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MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION VEHICLES REGISTERED IN OMAN TILL JUNE 2021

The total number of vehicles registered till June 2021 increased by 0.1 per cent) to reach 1,541,562, compared to 1,539,994 till May, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). **>A4**



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Oman, Iran review
bilateral relations

A4

VACCINATION OF STUDENTS BEGINS

The three-week
drive targets
320,000 public
and private school
students in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: School-going students aged 12 and above have started receiving COVID-19 vaccines, as part of Oman's efforts to vaccinate them before the start of the new school year.

The campaign, which is expected to run for three weeks, targets 320,000 students from private and public schools across the country's 11 governorates, with 90,000 students shortlisted for vaccinations in Muscat alone.

Vaccinating the new target groups got off to a positive start: on the first day of immunisation, Tuesday, August 3, vaccination centres such as the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Madinat Al Irfan saw good turnout from those eligible for the jab.

"It is important that students who come to us are above the age of 12," said Dr Lamia Al Balushi, the head of the epidemiological investigation team at the Directorate General of Health Services in Muscat Governorate. "Those who have been in contact with COVID-19 patients, or have respiratory diseases, are requested to reschedule their vaccine appointments until their symptoms



have subsided."

The campaign to immunise students is being jointly run by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.

The vaccination of students continues alongside the Ministry of Health's efforts to inoculate the other target groups in the country, which includes providing second doses to those who

have taken their first shots at least 10 weeks prior.

The OCEC and Quriyat Health Centre are the two main locations in Muscat where vaccinations are being administered. They are open from 8 am to 2:30 pm from Sunday to Thursday.

People in Oman, who wish to be vaccinated, need to register themselves on the Tarassud app, or through the ministry's website, www.covid19.moh.gov.om. Registration is mandatory, as it allows for smooth and uninterrupted vaccination of people.

On entering the site/app, those who wish to register for the vaccination must first fill in the governorate and wilayat they live in, and are requested to provide their date of birth and ID card number. **>A3**

Sanitisers can cause eye injuries

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Medical professionals in Oman have advised parents to make sure their children do not put hand sanitiser lotions into their eyes, either accidentally or on purpose, because the harm it causes them might be irreversible.

With sanitiser bottles a relatively new concept in many homes, having only been bought in large numbers since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, small children might not be fully aware as to what happens if they mishandle the contents within.

If they enter the eye, says Dr Sudha Ramesh, an ophthalmologist at NMC Healthcare, they could damage the surface of the eye, cause burning, or even affect a person's vision by forming a cloudy layer over the cornea of the eye.

"The chemicals in hand sanitisers make them mildly toxic to the eye, and the main effect of this is severe burning and redness," she said. **>A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Expats hopeful

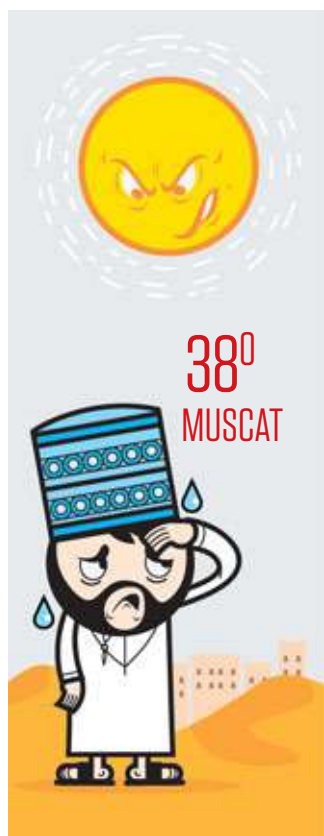
1 Expats stuck back home due to travel restrictions are now hopeful of early return to Oman as some Gulf countries lift flight restrictions. **>A3**

WORLD Heat wave in Greece

2 Greece is being hit by its worst heat wave in more than 30 years, the nation's Prime Minister said. **>A7**

MARKET Oman's wealth up

3 Oman's financial wealth grew annually at 3.8 per cent CAGR from 2015 to reach \$64 billion in 2020. **>B1**



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TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12.18pm
Asr.....	3.42pm
Maghrib.....	6.53pm
Isha.....	8.10pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4.17am

Times of Oman

VOL 9, NO. 23

MUSCAT, THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 1983 - SHAWAL 25, 1403

PRICE BAIZAS 200

Supreme Court plan studied

The Ministry of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs is working on a plan to establish a Supreme Court to work as the highest judiciary in the country.

The plan which is still at discussion stage envisages the construction of a building for the proposed court at Al Khuwair.

In the present judicial system of Oman there are Shariah courts an Appellate Court and the Committee for Mercy Appeals. It is believed that the proposed Supreme Court would have powers to review cases referred to it from lower courts and to hear mercy appeals.

by Muzaffar Mohammad

The Ministry's programme to modernise Shariah courts received a boost this year with the completion of new court buildings in Nizwa, Samad al Shaan and Khaboura.

The new court buildings in Mudaibi, Ibra and Seeb will be ready in two months. The buildings have been constructed at a cost of

R.O. 135,000 each.

Work on the new building for the Ministry of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs at Al Khuwair will start shortly.

The building which will cost R.O. 2.158 million is expected to be ready by November next year. A contract for the building which has been designed by Cansult, has been awarded to Qurm Contractors. The Directorate General of Public Works is supervising the project.

The three storey building will have offices of four directorates general of the Ministry on the ground floor. The first floor will be provided with offices of the two Under Secretaries. The second floor will be for offices of the Minister and the Grand Mufti.

The building which will be an example of Islamic and Omani architecture will be provided with a mosque.



