LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN

HM SENDS CONDOLENCES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to King Abdullah II of Jordan on the victims of a gas explosion incident in Port of Aqaba. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sympathies to King Abdullah II, families of the victims and the people of Jordan, praying to Allah the Almighty to rest the deceased souls in peace in paradise and grant their families patience and fortitude to bear the loss, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. - ONA

HM ISSUES FOUR ROYAL DECREES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday issued 4 Royal decrees reading as follows: Royal Decree No. (51/2022) amending some provisions of the Notary Public Law. After presenting the same before the Council of Oman Article (1) states that the amendments attached to the aforementioned Notary Public Law shall be applied.
Article (2) cancels all that contradicts the attached amendments or contravenes their provisions. >A5

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SULTANATE, EGYPT TO CREATE JOINT FUND FOR INVESTMENT IN FEASIBLE PROJECTS

His Majesty, Egyptian President reaffirmed their keenness to boost economic cooperation

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of Egypt reaffirmed their keenness in augmenting the volume of economic cooperation between the two countries.

The two leaders also instructed studying the establishment of a joint investment fund between the two countries to invest in feasible projects in diverse vital sectors.

This was stated yesterday in a joint statement on the occasion of the visit of the Egyptian President to the Sultanate of Oman. The text of the joint statement reads as follows: "Stemming from the ancient fraternal relations and firm cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt, and in response to the gracious invitation from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of Egypt paid an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman along with a high-level delegation for a period of two days, on Monday and Tuesday 27-28 Dhu al-Qi'dah 1443 AH, corresponding to 27-28 June 2022.

His Majesty the Sultan and the Egyptian President held official talks in the spirit of kinship and harmony. The two leaders reiterated their mutual firm desire to strengthen bilateral cooperation relations towards broader horizons in all spheres and levels in a manner that serves the mutual benefit of the two countries and their brotherly peoples.

The two leaders lauded the continuous cooperation and coordination maintained in political, diplomatic, economic and cultural fields. >A4

Oman, Egypt sign MoUs, agreements

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt signed six Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), two agreements, three executive programmes and letters of cooperation in various fields at Al Alam Palace on Tuesday.

The pacts come within the context of the official visit of President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate of Oman.

The pacts came as follows:

- MoU between the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and the Egyptian Competition Authority on cooperation in promoting competition and combating monopolistic practices.
- MoU between the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones in Egypt in the field of investment promotion.
- MoU between the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and the Egyptian Export Promotion Centre on exports development.
- MoU between the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates and the Egyptian Industrial Development Authority in the field of establishing and managing industrial estates. >A5

PROMOTING BUSINESS

Egyptian President offers opportunities to Omani businessmen for investments

MUSCAT: President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt met at Al Alam Palace guest house in Muscat on Tuesday Omani businessmen and businesswomen.

The meeting aims at promoting business and investment relations between the two countries. The meeting comes within the framework of the official, current visit paid by the Egyptian President to the Sultanate of Oman.

The Egyptian President affirmed his country's preparedness to offer all incentives to Omani investors wishing to invest in various economic fields. He also underlined the crucial role carried out by the private sector in the two countries.

Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion gave a speech saying that the visit represents a sincere desire to build up a growing partnership in strategic economic sectors and enhance efforts of investment and commercial exchange in a manner that reflects the comparative and competitive advantages enjoyed by the two countries.

Investment partnerships

On her turn, Dr. Hala El-Said, Minister of Planning and Economic Development underscored in her speech the importance of cooperation and entering into investment partnerships to achieve joint interests for the good of the two countries.

The meeting saw a presentation by the Egyptian side highlighting investment opportunities in the Arab Republic of Egypt, its legal procedures governing these opportunities in various economic fields. -ONA

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
HM hosts luncheon

1 His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik hosted a private luncheon at Al Alam Palace guesthouse on Tuesday. >A5

WORLD
US train derails, 3 dead

2 Dozens of people in the US were rushed to hospital after a train collided with a dump truck in the Missouri state. >A6

MARKET
Al Mouj Muscat's growth

3 Al Mouj Muscat has delivered on its promise to contribute to the economic prosperity of the Sultanate. >B1

OMAN

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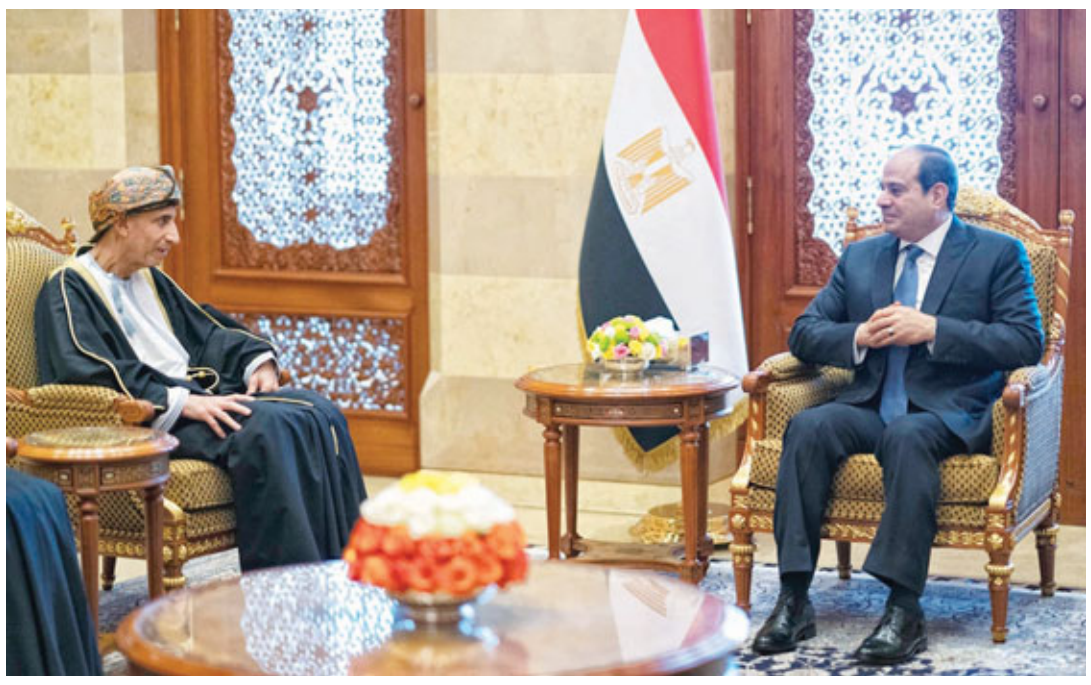
PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:15pm
Asr	3:33pm
Maghrib	7:03pm
Isha	8:25pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	3:56am

HISTORICAL TIES

Egyptian President, Sayyid Fahd explore areas of cooperation



MUSCAT: President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt received His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers at his residence at Al Alam Palace guesthouse on Tuesday.

The meeting explored areas of cooperation between the two countries and means of promoting them in various areas.

It also reviewed the distinguished relations and historical ties binding the two countries and peoples. In addition, it discussed a set of regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended from the Omani side by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance (Head of the Mission of Honour), Dr. Said bin Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Abdullah bin Nassir Al Rahbi, Ambassador of Oman to Egypt and its Permanent Delegate to the Arab League.

It was attended from the Egyptian side by Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hala El-Said, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Major General Abbas Kamel, Chief of the Intelligence Service, Khalid Radi, Ambassador of Egypt to Oman and Ambassador Bassam Radi, Spokesman of the Presidency. -ONA

WRITTEN MESSAGE

HM receives message to attend COP 27 in Egypt

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, inviting His Majesty to attend the 27th session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 27) scheduled to be held in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022.

The message was received by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister during his meeting with Sameh Shoukry, Egyptian Foreign Minister. -ONA

MEETING

Oman, Egypt to boost ties in science, tourism fields

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister and Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt held a meeting at Al Alam Palace on Tuesday.

The meeting comes within the framework of the official visit paid by President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of Egypt to the Sultanate.

The two sides reaffirmed the advanced relations between Oman and Egypt and underscored the importance of enhancing them in economic, investment, tourism and science fields.

They also exchanged views on various regional and international matters of common interest. They stressed the importance of resolving conflicts through peaceful means and dialogue.

The meeting was attended by Abdullah Nasser Al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt, Khalid Radi, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate of Oman and Khalid Hashel Al Muselhi, Head of the Minister's Office Department. -ONA

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Egyptian President leaves Oman after two-day visit

The visit explored various areas that serve the joint interests of the two countries and meet aspirations of their peoples

MUSCAT: President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt left here on Tuesday afternoon after an official two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The Egyptian President was seen off at the Royal Airport by His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'mani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance (Head of the Mission of Honour), Abdullah bin Nassir Al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt and its Permanent Delegate to the Arab League, Khalid Radi, Ambassador of Egypt to Oman and members of the Mission of Honour, as well as members of the Egyptian Embassy in Muscat.

President Abdul Fattah el Sisi was accompanied during his visit by an official delegation comprised Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister, Major General Staff Ahmed Mohammed Ali, Chief of the President's Office, Dr. Hala El-Said, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Major General Abbas Kamel, Chief of the Intelligence Service, Major General Mohsen Abdel Nabi, Director of the President's Office, Major General Staff Mustafa Shawkat, Commander of the Republican Guard Forces and Khalid Radi, Ambassador of Egypt to Oman. The visit explored various areas that serve the joint interests and meet aspirations of their peoples. It also discussed a range of topics of concern to the two sides in light of the regional and international developments. -ONA

DELEGATED BY HM

EA Chairman takes part in 2022 UN Ocean Conference

MUSCAT: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al Amri, Chairman of Environment Authority (EA) is taking part in the 2022 UN Ocean Conference being held in Lisbon in Portugal.

The conference is organised by the United Nations (UN) and will continue until 1 July 2022.

It discusses the implementation of the 14th goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (life under water), which is part of the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan and within a set of 17 transformational goals that stress the need to preserve the world's oceans, seas and marine resources and their sustainable use.

The 14th goal focuses on issues, such as oceans, reducing marine pollution, protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, minimising acid, eliminating illegal and overfishing, increasing investment in scientific knowledge and marine technology, and respecting the international law that calls for the safe and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources.

The conference also discusses strengthening efforts to create and manage solutions to achieve the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030, and promote sustainable solutions for green technology and innovative uses of marine resources.

The solutions also include addressing threats to the health of the ocean environment, economy and governance. -ONA

MEETING

NDC Commandant receives French military officer

MUSCAT: Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakron, Commandant of the National Defence College (NDC) received at the NDC in Bait Al Falaj Garrison on Tuesday Rear Admiral Jacques Fayard, Joint Commander of the French Forces in the Indian Ocean.

The two sides discussed several matters of common interest that serve academic and training spheres.

The meeting was attended by Brigadier Nasser Rashid Al Kalbani, Deputy Commandant of the National Defence College, Brigadier Abdullah Hamad Al Harthy, Director General of Studies and Academic Affairs at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, some senior officers and the Military Attaché at the French embassy in Muscat. -ONA

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

83,787 REACH

A story on changes in visa rules for travellers to Europe

A story on changes in visa rules for travellers to Europe reached 83,787 people and had 8,234 link clicks on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

444 VIEWS

Morning Minute video on SME registrations in Oman

The Morning Minute video on over 78,000 SMEs registered in Oman had 444 views and 22 likes on Instagram.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

1,400 VIEWS

Midday Minute news wrap video

The Midday Minute news wrap video had 1,400 views and reached 3,700 people on Facebook.

