1993 Oman Award, Omar Khairat will perform arrangements of works by Mohammed Abdel Wahab such as "Men Gheir Leh" and songs of Umm Kulthum such as "Enta Omri".

Adding to the wide appeal of this talented artist, the concert will be enriched by the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra. ROSO have established themselves as a mature orchestra, demonstrating a versatility which is widely acknowledged. All visits to the opera house are conducted under the guidelines of the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Social distancing is maintained throughout the building and the wearing of face-masks is mandatory. -ONA

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

23,731 REACH





Story on a traveller sharing his account of travel to India
A story on a traveller sharing his account of travel to India reached 23,731 people and had 774 engagements on Facebook.

 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

1,038 VIEWS





Morning Minute video
The Morning Minute video had 1,038 views and 60 likes on Instagram.

 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

970 VIEWS





Midday Update video
The Midday Update video had 970 views and reached 3,300 people on Facebook.

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



Maritime Security Centre inks pact with French Navy

MUSCAT: The Maritime Security Centre (MSC) signed here on Sunday a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the French Navy on exchanging information in the field of maritime security.

The MoU was signed by Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), Chairman of the Maritime Security Committee and Admiral Pierre Vandier, Chief of Staff of the French Navy, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

This came when Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the RNO received the French Navy's Chief of Staff at the MSC.

The two sides discussed several matters related to maritime fields between the two countries.

Moreover, Admiral Vandier toured the centre's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies.

ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF OMAN

<FROM A1 Humpback whale research

"Whilst research and monitoring for the Arabian Sea humpback whale will continue, ESO's long history of research means that there is now sufficient scientific information to back meaningful conservation actions," added the environmental organisation.

"As a result, the focus of ESO's work will shift to delivering more advocacy and mitigation options to help protect these endangered whales."

As a non-profit organisation, ESO continues to rely on the generous support of sponsors and members to deliver this work. For more information on how to support, make a donation, or to find out other ways to get involved, visit www.eso.org.om.

Founded in March 2004

The Environment Society of Oman was founded in March 2004 by Omanis representing different regions and many professional backgrounds.

The society is the first of its kind in Oman and works by promoting conservation and environmental awareness in all sectors of society.

In February 2009, ESO was accepted as a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and was chosen to represent environmental organisations from West Asia at the United Nations Environment Programme.

In June 2012, ESO attended the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (called the Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro as an officially accredited NGO as per the UN General Assembly's decision (A/66/L/44).

OFFICIAL VISIT

Qatari Emiri Naval Forces Commander arrives in Oman

MUSCAT: Rear Admiral Abdullah Hassan Al Sulaiti, Commander of the Qatari Emiri Naval Forces arrived here on Sunday on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman lasting several days.

He was received upon his arrival at Muscat International Airport by Commodore Tarik Issa Al Raisi, Royal Navy of Oman's (RNO) Senior Staff Officer, a number of senior RNO officers and the military attaché at the Qatari Embassy in Muscat. — **ONA**



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Training programme held for media personnel

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Information, represented by the Media Training Centre, on Sunday organised a training programme on creating digital content.

The three-day training programme sees the participation of 24 media personnel from various government units.

The programme covers several topics, including an introduction to influences on digital media, building communication strategies and operational strategic media planning, among other topics. — **ONA**

ANNOUNCEMENT

GORICA Vehicles & Co. LLC would like to make a statement to the public confirming its sole registered address in Oman to be PO BOX 491, Ghala Industrial Area, Postal Code 115, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

Recently we have witnessed some market abuse of the GORICA brand name, where some companies are abusing the GORICA trademark and brand name to try sell the same products and pretending to be true and genuine GORICA products. Please be aware and note that GORICA Genuine Products in Oman are only offered from our company GORICA Vehicles & Co. LLC, located in Ghala Industrial Area, which has been operating since 2007 in Oman.



For any points of clarification please visit us at our registered location or call +968 24504499.



GORICA Vehicles & Co. LLC
P.O. Box: 491, Ghala Industrial Area, Postal Code: 115, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman,
Tel: 00968 2450 4499, Fax 00968 2450 4488, E-mail: gorica.oman@goricagroup.com



PLANET FUTURE

A Unique Event to Create Awareness about our Environment through Contemporary Dance

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Venue: City Amphitheater, Qurm
Time: 7:00pm | Gates open at 5:00pm

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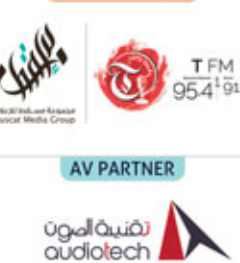
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Invitation to Tender

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

Tender Reference	DISC/E/Tender/2022/021
Subject	Shifting of DISC Assets from Private Properties Lot 01/2022
Tender Fee	RO. 52.500 Inclusive VAT (5%) Note: Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tender should collect the tender document from DISC's office or send an e-mail to below mention mail id for tender document.
Experience	The tenderers shall be registered electrical contractor with Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) Oman (Minimum C-Grade for 11 kV jobs and D-Grade for LV jobs) and should have performed similar UNE / Shifting jobs in Sultanate of Oman.
Pre-qualification	Bids to be attached along with valid "DCRP Registration Certificate" and valid "CEP Authorized card copy issued by DISC" Shall only consider for evaluation, Further, Tenderers will be evaluated as per the pre-qualification criterion specified in the Tender documents.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 7 th March 2022
Site Visit	N/A
Last date for seeking pre Bid clarification	N/A
Last date for Response for .pre bid clarification	N/A
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 14 th March 2022
Any Queries Please Contact	Phone 23232554, purchase@disc.nama.om

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



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Dhofar Integrated Services Company

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WORLD

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ATTACK ON UKRAINE

NATO Chief Stoltenberg warns Russia planning ‘full-scale attack’ on Ukraine

BERLIN: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Sunday accused Russia of “planning a full-scale attack on Ukraine” under a false pretext, according to media reports.

“No troops are being withdrawn, as Russia says, but new troops are being added,” Stoltenberg told German public broadcaster ARD, reported Sputnik News Agency.

He further raised concerns about the civilians being evacuated from the pro-Russian separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk amid an increase in ceasefire violations in the southeast (Donbas).

The NATO chief also denied the accusations of NATO having broken its promise not to expand eastward, citing the alliance’s founding treaty, according to the agency.

On the 8th of this month, the Chinese mission in European Union (EU) opposed NATO’s further expansion.

“Thirty years after the end of the Cold War, NATO continues to ex-



pand its geographical scope and the range of operations and engages in bloc politics and confrontation. This is not conducive to global security and stability. China believes

that regional security should not be guaranteed by strengthening or expanding military blocs,” the embassy statement said.

Earlier today, Switzerland’s Fed-

eral Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) urged Swiss nationals to leave the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the Donbas region amid escalations in ceasefire violations.

The recent tensions are a result of Russia’s build-up of around 150,000 troops just over the border from the Donbas region in the east, in Belarus to the north and Crimea to the south, which began in the autumn.

Meanwhile, Denis Pushilin, the head of the pro-Russian separatist government in the Donetsk region signed a decree on general mobilisation on Saturday, while the Russian Emergencies Ministry told Sputnik that their Rostov Region has opened 15 border crossings for refugees from the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas.

Amidst the increased tensions, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron are scheduled to speak on a phone call. **ANI**

COVID POSITIVE

Queen Elizabeth tests positive for coronavirus

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth has tested positive for the coronavirus, UK officials announced on Sunday.

“The queen has today tested positive for COVID,” Buckingham Palace said in a statement. “Her Majesty is experiencing mild cold like symptoms but expects to continue light duties at Windsor over the coming week.”

“She will continue to receive medical attention and will follow all the appropriate guidelines,” they added.

Both the Queen’s son, Prince Charles, and his wife Camilla tested positive earlier this month, though it wasn’t immediately clear if the UK head of state became infected due to contact with the other two royals.

The 95-year-old has already had three coronavirus vaccines.



People who test positive for the virus are required to self-isolate for at least five days, though the British government plans to lift that restriction for England in the coming week. On February 6, the Queen marked 70 years on the British throne. **BW**

Port of Salalah | ميناء صلالة

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info@salalahport.com, www.salalahport.com

DIRECTORS' REPORT 2021

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I have pleasure in presenting the annual report of your Company along with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2021.

At the outset, I hope you and your family are safe. We are indeed living through very unusual times and despite the disruption continuing unabated your Company is ensuring business continuity. The health and safety of our employees, customers and immediate community will remain our priority. Despite uncertain global economic circumstances and the pandemic situation, the year 2021 has ended on a positive note with both the Container terminal and the General Cargo terminal achieving record throughput during 2021.