Under Secretaries and diplomats at the opening of the third National Camp for the Disabled.

Camp for disabled opens at Wattayeh

The third National Camp for Disabled began at the Institute of Islamic Education in Wattayeh on Monday.

The camp was opened by Sayyid Motasim bin Hamoud, Minister of State and Chairman of the Musandam Development Committee at a ceremony which was attended by several Under Secretaries, Gulf diplomats and UN experts.

The 10-day camp will be the scene of wide ranging activities for the 65 participants who include three each from the five other Gulf states.

The programme includes lectures, literary, social and cultural competitions, workshops, exhibitions, sight-seeing and musical evenings with Omani youth.

The ceremony began with the National Anthem followed by a recitation from the Holy Quran by a disabled student from Qatar.

Mr. Said, leader of the Omani disabled group, welcomed the guests and thanked the National Committee of the Disabled for organising the camp.

Mr. Amer Shuwain al Hosni, Chairman of the National Committee for the Disabled spoke of the Government's efforts for the less fortunate section of the society. He called upon the people to help the Government to fulfil this task.

Sayyid Motasim bin Hamoud urged disabled people to make optimum use of the treatment and education facilities provided for them by the Government and other organisations.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs made arrangements for the camp. Khoula Hospital has set up a clinic at the camp.

Workshops for carpentry, electrical and designing have been set up at the camp. The products manufactured by them will be displayed at an exhibition at the camp.

Local youth clubs will entertain the disabled to dinner and musical evenings.

Sheikh Ahmad bin Hamad al Khalili, Grand Mufti of Oman, gave a lecture on Islamic education at the camp on Monday.

Sheikh Abdalla Ghanem, President of the Middle East Committee for the Blind will address the participants on Saturday. Madame Badriya Abdalla al Awdh from Kuwait will speak on Sunday.

Tomorrow the disabled will visit Rustaq and Hazam for sight-seeing.

Major General Hassan Ehsan Nessib, Under Secretary of Defence will be the chief guest at the concluding ceremony on Wednesday.

● Pictures on page 5.

State Council meeting

The State Consultative Council will meet on August 7 at the Ghubra Guest House.

The meeting will be presided over by the Council President Mr. Khalfan Nasser al Wahaibi.

The session, the third this year, will discuss various subjects relating to the national economy.

The announcement for the meeting was made this week by Mr. Ahmad Nabhani, Secretary General of the Council.

Over 10,000 Oman Haj pilgrims are expected

The Ministry of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs opened its counters on Monday to start the registration of over 10,000 pilgrims who are expected to perform Haj this year.

The office has been opened in the white building on the road to Al Falaj behind the Ministerial Complex in Ruwi which houses offices of the Directorate General of Islamic Affairs.

The Ministry has announced rules for pilgrims wanting to proceed to Saudi Arabia for Haj by road or by air.

There is no restriction on individuals or groups to go in their private cars provided the number of people in a vehicle does not exceed 12. Large groups will have to join Haj caravans which are being organised by private contractors.

The intending pilgrims are

required to contact the registration office with their passports and two photographs. They will be issued Haj cards and will be sent to the Department of Communicable Diseases in Darseit for a medical checkup.

On completion of the health check up and on getting travel documents, including visas and air ticket or road permit the applicants must go back to the registration counter to get a seal on the Haj card and the pilgrimage number.

The Ministry has divided Haj caravans into three categories.

Contractors in the first grouping can organise parties of 50, 25 and 12 pilgrims in vehicles registered in their own names. The second class contractors are allowed to organise groups of 25 and 20 and those in third category can arrange for groups of 25 and 12.

All the contractors will be required to arrange for a separate luggage carrier, water tanks of specified size, fire safety equipment, tents, kitchen apparatus, cooks and helpers and domestic servants. Every caravan must be accompanied by a religious leader to guide the pilgrims in Haj rites.

The contractors will have to produce a lease agreement made for accommodation in Mecca and Medina with a Saudi landlord. A personal or bank guarantee of R.O. 2,000, R.O. 1,000 and R.O. 500 will be required from contractors of the three categories respectively.

Two killed

Two workmen were killed when a car ploughed through a diversion barrier at Wadi Adei on Thursday night.

Your TV and radio programmes are on page 18



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DUBAI

Omani SME owners get product promo tips for Expo 2020

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Small and medium business owners from Oman taking part at Expo 2020 in Dubai were provided ideas on how to sell their products and advertise them to potential customers when they travel to the UAE later this year.

Featuring a number of workshops, lectures and seminars intended to give business owners advice, the Expo 2020 awareness campaign is being run from July 1 until the end of October, and will focus on those involved in manufacturing and production.

This campaign is among the initiatives supported by the country, represented by the General Commission of the Sultanate at the Expo 2020 Dubai in cooperation with a number of government entities including the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Social Development, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Authority for SME Development, and Taiseer, the Oman Trading Platform.

The campaign for this project is managed by Taiseer, in cooperation with the Industrial Innovation Centre, Al Muheet Institute, and Muscat Media Group, who are media sponsors.

In July, nine lectures were held as part of the campaign, alongside training workshops and discussion sessions, totalling more than 22 hours of interaction. 12 lecturers and speakers were involved in leading these events, which focus on marketing models and saw participation of 950 producers, industrialists and craftsmen.

The programme for this month was inaugurated on August 2, with a workshop delivered by Mohammed Al Kamzari, a specialist at the Industrial Innovation Centre. The workshop was organised under the theme “Safe methods for import of industrial production lines”.