His Majesty the Sultan, Egyptian President hold bilateral meeting

The two leaders reviewed the historical relations binding the two countries

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt held a bilateral meeting at the Al Alam Palace on Tuesday morning.

The two leaders reviewed the historical relations binding the two countries and means of promoting them towards broader horizons in a manner that serves joint interests and realises aspirations of the two countries' peoples.

The meeting was attended from the Omani side by Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'mani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance (Head of the Mission of Honour), Sayyid Dr. Sultan bin Yarub Al Busaidi, Advisor at the Private Office and Abdullah bin Nassir Al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt and its Permanent Delegate to the Arab League.

Meanwhile, it was attended from the Egyptian side by Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hala El-Said, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Major General Abbas Kamel, Chief of the Intelligence Service, Khalid Radi, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate of Oman and Ambassador Bassam Radi, Spokesman of the Presidency. -ONA

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

< FROM A1

Oman, Egypt affirm support to promote security, stability

They also affirmed their support for everything that serves the pillars of security, stability and peace in the region and the world at large and boosts the welfare and growth of the two countries' peoples.

The two leaders also expressed their keenness in upgrading economic cooperation between the two countries and developing all aspects of bilateral relations. In this regard, the two leaders underlined the role played by the joint committee and the Omani-Egyptian Business Council in developing areas of bilateral cooperation.

His Majesty the Sultan and the Egyptian President instructed all departments concerned to explore investment opportunities between the two countries in various fields, particularly energy, renewable energy, industry, health, pharmaceuticals, real estate development, tourism, petrochemicals, converting industries and information technology for the mutual benefit of both sides.

The move comes in light of the lucrative opportunities enjoyed by the two countries in a bid to develop economic relations, boost investments and strike partnerships, as well as augmenting the trade volume and the constructive role of the private sector to achieve integration between the two countries.

To this end, the two leaders instructed the consideration of establishing a joint investment fund between the two countries to invest in feasible projects in diverse vital sectors.

The two leaders also exchanged views on various issues of mutual interest at the regional and international arenas. They also underscored the importance of dialogue, resolving disputes through peaceful means and coordinating the stances of the two countries in a manner that serves their interests and contributes to bolstering regional and international cooperation based on the international law, principles of justice, fairness, respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik congratulated the Arab Republic of Egypt on the occasion of Egypt winning to host the 27th edition of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP-27), which will be held in November 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh.

President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt expressed his appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the Omani government and people for their warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to him and his accompanying delegation.

The Egyptian President wished the Sultanate of Oman further progress and prosperity. He also extended an invitation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to visit the Arab Republic of Egypt. The invitation was welcomed by His Majesty.

A number of agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed during the visit of President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate of Oman in various fields, namely in protecting and promoting investments, exports development, environment protection and establishing and managing industrial estates, as well as cooperation in the fields of youth and sports, labour and training, and higher education.

This statement was issued in Muscat on 28 Dhul Qi'dah 1443 AH corresponding to 28 June 2022." -ONA

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AT AL ALAM PALACE

His Majesty hosts private luncheon in honour of Egyptian President

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik hosted a private luncheon at Al Alam Palace guesthouse on Tuesday in honour of President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the occasion of his visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The luncheon was attended by some ministers and several members of the official delegation accompanying the Egyptian President.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan bade the Egyptian President farewell, wishing him a safe return to his country.

His Majesty also wished the Arab Republic of Egypt further progress and prosperity.

On his turn, President el Sisi expressed his utmost thanks for the warm welcome that was accorded to him and his delegation during the visit, wishing His Majesty the Sultan continuous good health, happiness and a long life.

The Egyptian President also wished the Omani people further progress and growth under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan. – ONA

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[Factory Al Misfah West, Bausher, Tel. # 00968 24437070 ext. 102, Fax # 00968 24437777]

TENDERS

Sl. #	Tender ID	Description	Deadline for Purchasing of Tenders	Tender Fee	Deadline for Submission of Offers
1.	83162/22	Dismantling of Install of Existing Shed (Re-Tender)	14th July 2022 1700 Hours	RO. 52.5/-	19th July, 2022 2359 Hours

Tender documents can be obtained by paying the below amount online to Company's account detailed below:
Account name: Oman Cement Company SAOG
Bank Name: Bank Muscat SAOG
Account number: 0423 01086 3070 017
Account Type: OMR
SWIFT Code: BMUSOMRX

Copy of deposit transaction of a non-refundable amount of writing on the above as tender fees to be emailed to CFOSecretary@omancement.com & Treasury@omancement.com with the Subject showing "Tender No." and "Tender Description" enabling the Company to provide tender document through email to your company. The above payment is a non-refundable amount.
Contact details: Office number: +968 244 37803,Mobile number: +968 97932277

The last date for purchasing of Tender Documents shall be on the 14th July, 2022.

The last date for submission of offers is on Tuesday, 19th July, 2022 by 2359 PM, accompanied by a bid bond issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 1%) of the total tender value or deposit slip. The bid bond must be valid for 120 days from the last date of submission of offers.

Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by a tender bond will NOT be considered. This publication is part of the tender documents

TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

< FROM A1

HM issues Royal decrees

Article (3) says that the decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. (52/2022) amending some provisions of the Records and Archives Law.

After presenting the same before the Council of Oman

Article (1) states that the amendments attached to the aforementioned Records and Archives Law shall be applied.

Article (2) cancels all that contradicts the attached amendments or contravenes their provisions.

Article (3) says that the decree shall be published on the Official Gazette and enforced the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. (53/2022) on the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates.

Article (1) states that the affiliation of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates shall be transferred to the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones.

Article (2) stipulates that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shall undertake the specialisations of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates pertaining to outlining the general policy, regulation, control, supervision, and unifying services and incentives offered to investors.

Article (3) says that the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates shall undertake the specialisations linked to the operation of industrial estates.

Article (4) replaces the phrase "Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion" wherever it might occur in laws and Royal decrees pertaining to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates with the phrase "Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones".

Article (5) the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shall issue the decisions necessary to implement provisions of this decree.

Article (6) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (7) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (54/2022) establishing National Natural Park Reserve in Governorate of Musandam.

Article (1) states that a sanctuary under the name "National Natural Park Reserve in Governorate of Musandam" shall be established and that it shall be accorded the zone whose demarcations are indicated in the annex and diagram attached to this decree.

Article (2) stipulates that the Chairman of the Environment Authority, after approval of the Governor of Musandam, shall issue the regulations and decisions necessary for the implementation of this decree. The regulations and decisions shall include the method of management for this national reserve, formalities for entry to the sanctuary, the prescribed fees, the duration of stay therein, the activities allowed to be practiced or prohibited there and the appropriate administrative penalties against each case of violation.

Article (3) says that the decree shall be published on the Official Gazette and enforced the day following its date of publishing. – ONA

Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby re -announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)
30/2022	Construction of villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-7-2022 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
31/2022	Construction of villa at As seeb	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-7-2022 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
32/2022	Construction of villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-7-2022 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
33/2022	Construction of villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-7-2022 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
34/2022	Construction of villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 18-7-2022 02:00 PM	Sunday 7-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at theTender Board e-tendering digital portal link (https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om) , On Wednesday 29/6/2022
- Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifcations and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200)

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry "

www.mosd.gov.om

BILATERAL TIES

< FROM A1

MoUs and agreements signed

- MoU between Oman's Environment Authority and the Egyptian Ministry of Environment in the field of environment protection.
- Initial MoU on mutual recognition of the marine qualification certificates for navigators and shift works issued by the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- Initial cooperation agreement in the field of maritime transport and ports.
- Cooperation agreement between Sultan Qaboos University and the Egyptian National Research InstituteofAstronomy and Geophysics.
- Executive programme for cooperation in the field of youth and sports between the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Egyptian Ministry of Youth and Sports for the years (2023-2025).
- Executive programme for technical cooperation in the fields of labour and training for 2022.
- Executive programme for cooperation in the field of higher education, research and innovation for the years (2022 - 2023 - 2024).

The pacts were signed on behalf of Oman's government by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, whilst they were signed on behalf of the Egyptian government by Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister affirmed to Oman News Agency (ONA) that these pacts would boost cooperation between Oman and Egypt, pointing out that they also represent an addition for the distinguished relations between the two countries.

Sayyid Badr said these pacts complement a set of previous pacts signed between Oman and Egypt, adding that there will be more cooperation between the two sides, particularly in the ecoomic areas. He said that the two countries look forward to augment the volume of trade and investment exchange through the Omani-Egyptian Joint Action Committee and other departments concerned. This drive, he Sayyid Badr, reflects the approach of the two leaderships to enhance all that serve interests of their countries and peoples. – ONA

OMAN/WORLD

CHLORINE GAS LEAK

10 killed by toxic gas leak at Aqaba port in Jordan

AMMAN: At least 10 people were killed on Monday when a chlorine gas storage tank was dropped and leaked poisonous fumes at the Aqaba port in Jordan.

Officials said that the 25 tonnes of chlorine were intended to be transported to Djibouti.

Footage shown on state television showed the tank falling from a crane and hitting the deck of a ship below which resulted in a large cloud of yellow gas rising into the air. People were seen running away from the scene.

"Specialists and the hazardous substances team in the civil defense are dealing" with the incident, civil defence spokesman Amer al-Sartawy said. He added that more than 250 people had been injured.

Residents told to stay home

Civil defence personnel rushed to the scene, some in hazmat suits, while the injured were taken to nearby hospitals.

"The injured people are in medium to critical condition," Aqaba health director Jamal Obeidat said, adding that the hospitals in the area were full.

He also told locals to "stay in their homes and shut all windows as a precaution."

Prime Minister Bishr al-Kasawneh and Interior Minister Mazen al-Faraya also made their way to the scene of the incident, according to state media.

Al-Kasawneh launched an investigation, to be headed by the interior minister, into the leak.

An official from the Aqaba Ports Authority said that the gas leak had occurred after an iron rope holding the container broke.

The Aqaba port is situated on the Red Sea, close to Jordan's border with Israel, and is the country's only marine terminal. DW

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Royal Decree for National Park Reserve in Musandam issued

According to the EA surveys, the waters around the islands of Musandam have various types of coral reefs, fungi and sea herbs that attract fish, green turtles and other sea creatures

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has issued a Royal Decree establishing the National Park Reserve in Governorate of Musandam.

The decree recognises the richness of Musandam Governorate in terms of geographic and natural diversity and the tourism potentials of the region.

In a statement, the Environment Authority (EA) has valued the decree and reaffirmed that it would put in place the Royal Decree in coordination with the ministries and departments concerned to ensure optimal management of the reserve and that it would issue the rules and regulations necessary for its management, in accordance with the decree.

The total area of the reserve is 1149.40 square kilometres, according to the surveys conducted by the Environment Authority in cooperation with the Office of the Governor of Musandam.

The islands in Musandam Governorate are the key locations not affected with human intervention and are of high national and regional significance and a habitat for birds. The islands represent a natural museum and are formed of limestone and coral reef.

According to the EA surveys, the waters around the islands host various types of coral reefs, fungi and sea herbs that attract fish, green turtles and other sea creatures.