Operational Overview
During the year 2021 the container terminal handled record breaking volume of 4,512 million TEUs (2020: 4,344 million TEUs), a growth of 4%. The Company has retained all major customers and Maersk's contribution to the total business has remained consistent during the year. The growth of container volumes despite the pandemic, is driven by the development of global container trade

The Port of Salalah General Cargo segment has handled 16,895 million tons during 2021 as compared to 15,296 million during 2020 a growth of 10%. The overall general cargo volume increase is mainly due to higher demand in export markets for gypsum, limestone and liquid bulk. The general cargo volumes handled at Berth 31 have been included in the container terminal financials, as in the previous year, due to the conversion of the berth into a multipurpose terminal facility.

The Company's top priority is ensuring the safety of its employees, contractors, and customers, and to this end, the Company continues to invest in technology and infrastructure to minimize risk. The Company continues to focus improvements through various initiatives to maintain operations of a world-class terminal and has maintained consistent productivity levels.

Financial Overview
The consolidated revenue from operations for 2021 is recorded at RO 66,704 million, an increase of 2% over the corresponding period last year. Consolidated EBITDA was recorded at RO 15,538 million which corresponds to an EBITDA margin of 23.29%. This compares to RO 18,02 million a margin of 27.47% during corresponding period last year. (Excluding the insurance compensation received in 2020 relate to the settlement of claim for the damages caused by Cyclone Mekunu in May 2018). The operational margin was impacted mainly by the increase in expenses RO 6.003 million incurred towards Maintenance & Repair (RO 4,322 million for 2020). The Company also incurred Covid-19 mitigation cost of RO 0.69 million for 2021 (RO 0.53 million for 2020).

Consolidated Net Profit for the year 2021 was recorded at RO 4,638 million, as compared to RO14,807 million during corresponding period last year. In May 2018, Port of Salalah was impacted by Cyclone Mekunu that caused property damage, increased cost of working, and business interruption. SPS reached a settlement with the insurance parties for USD 67.75million (RO 26.05million) for loss and damage compensation, which was accepted by SPS Board in February 2020. An advance payment of USD 38.5million (RO 14.80million) was already received and accounted for in 2018. The balance of USD 29.25million (RO 11.25million) has been received and recognized in 2020.

During 2021, your Company distributed 25 baiza per share annual dividend pertaining to 2020. Considering various capital expenditure plans to meet the equipment life cycle requirements and port improvement needs, as well as the volatile market conditions for international trade the Board of Directors is pleased to recommend the distribution of dividend of 10 baiza per share on the paid-up equity share capital of the Company, resulting in a total cash disbursement of RO 1,798,374.7.

Dividend history for the last 5 years

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Dividend %	20%	15%	15%	20%	25%
Cash Outlay (RO'000)	3,597	2,698	2,698	3,597	4,496

Employee Development
Our people contribute to the success of the Company. In order for the Company to stay competitive it needs to remain at the cutting edge of the industry with continued education on procedures, technologies, and best practices. The Company continues to invest in training and development of its workers, with a focus on enhancing Omanization and the skills development of local talent.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
Port of Salalah strongly believes in a CSR program that is aligned with the pillars of sustainability and volunteerism and it is fundamental to our business. The Company has invested RO 0.1million in CSR initiatives during 2021 contributing to the local Dhofar region in which we operate as well as segments of communities requiring support. Impacting the local Dhofar region and benefiting the larger segments of communities requiring support are the guiding posts of the company's CSR program.

Future Outlook
Container demand growth is losing some momentum amid mounting headwinds, but carriers will continue to rake huge profits, according to Drewry's latest Container Forecaster report. Fast rising inflation, ongoing supply chain bottlenecks and the Omicron Covid-19 variant could potentially lead to slow the pace of growth in container handling, forcing Drewry to lower its outlook for world port throughput in 2022 to 4.6% in the latest Container Forecaster, from 5.2% in the last edition against 2021 growth of 5.9%.

Management feels that the bulk of risk from the highly unpredictable container market will reside with shippers in 2022, which is shaping up to be another year of severe disruption, under-supply, and extreme cost. It is estimated that container rates are likely to remain high until at least the first half of 2022 albeit lower than 2021

As per IHS Markit, a leading global expert in the shipping industry analysis, the dry bulk and container market balance is expected to remain stable in 2022. With continued strength in the container market in 2022, Management feels that many geared multipurpose bulkers will stay in the container sector, which practically reduces fleet supply maintaining lower availability, higher costs for geared vessels and dry bulk shippers shifting to gearless vessels to achieve economies of scale.

Given the above dynamics, the Management view is that the impact on the local trade in terms of higher cost, equipment and space availability will continue well into the first half of 2022 for the container segment and more gearless vessels deployed in the dry bulk segment.

Conclusion
On behalf of the Board of Directors and the shareholders of the company, I record the sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, for his strategic vision, leadership, and his continued support. I also thank our customers, investors, and the members of the government we work together with daily.

Last, but certainly not least, I place on record our appreciation for the contributions made by our employees in achieving the level of performance in 2021. Our consistent growth was possible by their hard work, solidarity, cooperation, and support.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Braik Musallam Al Amri
Chairman of Board of Directors,
Salalah Port Services Co. SAOG

February 14, 2022

AUDITED CONSOLIDATED AND PARENT STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2021

Parent Company	2021	2020	Consolidated	2021	2020
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000
137,859	139,857	138,110	140,075	28,786	24,843
28,786	24,843	28,874	24,916	292	257
546	546	-	-	167,483	165,503
6,613	7,025	6,613	7,025	5,024	6,128
13,234	23,026	13,234	23,083	2,345	7,977
23,400	32,500	23,400	32,500	97,298	70,247
147,914	146,903	147,914	146,960	315,397	312,406
46,758	46,758	46,758	46,758	7,666	7,666
15,584	15,584	15,584	15,665	118,700	119,082
188,708	189,090	189,226	189,595	188,708	189,090
26,798	23,507	26,891	23,590	9,453	9,672
12,013	10,137	12,002	10,127	48,264	43,316
4,716	4,950	4,716	4,950	45,118	48,226
19,690	22,789	19,690	22,789	8,901	4,035
78,425	80,000	77,618	79,224	126,689	123,316
315,397	312,406	315,190	312,208	1,05	1,05

Parent Company	2021	2020	Consolidated	2021	2020
RO '000	RO '000	RO '000	RO '000	RO '000	RO '000
53,791	53,023	53,875	53,119	9,555	11,072
99	113	99	113	210	210
63,655	64,418	63,557	64,337	2,702	2,543
2,357	1,931	2,357	1,931	8,856	5,090
3,068	902	3,068	902	12,500	9,000
27,018	37,422	27,018	37,422	56,501	56,888
120,156	121,306	120,080	121,225	17,984	17,984
2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	5,904	5,904
45,799	45,652	45,960	45,840	72,726	72,579
72,726	72,579	72,918	72,776	9,041	10,306
3,720	3,636	3,720	3,636	3,899	4,620
16,660	18,562	16,688	18,595	1,904	1,814
18,549	17,354	18,253	17,040	8,765	7,573
1,552	3,424	1,552	3,427	30,770	30,165
30,770	30,165	30,474	29,854	47,430	48,727
120,156	121,306	120,080	121,225	0.40	0.40

Parent Company	2021	2020	Consolidated	2021	2020
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000
170,463	173,391	170,575	173,430	170,160	173,391
(110,160)	(110,160)	(110,160)	(110,160)	(110,160)	(110,160)
(21,619)	(18,156)	(21,655)	(18,187)	(21,619)	(18,156)
(24,460)	(27,136)	(24,472)	(27,152)	(24,460)	(27,136)
(844)	296	(844)	296	(844)	296
986	1,098	986	1,098	14,366	13,312
29,633	2,662	29,633	2,662	3,034	(1,859)
(2,146)	14,115	(2,152)	14,102	44,887	14,115
(6,437)	(2,043)	(6,445)	(2,043)	38,450	12,072
38,450	12,072	38,500	12,059	38,450	12,072

Parent Company	2021	2020	Consolidated	2021	2020
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000
Revenue	66,689	65,563	66,704	65,606	64,689
Direct operating costs	(44,685)	(42,368)	(44,685)	(42,368)	(44,685)
Other operating expenses	(6,983)	(8,314)	(6,983)	(8,314)	(6,983)
Administration and general expenses	(10,437)	(9,407)	(10,437)	(9,407)	(10,437)
Impairment Loss of Financial Assets	114	(326)	114	(326)	114
Other Income	422	379	422	379	422
Profit / (Loss) from operations	5,120	5,527	5,117	5,550	5,120
Insurance Compensation	-	11,397	-	11,397	-
Finance income	1,024	1,167	1,024	1,167	1,024
Finance costs	(715)	(828)	(717)	(828)	(715)
Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax	5,429	17,265	5,424	17,286	5,429
Income tax	(786)	(2,478)	(786)	(2,479)	(786)
Profit / (Loss) for the period	4,643	14,789	4,638	14,807	4,643
Other comprehensive income for the period, net of tax	-	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period, net of tax	4,643	14,789	4,638	14,807	4,643
Profit attributable to:					
Equity holders of the parent	4,643	14,789	4,638	14,807	4,643
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income attributable to:					
Equity holders of the parent	4,643	14,789	4,638	14,807	4,643
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-	-
Basic earnings per share (US \$ / RO)	0.03	0.08	0.03	0.08	0.03

The complete accounts of the company will be delivered or sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English as requested, within seven days of receipt of the request.