This workshop will be followed by another, on August 4, titled “Manufacturers: between design and position”, which is to be delivered by Mohammed Khurais.

Another workshop on August 5, called “Training and development; your way to excellence”, will be helmed by Jamal Al Hadi from Oman Post.

A lecture on the “Concept of sustainability and economies of SMEs” will be delivered by Musab Al Sabahi, from Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be’ah) on Sunday, August 8. On Tuesday, August 10, a lecture on “Fluctuations of domestic manufacturing and mechanisms of development” has been scheduled by Dr Bashaer Al Riyami from the Industrial Innovation Centre.

A workshop on the preparation of product posters as per GCC specifications is scheduled for 12 August, and will be delivered by Atyab Food Tech Labs. Following this is a lecture on “Management of small projects” by Mohammed Suwailim from Al Muheet Institute on August 15.

A discussion session on the “Craftsmen of the 21st Century” will be held on August 17, following by one on recycling two days later, hosted by Muneera Al Mukhaini from Oman LNG.

Expats hopeful of early end to travel restrictions

With Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE allowing fully vaccinated passengers from travel ban list countries to enter, Oman residents stuck back home are hopeful of return

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Expatriates, who are unable to come back to Oman due to the current entry ban on passengers from certain countries, are hopeful that they will be allowed to return soon, after other Gulf countries loosened entry restrictions.

Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates are among those GCC countries that have allowed fully vaccinated passengers to enter. On July 30, Qatar announced rules for expatriates coming from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

“Travellers who have been vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 in the State of Qatar, coming from one of these countries, are subject to a hotel quarantine for a period of two days, and the quarantine period will end after obtaining a negative PCR test result on the second day,” said the country’s Ministry of Public Health.

“All other travellers coming from these countries are subject to hotel quarantine for a period of 10 days,” added the ministry.



Passengers arriving in Qatar from other countries, if fully vaccinated, do not need to undergo quarantine, upon receipt of a positive antibody test taken on arrival. Those who are unvaccinated/partially vaccinated, however, must quarantine on arrival. From August 5, fully vaccinated residents of the UAE from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Nigeria, and Uganda, will be allowed to return.

Similarly, Kuwait on August 1, welcomed its first group of fully vaccinated residents, reported KUNA, the country’s news agency. “Vaccinated non-Kuwaitis with Pfizer, Oxford AstraZeneca, and Moderna, or a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are allowed to enter the country, and must adhere to the procedures of health authorities,” added KUNA.

In the wake of these measures, Saif Mohammed, a Pakistani national employed in Oman as an engineer, was hopeful he would soon be able to board a direct flight to Muscat. “We hope that with the

COVID situation getting better and more people getting vaccinated, we will soon be allowed to fly back,” he said. “This time has been tough for us, and we are looking forward to the day we can book tickets to Oman.”

Rohan George, an Indian national, said that while he would be sad to leave his family in India, he is keen to resume work in-person. “My company fortunately has a policy that allows us to work remotely during these unpredictable times, but things are slowly getting back to normal, and all of us sincerely hope they get better in the coming months,” he said.

Filipino national Ronald Castro has also been waiting for restrictions to be eased, so that he can resume work. “I needed to travel home for personal reasons, but was unable to return because of the entry ban,” he said. “Now that we see other Gulf countries lift restrictions, we hope this will soon take place in Oman as well.”

With direct entry from a number

of countries, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the UK, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and many others still not permitted, some expatriates have sought alternate routes to Oman, choosing to fly through third countries. Because of the costs and additional quarantine rules associated with these travel arrangements, however, demand is still relatively low. “We had seen a good number of people make bookings before the recent Eid Al Adha holidays,” said Faiyaz Khan, general manager for Travel Point, a travel agency in the country.

“However, since then, bookings and enquiries have really fallen, because people are not willing to spend so much money – it costs about OMR500 to come back via Qatar, and that’s excluding flight tickets. Money is tight for some people during these times, so they are waiting for direct flights to reopen,” he added. “We get a lot of people requesting us to inform them when direct flight packages are available.”

Trending

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

26,540 REACH



Report on Kuwait begins receiving expats

 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

3,400 VIEWS



Fighting Covid episode

 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

1,160 LIKES



Photo story on electricity bills to be recalculated

COVID-19

< FROM

A1

309 fresh cases

Once these details have been provided, people must sign a vaccine declaration form indicating their willingness to take the jab. Subsequently, on receiving a one-time PIN, registrants will then be able to select a vaccination centre of their choice, and their preferred appointment date. They will then be sent an appointment letter that they can bring with them on the day of their vaccination.

Oman recorded 309 fresh infections of COVID-19 on Tuesday, and reported nine new deaths from the disease, according to the Ministry of Health statistics. So far, 297,431 people have tested positive for the disease, since the start of the pandemic, while 280,927 people have recovered from the virus. Sadly, however, 3,877 people have succumbed to the coronavirus. The country’s COVID recovery rate stands at 94.5 per cent.

Over the last 24 hours, 35 people were admitted to hospitals to seek treatment for COVID-19. There are 210 people currently in intensive care, of the 485 patients currently in hospital.

Earlier, the country’s Minister of Health, Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Saidi, had said there were plans to vaccinate all eligible students before the start of the school term, so that they could continue their education normally.



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Marginal rise in registered vehicles in June over May



NEW REGISTRATIONS: While the vehicles with commercial registration reached 232,168 (15.1 percent), the number of taxis was 29,078 (1.9 percent). -**ONA**

Vehicles with

private registration accounted for 79.2 percent of the total number of registered vehicles, reaching 1,220,521

MUSCAT: The data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicate that the total number of vehicles registered till June 2021 increased by 0.1 percent to reach 1.54 million, compared to 1.53 million at the end of May 2021.