The surveys also affirmed the presence of rich wildlife including wild rabbit, hedgehog, lynx, mountain fox, red fox, wild cat and reptiles among others, while the survey on wild plants reaffirmed the presence of over 200 species of plants including rare and endangered plants. The sea islands in Musandam Governorate also enjoy a rich vegetation cover.

It is worth mentioning that the islands, separated from the main lands, have a large number of sea birds.

Birds have transformed the islands into a fascinating scene, mainly on Umm A'Tair Island. Sea snakes and green turtles are also seen on the sandy beaches.

Sea mammals, dolphins and whales, red fox, wild cats and reptiles are also common on the Islands of Musandam Governorate. This environment, rich in fauna and flora, would play a vital role in encouragement and development of ecotourism.

— ONA

TRAIN DERAILS

Passengers killed after train derails in US

MISSOURI: Dozens of people in the US have been rushed to hospital after a train travelling from Los Angeles to Chicago collided with a dump truck in the state of Missouri on Monday.

At least three people were killed in the accident, police said. Two of them were on board the train, while the third was the truck driver himself.

Broadcaster CNN reports that "at least" 50 more people were injured.

"The investigation is in its preliminary stages and as more information becomes available, we will be releasing it at that time," Justin Dunn, a spokesperson for the Missouri State Highway Patrol, said at a press conference.

What happened?

Railway operator Amtrak said some 243 passengers and 12 staff were on board the Southwest Chief when it crashed into a dump truck that was blocking a railroad crossing near Mendon, Missouri.

The intersection was reportedly on a gravel road with no lights or electronic controls.

Eight carriages and two locomotives derailed as a result of the accident. Mendon, with a population of about 160, is about 100 miles (161 kilometers) northeast of Kansas City. At least six helicopters arrived at the scene to airlift passengers to hospital.

Who was on board?

Among those on the train were 16 youths and eight adults from two Boy Scout groups who were travelling home to Wisconsin after a backcountry excursion. None of the boys were seriously injured.

Scott Armstrong, director of national media relations for the Boy Scouts of America, said the Scouts administered first aid on the scene, including to several injured passengers and the driver of the dump truck.

Also on board the train was a group of high school students from Kansas, who were headed to a Future Business Leaders of America conference in Chicago.

The Missouri collision is the second deadly train accident the US has seen in recent days. In California, three people died after a train collided with a car at a railroad crossing on Sunday. DW

IN US STATE OF TEXAS

46 migrants found dead inside a truck

TEXAS: At least 46 migrants were found dead in the back of a truck in the southern US state of Texas on Monday, officials confirmed.

The sweltering semi-trailer was discovered on the outskirts of San Antonio, around 160 miles (250 kilometres) from the US southern border with Mexico.

"We're not supposed to open up a truck and see stacks of bodies in there," the city's fire chief Charles Hood said.

Meanwhile, San Antonio police chief William McManus said it was the largest incident of its kind in the city.

What we know so far

A worker in a nearby building was alerted to the situation after hearing a cry for help on Monday afternoon, McManus said.

Inside the truck, police officers found 46 dead adults, making it one of the deadliest incidents at the US-Mexico border.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Tuesday that at least 22 Mexicans were among the dead. Obrador put the total number of dead at 50, without specifying where the higher number came from.

Four minors found alive

Another 12 adults and four minors were found alive inside the truck. They were rushed to the hospital with heat-related illnesses. Among the survivors were two Guatemalans, Mexican officials said.

Three people have been taken into custody, according to McManus, but their connection to the deaths remained unclear.

Fire chief Hood said the individuals were hot to the touch and suffering from heat stroke. No water or air conditioning was found inside the truck.

Temperatures in San Antonio reached a high of 39.4 degrees Celsius (103 degrees Fahrenheit) on Monday when the truck was found. The temperature inside a trailer filled with people is typically even higher than the outside temperature.

— DW

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Sri Lanka permits companies to import fuel as crisis worsens

With no fuel shipment in sight any time soon, the country will come to a complete standstill from this week

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan Cabinet on Tuesday granted to open fuel imports and retail sales market to companies from oil-exporting nations after the country ran out of fuel as only 1,100 tonnes of petrol and 7,500 tonnes of diesel are left, which are not sufficient to last for a day.

Power and Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera said that the companies will be selected upon their ability to import fuel and operate without Forex requirements from the CBSL and banks for the first few months of operations, reported Daily Mirror Online.

He said the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC/ CEYPETCO) will be the service provider for logistics, stocking and distribution with a service fee levied from those companies.

"Selected outlets of the existing 1,190 CEYPETCO and new outlets will be made available for LIOC and new companies which would be selected. Refinery will remain under CPC's purview," said Wijesekera.

With no fuel shipment in sight any time soon, the country will come to a complete standstill from this week, as even public transportation will come to a grinding halt.

Not only this, but lengthened power cuts will also come into effect soon as the required stocks of fuel will not be supplied to the power plants.

This comes after Wijesekera on Saturday said that suppliers have informed state-owned fuel importer and distributor Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) that they will not make the deliveries of petrol, diesel and crude oil, scheduled for this week and next week due to banking and logistic reasons.

He added that public transportation, power generation and industries would be given priority until the next shipments arrive. Therefore, limited stocks of diesel and petrol will be distributed to a few gas stations throughout next week.

Further, on Sunday the minister announced that the fuel stations across the country will issue tokens for consumers from today, as only limited stocks of fuel were available.

He said that the government has sought assistance from Sri Lankan army and police to issue token numbers to the public to fill petrol and diesel. The public was requested to register their mobile numbers at their nearest filling stations and once their numbers were issued, they would be notified, Wijesekera added.

The minister who had been assuring the public of the arrival of a fuel vessel last week also admitted that the date of the arrival of the next fuel shipments in the county was unsure and apologized for the delay. ANI

CO2 NEUTRAL

Germany signals support for 2035 phaseout of fossil fuel cars, with conditions

BERLIN: Germany will only back the package if an option is added that permits sales of cars running on "CO2 neutral" fuels, German Environment Minister Steffi Lemke said on Tuesday.

"This addition is important to Germany in terms of our position, we believe it can also be a bridge for the overall discussion," Lemke said at a meeting of EU environment ministers on Tuesday.

If approved, the bill will ban sales of all fuel emitting cars from 2035 onward. But Germany wants an added clause that makes an exception for carbon-neutral vehicles.

Environment ministers from the 27 EU member countries are meeting on Tuesday to form an agreement on laws to fight climate change.

A car emissions proposal tops the agenda. However, EU countries are divided over how ambitious the ban should be.

Where do other EU countries stand on the proposal?

Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania have requested that the EU delay the phaseout.

The five EU countries have instead called for a 90% cut in CO2 cars by 2035, and a 100% target by 2040.Poland also supports a lighter ban.

"2035 for Poland is not possible to accept, but I know that there are many countries which will raise this issue today," said Polish Climate Minister Anna Moskwa.

An unnamed Bulgarian official also said climate policies needed to consider economic and social factors such as the "the significant differences" in purchasing power between EU countries.

Brussels has warned that delaying the ban could prevent the EU from reaching its net-zero target by 2050 — a goal that scientists say could help curtail the effects of climate change.

"The decision on cars will show how serious European governments are about their climate promises," said Julia Poliscanova from the campaign group Transport and Environment. DW

G7 SUMMIT

G7 expresses concern over humanitarian situation in Afghanistan

SCHLOSS ELMAU: The Group of Seven (G7) countries on Tuesday expressed deep concern about the political situation and the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation in Afghanistan since the Taliban take-over.

"We express our deep concern about the political situation and the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation in Afghanistan since the Taliban take-over. We reassure the people of Afghanistan of our principled support and continued humanitarian assistance and assistance to cover basic human needs, based on the respect for humanitarian principles and fundamental human rights, including women's rights," the G7 said in a statement. In the statement, they also reassured swift relief to the people of Afghanistan in wake of the devastating earthquake in the country.

"We are united in our strong condemnation of the ongoing violence with recurring terrorist attacks particularly targeting members of ethnic and religious minority groups," it added.

The leaders of economically strong countries also called upon the Taliban to respect human rights, especially the rights of women and girls and members of minority groups, including the right to education for all without discrimination.

"We urge the Taliban to take significant steps in support of creating inclusive and representative governance of Afghanistan, and to ensure safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, combat terrorism in line with their relevant commitments including the Doha agreement, and allow safe passage for all Afghans in need of protection travelling abroad," they said.

At least 155 children have died after a tragic earthquake hit southeast Afghanistan last week. ANI

SPORTS

Djokovic forced to four sets in opener, Norrie makes winning start

The win extends Djokovic's unbeaten run at Wimbledon to 22 matches

CENTRE COURT: The Serbian becomes the first player, man or woman, to record 80 singles victories across each of all four Grand Slam tournaments.

LONDON: In the first match of the Wimbledon on Centre Court, defending champion Novak Djokovic recorded his 80th Wimbledon match victory with a win over South Korea's Soonwoon Kwon on Monday.

The Serbian becomes the first player, man or woman, to record 80 singles victories across each of all four Grand Slam tournaments. The world no. 3 maintained a solid level in his 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory against the World No. 81.

Yet Kwon's aggressive tactics meant Djokovic was never completely comfortable in his first tour-level match since his Roland Garros quarter-final on May 31.

The win extends Djokovic's unbeaten run at Wimbledon to 22 matches. The Serbian is hunting a fourth consecutive crown at the third major of the year in London, and his second tour-level title of 2022 after he triumphed at the Italian Open in May.

The South Korean was a break up in each of the first two sets and pumped up the Centre Court crowd after he levelled proceedings at a set apiece, but Djokovic's trademark consistency proved enough to complete a two-hour, 27-minute victory.

The top seed will face Thanasi Kokkinakis or Kamil Majchrzak in the second round at SW19, where he now holds an 80-10 record. The World No. 3 is chasing his seventh title at Wimbledon, a tally that would draw him level with legendary American Pete Sampras and move him within one of record-holder Roger Federer's eight crowns.

Elsewhere, Cameron Norrie, the British No.9 seed, made a flying start in his 6-0, 7-6(3), 6-3 victory over Pablo Andujar on No.2 Court.

The 26-year-old left-hander romped through the first set for the loss of just 11 points, in 23 one-sided minutes.

The veteran Spaniard, who is 10 years Norrie's senior, forced a tie-break in the second set but was always chasing the match in the third.

Tantalisingly, the play was suspended with the score at deuce in what proved to be the final game. Norrie, who achieved his best result at Wimbledon last year when he reached the third round, will face another Spaniard, Jaume Munar, in the second round. ANI

WIMBLEDON

Ons Jabeur downs Mirjam; Emma Raducanu sails into round two

LONDON: The no. 3 seed Ons Jabeur dropped just four games against qualifier Mirjam Bjorklund in the first round of Wimbledon on Monday.

For the second major in a row, the Tunisian comes in fresh off a title and in hot form, having won in Berlin two weeks ago and ascended to World No.2 this week. Indeed, against Bjorklund, Jabeur barely put a foot wrong, striking 11 winners to the Swede's three. Jabeur was especially dominant on serve: she conceded only five points behind her first delivery and a measly two behind her second. Jabeur will face either Rebecca Marino or qualifier Katarzyna Kawa in the second round. While Alison Riske-Amritraj and Maja Chwalinska were other early winners on Day 1. British No. 1 and No. 10 seed Emma Raducanu was a straight-sets 6-4, 6-4 winner over Alison van Uytvanck on Centre Court in her Wimbledon return.