DO
MORE

MEDALS
TALLY

BEIJING 2022



Rank		G	S	B	T
1	Norway	16	8	13	37
2	Germany	12	10	5	27
3	PR China	9	4	2	15
4	USA	8	10	7	25
5	Sweden	8	5	5	18
6	Netherlands	8	5	4	17
7	Austria	7	7	4	18
8	Switzerland	7	2	5	14
9	ROC	6	12	14	32
10	France	5	7	2	14
11	Canada	4	8	14	26
12	Japan	3	6	9	18
13	Italy	2	7	8	17
14	R. Korea	2	5	2	9
15	Slovenia	2	3	2	7
16	Finland	2	2	4	8
17	New Zealand	2	1	0	3
18	Australia	1	2	1	4
19	Great Britain	1	1	0	2
20	Hungary	1	0	2	3
21	Belgium	1	0	1	2
21	Czech Republic	1	0	1	2
21	Slovakia	1	0	1	2
24	Belarus	0	2	0	2
25	Spain	0	1	0	1
25	Ukraine	0	1	0	1
27	Estonia	0	0	1	1
27	Latvia	0	0	1	1
27	Poland	0	0	1	1

timesofoman.com

Al Harthy matches season’s best top five finish in Abu Dhabi

Oman Racing’s Al Harthy, challenged hard for a deserved GT class podium finish but a red flag stoppage worked contrary to the team’s strategy

Times News Service

DUBAI: Aston Martin Vantage GT3 racer Ahmad Al Harthy produced a typically fast, committed and determined performance during round three of the Asian Le Mans Series at Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi on Saturday, 19th February, on the way to matching a season-best top five finish.

Oman Racing’s Al Harthy, plus team-mates Charlie Eastwood and Sam De Haan, challenged



hard for a deserved GT class podium finish but a red flag stoppage 90 minutes into the four-hour encounter, plus a series of Full Course Yellow cautionary periods, worked contrary to the team’s strategy. Fifth place though, added to sixth and fifth place results in rounds one and two last weekend at Dubai Autodrome, continues the Oman entry’s consistent 2022 campaign in ALMS unabated – and Al Harthy is determined to sign-off the championship on a high today with a challenge for silverware in the fourth and final round.

“We had really good pace, the car was amazing”, said the Omani, OQ and MHD-ITICS backed

Omani, “Unfortunately the Safety Car, Red Flag and Full Course Yellows limited us from reaching the podium, but there are so many positives to take into race two. I’m absolutely happy with my pace in the car, Sam’s initial start was really strong and Charlie’s ending was really strong as well.

“We’re really happy to be in Abu Dhabi and really happy to show our true pace. If everything goes to plan, which obviously isn’t always that easy with so much out of your control, we should have a good result in the final round and that’s what we’re hoping for.”

He added: “P5 is very respectable, especially out of a big and very strong grid, and being the fastest

Aston Martin again as well. We’re working extremely hard and the team is doing an amazing job to make sure we’re as competitive as we can be.”

Aston Martin ‘factory’ driver Eastwood qualified the No.69 car a strong fourth fastest for the round three GT class grid, but De Haan took the opening stint of the first Abu Dhabi race and put together a superb opening lap.

Storming through into second in GT, the Briton was shuffled back to eighth during a very tight battle around 15 minutes into the race but then mounted a great fight-back. Prior to a Full Course Yellow cautionary period at the half-hour mark, De Haan had moved back into the top four and he then pitted to hand over the Oman Racing car to Al Harthy after another FCY late in the first hour.

Al Harthy climbed behind the wheel for hour two and the multiple GT endurance racing champion had plenty of work to do from 15th position in class. Lapping quickly and consistently, the Omani began to slice his way through the order before the action was then halted midway through his stint due to a car fire for a rival entry and oil on the track.

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Easy wins for Earn Trust, Rock International, KCA Deutag, ISG

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Khurram Chaudhary struck an unbeaten 64 off 43 to help Earn Trust trounce Team Coorg Muscat (TCM) by 64 runs in an F Division T20 League game at Muscat Municipality ground 1 in Amerat on Friday.

Earn Trust posted an imposing 197 for 3 on the board thanks to top knocks by Khurram, Baiju Lawrance (39 not out off 33) and opener Arif Hussain (33 off 17).

TCM failed to come up with a befitting response, managing to score a disappointing 133 for 9. Milind Bhujwala topscored with a fluent 52 not out. Sadik Khan and Sameer Mohamed claimed two wickets each.

Brief Scores (F Division): Earn Trust CT 197 for 3 in 20 overs (Khurram Chaudhary 64 not out – 9x4, Baiju Lawrance 39 not out – 1x4, 1x6, Arif Hussain 33 – 5x4, 1x6) beat Team Coorg Mus-

cat (TCM) 133 for 9 in 20 overs (Milind Bhujwala 52 not out – 4x4, Sadik Khan 2-13, Shameer Mohamed 2-25) by 64 runs.

Kirit lifts Rock International

In another F Division game, Kirit Tandel’ superb 32-ball 58 steered Rock International to an exciting 18-run win over OCT Al Hail B at OAC 3 ground.

Kirit’s 58 and Gadhia Nimesh’s 31 were the only highlights in Rock International’s modest score of 140 all out in 17.5 overs. Qais Khalid picked up 3 for 17 whereas Ahmed Mohammed took 2 for 23. OCT Al Hail found the going tough as it was restricted to 122 for 6 in 20 overs due to tight bowling by Hemant Magar (2for 18) and Saumya Bhavin (2 for 25). Ahmed Mohammed and Adil Ishaq both score 33 each.

Brief Scores (F Division): Rock International 140 all out in 17.5

overs (Kirit Tandel 58 – 8x4, 1x6, Gadhia Nimesh 31 – 3x4, Qais Khalid 3-17, Ahmed Mohammed 2- 23) beat OCT Al Hail ‘B’ 122 for 6 in 20 overs (Ahmed Mohammed 33 – 2x4, Adil Ishaq 33 – 4x4. Hemant Magar 2-18, Saumya Bhavin 2-25) by 18 runs.

Mubeen stars in KCA Deutag victory

KCA Deutag rode on Mubeen Ullah’s superb 73 off 36 to thrash FFC Oman by 90 runs in an F Division match at Muscat Municipality ground 1 on Friday.

Chasing KCA Deutag’s 183 for 9, FFC wilted under immense pressure, folding up for a paltry 93 in 14.5 overs due to brilliant bowling by Imran Nazir (3 for 17) and Khalid Al Balushi (2 for 4). Anup Rajan topscored with 35.

Brief Scores (F Division): KCA Deutag 183 for 9 in 20 overs (Mubeen Ullah 73 – 13x4, 1x6, Khalid Al Balushi 22 – 4x4. Jophy

Kokkandathil 2-25, Prithwiraj Gopi 2- 14) beat FFC Oman 93 all out in 14.5 overs (Anup Rajan 35 – 6x4, Imran Nazir 3-17, Khalid Al Balushi 2-4) by 90 runs.

ISG defeat PSM in U-16 clash

Abhishek Prakash struck an elegant 58 to help Indian School Al Ghubrah (ISG) to a 21-run victory against Pakistan School Muscat (PSM) in a Junior Division 30-over Under-16 League match at OAC 3 ground in Seeb on Saturday.

Brief Scores (Junior Division U16): Indian School Al Ghubrah 211 for 6 in 30 overs (Abhishek Prakash 58 – 4x4, Adrian George 43 – 4x4, Ahsan Hayat 3-32) beat PSM 190 all out in 27.2 overs (Muhammed Asad 63 – 12x4, Ahsan Hayat 53 – 8x4, Kabir Sethi 3-30, Madhav Manish 3-42, Rishab Shivadas 2-34, Ayush Karthiyl 2-17) by 21 runs.

COMMENTARY

The rise and rise of Rohit Sharma

Anis Sajjan, Vice Chairman, Danube Group

Rohit Sharma has made rapid rise in all forms of cricket by now becoming Indian Test captain. After Virat Kohli was removed as ODI Captain before the South Africa series, Rohit Sharma was named as the captain of the white ball format by the selectors.