Vehicles with private registra-

tion accounted for 79.2 percent of the total number of registered vehicles, reaching 1,220,521.

As for vehicles with commercial registration, the number reached 232,168 (15.1 percent), while the number of taxis was 29,078 (1.9 percent). The number of rental vehicles stood at 22,760 (1.5 percent) of the total vehicles registered until the end of June 2021.

The number of government vehicles reached 12,328, while the number of vehicles with temporary registration (temporary inspection, export and import) was 10,687. The number of registered motorbikes was 6,104, while the driving tutoring vehicles reached 5,792. Meanwhile, the agricultural tractors reached 1,301, and the number of diplomatic vehicles reached 823.

Among colours, white was the most preferred colour for vehicles in the Sultanate with 662,718 (43 percent). Silver was the second choice with 198,269 (12.9 per-

cent), while gray came as the third most prominent vehicle colour with about 124,200 (8.1 percent) vehicles.

As for engine capacity, the NCSI report indicated that the majority of vehicles (826,972) have engine capacities between 1500 and 3000 cc while 350,218 vehicles have engine capacities between 3001 and 4500cc. The number of vehicles with engine capacity above 4500 cc stood at 200,535. There were 115,025 vehicles with engine capacity less than 1500cc. About 48,812 vehicles functioned without engines as they were designed and manufactured to be towed by another vehicle.

In terms of weights, the report stated that the majority of vehicles weighed less than 3 tonnes, reaching 1,389,728. As many as 69,910 vehicles weighed more than 10 tonnes. About 44,963 vehicles weighed from 3 to 7 tonnes and 36,961 vehicles from 7 to 10 tonnes. -**ONA**

MEETING



Oman, Iran review bilateral relations and joint cooperation

TEHRAN: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister held this evening a session of talks with Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The session reviewed the bilateral relations and the joint cooperation in different spheres between the two countries. The two sides affirmed their keenness in enhancing those relations to serve their joint interests for the good of their peoples.

The session also touched on regional and international developments of mutual interest.

Sayyid Badr underscored the

importance of continuing to work on finding consensus in political solutions through peaceful dialogue and by backing all efforts exerted to achieve peace and security in the region.

Historic relations

In his turn, Dr Zarif commended the historical relations between the two countries, and the wise political role played by the Sultanate in dealing calmly with different issues.

He also stressed the importance of the joint and multilateral cooperation, as well as the endeavours of establishing peace

and stability.

The session was attended by Ibrahim Ahmed Al Mu'aini, Oman's Ambassador to Iran and officials from the two countries' foreign ministries.

Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, Sayyid Badr arrived in Iran's capital, Tehran earlier on Tuesday to represent the Sultanate in the swearing-in ceremony of the Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi.

Sayyid Badr was received upon his arrival in Mehrabad International Airport by Iranian officials and members of the Omani embassy in Tehran. - **ONA**

PROMOTING TOURISM

Sultanate opens tourism representation office in China

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has opened a tourism representation office for the Sultanate in China.

The year-long contract lasts from August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022 and it is renewable. The step comes within the context of a comprehensive system to develop and renew marketing plans and programmes being conducted by the Ministry to promote the Sultanate's tourism attractions through its offices abroad.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism deemed it necessary to expand its activities in the Chi-



nese market after the number of tourists from the People's Republic of China increased by 141 per cent in 2018 and 2019 to 219,717.

In particular, the office in China will serve as a link connecting visitors of Expo Dubai 2020 to tourism packages that include visiting

the Sultanate during the Expo's period.

The tourism representation office will play a role in raising the awareness of target Chinese visitors through campaigns aimed at promoting the Sultanate as a key tourism destination.

The office will also cement ties between local sector partners (companies and hotels) and their Chinese counterparts. It seeks to generate maximum benefits from the tourism sector. The office will establish long range business relations that benefits both sides.

- **ONA**

SAFETY MEASURES

Parents must advise children on how to safely use sanitisers

"The moment you know the sanitiser lotion has gotten into your eye, apply cool water to the affected area, and continue to wash it until you reach the hospital. If you administer first aid, then by the time you get here, we will be able to help you," said Dr Sudha Ramesh.

Ramesh did say she had come across a few patients who did need medical assistance because they had squirted sanitisers into their eyes.

Cases like these are often treated through eye washing, drops, and medicines.

"Patients who treat themselves properly and then come to us recover within a very short time," she explained. "However, those who fail to follow proper first aid are only risking further harm. Depending on which area of the eye the sanitiser affects, the consequences can vary. If it affects your cornea, for example, your vision might get cloudy or blurred."

"It is worse if you don't take care of your eyes properly and they are not healthy, because then, the cloudiness will persist and permanently affect your vision," she said. "It won't lead to blindness, but you are definitely risking your eyesight under such conditions. Parents must make sure they advise their children on how to use sanitisers, because they are too small to know on their own."

Anuya Phule, a psychotherapist at Hatat Polyclinic, is herself the mother of two small children, the younger of who loves playing with sanitiser bottles, sometimes squirting so much of it that he empties several of them in a day.

For children to seek out something that is different or unusual from the normal is part of their

behaviour, she explains, which makes it all the more important for parents to keep a keen eye on them, and restrict access to items such as these that are potentially harmful.

"Children are used to washing their hands with water, but for them, hand sanitisers are something new," she said. "This after all feels different, is cool to the touch, and evaporates quickly. Many young children have never experienced something like this. They have the same fascination with creams, because they feel so different."