The British teenager is now 5-0 in her young career in the first round of Grand Slams. It was her first straight-sets win at a major since her US Open championship triumph in September, and perhaps more importantly, her body cooperated.

2018 champion Angelique Kerber of Germany held off a comeback by Kristina Mladenovic of France before notching a 6-0, 7-5 victory and advancing into the second round of Wimbledon. Also on Monday, Kaja Juvan ousted one of this year's top grass-court players, Beatriz Haddad Maia.

In her 51st consecutive Grand Slam main draw appearance, No.15 seed Kerber took just over an hour to collect her 83rd match-win on grass in her career.

Also on Day 1, Kaja Juvan of Slovenia pulled off a significant upset in the first round by defeating No.23 seed Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in just under two hours.

Juvan will next meet Hungary's Dalma Galfi in the second round. Galfi overcame Australian qualifier Maddison Inglis 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 in 2 hours and 15 minutes. ANI

CRICKET

New Zealand to host England for Test, India for white-ball series

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: New Zealand will host England in a day-night Test this summer, while the Kiwis will also play white-ball series' at home against India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka over the next 10 months.

New Zealand Cricket announced a busy home schedule for the upcoming summer on Tuesday, with the Black Caps hosting a total of five different international teams between October and April. The Kiwis will take on Pakistan and Bangladesh in a T20I tri-series at the start of October, before travelling to Australia for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

At the completion of that tournament, India will visit New Zealand for three T20I and three ODIs, before England arrive in the middle of February for two Test matches that won't form part of the current World Test Championship period.

The opening Test of that series will be under lights in Mount Maunganui and will be the first day-night Test match in New Zealand since Auckland hosted a clash against England in 2018.

England were rolled for just 58 on the opening day of that day-night Test at Eden Park, with current stars Joe Root, Ben Stokes and Jonny Bairstow all dismissed without scoring as Trent Boult and Tim Southee ripped through the visitors' batting line-up.

New Zealand Cricket CEO David White is hopeful of attracting big crowds to all series throughout the summer.

"Last summer's Women's World Cup did so much to promote the game, and it will be great to see the White Ferns in action right around the country," White said in a statement.

"And to have India, England and Sri Lanka touring here, on top of visits from Pakistan and Bangladesh, means cricket fans can look forward to a summer of top-quality cricket," he added.

Two Tests against Sri Lanka in March will follow the England series, before a bumper few months of cricket will finish with white-ball series' against the Island nation all the way through until April 8.

New Zealand's women's team will also host Bangladesh for three T20I and three ODIs in December before they travel to South Africa for next year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup. ANI

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP

Richie Berrington appointed as new Scotland captain

SCOTLAND: Scotland stalwart Richie Berrington has been named as Kyle Coetzer's successor ahead of the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series.

Kyle Coetzer, the ICC's Associate Cricketer of the decade, stepped down from the captaincy throne earlier this month, having led his side in 41 T20Is and 45 ODIs. Berrington has previously led Scotland on five occasions - two ODIs and three T20Is - in Coetzer's absence. The upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series against Namibia and Nepal will be his first assignment as a full-time captain, for which Scotland have unveiled a 14-member squad.

Reflecting on his new role, Berrington said: "I feel incredibly honoured and privileged to lead this team and represent my country. Having come through the Scottish system from a young age, I'm very proud to take on the role of men's captain."

"We have an extremely skilful and talented group of players and a lot of experience in our squad but as a group we are always looking to find ways to improve and I'm looking forward to seeing the team continually move forward."

He further added: "As a team we're very much looking forward to what's ahead - three home series over the next couple of months is a great opportunity for us to keep building on the team's recent success and we'll be doing all we can to produce some good results in front of a home crowd."

Berrington will be assisted by Matthew Cross, who has been named as his deputy. As the leader of the side, his focus is on helping Scotland achieve the upcoming goals by "giving everything I can to help support the team".

"We've had a fantastic leader in Kyle, who has been a great ambassador for our sport and I have learnt a lot under his leadership. As men's captain, I am aiming to lead through performance, bringing my experience to the role and giving everything I can to help support the team. Long-term, World Cup qualification is key for us and we are determined to keep pushing towards full member status, while continuing to develop the younger players we have coming through," Berrington added.

The CWCL2 tri-series will be played between July 10-17. ANI

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

Los Angeles confirm signing of former Real Madrid superstar Gareth Bale

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles FC on Monday announced that the Major League Soccer (MLS) club have signed forward Gareth Bale to a 12-month contract with options through 2024.

A five-time UEFA Champions League winner, Bale joins LAFC following a successful nine-year career with La Liga's Real Madrid that saw him win an unprecedented 19 trophies since 2013. Goal-scorer in the 2014 and 2018 Champions League Final, Bale was named the Best Player of the 2018 Champions League and won the Golden Ball at the 2018 Club World Cup.

Bale, 32, is considered one of the greatest Welsh players of all time and has made 105 appearances for Wales since 2006, scoring 28 goals and registering 22 assists.

Bale was instrumental in leading Wales to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, securing their first appearance in the tournament in 64 years. He also helped lead Wales into the Round of 16 of the UEFA 2020 European Championship.

"I am extremely excited for this move to LAFC," Bale said. "This is the right place for me and my family and the right time in my career, and I cannot wait to get started working with the team and getting ready to win more trophies in Los Angeles."

A Cardiff, Wales native, Bale made his professional debut in 2006 at 16 with English Championship club Southampton before moving to Tottenham Hotspur of the English Premier League in 2007. During his time with Tottenham, he was named the PFA Men's Player of the Year in 2011 and 2012 and selected to the 2011 UEFA Team of the Year.

He joined Cristiano Ronaldo as just the second player in history to win the PFA Player of the Year, Young Player of the Year and FWA Footballer of the Year when he did it in 2012. From 2007-2013 he scored 42 goals in 146 appearances for the Spurs. Bale also scored 11 goals and tallied two assists with Tottenham during the 2020-2021 EPL season while on loan from Real Madrid.

Bale joined Real Madrid in 2013 and finished his time there as an official club legend, making 258 appearances and registering 106 goals and 67 assists across all competitions - including 176 games in LaLiga. He was a major part of an incredible era at Real Madrid winning 19 trophies, including: five UEFA European Championships, four Club World Cups, three UEFA Super Cups, three LaLiga titles, one Copa del Rey and three Spanish Super Cups.

Bale was awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth of England on June 2 as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List. The award stands for "Member of the Order of the British Empire" and Bale received it for services to football and charity. Bale has donated significantly to hospitals in Wales and Spain to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. ANI

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by August 2022 reaching $113.05, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by $2.79 from the price of Monday, which was $110.26. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,127.89 points, up by 0.27 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.81 per cent at 455.17 points. Oman Fisheries, up 5 per cent, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 4.86 per cent, was the top loser.

Al Mouj Muscat's impressive growth delivers economic benefits for Oman

As a joint venture, the impressive partnership behind Al Mouj Muscat has ensured that growth across retail, real estate and leisure aligns with Oman's long-term strategic vision

"Oman is an investor-friendly country, and our focus remains on ensuring that Al Mouj Muscat is a superb location for investment, generating both growth and opportunities for people and enterprise

Ahmed Abdullah Al Massan
Al Mouj Muscat's Chief Financial Officer

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat has delivered on its promise to contribute to the economic prosperity of Oman and the unique partnership of Majid Al Futtaim, Omran and Tanmia has created a destination where investment grows producing a lasting value for the Sultanate.

Since 2006 when it was established as the country's first Integrated Tourism Complex (ITC), Al Mouj Muscat has achieved outstanding asset growth of 777 per cent. Its total investment currently stands at $3.5 billion, and the thriving community is actively contributing to the aims of Oman Vision 2040. As a joint venture, the impressive partnership behind Al Mouj Muscat has ensured that growth across retail, real estate and leisure aligns with Oman's long-term strategic vision.

Alongside exceptional year-on-year growth, Al Mouj has secured $884 million in foreign direct investment (FDI) and has contributed OMR11 million in tax revenues. It has also committed OMR4.34 million in corporate social responsibility expenditure, helping to boost local skills and employment prospects across multiple sectors including tourism, retail and construction.

In 2020 alone, Al Mouj Muscat achieved OMR76 million pre-tax profitability and contributed OMR46 million to Oman's GDP.

Al Mouj Muscat's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Ahmed Abdullah Al Massan said, "We have achieved exceptional growth through a strategy that has yielded consistent and positive returns, and we have attracted significant foreign direct investment from around the globe. Oman is an investor-friendly country, and our focus remains on ensuring that Al Mouj Muscat is a superb location for investment, generating both growth and opportunities for people and enterprise."

Al Mouj Muscat has established itself as the premier location for global, regional and local buyers as well as investors. It is committed to generating value for its communities and its stakeholders and offers a wide range of services, initiatives and platforms that unlock opportunities for businesses large and small.

Nasser Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, adds, "The facts and figures included in the Impact Al Mouj campaign demonstrate the success of our partnership model, and the extent of the value creation achieved to date. We will continue to promote the growth of retail, real estate and infrastructure sectors through the sale of residences, our construction activities, and hospitality, leisure, entertainment and retail assets. Plus, we continue to innovate across products and services, all of which will add to the significant impact we deliver for people, for our community and Oman."

Al Mouj's significant socio-economic benefits include growth in tourism, job creation, development and the SME sector. As an ITC, it has created the foundation for sustainable and lasting value for the Sultanate with details of its achievements included on the website impact.almouj.com.

INVESTMENT CONTRACT

Pact signed to set up integrated service station in Al Buraimi

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Buraimi Industrial City, which pertains to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has signed an investment contract with Murtafat Mahdha Trading, to set up an integrated service station for vehicles on an area of 3,559 sqm with an investment value touching OMR500,000.

The contract was signed by Said bin Abdullah Al Balushi, Director-General of Al Buraimi Industrial City and Rashid bin Salim Al Kaabi, Project Manager.

The project, which will be located on the main road to Al Buraimi Industrial City, aims to offer a range of facilities and services to the investors, business owners and workforce in Al Buraimi Industrial City in particular and the population in Al Buraimi governorate in general. This value-added project in the industrial city will play a role in generating job opportunities and attracting service projects.

It is worthwhile to mention that Madayn is implementing a number of projects in Al Buraimi Industrial City, which include the infrastructure development project in phases 1 and 2 at a total cost of more than OMR5 million and a completion rate exceeding 30 per cent. This project includes the implementation of a sewage treatment plant with a capacity of 400m², road rehabilitation works, a water supply distribution network, electrical works, and street lighting (85 lighting poles) for phase 2.

VALUE-ADDED PROJECT: The project, which will be located on the main road to Al Buraimi Industrial City, aims to offer a range of facilities and services to the investors, business owners and workforce. - Supplied picture

NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN

NBO launches private banking

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Opening up new opportunities for high-net-worth customers, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) has launched private banking.

Catering to the banking and financial advisory needs of its clients, the new proposition provides comprehensive and holistic solutions tailored towards their unique goals, all delivered with complete privacy and confidentiality. Leveraging the latest technology, industry insights and analysis, courtesy of its team of consultants, NBO is guiding customers towards long-term financial well-being.

Ali Mustafa Al Lawati, Head of Private Banking at NBO, said, "Our new Private Banking proposition marks a major milestone in our 50-year legacy, setting the benchmark for personalised banking in Oman.

"Our premium banking services are designed to meet the unique wealth management requirements of our customers, offering personalised wealth advisory with exclusive access to the latest investments and products."