But when Virat Kohli quit the test captaincy after the South Africa series, the obvious choice was Rohit Sharma but one was not sure if he would be also named as test captain because of his fitness issues and also that he would be turning 35 in April that means age was not on his side but the selectors decided to go with Rohit Sharma and made him the captain of all formats.

Rohit Sharma had always done well in the white ball format scoring 9,283 runs in the ODI format in 230 games with an average of 48.60 and 29 hundreds at a strike rate of 89.

He had a spectacular 2019 world cup where he became the first player to hit 5 centuries scoring 648 runs. To add to it, Rohit Sharma is the only player to score three double hundreds in ODI Cricket which is phenomenal. In the shortest format Rohit is the only player to score 4 hundreds and just 45 runs short being Virat Kohli to be the highest scorer with 3,256 runs and a strike rate of 140 having played 121 games.

But in Test Cricket, Rohit Sharma’s journey had been up and down after his debut in 2013 against West Indies at home where he began with two hundreds. But his technique was exposed in the following series against South Africa, New Zealand, England and Australia where he was found wanting. His next hundred came only in 2017 against Sri Lanka. But



the tide changed for Rohit Sharma as a test player when he was made to open the innings against South Africa in 2019 where he scored three hundreds in that series which included a double century too.

It needed to be seen if he could get the runs in tougher conditions opening the batting away from home but he showed a great application to score a hundred against the England at Oval and was the highest scorer with 368 runs in the four test India played. He was also the highest scorer against England at home before the England series and has improved his test average taking it to 47 from 35 in the 43 test matches he has played.

Rohit Sharma who was included in the ICC mens team of the year for 2021 which was his best year in Test cricket. Till 2019 he was not certain of a place in the side but his graph has gone upwards and his journey in Test Cricket is full of inspiration and determination.

From being a failed test cricketer, Rohit Sharma went on to become one of the best players currently in the Indian squad and now becoming Test captain is something of a fairytale.

WINTER OLYMPICS COMES TO AN END

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach declared the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games closed on Sunday. Bach called the Beijing Winter Olympics “truly exceptional” in his speech at the closing ceremony held at the National Stadium. “The Olympic spirit could only shine so brightly, because the Chinese people set the stage in such an excellent way - and in a safe way,” said the IOC chief. – Xinhua



IPL

Gujarat Titans unveil team logo in Metaverse

AHMEDABAD: Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Gujarat Titans on Sunday unveiled the team logo in the Metaverse.

The logo shows an apex echoing the spirit for what they are called the ‘Titans’ - to move upward and beyond with the aim to achieve higher goals. It symbolizes the aspirations of the team to achieve the ‘pinna- cle’ of success in the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League. The logo was launched by the team’s Head Coach - Ashish Nehra, Captain - Hardik Pandya, and batter - Shubman Gill, who had the first-ever interaction in The Titans Dugout in the Metaverse. **ANI**



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,087.99 points, down by 0.11 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.09 per cent at 495.06 points. United Finance, up 8.33 per cent, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 3.82 per cent, was the top loser.

Asyad Terminals-Duqm to manage and operate 3 berths in Port of Duqm

These berths will consequently absorb the anticipated growth in ship traffic and cargo operations, ramp up trade via Port of Duqm with international ports



PARTNERSHIP: Asyad Terminals - Duqm, established through a partnership between Asyad Ports and Port of Duqm, will manage and operate three berths in Port of Duqm, which can accommodate the largest container ships and very large crude carriers to serve customers and trade partners. - ONA

MUSCAT: In line with the official inauguration of Port of Duqm, Asyad Ports-Duqm is set to commence the operation and management of the general cargo terminal that includes three commercial berths in Port of Duqm, following Asyad Group's strategy to enhance the competitiveness of Omani ports and maximise their investment and economic returns, as underpinned by Oman Logistics Strategy (SOLS 2040).

Asyad Terminals - Duqm, established through a partnership between Asyad Ports and Port of Duqm, will manage and operate three berths in Port of Duqm, which can accommodate the largest container ships and very large crude carriers (VLCC) to serve customers and trade partners.

The first one is a multi-use general cargo berth with a capacity of about 1 million TEUs per annum, the second is a bulk cargo berth offering a capacity of almost 5 M TEUs per annum, while the third is a Ro-Ro vessels berth. These berths will consequently absorb the anticipated growth in ship traffic and cargo operations, ramp up trade via Port of Duqm with international ports, provide exporters and suppliers of local and global business communities with rapid solutions, and meet Sezad's

economic projects' requirements. "This significant milestone, which translates the pillars and objectives of Oman Vision 2040, gives to national operators priority of managing large Omani ports and associated logistics services, and optimising the use of port equipment and facilities to promote national exports and Oman's economic growth", said Sheikh Nasser Sulaiman Al Harthy, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Asyad Group. Al Harthy also added that the

management of Asyad Group adopts a clear strategy aimed at enhancing logistics investments and increasing the operational efficiency of Omani ports, which would generate new prospects for international investment and trade companies and private Omani companies in this vital sector. As additional results, the Omani ports will become a much sought-after hub for various global shipping lines and will create new business opportunities for SMEs in different sector-

related operational services.

On his part, Dr Ahmed Mohamed Al Abri, CEO of Asyad Ports, indicated, "Asyad is moving ahead in developing the ports sector in Oman, achieving further progress and taking multiple initiatives to turn the ports of Oman into an investment pull factor. In co-operation with various government agencies, those ports will grow to become a leveraging pillar for trade and economic development in the country."

He subsequently highlighted that assigning the management and operation of the general cargo terminal in the Port of Duqm to Asyad Terminals - Duqm was a serious step forward into the circle of worldwide competition in the area of operation of international berths and ports.

He elaborated that Asyad Terminals - Duqm will seek to develop the superstructure of Port of Duqm and handle general, bulk and rolled cargo. Furthermore, the Company will provide competitive incentives and initiatives to facilitate business and raise the competitive advantage of Port of Duqm, thus becoming a multi-purpose global trade gateway offering access to markets that include more than three billion consumers around the world.

"Asyad Ports has over the past years demonstrated its solid know-how, administrative capabilities, and national competence, in managing Oman's ports (A'Suwaik, Shinas, Khasab, Port of Sultan

Qaboos and Khazaen Dry Port), and employing those abilities to strengthen the crucial role of Port of Duqm as a prime location and a nerve centre in the global supply chain," added Dr Ahmed Al Abri.

In the same vein, particularly on the ICV side, Dr Ahmed Al Abri pointed, "Assigning the management and operation of the commercial berths in Port of Duqm to Asyad Terminals - Duqm will undoubtedly lead to finding a common ground with the private sector in many fields, and will offer business opportunities to Omani SMEs, in various logistics services and support activities such as customs clearance, transport, storage and maintenance. This will naturally occur with the rebound of trade through the Port and the local markets become connected to global markets through direct shipping lines.

Port of Duqm, officially inaugurated in February 2022, is one of the most important and largest ports in the Middle East as it extends over an area of 188 square kilometres and consists of 9 berths which are 2.25 km long, 350 m wide, and up to 18 m deep. The Port of Duqm incorporates various industrial lands, a stretch of 2,000 hectares and logistics lands estimated at 1,000 hectares. It has an 8.7km breakwater that rises 11 metres above sea level, in addition to a secondary breakwater of 4.6km. Thanks to its unique specifications, the Port can receive the largest ships in the world. - ONA

OMAN INVESTMENT AUTHORITY

OIA's new project to attract foreign investment

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Pertaining to its role in attracting foreign investment, building strategic partnerships and bringing advanced modern technologies to the country, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) launched a new project to produce mushroom-based protein using dates as the main element, in collaboration with international partners; most predominantly, US company 'MycoTechnology'.

This partnership came in the heels of OIA's investment in MycoTechnology, a US company founded in 2013. MycoTechnology is a leading US food biotechnology company focused on the production of alternative protein and sugar reduction ingredients.

The company has successfully established its fermentation technology platform producing a variety of ingredients that address some of the food industry's most pressing challenges. OIA and MycoTechnology announced the establishment of 'Vital Foods



COLLABORATION: OIA launched a new project to produce mushroom-based protein using dates as the main element, in collaboration with international partners; predominantly, US company 'MycoTechnology'. - Supplied picture

Technologies' to complete the feasibility study of a large scale production facility in Oman.

The partnership was announced at the 'Future of Food' event organised by OIA and MycoTechnology to introduce the promising capabilities of this project, which already underwent several successful techno-economic studies.

The event witnessed the formal signing between OIA and MycoTechnology to establish Vital Foods Technologies and was attended by several senior government officials, senior corporate executives, representatives of companies and funds investing in the food sector, and MycoTechnology representatives. Attendees

were served a Southeast Asian menu with dishes composed of alternative protein.