"Their inquisitiveness means they often seek out those items that feel or taste different from the norm, so parents need to keep a watchful eye on their young ones...their curiosity is a natural part of growing up," added Phule.

Recently, at the Cleveland Clinic in Abu Dhabi, the capital of Oman's neighbouring United Arab Emirates, doctors were required to perform surgery on the eye of a four-year-old girl after she inadvertently squirted a large amount of sanitiser into it.

The accident occurred when the child activated a foot-operated hand sanitiser station installed in a public place that she was visiting with her family and got hand sanitiser gel in her eye. When she pressed the pedal of the dispenser, the hand sanitizer didn't fall downwards, but instead, a large amount went straight into her eye and she began screaming in pain.

The child presented to Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi with extreme pain and inability to open her eye. Doctors immediately washed the solution from the child's eye, administered antibiotics to prevent infection and pain drops to reduce discomfort.

She was diagnosed with a near total corneal abrasion caused by the alcohol and alkaline chemical additives in the hand gel. When the pain continued to escalate despite close follow-up over the following days by caregivers from Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi's Eye Institute, the child was taken to the operating room where doctors evaluated her eye under anaesthesia and placed a self-retaining amniotic membrane, or biological bandage used to heal large non-healing corneal abrasions.

"Hand sanitiser dispensers installed in public spaces are often at waist-level for adults but this means that they are at eye-level for children," said Dr Brian Armstrong, staff physician at Cleveland Clinic, who was part of the care team assigned to the young patient.

"With this child, the pain may have increased over time as the alkaline solution penetrated deeper into her cornea," he added.

"Immediate irrigation is advised in these cases, and manual opening of the eye may be required. It is important to irrigate away from the unaffected eye to prevent any further damage," he explained.

"This is the kind of injury we would typically see among workers who are exposed to toxic materials or a chemical spill on a worksite. Delayed treatment of such injuries can have even worse repercussions in children compared to adults because their vision is still developing at such a young age. The risk of amblyopia, where vision fails to develop properly, is much higher at this age. The likelihood of complications following corneal transplantation, if necessary, is also much higher at this age."

Investment Manager Report

On behalf of the Fund Management Board, I am pleased to present the un-audited financial results of Al Hilal MENA Fund for the quarter ended 30 June 2021.

	30-June-21	30-June-20	31-Dec-20
Number of units	3,215,100	3,215,000	3,216,100
Net asset value (RO)	2,135,580	1,891,027	2,309,660
Net asset value per unit(RO)	0.664	0.646	0.718
Net profit/(loss)	(147,173)	(-264,854)	(29,615)

Al Hilal MENA Fund has closed the first half of 2021 -7.6% lower year to date as the Fund Management Board took the decision to write down illiquid investments to fair value. The decision to write-down illiquid investment has been taken to more closely reflect the value of the underlying investments and position the Fund to grow and build a solid track record going forward from 2Q 2021 onwards. The Fund manager continues to look for opportunities to sell these illiquid positions, in which case there may be reversals on these provisions.

Without taking the provisions into account, the Al Hilal MENA Fund closed 12.5% higher in the first half of 2021 and +7.6% in the second quarter of 2021. The new Fund Management team has put in place a new investment process driven by in-depth fundamental analysis and bottom-up stock picking. The allocation for the portfolio has been re-structured to reflect the underlying fundamentals, liquidity in regional markets and benchmark weights. As a result, allocation to Saudi has increased from ~20% to ~48% and allocation to UAE and Qatar have also been increased. The re-positioning has already started to show positive results reflected in the positive portfolio performance for 2Q 2021.

Markets Performance

Global and regional markets have had a strong start to the year with ongoing roll-out of vaccines, additional fiscal and monetary support from central banks, and strong rebound in the oil prices jumping almost +45% to levels not seen since September 2018. All factors are giving investor's the necessary confidence to continue investing in the equity markets. As a result, the MSCI World Index was up by +12% YTD whilst regional markets such as Abu Dhabi and Saudi were the best performing markets, closing +36% YTD and +26% YTD respectively. Kuwait, Dubai, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman also closed in the green while Egypt closed marginally lower.

*As of 30 June 2021

In key developments for the quarter under review, the OPEC+ Meeting that happened at the quarter end provided much uncertainty in the oil market as UAE refused to raise the base ceiling of production whilst Saudi Arabia and Russia were in favour of it. Investors are currently placing a keen eye on the development that will unfold in the future regarding the divide between the three nations. As for the latest news regarding inflation, Jerome Powell, Federal Reserve Chairman of the USA, reiterated his statement regarding interest rates being transitory and that tapering and raising of rates will most likely happen beyond the year of 2022. The Delta Variant on the other end continues to pose considerable risk to the reopening of economies across the globe. Markets seem to currently be brushing it over however the risk to travel, entertainment, retail and cyclical themes continues to be prevalent and watched closely.

Regionally, Saudi Arabia introduced a new investment program called Shareef, which aims to establish a partnership between the government and private sector to further domestic investments and support economic growth. The overall investment encompasses a SAR3 Trillion injection into the program and provides a positive sentiment boost on the overall economic outlook for the country.

Market Outlook

Our longer-term outlook is positive for global and regional equities as all key factors such as a low interest rate environment, high liquidity, strong earning power, robust relative economic growth in key countries provide some certainty on the overall trend of the capital markets. In the near term, we are slightly more cautious amidst uncertainty with inflation, the 2Q earnings season and resurgence of the Delta variant. Within the region we prefer stocks in Dubai and Qatar while we are more selective in Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait. Overall, the Fund is now positioned to take advantage of current market opportunities.