He added, "The new service is a valuable addition to our growing premier segment and we look forward to working closely with our clients to support them in reaching their investment and financial goals."

NBO's Private Banking is a platform offering a portfolio of investment and wealth management products and services including, global investment funds and structured products, offering customers the opportunity to invest in a wide range of robustly managed products to leverage market opportunities. Other products and services include securities brokerage, Systematic Investment Plan, global investment advisory, trade execution, wealth planning, trust services and financing across a range of options, covering traditional as well as specialist solutions.

As a consistent leader in privilege banking in Oman, NBO is the only bank in the country to offer such a wide range of wealth management product solutions, such as Sadara, that constantly meets the sophisticated banking and investment needs of high-net-worth customers with exclusive privileges and benefits to suit their lifestyle.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Treasury bills worth OMR3 million issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR3 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 364 days, from June 29, 2022 until June 28, 2023.

The average accepted price reached 97.875 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 97.750 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 2.13084 per cent and 2.17727 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). -ONA

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Oman Fisheries, up 5 per cent, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 4.86 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,127.89 points, up by 0.27 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.81 per cent at 455.17 points. Oman Fisheries, up 5 per cent, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 4.86 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of OIFC were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat was the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 370 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.14 million, with more than 9.4 million shares changing hands.

Out of 45 traded securities, 18 advanced, 5 declined, and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR209,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR191,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR18,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,625.78 points, up 0.3 per cent. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, Ahli Bank, Muscat Finance and Oman & Emirates Investment were up by 4 per cent, 2.41 per cent, 1.67 per cent, 1.52 per cent and 1.21 per cent respectively. Ominvest price was down by 0.65 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,784.88 points, up 0.19 per cent. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Oman Packaging, Voltamp Energy and Construction Materials were up by 5 per cent, 2.31 per cent, 1.85 per cent and 1.33 per cent respectively. Prices of A'Saffa Foods and Oman Cement were down by 4.86 per cent and 0.39 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.59 per cent before closing at 1,573.49 points. Prices of OIFC, Oman Oil Marketing, Shell Oman Marketing, Al Batinah Power and Al Jazeera Services were up by 2.54 per cent, 2.44 per cent, 2.44 per cent, 2.13 per cent, and 1.85 per cent respectively. Prices of Phoenix Power and Muscat Gases were down by 2 per cent and 1.33 per cent, respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,133.07	4,116.95	4,127.89	4,116.95	10.94	0.27
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,636.62	6,605.91	6,625.78	6,605.91	19.87	0.30
Industry Index	5,787.81	5,780.44	5,784.87	5,773.61	11.26	0.19
Services Index	1,575.10	1,563.51	1,573.49	1,564.32	9.17	0.59
MSX Shariah Index	455.41	452.88	455.17	451.50	3.66	0.81
MSX TR INDEX	5,209.94	5,189.62	5,203.42	5,189.62	13.80	0.27
FINANCIAL TR IDX	6,944.48	6,912.34	6,933.13	6,912.34	20.80	0.30
SERVICES TR IDX	1,628.62	1,616.63	1,626.95	1,617.47	9.48	0.59
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,006.78	5,999.12	6,003.73	5,992.04	11.68	0.19

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
9,409,827	2,143,224	370	22,195,668,957	18	5	22	45

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 28

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN.	2,202,760	262,385	56	0.122	0.122	0.118	0.121	0.118	0.003	2.542	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.100	28,677,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	252,000	21,532	13	0.085	0.087	0.085	0.085	0.083	0.002	2.410	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	7,650,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	12,500	3,433	12	0.271	0.275	0.271	0.275	0.270	0.005	1.852	0.275	0.270	0.275	0.100	16,831,175
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	141,470	17,259	5	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.120	0.002	1.667	0.122	0.118	0.125	0.100	237,858,211
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	183,516	19,392	12	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.962	0.105	0.103	0.112	0.100	14,700,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	16,280	7,072	6	0.430	0.440	0.428	0.438	0.434	0.004	0.922	0.438	0.426	0.432	0.100	103,547,580
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM.	355,700	310,164	11	0.868	0.872	0.868	0.868	0.864	0.004	0.463	0.868	0.856	0.872	0.100	651,000,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	480,000	100,800	15	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.000	0.000	0.210	0.209	0.231	0.100	341,448,735
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	2,440	844	1	0.346	0.346	0.346	0.346	0.346	0.000	0.000	0.346	0.346	0.378	0.100	43,214,694
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,586,331	831,558	45	0.524	0.526	0.524	0.524	0.524	0.000	0.000	0.524	0.524	0.526	0.100	1,966,676,030
OM0000003000	Al MAHA MARKTING	3,000	2,040	1	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.000	0.000	0.680	0.680	0.000	0.100	46,920,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H	153,600	9,984	7	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.100	13,000,000
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	98,080	8,541	10	0.088	0.088	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.086	0.089	0.100	22,244,915
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	1,320,000	136,640	11	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.100	310,966,478
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	66,200	21,282	10	0.320	0.330	0.320	0.330	0.330	0.000	0.000	0.330	0.320	0.330	0.100	214,811,596
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	440,900	111,548	3	0.253	0.253	0.253	0.253	0.254	-0.001	-0.394	0.253	0.246	0.252	0.100	83,710,796
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	139,489	42,631	9	0.308	0.308	0.304	0.304	0.306	-0.002	-0.654	0.304	0.304	0.310	0.100	203,183,090
Total		17	7,454,266	1,907,105												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	45,000	4,765	5	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.105	0.100	0.005	5.000	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	19,118,232
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	361,932	28,300	19	0.077	0.079	0.077	0.078	0.075	0.003	4.000	0.078	0.078	0.079	0.100	15,600,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK.	1,000	840	1	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.820	0.020	2.439	0.840	0.840	0.820	0.100	79,800,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	2,000	1,680	1	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.820	0.020	2.439	0.840	0.800	0.760	0.100	51,471,000
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	6,444	1,714	1	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.260	0.006	2.308	0.266	0.000	0.000	0.100	8,627,939
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	6,350	305	2	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.001	2.128	0.048	0.046	0.048	0.100	32,394,597
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	158,271	17,398	23	0.105	0.110	0.105	0.110	0.108	0.002	1.852	0.110	0.107	0.110	0.100	8,954,303
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	323,469	21,637	26	0.066	0.068	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.067	0.067	0.068	0.100	20,578,804
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION M.	45,000	3,446	3	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.076	0.075	0.001	1.333	0.076	0.075	0.079	0.100	4,750,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	2,000	168	1	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.001	1.205	0.084	0.082	0.084	0.100	10,237,500
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	100,000	9,500	9	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.094	0.001	1.064	0.095	0.094	0.096	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	357,080	67,805	4	0.188	0.190	0.188	0.190	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.190	0.205	0.100	19,904,789
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	15,000	2,130	3	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.142	0.145	0.100	12,070,000
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	62,263	5,168	8	0.083	0.084	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.080	0.083	0.100	2,786,430
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	325	49	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.149	0.149	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.147	0.150	0.100	29,800,000
OM0000002333	SALALAH PORT SR	177	98	1	0.556	0.556	0.556	0.556	0.556	0.000	0.000	0.556	0.000	0.556	0.100	99,989,594
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	10,000	1,150	1	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.115	0.115	0.116	0.100	344,580,415
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	40,000	4,120	2	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.103	0.105	0.100	20,907,604
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	52,000	4,784	7	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.092	0.094	0.100	16,100,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	101,750	4,779	7	0.047	0.047	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.045	0.041	0.047	0.100	11,250,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	103,830	4,984	5	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.100	34,291,504
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	25,800	1,806	3	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.068	0.070	0.100	32,983,047
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	9,880	1,462	2	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.150	-0.002	-1.333	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.100	4,440,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	82,988	4,145	3	0.050	0.050	0.049	0.049	0.050	-0.001	-2.000	0.049	0.049	0.050	0.100	71,667,472
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	7,700	1,055	1	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.144	-0.007	-4.861	0.137	0.133	0.137	0.100	16,440,000
Total		25	1,920,259	193,289												

FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVIDER

United Finance appoints new leadership team to drive its transformation initiatives

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Headquartered in Muscat, United Finance Company, a leading financial services provider, embarked on a transformation programme in late 2021 to redefine what financial lending companies should be.

A critical part of this transformation relies on leadership, foresight, and direction, realised through a newly appointed Omani leadership team who brings a wealth of banking and other industry knowledge and expertise to the organisation.

The team is led by United Finance's Chief Executive Officer, Nasser Al Rashdi. He assumes the role of directing and executing the company's overall strategy in becoming a prominent and digitally-enabled financial services company.

Other members include Abdul Aziz Aal Abdulsalam, who assumes the role of Chief Transformation Officer and has over 18 years of regional experience across multiple industries, with a strong focus on transformation. Fawaz Al Riyami joins the C-suite team as United Finance's Chief Business Officer with a 15-year of experience gained from multiple banks in Oman, together with Abdul Aziz Al Mahrizi as Chief Operating Officer who adds over 21 years of local and international banking experience to the team. In addition to Mahmood Al Hadi AGM – HR and Admin with over 25 years of experience in the organisation.

"Our core values revolve around our people and by developing, empowering, and nurturing the talent we can then expect the best service for our customers," said Mohammed Al Khonji, Chairman.

United Finance has embarked on a deep transformation covering every aspect of its operations - from people, technology, operational standards, products, and services to its marketing and communications. With its senior team now established, the process of transformation is set to capture opportunities further.

The board has expressed its ambitions and trust in the new management team and everyone in the organisation to continue United Finance's journey of evolution.

EUROPEAN INFLATION

Euro stands firm ahead of inflation gauge

SINGAPORE: The euro held onto its recent gains on Tuesday ahead of European inflation figures this week that are expected to run hot and a speech from central bank chief Christine Lagarde, while a rally in oil prices boosted commodity currencies.

The euro rose 0.28 per cent overnight and at one point poked above its 50-day moving average. It last sat at $1.0574, Reuters reports.

The dollar held modest overnight gains on other currencies and traded at 135.33 yen and $0.693 per Australian dollar in the Asia session.

German inflation figures are due on Wednesday, French data on Thursday and euro zone numbers on Friday.

European Central Bank President Lagarde is also due to speak at the ECB forum in Sintra, Portugal, at 0800 GMT on Tuesday. -**BNA**

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION

FAO launches initiative to promote sustainable food systems in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has recently launched an initiative to promote sustainable food systems, healthy diets and improved food and nutrition security in Oman. This was undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water Resources (MAFWR) and Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC).

The project aims at linking local production and supply of safe and nutritious foods with multiple interventions to also increase demand, by influencing consumer behaviour in such a way that it contributes to healthier diets.

In addition, it also aimed to encourage government bodies, SMEs, their supporting organisations and investors to use the results of the analysis in their planning. This will enhance the potential of these value chains to generate income and better nutritional outcomes at the national level.

The initiative is aligned with the National Nutrition Strategy of Oman 2014-2050 and the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy 2040. Under this, emphasis is given to the importance of an adequate intake of fruits and vegetables while decreasing the intake of energy-dense foods, as a main determinant of health as well as food security and nutrition.

The three entities conducted an assessment of the Sultanate's Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chain in one of the main agricultural governorates in the Sultanate: Al Batinah North. The study focused on two commodities; papaya and carrots for their high beta-carotene content. These contain a precursor of vitamin A, which is lacking in the diets of the Omani population, according to the latest health nutrition survey conducted by the Ministry of Health in 2017.