From this partnership, OIA seeks to enhance food security, achieve national sufficiency and attract international expertise to be utilised in local projects. The outcome of this partnership is hoped to achieve economic diversity, create direct and indirect job opportunities and create opportunities for Omani SMEs.

"This innovative project represents the benefits OIA can reap from international investments, whereafter it attracts its international partners to establish their projects in Oman and to transfer and bring advanced modern technologies to the country," stated Ibrahim Al-Eisri, Director of Private Equity at Oman Investment Authority. "Through its investment in the food production sector, OIA is exploring promising investment opportunities that can succeed in the backdrop of Oman's climate and benefit the national economy," he added.

TEJARAH TALKS

New initiative unveiled to examine key issues shaping Oman's business landscape

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tejarah Talks, a new initiative launched by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) will hold its first event on February 23 at the Civil Aviation Authority Training Centre in Al Hail North.

Supported by Sohar Port & Freezone, HSBC and Oman Business Forum, over the coming year Tejarah Talks will bring together panels of experts, business and thought leaders in a series of seven interactive and informal discussion-led evening sessions to examine key issues shaping Oman's business landscape, influencing the sultanate's socio-economic environment, impacting investment and driving non-oil exports.

Maymuna Al Adawi, MoCIIP Director and Tejarah Talks organiser said, "Through this

inspiring initiative, we look forward to showcasing the dynamism of business and industry in Oman and highlighting how under the wise guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Oman Vision 2040 is creating the conditions where more than ever investors in our country can grow, succeed and thrive."

Tackling topics directly relevant to business, industry and investment in Oman, economic diversification and job creation as well as pressing global issues, Tejarah Talks will explore post-COVID company culture, the evolving world of manufacturing, cracking export markets, the green transition, creative industries and Gen Z, and marketing in the new data-led world. The first Tejarah Talks session will examine the role of sustainability in enhancing competitiveness, attracting investment and unlocking new opportunities.

TELECOM

China to boost new infrastructure projects amid economic recovery

BEIJING: China will accelerate the construction of major new infrastructure projects, support telecom operators to speed up 5G construction and help industrial enterprises advance digital transformation, according to a circular released.

The circular on policies to promote the steady growth of the economy was issued by 12 central departments including the National Development and Reform Commission. China will kick off major projects for the industrialisation of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and promote the large-scale application of the system in major regions, the circular stated. The country will accelerate the construction of 8 national computing hubs amid its efforts to channel more computing resources from the country's eastern regions to its less developed yet resource-rich western regions. -Xinhua

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

United Finance, up 8.33 per cent, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 3.82 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,087.99 points, down by 0.11 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.09 per cent at 495.06 points. United Finance, up 8.33 per cent, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 3.82 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of United Finance were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Oman Cables Industry was the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 748 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR5.7 million, with more than 34.2 million shares changing hands. Out of 40 traded securities, 15 advanced, 9 declined and 16 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net

buyers for OMR598,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR436,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR162,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 6475.08 points, down by 0.11 per cent. Prices of United Finance, Muscat Finance, Global Financial Investments, Al Omaniya Financial Services, and Oman United Insurance were up by 8.33 per cent, 4.92 per cent, 2.74 per cent, 2.26 per cent, and 1.58 per cent respectively. Prices of Bank Dhofar, Al Anwar Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, Bank Muscat, and Al Batinah Development Company were down by 1.7 per cent, 1.24 per cent, 1.06 per cent, 0.77 per cent and 0 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5772.04 points, up by 0.27 per cent. -United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,096.30	4,083.93	4,087.99	4,092.50	-4.51	-0.11
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,493.63	6,475.08	6,475.08	6,482.36	-7.28	-0.11
Industry Index	5,782.93	5,769.69	5,772.04	5,756.31	15.73	0.27
Services Index	1,647.78	1,643.40	1,647.49	1,644.63	2.86	0.17
MSX Shariah Index	496.42	495.06	495.06	494.61	0.45	0.09
MSX TR INDEX	4,930.90	4,916.02	4,920.90	4,926.33	-5.43	-0.11

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PUR. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	5,502,325	352,326	180	0.061	0.066	0.061	0.064	0.061	0.003	4.918	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.100	19,657,365
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	15,000	6,880	2	0.456	0.460	0.456	0.458	0.442	0.016	3.620	0.460	0.424	0.460	0.100	25,190,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINS	488,504	66,423	12	0.136	0.136	0.134	0.136	0.133	0.003	2.256	0.136	0.134	0.135	0.100	39,703,183
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR.	292,000	112,712	1	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.380	0.006	1.579	0.386	0.354	0.388	0.100	38,600,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	692,355	562,018	17	0.800	0.812	0.800	0.812	0.804	0.008	0.995	0.812	0.804	0.812	0.100	899,000,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR	1,460,000	1,395,520	3	0.944	0.956	0.944	0.956	0.952	0.004	0.420	0.956	0.948	0.956	0.100	85,763,200
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	25,390	3,225	4	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.127	0.127	0.130	0.100	10,795,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST & FIN	1,240,000	193,440	15	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.000	0.000	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.100	36,972,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	1,000	298	1	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.000	0.298	0.298	0.304	0.100	199,172,897
OM0000003200	AHLI BANK	17,924	2,151	2	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.118	0.120	0.100	233,958,896
OM0000003000	AI MAHA MARKETING	1,831	1,252	1	0.684	0.684	0.684	0.688	0.688	0.000	0.000	0.684	0.684	0.684	0.100	47,472,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	5,000	535	1	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.100	0.112	0.100	322,928,727
OM0000003968	QOREDOO	1,750,346	626,624	16	0.358	0.358	0.358	0.358	0.360	-0.002	-0.556	0.358	0.358	0.360	0.100	233,038,054
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	82,700	26,325	18	0.320	0.320	0.318	0.318	0.320	-0.002	-0.625	0.318	0.318	0.318	0.100	19,462,959
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	745,600	384,730	24	0.516	0.516	0.516	0.516	0.520	-0.004	-0.769	0.516	0.514	0.516	0.100	1,844,428,993
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	677,219	261,118	42	0.390	0.390	0.384	0.386	0.390	-0.004	-1.026	0.390	0.384	0.390	0.100	44,210,613
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	35,000	3,256	4	0.095	0.095	0.092	0.093	0.094	-0.001	-1.064	0.092	0.086	0.092	0.100	8,370,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	2,473,281	198,446	78	0.082	0.082	0.079	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.235	0.079	0.079	0.081	0.100	16,000,000
Total	18	15,505,445	4,197,279	421												
Parallel Market																
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	13,385,984	1,042,567	158	0.075	0.079	0.075	0.078	0.072	0.006	8.333	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.100	27,233,264
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	30,000	1,620	1	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.050	0.004	8.000	0.054	0.047	0.054	0.100	12,000,960
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	2,074,000	246,782	9	0.118	0.119	0.118	0.119	0.115	0.004	3.478	0.118	0.117	0.118	0.100	15,470,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	1,520,299	113,801	56	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.073	0.002	2.740	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.100	15,000,000
OM0000004933	AI SUWADI POWER	445,000	22,125	15	0.049	0.050	0.049	0.050	0.049	0.001	2.041	0.049	0.049	0.050	0.100	35,720,317
OM0000001568	OMAN FISHERIES	133,500	8,927	15	0.070	0.070	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.066	0.066	0.068	0.100	8,375,000
OM0000003281	TAGIERR FINANCE	13,749	1,112	7	0.082	0.082	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.100	20,540,790
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	42,000	4,069	6	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.001	1.042	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.100	16,975,000
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	25,000	3,070	3	0.122	0.124	0.122	0.123	0.122	0.001	0.820	0.124	0.123	0.126	0.100	19,132,699
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	56	98	1	1.750	1.750	1.750	1.750	1.750	0.000	0.000	1.750	1.750	1.750	0.100	87,500,000
OM0000001537	HSCB BANK OMAN	5,000	490	1	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.098	0.101	0.100	196,039,653
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	10,000	700	2	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070	0.071	0.100	8,531,250
OM0000003265	NAT. DETERGENT	807	500	1	0.620	0.620	0.620	0.632	0.632	0.000	0.000	0.620	0.620	0.600	0.100	10,751,900
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	16,000	1,136	1	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.068	0.071	0.100	14,412,038
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	208,724	20,246	4	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.097	0.098	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000004689	SHARQIYA DESALIN	1,500	207	1	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.140	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.138	0.138	0.144	0.100	13,692,302
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	513,957	25,185	21	0.049	0.050	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	23,069,484
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	99	1	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	19,200,000
OM0000004735	SEMBOCORP SALAH	57,298	4,240	13	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.100	70,638,324
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	135,000	15,660	2	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.118	-0.002	-1.695	0.116	0.114	0.116	0.100	347,576,767
OM0000002804	A'SAFFA FOODS	115,602	14,551	8	0.130	0.130	0.118	0.126	0.131	-0.005	-3.817	0.118	0.118	0.130	0.100	15,120,000
Total	21	18,714,536	1,527,186	326												

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1 to 2m

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On fingers from touching

The droplets eventually get into nose and mouth

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EV charging stations expanded 2.5 times in 9 major Indian cities

NEW DELHI: The number of charging stations for electric vehicles (EV) in nine mega cities of India increased by 2.5 times in the last four months due to multiple initiatives taken by the government, the Union Ministry of Power said.