صندوق الهلال للشركات الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا

Al Hilal MENA Fund

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2021			
	Unaudited June 2021	Unaudited June 2020	Audited Dec 2020
	RO	RO	RO
Assets			
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	2,119,096	1,782,505	2,079,446
Cash and cash equivalents	22,858	298,779	238,344
Dividend Receivable	-	5,536	-
Total assets	2,141,954	2,086,820	2,317,790
Liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	6,275	11,190	8,130
Amount due to unitholders	99	105	-
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	2,135,580	2,075,525	2,309,660
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	2,141,954	2,086,819	2,317,790
Net assets per unit attributable to the unitholders	0.664	0.646	0.718
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 2021			
	Unaudited June 2021	Unaudited June 2020	Audited Dec 2020
Income			
Dividend income	40,722	46,457	46,861
Wakala profit	212	-	452
Other income	-	371	-
Total income	40,934	46,828	47,313
Net realised gain/(loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	93,820	(74,832)	(46,420)
Net unrealised (loss)/gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(281,927)	(208,883)	29,080
Net investment income	(147,173)	(236,887)	29,973
Expenses			
Management fees	(14,406)	(14,125)	(27,979)
Custody fees	(1,673)	(2,486)	(3,000)
General and administrative expenses	(9,990)	(10,356)	(28,608)
Total expenses	(26,069)	(26,967)	(59,587)
(Loss) and total comprehensive (losses)/income (Decrease) in net assets attributable to the unitholders for the period	(173,242)	(263,854)	(29,614)
(Loss) per unit	(0.075)	(0.081)	(0.009)



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ROP issues guidelines for khareef season in Dhofar

This year's khareef season is exceptional compared to the past years due to the COVID-19, said the Royal Oman Police



SAFETY TIP: The Royal Oman Police stresses that all visitors to the governorate should choose the appropriate time after the driver has taken rest, and avoid driving for a long distance without stopping.

curity and order in cooperation with the competent authorities."

The ROP also seeks to provide the best services and ensure police presence in all locations of the Dhofar Governorate and the roads leading to it, in accordance with the procedures it undertakes, such as monitoring public places, addressing the public, directing people, whether citizens or residents, not to gather and crowding, and educating them about its risks to limit the spread of the virus.

Lieutenant-Colonel Saeed Al Buraiki, Director of Salalah Traffic at the Dhofar Governorate Police Command, says, "The efforts of the Salalah Traffic Department in the khareef season are to implement the decisions of the Supreme

Committee, by developing traffic plans and preparing to receive visitors to the governorate and traffic spread on all main roads to facilitate smooth flow of traffic, in addition to monitoring the locations of traffic lights and monitoring and apprehending violators of the provisions of the traffic law."

The Royal Oman Police is keen to ensure the presence of police, civil defence and ambulance personnel along the roads leading to the Governorate of Dhofar, in addition to the support of police aviation for emergency cases, in order to serve road users and provide them with the necessary assistance.

Captain Ahmed Al Hajri from the Dhofar Operations Depart-

ment said, "The Dhofar Governorate Police Command has prepared early for the khareef season by developing and preparing plans in the tourist sites where there is a lot of overcrowding in order to facilitate movement to avoid any traffic jams and maintain the safety of visitors, in addition to receiving reports and directing destinations. The competence to deal with and follow up on them, respond to all inquiries received to the Dhofar Operations Room, and monitor and record all security and traffic observations."

The Royal Oman Police stresses that all visitors to the governorate should choose the appropriate time after the driver has taken rest, and avoid driving for a long distance without stopping, especially in these days when temperatures are high, taking into account the time measurement.

First Lieutenant Suhail bin Muslim Tabuk from the Special Task Forces Police Unit in Salalah said, "The efforts of the Special Task Force Police in Salalah are represented in several aspects, the most important of which is the spread of patrols on the roads leading to the governorate and in tourist places and water springs, dealing with various communications and providing assistance to citizens and visitors to the governorate, in addition to preventing all violators, and providing support and assistance to the various departments and command centres of the Dhofar Governorate Police."



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DIVORCE FINALISED

Bill and Melinda Gates are officially divorced

WASHINGTON: The divorce between Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Melinda French Gates has been finalised.

A Monday filing with the King County Superior Court in Washington made the move official, CNN reported. Melinda French Gates filed the petition for divorce in King County, Washington.

Bill Gates and Melinda announced in May that they would be ending their marriage after 27 years, saying, "we no longer believe we can grow together as a couple in this next phase of our lives."

However, the duo said they will continue to work together at Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Meanwhile, the foundation said last month that the organization was planning a two-year trial period to see if the pair could continue working together effectively.

"If after two years either decides they cannot continue to



work together as co-chairs, French Gates will resign her position as co-chair and trustee," CEO Mark Suzman said.

In the weeks following the initial announcement of the divorce, Gates faced allegations of questionable workplace conduct in the early years at Microsoft. **ANI**

INVESTIGATION REPORT

Key officials 'criminally negligent' in Beirut blast, says Human Rights Watch

BEIRUT: Lebanese officials knew about the risks of hazardous chemicals in Beirut's port but did nothing to prevent the blast, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a report released on Tuesday.

The report comes as Lebanon marks one year since the explosion killed more than 200 people and devastated the capital.

HRW said that several "Lebanese authorities were, at a minimum, criminally negligent under Lebanese law in their handling" of the ammonium nitrate shipment that was brought to the port in 2013. "Evidence strongly suggests that some government officials foresaw the death that the ammonium nitrate's presence in the port could result in and tacitly accepted the risk of the deaths occurring," the report said.