The study also involved SMEs related to food and agriculture, farmer organisations, smallholders and other players along the aforementioned value chains. It shed light on the Sultanate's current landscape of challenges and opportunities in the supply and demand of carrots and papaya, as they relate to dietary and nutrition challenges.

The analysis produced recommended actions and various investment opportunities across the two value chains to improve the enabling environment to boost demand and supply, thereby leading to an increase in incomes for smallholders and family farms as well as for small SMEs in food processing and innovative start-ups. Furthermore, this assessment contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through improved knowledge of the food system in Oman and providing a variety of evidence-based intervention and investment opportunities along the value chain.

APPOINTMENT

Tatweer Duqm appoints new CEO

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Board of Directors of Oman Company for the Development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Tatweer Duqm) announced the appointment of Eng. Ali bin Moosa Malallah as the Chief Executive Officer.

Eng. Ali has more than 27 years of experience in multiple industries that include integrated projects facilities management, real estate & investment, public transport & semiconductors. He spent nearly two decades of his career working in Europe, the USA, Japan, Southeast Asia & Mena. He has held many leading positions in international operations, training, manufacturing, real estate, sales & marketing.

LIFESTYLE

DO YOU KNOW SEA CUCUMBERS CAN TEACH US ABOUT SELF-DEFENCE?

An international research collaboration investigated the genome of sea cucumbers and compared them with those of other Echinoderms, such as sea stars and sea urchins.

Analysis showed that an enzyme found across all kingdoms of life that makes sterols, essential for building membranes and hormones, was missing in sea cucumber.

According to a new study, researchers with the help of genome mining techniques, found how sea cucumbers can produce defensive chemicals that enable them to fend off foes in the murky depths.

The findings of the research were published in the journal ***Nature Chemical Biology.***

Sea cucumbers are a food delicacy in south Asia where their cultivation is a multi-million-dollar industry. The molecules they produce to defend their ecological niche at the bottom of the ocean are highly valued for their medicinal properties.

These curious marine animals produce a category of molecule known as triterpenoid saponins which are widespread in plants, but rare in animals.

Until now the question of how they evolved their unusual ability to produce these molecules has been unexplained.

An international research collaboration investigated the genome of sea cucumbers and compared them with those of other Echinoderms, such as sea stars and sea urchins.

Analysis showed that an enzyme found across all kingdoms of life that makes sterols, essential for building membranes and hormones, was missing in sea cucumber.

In sea cucumbers this sterol-producing function had been diverted to produce two new genes in this enzyme family. Using molecular biology, the researchers isolated the genes, transferred them to yeast and analysed the extracts.

This showed that the genes have acquired new functions; one of them makes an alternative type of saponin that the sea cucumber uses for self-defence, and the other produces molecules that protect the creature from the toxic effects of its own chemicals.

Chemical analysis showed that these genes required for the synthesis of self-defence compounds were expressed more in the outside layers of tissue.

The next stage for this research is to find the remaining chemical steps necessary to make these potentially high value chemicals so that they can be produced using plants or yeast more cheaply and help conserve sea-cucumbers in their natural habitats.

Saponins are widespread natural products, with more than 20,000 reported. They have a wide range of uses, traditionally as a source of soap and more recently as vaccine adjuvants, foaming agents, antifungal treatments and emulsifiers.

Many animals use toxins as chemical defences - usually obtained from food or produced via symbiotic relationships. Echinoderms, in contrast, biosynthesise their toxins themselves.

Professor Anne Osbourn, a group leader at the John Innes Centre, and corresponding author of the study said: "Sea cucumbers are massively important in Asia as a health benefiting food source and for traditional medicines. So, if we can understand how their molecules are made, we can make these high value compounds without needing to grind up sea cucumbers. We can make them using plants or yeast."

Innate immunity in sea cucumbers: repurposing sterol biosynthesis for defense is in Nature Chemical Biology. -ANI

IN-PICTURES

Rafeeq SHOP NOW rafeeq.om

Romania celebrates National Flag Day
A woman talks to a veteran during a ceremony celebrating Romania's National Flag Day in Bucharest, capital of Romania, June 26, 2022. (Photo by Cristian Cristel/Xinhua)

Namibian music academy helps nurture youth's artistic growth
Participants play musical instruments at a music workshop by Thetardius Music Academy in Windhoek, Namibia on June 18, 2022. (Photo by Ndalimpinga Iita/Xinhua)

Highlight of men's fashion week in Paris
A model presents a creation from the Spring/Summer 2023 collection of Thom Browne during the men's fashion week in Paris, France, on June 26, 2022. (Photo by Piero Biasion/Xinhua)

Madhavan speaking at the promotion of his upcoming film 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect'
Actor R Madhavan speaking at the promotion of his upcoming film 'Rocketry: The Nambi Effect', at a press conference, in Kolkata on Monday. (ANI Photo)

Vietnamese students compete in 21st "Chinese Bridge" contest
Vietnamese students perform in the "Chinese Bridge" college student Chinese language competition in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, on June 25, 2022. Twenty-eight students in southern Vietnam on Saturday gathered in Ho Chi Minh City to compete in the final round of the 21st "Chinese Bridge" contest, an annual Chinese proficiency competition for students of universities and colleagues in southern provinces and cities. (Chinese Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City/Handout via Xinhua)

Life Beat Festival celebrated at Hamra street in Beirut, Lebanon
A handicraft booth is seen at the Life Beat Festival at the Hamra street in Beirut, Lebanon, June 26, 2022. The Life Beat Festival, which is aimed at promoting public health and wellbeing, was held at one of the most popular shopping streets in Beirut on Sunday. People enjoyed health consultations, shopping, eating, drinking, arts and crafts, live performances during the festival. (Xinhua/Liu Zongya)

Rafeeq
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Go places to make a mark in powerful Ford Ranger Wildtrack

Engineered and designed to impress and make a mark, the Ford Ranger Wildtrack always shines bright making every journey thrilling

MUSCAT: The Ford Ranger Wildtrack is built to take on extreme tasks with ease.

Engineered and designed to impress and make a mark, the Ford Ranger Wildtrack always shines bright making every journey thrilling. Just like the F-150, Built Ford Tough is engineered into every nut, bolt, panel and component that comprises the Ranger – and Ford dedicates an extraordinary amount of expertise to ensure the Ranger will stand the test of time. From its backbone – the high-strength steel frame ladder chassis – to its tough steel body and versatile cargo box, Ranger's appetite for adventure is apparent. The tough exterior design incorporates a high beltline, a raked grille and a slanted windshield which give Ranger its athletic appearance and superb aerodynamics which helps cut wind noise and improve fuel economy.

Off-road, Ranger's short front and rear overhangs mean impressive approach and departure angles for tackling steep terrain, while its 23cm ground clearance allows it to clear obstacles easily. Ranger is also able to navigate watery obstacles up to 800mm deep, allowing drivers to push through conditions that may stop its competitors in their tracks. The Ranger's 3.2-litre turbodiesel engine produces 196 hp and 470 Nm of torque. With the likes of 800mm wading depth, complemented by its powerful engine choices, and six-speed auto transmission, Ranger can take you anywhere you need to go.

With room for five people inside, a maximum towing capacity of 3.5 tons and a cargo tray capable of carrying up to 1425kg of gear, there's no need for passengers to pack light for the journey. Ranger has enough space for everyone and everything they need to unlock the great outdoors. In Oman, Ford vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

Oman set to create largest Oasis Park in Middle East

MUSCAT: Through the years, Oman has made giant strides as a nation. The Sultanate's march towards development is punctuated by milestones of growth, whilst protecting the environment and preserving the natural resources.

With beaches, deserts, mountains, greenery and wadis, Oman is an enchanting tapestry of different terrains. The Sultanate boasts of the fjord-like splendour in the Musandam Peninsula that projects and leads to the fertile Batinah coastal region. The plains of Oman slope south-east towards Muscat, through the enormous sandy border of the Rub Al Khali (The Empty Quarter) amidst the mountains to the tropical Salalah.

Oman is indeed Arabia's best kept secret!

And now the dream is to add the magic of an Oasis Park to this enchanting land.

The beauty and tranquillity of natural parks all over the world—from the tropics to the tundra—inspire all. It has motivated O! Millionaire's environmental initiative to create Middle East's most significant green space, the Oasis Park in Oman which aims to be a beacon of hope for a sustainable future.

Ralph C. Martin, Chairman, O! Millionaire details, "Oman possesses a very rich biological diversity, blending separate ecosystems, both terrestrial and aquatic. This multiplicity of ecosystems plays an essential role in the maintenance of environmental services. As a company, we decided to make a social investment, support local efforts, and implement changes as an endowed group to achieve exceptional results that we feel are necessary. Oasis Park is an extraordinary concept that will bring about a positive change. Oasis Park will be a habitat for wildlife, a sanctuary for relaxation and an expanse for food abundance."

Oasis Park will be spread across an area of 1,200 square kilometres and will host 60 million trees. Once Oasis Park is fully developed, it is expected to contribute to CO^2 reduction by 1,440,000 tonnes approximately and will also witness a reduction of the total annual emission of Oman by around 2.4 per cent. The life-sustaining process of photosynthesis involves absorbing carbon dioxide from the air, thereby reducing the concentration of this greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. Therefore, global warming is slowed down. The autotrophic trees that are planted will provide for Oman's efforts toward food security and foster intelligent farming techniques.

Key objectives

Ralph. C. Martin says, "In line with the key objectives of Oman Vision 2040, this initiative seeks to protect the environment and conserve Oman's rich biodiversity. It also aims to contribute to the country's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint in alignment with the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

He adds, "Oasis Park is a bold endeavour to promote conservation, develop sustainable economic opportunity for the country, and support continued research and education. The goal is to take positive steps toward climate change mitigation, carbon sequestration, food security, water security, and biodiversity conservation amongst others. As responsible citizens of the world, we must take a stand to ensure that the next generation will inherit a healthy world."

Sustainable future

Basim Al Zadjali, CEO, O! Millionaire says, "Oasis Park is Oman's answer to the global call for a sustainable future. Oasis Park will be a haven for flora and fauna, complete with clean energy provided by electricity from solar energy and water generated by air machines.

It will preserve the natural resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of the present and future generations. The park is set to create running paths and a play area for kids. We intend to ensure that the Oasis Park will be a tourism destination in the near future thereby providing employment opportunities to many."

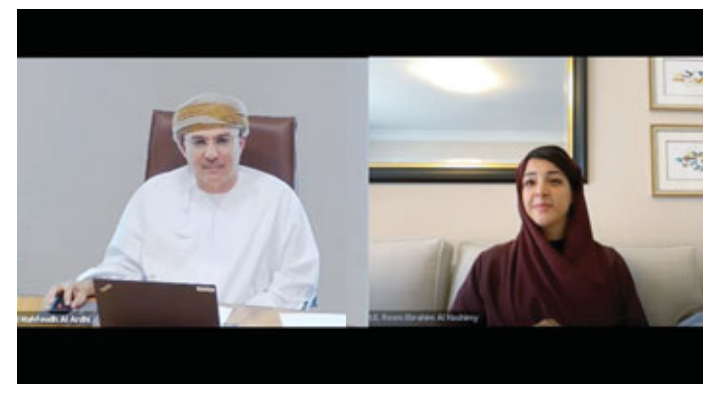
O! Millionaire through Oasis Park will support broader economic and social development in the country, by generating thousands of jobs for nationals, contributing to the country's GPA (VAT and profits taxation), raising the Happiness Index of Oman, supporting ESG Initiatives, and promoting Oman as country acting against global warming.