The nine mega cities that are in

focus for the development of electric vehicles infrastructure are: Surat, Pune, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai.

The aggressive efforts undertaken by the government through various implementing agencies have resulted in rapid growth

in the deployment of public EV charging infrastructure. There has been the additional installation of 678 public EV charging stations between October 2021 to January 2022 in these 9 cities, which is about 2.5 times of the earlier numbers, during the same period, about 1.8 lacs new electric vehicles. -ANI

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GFH launches GCC \$100m Sukuk fund

MANAMA: GFH Financial Group (GFH) has announced that it has launched and seeded a \$100 million Sukuk fund which holds a diversified portfolio of Sukuk following signing an agreement with Credit Suisse to provide attractive financing and fund administration services.

Sharia principles
The fund holds a portfolio of sovereign, quasi-sovereign and corporate Sukuk and Sukuk-related securities from various countries and issuers, primarily in the GCC and will be managed following Sharia principles.

GFH aims to generate returns to the fund through active asset allocation, credit selection, optimal leverage and duration management to achieve an above-average long-term investment return on a risk-adjusted basis.

Salem Patel, Head of Asset Management at GFH, said, "The market is becoming more buoyant as economies in the GC-Creover amid a revival of key sectors. Global borrowers have issued more than \$23 billion of Shari'a-compliant debt in 2021 and global Sukuk supply is expected to accelerate in 2022. The GFH Sukuk Fund aims to capitalise on post-pandemic economic growth and recovery."

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Energy saving , More cooling

5 WAYS TO SPRING CLEAN YOUR ROUTINE



Falling short of your goals?

In a period of stagnation?
It may be time to spring clean
your routine. Here are a few tips
and ideas for getting
done with greater ease.

1

SPRUCE UP YOUR SETTINGS

Do you find some of the push notifications on your phone distracting? Give yourself the gift of fewer beeps and buzzes by spending just a few minutes reviewing and changing the notification settings of your apps.

2

SQUEEZE IN SELF-CARE

Taking regular breaks from your work is essential. Not only are these interludes good for your mind and body, they can actually help you be more creative and productive. However, if you're someone who loses track of time easily when you're concentrating, you may need a tool to remind you to step away from your workstation.

3

REDUCE MEALTIME STRESS

If weeknight dinners are rushed and chaotic but you don't want to resort to take out more than once or twice a week, try subscribing to a meal kit service that delivers all the ingredients and instructions you need to create delicious and wholesome home-cooked meals. The good news is that many such services have ever-changing menus, as well as flexible options for those who are on special diets. These kits can also be a good way for kitchen novices to master basic culinary skills before embarking on more complicated efforts.

4

STAY FOCUSED

Everyone is overscheduled these days. Having tech tools handy that keep you task-oriented can help ensure you never miss an important meeting or appointment. Those who embrace classic styles should consider watches that are particularly suitable for those who frequently travel or work with others in different time zones, the watch displays the time of cities all around the world. And because the watches are water-resistant and in many cases, solar-powered, it's a timepiece you can rely on.

5

WRITE IT DOWN

On the first of each month, take a few moments to jot down any goals you have for the month ahead, as well as any habits you want to start or stop. Take time to note how you are planning to fulfill your objectives. At the end of the month, review what worked and what didn't. -Statepoint





FEATURE



Francis Kere designs new Goethe-Institut in Senegal

CAPTURING wind for cooling, using wood and clay as basic materials for houses, or constructing buildings tuned to the sun's daily path to provide natural shade: Instead of over-exploiting nature, a new generation of architects in sub-Saharan Africa is focusing on building practices that conserve resources and are climate-friendly.

"It is high time," says Francis Kere, one of the best known sub-Saharan architects who was born in Burkina Faso and now lives in Berlin. "For a better future for all of us, not just in Africa, but for all of us on this planet, it's important to go back and actually use only those materials that nature gives us freely and to stop overexploiting them," he told DW.

Kere is designing the new Goethe-Institut in Dakar. This is the first time in the history of the German cultural institute that a building commissioned specifically for their purposes is being built in sub-Saharan Africa. "We are very pleased that Francis Kere has taken on the design of this building," said Philip Küppers, director of the Dakar Goethe-Institut, adding it was always clear "it had to be

Constructed around a baobab tree in Dakar, the Senegalese architect will utilise traditional West African materials for the new, high-tech building

an interaction between Germans and Senegalese or West Africans." On February 21, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will attend the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone.

Traditional building materials

For the construction, Kere will use local building materials including clay and laterite, a highly compacted soil that can be cut into brick-shaped blocks. The building's walls will be made of a double layer of BTC bricks (French acronym for briques de terre compressée), pressed from slightly moistened soil with the addition of a little cement, making them strong and waterproof.

In addition, the architect plans on using clay, which has been used in the Sahel region for centuries due to its temperature-regulating properties. Kere's approach is both traditional and contemporary. He also plans to employ local workers, for the most part. "Building is a big job and that requires many, many people working together, but also people who have a lot of experience and pass their knowledge to the next generation," the architect ex-

plains. It's a community event that has worked well for the architect in previous projects, he says.

Despite his international success, Francis Kere has never forgotten his roots. He grew up in a small village in rural Burkina Faso. To attend elementary school, he moved to the nearest town where he lived with relatives for a while. In the 1980s, a scholarship brought him to Berlin, where he initially trained as a carpenter before beginning architecture studies at the Technical University. While still a student, he completed his first major construction project in his native country, building an elementary school in the village of Gando.

In 2004, he received the Agha Khan Award for Architecture, the first of several awards. He almost didn't return to university, but his professors convinced him to complete his studies. In 2005, he founded his own firm in Berlin, Kere Architecture. He has been very successful internationally, known among other things for Opera Village Africa, an arts education project in the capital of Burkina Faso that was initiated by the late German film director, Christoph Schlingensief.

The new Goethe-Institut in Dakar will be able to accommodate about 600 students, with space for video conferences and online courses, according to Philip Küppers. A recording studio will be installed in the library for digital recordings of the local population's oral histories. Küppers sees the role of the institute, which has been in Dakar since 1978, as primarily fostering dialogue among people and strengthening mutual understanding.

Symbolism of the baobab tree

The large baobab tree around which the building is being constructed is highly symbolic for the Senegalese, Küppers points out. "It's the place where people would come together in the village, where the elders gathered, where issues were discussed, where maybe the small local court would adjudicate a dispute," Küppers said. It's a place of discourse and gathering, which is exactly what a Goethe-Institut does, "bring people together to discuss things, to develop something new." The start of construction was delayed due to the COVID pandemic, but the new institute is now expected to open its doors in the summer of 2023. —DW

ROUND-UP

SPLASH FASHIONS

Middle East’s first-ever NFT collection to merge fashion with environmental consciousness

MUSCAT: Created in 2019 to bring together artists, visionary ideas, evolving technology, and the virtual world, Boredpuma reveals the upcoming launch of the Celestial Collection, the highly anticipated collaboration with Splash Fashions.

As an award-winning, sustainable focused & forward-thinking fashion label, Splash stands out as the ideal collaborator in this project, fusing technology and fashion-driven art. This collection is recognised as the first-ever NFT collection and collaboration of its kind in the Middle East, signifying the future of NFTs, the metaverse, and beyond.

The groundbreaking virtual collection features concepts of sustainability and fashion with concept art created by Jong Sacil. Featuring the mask of a ‘puma’ - the artwork will signify the collaborative efforts to then develop fu-



ture characters for the Metaverse. The Celestial Collection is comprised of characters whose designs represent the celestial bodies in our universe, and are inspired by the elements; the sun, moon, planets, stars, constellations, and more. Symbolizing the graphic elements and featuring a Y2K aesthetic, character designs pull inspiration from mangas and anime. The sam-

urai sword expresses each characters’ identity with compelling artwork and unique designs.

Future projects within the collection will include 3D avatars, with masks acting as the symbolic trait that combines fashion with ‘Gen2’ Puma Punks. This phase will allow the collaboration to move into the Metaverse.

In purchasing from this NFT

collaboration, members will gain access to benefits including a digital access card, which allows entrance into the inner circle of fashion shows, future projects, and the ability to mint and purchase during pre-sale. All NFT collection holders will be given a Discord ‘Splash’ badge and will be able to rank up by being an active member to reach the OG rank of ‘Celestial’.