Who is implicated in HRW's investigation?

The report, entitled "They Killed Us from the Inside: An investigation into the August 4 Beirut Blast," identified several senior individuals in the government, customs, the army and security agencies and accused them of negligence.

HRW based its report on documents and multiple interviews with top officials, including the



president, the caretaker prime minister and the head of the country's state security.

According to the report, then-Prime Minister Hassan Diab first started receiving reports of the ammonium nitrate shipment in June 2020. "I then forgot about it, and nobody followed up. There are disasters every day," HRW quoted Diab as saying.

The Lebanese army also "took no apparent steps to secure the material," despite knowing that the shipment's nitrogen grade was classified as material used to manufacture explosives, the report said.

According to a document seen and cited by Reuters news agency, the Lebanese president was also warned about the security risks.

What about the local investigation?

A Lebanese probe into the blast has stalled, with politicians and senior security officials yet to be questioned. Requests to lift their immunity have been hindered.

Rights group Amnesty International on Monday accused Lebanon's authorities of working against the domestic investigation.

"Lebanese authorities have spent the past year shamelessly obstructing victims' quest for truth and justice," Amnesty International said in a statement.

HRW called on the United Nations Human Rights Council to probe the blast. The rights group also urged foreign governments to impose human rights and corruption sanctions on Lebanese officials. **DW**

SANCTIONS

EU sanctions Nicaragua's vice-president Rosario Murillo

LONDON: The EU announced on Monday that it has imposed sanctions on eight members of the Nicaraguan government, including Rosario Murillo, the country's vice-president and the wife of President Daniel Ortega.

In a statement, the EU Council said the sanctions applied to those "responsible for serious human rights violations in Nicaragua and/or whose actions undermined democracy or the rule of law."

"The political use of the judicial system, the exclusion of candidates from the elections and the arbitrary delisting of opposition parties are contrary to basic democratic principles and constitute a serious violation of the rights of the Nicaraguan people," the Council said.

The EU's move comes after the US recently applied sanctions on senior Nicaraguan officials and other members of Ortega's family.

Both the EU and US are responding to a wave of repression in the Central American country that has seen the arrests of several of Ortega's political adversaries, including presidential hopefuls, ahead of a November election.

A travel ban will apply

The EU Council said that some 14 Nicaraguans would be subject to an asset freeze, while EU citizens and companies are forbidden from making funds available to them.

A travel ban, which impedes them from entering or transiting through EU territories, will also apply to those sanctioned.



"Today's additional sanctions demonstrate that the EU continues standing ready to use all its instruments to support a democratic, peaceful, and negotiated solution to the political crisis in Nicaragua," the Council said.

Ortega will run again

The Nicaraguan president is seeking a fourth consecutive term in November's general election, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party said on Monday, with Murillo again as his running mate.

"We have our formula, our candidates were elected unanimously," said Gustavo Porras, an FSLN legislator, during the party congress.

The 75-year-old president first seized control of Nicaragua after

his Sandinista guerrillas ousted the Somoza dynasty that had governed the country from 1937 to 1979.

He remained a fixture in Nicaraguan politics for 17 years after that and in 2006 was democratically elected. But since then, critics accuse him of authoritarianism, corruption and of again turning Nicaraguan politics into a family affair, much like the Somozas once did.

Amnesty International warning on Monday that Ortega had built a system of impunity likely to hamper fair elections this year.

"The road to the elections will be plagued by repressive actions implemented to make it impossible for the population to exercise their political rights without fear of reprisals," Amnesty International said in a statement. **DW**



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Greece faces worst heat wave in over three decades

The country’s July 1987 heat wave killed more than 1,000 people

ATHENS: Greece is being hit by its worst heat wave in more than 30 years, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Monday as temperatures hit as high as 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) in some regions.

His comments came as firefighters across the country battled to get hundreds of wildfires under control.

“We are facing the worst heat wave since 1987... [causing] a burden on the electricity network,” Mitsotakis told journalists.

The country’s July 1987 heat wave killed more than 1,000 people. Forecasts predict temperatures will peak later this week.

Which areas have been the worst affected?

The National Observatory of Athens, citing EU satellite images, said some 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) of pine and olive groves have been destroyed by a fire that broke out near the city of Patras, 200 kilometers (125 miles) west of Athens.

Emergency services had failed to extinguish that fire on Monday, according to Greek state news agency ANA. Extra firefighting crews were being sent to the island of Rhodes, which is close to the Turkish border, to try and get fires there under control.



WILDFIRES: Countries such as Italy, Spain and Turkey have also battled wildfires in recent weeks amid soaring temperatures.

A popular hiking spot known as “the Valley of the Butterflies” was evacuated on Sunday.

How widespread are the fires?

Authorities said there had been 116 new blazes over the past 24 hours, with more than 1,500 fires being recorded in July alone, compared to 953 in 2019.

Deputy Minister of Civil Protection Nikos Hardalias told Greece’s Star TV that “we are no longer talking about climate change but about a climate threat.”

“We are in a phase of absolute climatic deregulation,” he warned.

The hottest temperature ever recorded in Europe is 48 C, in 1977 in Athens. Forecasters predict the temperature in Larissa, central Greece, will get close to

that mark on Tuesday.

Countries such as Italy, Spain and Turkey have also battled wildfires in recent weeks amid soaring temperatures. The fires have forced thousands of people to be evacuated from their homes.

The European Union on Monday said it would send volunteers and firefighting planes to Turkey where blazes have claimed at least eight lives.

What role does climate change play?