O! Millionaire project

The splendour behind the concept of Oasis Park is that it will be a community-contributed initiative. The visionaries behind the concept have made it simple for everyone to be part of this movement. For more information on this initiative, please visit the website and purchase a green certificate worth OMR 2.5. This green certificate confirms their contribution to the Oasis Park project of O! Millionaire. Each certificate, which is issued only once, has a unique number which will be tagged to the tree growing in the Oasis Park establishing a personal connection to the buyer.

The green certificate also entitles the person to enter a draw with prizes leading to more than OMR 5 million. The certificate gives participants two chances to win – one a raffle that pays out each winner OMR 10,000 every week and a draw that can win them prizes over OMR 5 million. The draw is held every Thursday at 8 pm.

CHAIRMAN'S FORUM



Sohar International concludes 10th virtual Viewpoints

MUSCAT: Progressive, agile, and dynamic - Sohar International has been a key patron of empowering the community through thought-leadership initiatives that ride on shared knowledge.

One such endeavour is the Viewpoints – Chairman's Forum which recently concluded its 10th virtual edition. Conceptualised and hosted by the Chairman of Sohar International, Mohammed Mahfoudh Al Ardhi, the latest session welcomed as its esteemed guest speaker, Reem Ebrahim Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director General, Expo 2020 Dubai. Themed 'Discover the experience behind Expo 2020 Dubai, Al Hashimy shared key insights into the execution of a historic exhibition of a huge magnitude.

The highly-anticipated virtual event, Viewpoints, which was held on 23 June 2022, was live-streamed via the Zoom App and Shabiba FM. Gaining the attention of individuals from different segments of society, it saw the active involvement of C-suite executives, industry professionals, and even the youth. With a format that is designed to drive interaction, the event allowed the participants to enter into meaningful dialogues with the speaker, engage in thoughtful debates with peers, and network with industry leaders.

Sharing his view on the session, Mohammed Al Ardhi said, "Viewpoints has consistently been inspiring individuals to think out-of-the-box, inciting curiosity in the youth to explore different professional domains and encouraging a leadership mindset in the community. At the same time, by offering a platform to connect with international experts, it also gives individuals the necessary exposure to better understand the operations, challenges, and opportunities in foreign markets."

He further added saying, "Expo 2020 Dubai was more than just a world fair that brought together over 190 countries – it was a historic event that exuberated excellence in organisation, operation, and conduct. The select few that saw through the entire process of conceptualisation to execution demonstrated exceptional capabilities, intellect, and resilience. Our distinguished guest, Reem Ebrahim Al Hashimy, played an integral role in the event and we were incredibly honoured to have her share her valuable insights."

Al Hashimy highlighted the core values of driving competitive growth and creating a world-class customer experience. The discussion also focused on the importance of embracing technology and innovation and the critical role these elements play in the progress of any country. He further elaborated on the Expo's long-standing success journey, which began in 2011. For Expo Dubai 2020 specifically, the success of the project, which has hosted more than 24 million participants, was due to the ability to manage a crisis, to take appropriate measures, especially during the Covid-19 period, including continuous communication with stakeholders and to bring the team members together as a global national project. The project has also strengthened the role of youth and the importance of integrating this important group of society with decision-makers.

MEETHAQ

Hafawa Visa Signature credit cardholders eligible to win 2 hospitality packages to Fifa World Cup

MUSCAT: In line with its customer-centric vision and commitment to offering the best value proposition to its customers, Meethaq, the pioneer of Islamic banking in Oman from Bank Muscat, has announced that its Meethaq Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Cardholders can win 2 hospitality packages to Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy of Visa. This exciting promotion is part of the run-up to one of the biggest sporting spectacles on the planet and will be open till 31 August 2022.

Two winners will be chosen by Meethaq, and each winner will receive a Hospitality Package for two to the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy of Visa. The attractive package includes airline tickets, hotel accommodation with full board and match tickets. Winners will be chosen based on their overall spending using Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Cards. It must be noted that cardholders will earn one point for every OMR50 spent in Oman using their Visa credit card, while international spending will earn double the points compared to domestic transactions. Customers are also eligible to get 2 additional points if their monthly spending using the card is OMR500 or more. The 2 customers who accumulate the maximum points will win the hospitality packages, courtesy of Visa. It must be noted that ATM withdrawals and government transactions are not eligible to receive points to decide the winners.

Speaking about the exciting promotion, Sami Arfah Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager – Meethaq Personal Banking, said: "Meethaq is delighted to offer football enthusiasts a great opportunity to win Hospitality Packages to Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy of Visa. Launching this special campaign comes within Meethaq's customer-centric vision and strategy of offering the best features and benefits to our customers. We invite all our Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Cardholders to participate enthusiastically in this once-in-a-lifetime offer. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their strong confidence in Meethaq Islamic Banking and its cutting-edge products and services."

The Hafawa Visa Signature Credit Card offers up to a 52-day profit-free credit period and is accepted worldwide at more than 30 million locations.

OER AWARD

Oman Cables receives excellence award for empowering local talent

MUSCAT: Oman Cables Industry (OCI), Oman's leading manufacturer of industrial cables, participated in the OER Manufacturing Summit 2022 where the company received the OER Manufacturing Excellence Award for Empowering Local Talent.

The company has raised its Omanisation rate to nearly 50% within the last year by introducing training and development programs designed to unlock the potential within the local workforce.

Cinzia Farisè, CEO of Oman Cables and Prysmian Group MEAT Region was present to underline the company's commitment to supporting Oman's economic diversification by producing and offering the most advanced cable technology.

OCI is guided by a vision of 'Empowerment, Innovation and Excellence' which extends from its products and services to the opportunities available to its workforce. As part of the Prysmian Group, Oman Cables has access to the Prysmian Group Academy which comprises the Prysmian Business School, Prysmian Professional School and Prysmian Digital School where employees can complete training programs in partnership with international Business and Technical Schools with a special focus on strengthening individual skills.

Oman Cables recently launched several educational initiatives to guarantee long-term sustainable growth of the company and its human capital. Development programmes to upskill employees throughout the company have been designed to empower local talents in various roles. 'STEM IT', 'SELL IT' is aimed at sales and 'SUM IT' for controlling and finance.

Each programme is delivered over three-to-five years with digital training, technical training and project experience, and offers exposure to workplace cultures in Italy, North America and the ASEAN region to enhance the learning experience. OCI also offers a mini MBA to equip mid and senior management with leadership skills to take their career to the next level, and a worldwide youth programme – "Build The Future"- which has to date provided Omani employees with experience within Prysmian Group of Companies in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the United Arab Emirates.

Cinzia Farisè said, "Oman is poised to enter a period of technological advancement within the manufacturing sector and expanding the Omani industry through innovation is firmly aligned with Oman Cables' mission. Our approach to investing in and empowering employees to meet the growing demands is part of a localised effort to develop an Omani team equipped with the skills and experience required to lead change and achieve the strategic goals of the company and the nation. This, our people award underlines our commitment to Oman and national industries and positions Oman Cables as ready to build a sustainable future."

ROUND-UP

BankDhofar signs pact with Oman Oil

As part of the agreement, BankDhofar will provide Oman Oil with innovative payment solutions, including Point of Sale (POS) terminals and a payment gateway for its mobile application

MUSCAT: BankDhofar and Oman Oil recently signed an agreement for payment solutions. The agreement was mutually signed by Dr Tariq Taha, Chief Retail Banking Officer, at BankDhofar, and Ali Muqaibal, GM International Retail from Oman Oil Marketing, with the presence of executive management team members.

As part of the agreement, BankDhofar will provide Oman Oil with innovative payment solutions, including Point of Sale (POS) terminals and a payment gateway for its mobile application.

Upon signing the agreement, Dr Tariq Taha, Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar, said: "We are proud to sign the agreement with Oman Oil to provide them with innovative payment solutions, which will facilitate their business operations.

"The agreement will positively reflect on the experience of the customers of Oman Oil, especially users of the Oman Oil mobile App and Basma card.

"At BankDhofar, providing innovative products, services and solutions to our customers has always been our priority."

The POS terminals provided by BankDhofar will ensure highly secured, and quick payments. On the other hand, BankDhofar's payment gateway will enable customers to enjoy a better experience when it comes to purchasing or top-up Basma cards through Oman Oil mobile app.

BankDhofar is one of the best banks in the region, catering to customers' needs and requirements, and setting the standard for the best customer experience within the banking industry in the Sultanate through innovative products and creative solutions. Following best international banking practices, provision of outstanding customer experience, in addition to its commitment to community development and contribution to the growth of the national economy, has placed BankDhofar at the top of the list of best banks in the region.

RECOGNITION

Atyab wins Quality Award at OER summit

MUSCAT: AtyabFood Industries was recently presented with the 'Exceeding Customers Quality Expectations' Award for its products at the OER Manufacturing Summit and Awards 2022.

Organised by UMS Events, the topic of the summit was 'Smart Manufacturing: Enhancing competitiveness, innovation and transformation'. It was held at the Sheraton Oman Hotel under the patronage of Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry.

This award was presented to Atyab in recognition of its consistently high quality across its line of more than 300 products. The company has also recently begun operating in the United Arab Emirates as part of its expansion plan to bolster its presence throughout the Middle East.

SUPPORT

Ministry of Sports joins as strategic partner for Al Mouj Muscat Marathon

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth signed an agreement with Sabco Sports to become a strategic partner for the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon.

The agreement was signed by Muhammad Ahmed Al-Amri, Director General of Sports Activities in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and Ali Sulaiman Al-Ajmi, Acting General Manager of Sabco Sports. Through this agreement, the ministry will support the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon in its mission to encourage a healthy and an active lifestyle, which is in line with the Oman 2040 vision of building a sustainable and healthy society in which the culture of "health is everyone's responsibility" is rooted.

Biggest running event

The Al Mouj Muscat Marathon is on course to be the biggest international running event in Oman. Registrations are open for the two-day festival of running, which takes place on November 11 and 12 at Oman's premium lifestyle destination, Al Mouj Muscat. The event has become a symbol of pride and prestige for the country and contributes to its global recognition.

Ali Sulaiman Al-Ajmi, Acting General Manager of Sabco Sports, said after signing the agreement, "We are pleased to have the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth as a strategic partner for the Al Mouj Muscat Marathon, as they will have a major role in the success of the event to achieve its planned sports, economic, tourism and health goals. Their partnership with this event is invaluable. This year, Al Mouj Muscat Marathon is anticipated to witness a huge number of local as well as international participants. We are working hard to provide a bold, unique and unforgettable experience, in cooperation with the Oman Athletics Association as well.

The highly anticipated Al Mouj Muscat Marathon features five different race distances to cater to a variety of fitness levels and experiences. The 42km marathon and 21.2km half-marathon and 10km runs are certified by the world-running organization AIMS, aligning the event with International Association of Athletic Federation (IAAF) standards and adding to competitive runners' rankings. There is also a 5km run and Kids' Run of 1km, 2km and 3km open to young runners aged 7-12 years old. The kids' category races are already sold out, leaving a very limited number of slots available for the 5 km and above categories. All competitors who cross the finish line will receive medals, in addition to event t-shirts.