The Boredpuma X Splash collaboration of the future will also include 3D card collections, game development, a fully developed and semi-dystopian storyline, “The Celestials”, as well as immersive audio and visual experience which will feature original soundtracks and elements unique to the Celestial Collection. 3D environments, 3D character creation, and VR characters will all become part of this collection’s world - this is only the beginning.

COMPETITIVE FINANCE OFFER

Alizz Islamic Bank continues its exciting finance offer

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank continues its competitive finance offering that helps customers fulfil their aspirations. The bank’s offer provides the opportunity to purchase and build a perfect home as per their monthly income through simple and easy procedures. In addition, it extends attractive offers to purchase a vehicle or fund electronic products or furniture which is subject to flexible terms with respect to the funding period or repayment.

As per the offer customers can purchase or build a house, with home financing at a competitive profit rate starting from 4.85%.

In addition, special offers are being extended to those wanting to transfer their existing financing to Alizz Islamic Bank from other Islamic and commercial banks at a reduced financing rate starting from 4.75% per cent for customers who transfer their financing to Alizz Islamic Bank.

Likewise, the option of car and commodity financing has become flexible and accessible as the customer can choose the car model and complete his transactions in no time, with a financing ratio rate starting from 4.95 %.

Mohammed Juma Al Ghasani, AGM and Chief Consumer Banking Officer at Alizz Islamic Bank, said: “Your home and your car are waiting for you at Alizz Islamic Bank. In fact, these offers make it easier for customers, whether new or existing, to purchase or build a small house, a car or finance commodities through easy and flexible procedures. Such diversity of options meets various expectations and requirements of different customers. Our team is aware that customers’ interest must be given the highest priority, as serving our customers, satisfying their needs and giving them advice is of utmost importance to us.”

Lulu focuses on empowering Omani youth and promoting local talent

The group has remained steadfast in its policy of encouraging Omani employees to shoulder key responsibilities in the operations across its 31 facilities, including 28 stores and 3 logistic hubs and the regional headquarter operations

MUSCAT: As part of its efforts to encourage and nurture local talents in the retail sector, Lulu Group Oman had embarked on an ambitious drive and today boasts of a workforce of over 3,200 Omani employees from different educational qualifications for its operations in the Sultanate of Oman.

The group has remained steadfast in its policy of encouraging Omani employees to shoulder key responsibilities in the operations across its 31 facilities, including 28 stores and 3 logistic hubs and the regional headquarter operations.

Nasr bin Mubarak bin Salim Al Maawali, General Manager - HR at Lulu Group, stated, “Lulu Group has always been committed to the empowerment of national cadres in all its departments. We believe in the importance of career progression of the local workforce through specialised training under the supervision of expert trainers to enhance their skills, experiences, and practical knowledge. In the recent drive, we have recruited employees who are post-graduates, degree holders, high school freshers and others. The group



has also demonstrated its commitment towards Omanisation by hiring large batches of Omanis in various fields in all its branches in the Sultanate.”

Nasr also informed that, in the recent intake, Omanis were hired to senior positions such as general managers, managers, assistant managers, trainers, market-

ing executives, accountants, IT professionals, happiness centre in-charges and department heads across the spectrum of operations. He explained that a training centre with a state-of-the-art infrastructure has been set up to train Omani citizens regularly in their areas of work. As part of its HR development strategy, the company has also trained the incumbents for improved language skills in English as well as sharpened inter and intra interaction skills.

The group has focused on the importance of training Omani youth according to the employment plans adopted by the Ministry of Labour by raising their efficiency in dealing with customers and understanding the areas of work related to hypermarkets. As a matter of career progression, Lulu has also introduced a motivational scheme to employees by rewarding them through promotions and upgrades based on an individual’s efficiency and proficiency.

The training imparted through specific modules would make it easier for the recruits to interact with customers of different nationalities, meet their demands,

and provide them with a world-class shopping experience. The Group has also hired employees who have not completed their high schooling as food supply salesmen, cashiers and merchandisers, allowing them to come to the mainstream, be productive and contribute to the growth story of the country, he added. Nasr dwelt on the part-time job opportunities available for Omanis in the Governorate of Muscat. This he said, is an extension of the policy to encourage Omanis in different walks of life, whether job seekers, public or private sector workers, male or female students in higher education institutions, housewives and retirees to a stable and brighter future. This of course is subject to the conditions and controls outlined in Ministerial Resolution No. 115/2021 regarding the organisation of Part-Time Employment issued by the Ministry of Labour. Another important aspect of the Group’s commitment is the resolve to hand-hold people with special needs through collaboration with the Ministries of Labour and Social Development, to open up better opportunities for them.”

RECOGNITION

Bahwan Engineering bags GCC Best Employer Brand award

MUSCAT: Bahwan Engineering Company (BEC) has been awarded as the Best Employer Brand 2021 at the 08th Edition of the GCC Best Employer Brand Awards, which is part of the World Human Resources Development Congress. The GCC Best Employer Brand Awards 2021 recognises organisations that have used effective practices in attracting, developing and retaining talents.

The event also celebrated some of the finest leaders that believe in producing leaders, leaders of change, leaders who are iconic & Talent Management strategy alliance with the vision & the mission of the organisation. The award winners were judged based on research and recommendation of organisations by the World Federation of HR professionals.

The awards ceremony was attended by over 100 participants including high profile industry



leaders within GCC.

BEC Group, a leading conglomerate in Engineering, Products Sales, and Support Services, believes that their people are their most valuable assets, and they are committed to cultivating a culture that exhibits this value. BEC Group employees have the opportunity to work on a wide range of diversified projects, which give them a chance to learn and grow.

Every employee works together in a culture of open collaboration, where dedicated people pursue the common goal of creating greater success. The group strives to provide a healthy work-life balance for its employees and is proud to retain its employees for many years. It is not surprising that many of the BEC Group’s employees have been with the company for decades.

COMPACT AND POWERFUL

Make all roads fun with Kia Pegas

MUSCAT: Kia’s compact yet powerful and fuel-efficient Pegas is exciting to drive and fun to own too. The Pegas is equipped with an impressive range of features and technology along with comfort and space that makes it an ideal car for first-time buyers.

The Kia Pegas is powered by Kia’s efficient 1.4-litre MPI (multi-point injection) gasoline engine which produces maximum output of 94PS at 6,000rpm and maximum torque output of 13.5 @ 4,000 rpm. It offers impressive fuel efficiency of 17.8km/L.

For added convenience and safety the Pegas is also equipped with a rear parking system and steering audio control.

The Pegas offers buyers in this class a uniquely stylish design, with sculpted body panels and bold character lines complemented by a striking colour palette and a carefully-balanced sedan silhouette. The Pegas’ profile is enhanced with a chrome radiator grille, body colour bumper and door handles,



body colour outside mirrors, side repeater lamp in the outside mirror, halogen lamps, 14” steel wheel, front fog lamp and rear fog lamp. Viewed from the side, the profile of the Pegas gives it a finely-balanced silhouette. Its definitive character lines give the impression of motion, even while it sits stationary.

Inside, the cabin of the Pegas offers occupants maximum space and convenience. The centre fascia has been designed to enhance ease of use, with many of the car’s functions controlled with clear, ergonomic buttons. Adding appeal to the interior of the Pegas is power windows, front console centre armrest with storage box, driver’s seat adjuster, manual air conditioning, Radio and Bluetooth.

The Pegas is also immensely practical for storing luggage. The trunk has a capacity of 475 litres, enough to store up to three golf bags, or a couple of large suitcases. As the trunk lid opens, illumination within the trunk also reveals any smaller items that could be forgotten.

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

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TIME TO MEET AGAIN

ROUND-UP

Realise your firm’s potential with Bank Muscat Corporate Banking Solutions

As one of the enduring successes of the Sultanate’s Renaissance, the bank has been playing a key role in transforming the Omani banking sector with several innovative products and services over the past four decades



MUSCAT: In line with its customer-centric vision, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, continues to launch new innovative financial services and solutions that simplify corporate banking. As one of the enduring successes of the Sultanate’s Renaissance, the bank has been playing a key role in transforming the Omani banking sector with several innovative products and services over the past four decades. Bank Muscat enjoys the enduring trust of government institutions, corporates and SMEs who have been partners in the bank’s journey since the very beginning, and its constant development over the years. Today, Bank Muscat is the largest financial services provider for corporates in the Sultanate.

Bank Muscat is proud to have contributed significantly to the emergence and establishment of many institutions that are leading institutions in the private sector today.

The bank is contributing steadily to the implementation of their production plans in addition to contributing to the support of government institutions as a part of the vital role the bank is playing in supporting the Omani Renaissance. Bank Muscat is proud to collaborate with corporates across various sectors such as oil and gas, power, water, mining, transport and telecommunications, airports, free zone development and industry.