FOOD FESTIVAL

First edition of Salalah Eat to be hosted at Hawana Salalah

MUSCAT: Hawana Salalah, Muriya flagship destination in the Governorate of Dhofar, will host the first edition of the Salalah Eat Festival from August 4-13.

Salalah Eat will feature the largest food festival in Oman and bring together over 80 food stalls and trucks from local food and beverage providers covering a wide range of Small & Medium Enterprises, as well as home businesses for 10 days of food, live entertainment, and fun for the whole family. Muriya, the developer of Hawana Salalah is a partnership between the leading government arm for tourism development in Oman, Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran), and the internationally acclaimed developer of fully-integrated towns, Orascom Development Holding (ODH).

"We are delighted to welcome Salalah Eat to Hawana Salalah. This is a great opportunity to fall in love with local and international cuisines made by some of the finest foodies in Oman and enjoy the entertainment in a wonderful climate during the mesmerising season of Khareef," said Karim Boushra, Area Destinations Director at Muriya.

"Hawana Salalah is the perfect place to host such a fun festival and welcome visitors back to the Governorate of Dhofar in general where they can enjoy the world-class hospitality, wide variety of restaurants, cafes and facilities that form the heart of Hawana Salalah's bustling, vibrant multi-national community."

Organised by Celebrate Oman, Salalah Eat follows in the footsteps of the incredibly successful Muscat Eat by branching out to major cities across Oman to showcase talented chefs and home cooks and introduce visitors to new styles of food available on their doorstep.

With this event taking place at Hawana Salalah and the expected visitors from across Oman and the GCC for the Khareef season, more than 50,000 people are expected to visit the destination. Set on 13.6 million square metres of land along a 7km stretch of white sandy beaches, the destination is Oman's largest and fastest-growing tourism destination and features over 1,100 hotel rooms and Oman's first water theme park all within a short walk of the 170-berth marina.

STRATEGIC

100 Inspire CEO Forum kicks off today

The forum will discuss a number of issues such as the current challenges facing the economic sector

MUSCAT: The 100 Inspire CEO Forum, organised by Alizz Islamic Bank in collaboration with Oman Arab Bank, will be held at Rozna Restaurant today with the participation of more than 200 CEOs from various entities and organisations operating in the Sultanate.

The forum will discuss a number of issues such as the current challenges facing the economic sector, in addition to highlighting some local, regional and international experiences in addressing and overcoming any obstacles that the economy may have faced over the past two years due to the pandemic.

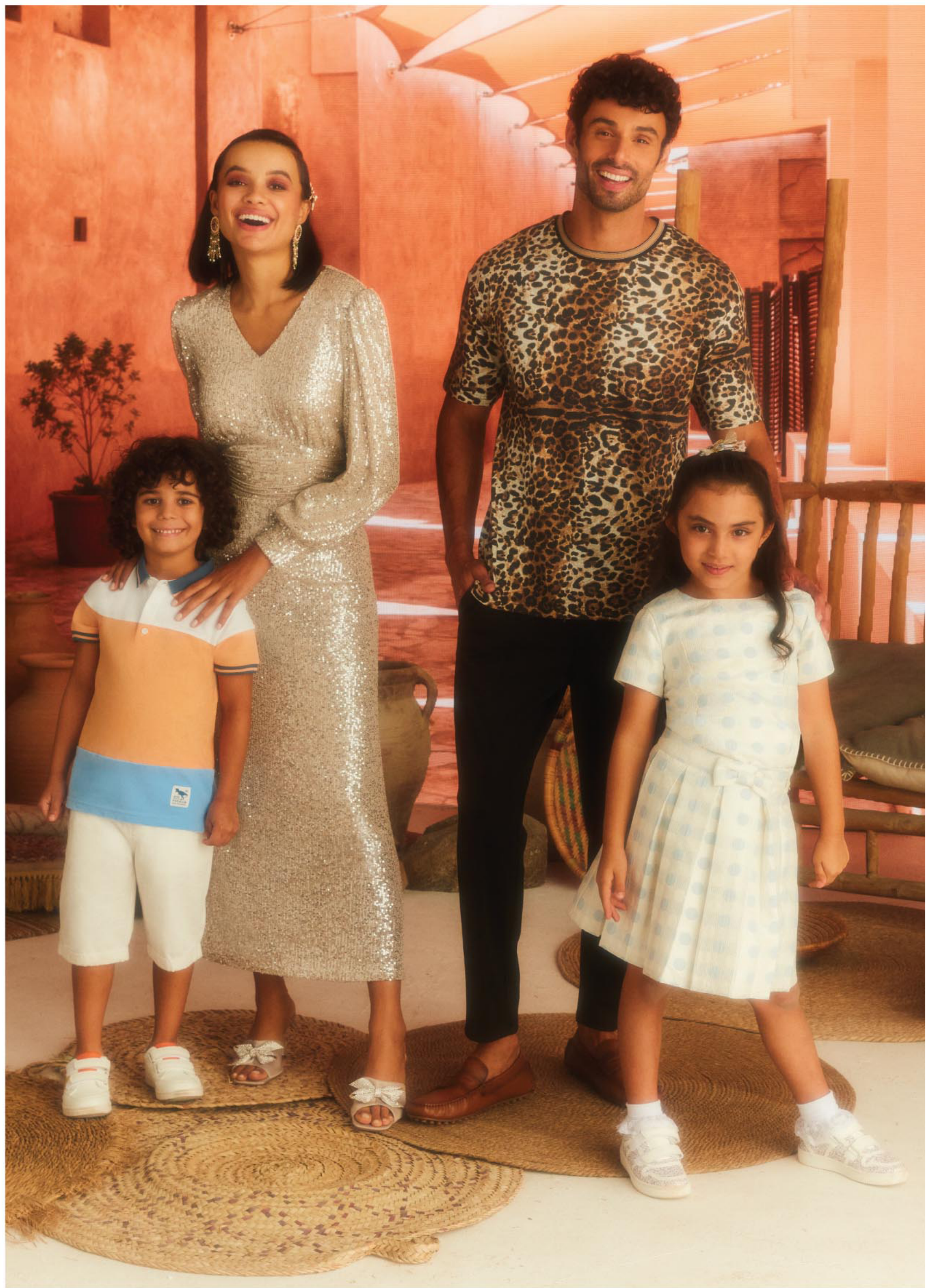
The forum will carry out a comprehensive assessment on how to enhance the roles of the private sector to be in line with the government perspectives in terms of job creation and contribution to the GDP to enhance liquidity, which in turn facilitates understanding of the current situation and developing a clear strategy based on facts, rather than assumptions.

Abdul Aziz Al Balushi, Group CEO of Ominvest, and Tariq Qureishy, Founder and CEO of MAD Talks, will present insights that cover several strategic topics on how to build a productive and diverse economy based on innovation, the integration of roles and equal opportunities, expanding businesses regionally and globally, as well as how to enhance the role played by the private sector in tandem with the global economy to achieve sustainable and comprehensive development and meet the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Commenting on the forum, Abdul Aziz Al Balushi, Group CEO at Ominvest said, "We strongly believe in our purpose statement at Ominvest of "Transforming Businesses to Enrich Societies" and it is forums like this that give us and the private sector the opportunity to collectively contribute to advancing the economic sector in the Sultanate of Oman. I am delighted to share and receive insight from reputable CEOs across Oman and hope this forum can lead to making a positive change for the sector."

The forum aspires to develop strategic resolutions that promote partnerships with various economic entities, and new investment opportunities in different fields that contribute to enhancing the Sultanate's GDP, as well as attracting direct foreign investments, particularly in light of the diverse facilities granted to investors, including a supportive environment for expanding the production base of various sectors, and utilisation of modern technologies in various fields.

Today, the Sultanate gives priority to enhancing the efforts of the private sector and strengthening investment in high-value sectors to promote In-Country Value regionally and internationally, in addition to creating job opportunities for skilled Omani youth with the participation of government organisations; aligning the labour market structure with global developments to incorporate future jobs increasing the percentage of skilled cadres in the workforce by the implementation of the principles of governance, improving performance and conducting assessments in order to enhance performance enablers.



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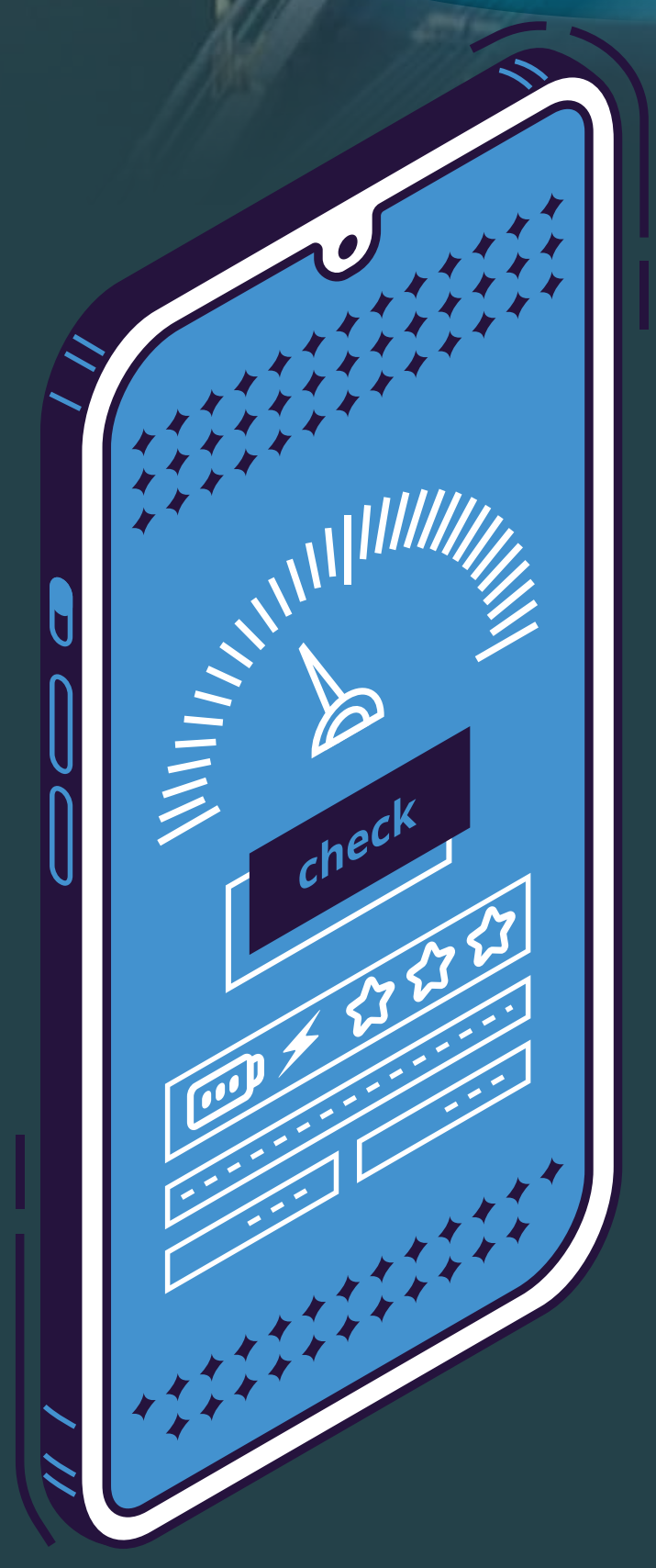

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