Today, Bank Muscat offers a wide range of corporate banking products and services including

term loans, working capital facilities, overdraft, asset finance, agency and custody services, import and export services, bonds and guarantees among others.

The bank maintains a leadership position enabled by its deep sectoral expertise, innovative structuring capabilities and sound due diligence techniques thus catering to the long-term financing requirements of various projects in the Sultanate.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi, Chief Banking Officer, said, “Bank Muscat has strengthened the Sultanate’s banking sector as an Omani institution, which provides a full suite of banking products, services and solutions. One of the great success stories of the Sultanate’s Renaissance, Bank Muscat has become a trusted corporate banking partner to government institutions and corporates, both big and small, over the past four decades. We are delighted to further build on this success and continue launching new world-class banking services and solutions that fulfil the complex requirements of our valued customers to realise the ambitious goals of Oman Vision 2040.”

Speaking about the digital transformation of the banking sector, Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi said: “During the past few years, the world has witnessed many challenges that helped accelerate digital transformation due to the growing need to provide unlimited access for all regardless of their circumstances.

“Digital solutions are playing an even bigger role in economic

growth and development with more and more corporates around the globe boosting their internal efficiencies through digitalisation. We are excited to see more and more of our corporate banking customers using digital solutions to enhance business efficiencies and scalability. Going ahead, Bank Muscat will continue to support the business sector by launching new and innovative digital solutions that further enhance the ease of banking.”

One-stop banking

As part of its efforts to enhance the convenience and add value to services offered to the government, large corporates and SMEs, the bank has four exclusive corporate banking branches located in the major business hubs of the Sultanate. Staffed by highly-experienced Omani nationals, these corporate branches are a one-stop-shop for all types of business banking requirements, ranging from a simple account opening to availing of credit facilities and more complex transactions such as trade financing and the issuing of Letters of Credit. The bank’s services are also available through its other branches across the Sultanate as well as Corporate Online Banking. Most importantly, all corporate customers have a dedicated Account Relationship Manager. This ensures the prompt and effective resolution of their banking needs and requirements.

New solution-oriented website

In 2021, the bank launched its new Corporate Banking website,

which features a modern design, simple and user-friendly content, easy navigation, and interactive application forms for existing and prospective customers to apply for availing banking products and services. The site provides direct links to a large range of services and solutions including Corporate Online Banking, Business Loans and Solutions, Trade Finance, Agency and Custody Services, Sectoral Insights and Customer Testimonials.

The bank’s corporate customers can easily access its eApplication for various trade solutions, in addition to various other application forms for various banking services, a checklist of documents required, and other guides and tutorials. The new website aims to provide an engaging experience and will help the bank’s existing and prospective customers to find all essential information effortlessly as well as place requests for the services that can best serve their corporate banking needs.

Digital banking platform

The bank’s cutting-edge Corporate Banking products, services and solutions are backed by a powerful digital banking platform that provides non-stop 24/7 access to corporate banking. The immense benefits of the currently ongoing digital shift include increased efficiency, cost reduction, accountability, speed and scalability. Available in both Arabic and English language options through <https://www.bankmuscatonline.com>, the corporate online banking platform facilitates real-time account details, transactions in local or

foreign currencies as well as bulk payments. It must be noted that the online banking platform features the latest technologies with excellent security features.

Bank Muscat also has a large suite of solutions and services including the state-of-the-art Business-to-Business (B2B) Connect platform, which addresses the transactional requirements of large Government, institutional and corporate entities. The B2B Connect platform enables institutions and large corporates to build an efficient and robust payment and reconciliation system that is integrated with their ERP. Other digital solutions such as Remote Deposit Capture (RDC) online cheque clearing solution and the Direct Debit solution. The bank’s online Corporate Banking platform and the B2B Connect solution also facilitate salary payments for employees through a secure payment channel under the Wages Protection System (WPS) as mandated by the Central Bank of Oman and the Ministry of Manpower.

Bank Muscat recently launched its next-generation Transaction-banking platform, which offers a comprehensive suite of advanced digital solutions that includes payment, account services, collections and receivables, liquidity, single view accounts and trade solutions for the corporates, SMEs and government institutions.

The platform will greatly help customers to streamline their operational processes, reduce business complexities and minimise costs. The bank also offers a full suite of Global Trade Services to its Corporate Banking customers to

facilitate trade and the economic growth and development of Oman. These include international trade finance and lending solutions to the bank’s institutional clients in both developed and emerging markets, making it a leading market player in the region.

Customer-centric vision

In 2019, the bank launched its Global Relationship Management Programme as part of its customer-centric vision. This has created synergies across different departments of the bank to provide customised solutions to corporate clients. This enables the bank’s corporate business partners to have a single point of contact at the bank through their dedicated Global Relationship Managers, greatly improving their banking experience.

Better service, every day

Over the years, Bank Muscat has been working steadily to further improve its portfolio of services and solutions in line with its vision of serving its customers better, every day. The bank’s new services and solutions are based on customer feedback and needs as well as global trends. By capturing the Voice of the Customer, the bank connects and engages with its customers at every touchpoint in the customer journey. Bank Muscat is continuously trying to improve customer experience as part of its customer-centric vision and will keep on introducing new products, services and features that further enhance the customer experience and boost their confidence and trust in the bank.

KELLEY BLUE BOOK BEST BUY AWARD

Hyundai Santa Fe affirms its title as ‘Family SUV of choice’

MUSCAT: Hyundai Santa Fe has made a brilliant start to the New Year, gaining wide recognition by top tier global automotive awards, winning top titles in Kelley Blue Book Best Buy Award, Large SUV of the Year at 2022 What Car? The award, and US News 2022 Best Car for the Money, affirm Santa Fe as an innovative choice among large SUVs in combining family convenience with an adventurous unrivalled presence on the road.

Being appraised as the best car for the money, the Santa Fe has been successful in combining the quality and value measures as a modern-day SUV. The new Santa Fe, coming to 2022 with a refreshed design from the exterior and interior, has also gained an array of novelty features and an enhanced dynamic driving experience pro-



viding the balance of optimal performance and comfort, giving the driver the choice of driving modes that suit every road or driving situation, ensuring an unparalleled ride experience for both the driver of the

different family members.

“This wide recognition of Hyundai’s Santa Fe in the eyes of automotive experts and enthusiasts is a strong indication of the added value that Santa Fe is bringing to

the market,” said Hyoungjung Im, the Vice President of Hyundai Motor Company. “The Santa Fe has proven for many years now to be Hyundai’s potent class-leading contender in the large SUV seg-

ment across the world’.

Im added, “Such accolades motivate us to continue our dedication towards our valued customers and to meeting and exceeding their expectations.”

The Fourth-generation Santa Fe came with a bold new design, and of the bouquet of “SmartSense” safety features, boasts a strong stance. With an Overall Length of (mm) 4,785 mm, and a Width of (mm) 1,900 mm, the 2022 Santa Fe provides a wide choice of family-oriented features, starting from flexible seat variations. 2nd and 3rd Row Seats & Space, One-Touch Walk-in & Folding, and Smart Power Tailgate.

Santa Fe is among the safest in its class, receiving the maximum Five-Star safety rating from the Euro NCAP safety assessment

program, it’s also equipped with the latest technologies such as an in-house developed and industry-first Rear Occupant Alert system, which uses an ultrasonic sensor to detect the movement of children or pets on the rear seat and alert the driver when leaving the car. In addition to Remote Smart Parking Assist (RSPA) which enables the driver to control the forward/backward functions remotely from outside. Surround View Monitor (SVM) that involves 4 HD cameras mounted on the front, sides, and rear of the vehicle show the surroundings in real-time.

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ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE OF MIRBAT CASTLE



Mirbat Castle is a popular tourist attraction for people who visit Oman. Mirbat is located less than an hour's drive from Salalah, it is a tourist attraction famous for its fascinating archaeological sites such as Mirbat Castle.

The castle is distinguishable by its Omani style of architecture. While Mirbat Castle and its ancient complex is distinguishable by Islamic architecture, the tourists can also find here the tombs and graves of scholars.

"East of Salalah, the coastal town of Mirbat was once the capital of Dhofar, trading in frankincense and Arabian horses," according to the Ministry of Tourism.

"One of the fort's facilities was allocated to be an office for the management and staff of the fort who oversee it and organise visits.

"They also brief the visitors on the fort's history and its facilities, as well as the distribution of publications about the tourist attractions in the Wilayat of Mirbat in particular and the Governorate of Dhofar in general.

It receives many visitors, including school students and tourists from most countries of the world.

It hosts many heritage events, such as poetry readings and folklore festivals, in addition to national holidays, celebrations and other occasions.