Last month, the AFP news agency obtained a leaked draft of the latest UN report on climate change, ahead of a November summit in the British city of Glasgow.

It warned that the world could be heading for a point of no return in a bid to stem the effects of

global warming.

“Life on Earth can recover from a drastic climate shift by evolving into new species and creating new ecosystems,” AFP quoted the report as saying. “Humans cannot.”

Dann Mitchell, a professor of climate science at the University of Bristol, said the heat wave in southeast Europe “is not at all unexpected, and very likely enhanced due to human-induced climate change.”

“The number of extreme heat events around the world is increasing year on year, with the top 10 hottest years on record all occurring since 2005,” he said.

“These black swan events have always happened, but now they sit on the background of a hotter climate, so are even more deadly.” **mw**

MAJOR OFFENSIVE



Afghanistan urges civilians to evacuate besieged city

KABUL: Afghanistan’s army on Tuesday warned the residents of the besieged southwestern city of Lashkar Gah to evacuate ahead of a major offensive against Taliban militants.

Since foreign forces began the last stage of their withdrawal in early May, the Taliban seized control of much of rural Afghanistan. The United Nations on Tuesday said at least 40 civilians were killed in the last 24 hours as fighting raged in Lashkar Gah.

‘We will not leave a single Taliban alive’

General Sami Sadat of the Afghan army told Lashkar Gah residents to leave the town as soon as they could.

“Please leave as soon as possible so that we can start our operation,” he said in a message to the city of 200,000.

“I know it is very difficult for you to leave your houses — it is hard for us too — but if you are displaced for a few days, please forgive us,” he added.

“We are fighting the Taliban wherever they are. We will fight them, and... we will not leave a single Taliban alive.”

‘Intense’ fighting

Officials reported that the Taliban had seized nine out of 10 districts in Lashkar Gah, as well as more than a dozen local radio and TV stations in the city, leaving only one pro-Taliban channel.

“Fighting was intense this morning,” Sefatullah, director of Sukon radio in the city, was quoted as saying by the AFP news agency.

US and Afghan air force planes hit Taliban positions, Sefatullah said, adding that the fighting was near Lashkar Gah’s prison and a building housing police and intelligence headquarters.

The US had intensified airstrikes against the Taliban across Afghanistan in recent days.

Fighting has also been ongoing for days in the Kandahar province and in the western part of the city of Herat, in the west.

DPA news agency reported, citing a hospital official, that at least 24 people died and nearly 200 were wounded in Herat in the past six days.

Dozens of people were also reportedly killed in Kandahar and Helmand, the province of which Lashkar Gah is the capital. **mw**

MURDER PROBE

Belarusian NGO chief found murdered a day after reported missing in Ukraine

MINSK: The body of a Belarusian activist was discovered in Kyiv a day after he was reported missing, Ukrainian police said on Tuesday.

“Belarusian citizen Vitaly Shishov [...] was today found hanged in one of the Kyiv parks, not far from where he lived,” police said in a statement.

A murder probe has been opened, authorities said, adding that they would pursue all leads including a possible “murder disguised as a suicide.”

Shishov heads the Kyiv-based Belarusian House in Ukraine (BDU), an organization that helps Belarusians trying to flee persecution. The organization helps them find accommodation, employment, and legal services.

Ukraine, like Poland and Lithuania, has become a haven for Belarusians, following a crackdown on dissent in their home country by President Alexander Lukashenko.



Shishov was followed by ‘strangers’

Police said the activist was reported missing by his partner when he did not return from his morning run. Shishov’s friends said he had been followed by “strangers” recently while jogging.

The Belarusian House in Ukraine released a statement saying he was under surveillance, and “both local sources and our people in Belarus” have alerted the group to the possibility of “various provocations, including kidnapping and liquidation.”

“There is no doubt that this was a planned operation by security operatives to liquidate a Belarusian dangerous for the regime. We will continue to fight for the truth about Vitaly’s death,” the group said.

They added that Shishov was forced to move to Ukraine in the fall of 2020, after anti-government protests led to a crackdown on dissent in Belarus.

Shishov headed the Kyiv-based Belarusian House in Ukraine (BDU), an organization that helps Belarusians trying to flee persecution. The organisation helps them find accommodation, employment, and legal services

Yury Shchuchko from the Belarusian House in Ukraine told the AP news agency that Shishov was found with evidence of beating on his face.

He said Shishov felt he was being watched during his runs,

adding that strangers would approach him and try to start a conversation.

“Vitaly asked me to take care of his loved ones, he had a weird feeling,” Shchuchko said.

Olympic sprinter speaks up in Tokyo

Belarus has seen mass protests against President Alexander Lukashenko after disputed elections last year. Amid crackdown on dissent, many Belarusians have fled to nearby countries such as Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania.

Belarusian sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya was recently denied participation in the Tokyo Olympics and threatened with forced repatriation after she criticized her athletics federation on social media. She has been granted a humanitarian visa by Poland.

Lukashenko and his son have been banned from Olympic events for targeting athletes who have openly expressed opposing political views. **mw**

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Date of Campaign

Campaign Type

Description

: 4th August, 2021

: Recall Campaign

: Stop Lamp switch

Model	Year of Import	VIN - No Range	No of Vehicles
Pathfinder R52	MY13 – MY15	From 5N1AR2M50DC626031 to 5N1AR2MM6EC662430	2929

Defect and Action :

Model	Concern Background	Field Action
Pathfinder R52	For the affected Pathfinders the stop lamp relay may stick in the ON position, in this condition, the stop lamps may remain illuminated or customer can shift without depressing the brake pedal.	Inspect Brake switch relay and replace if required.

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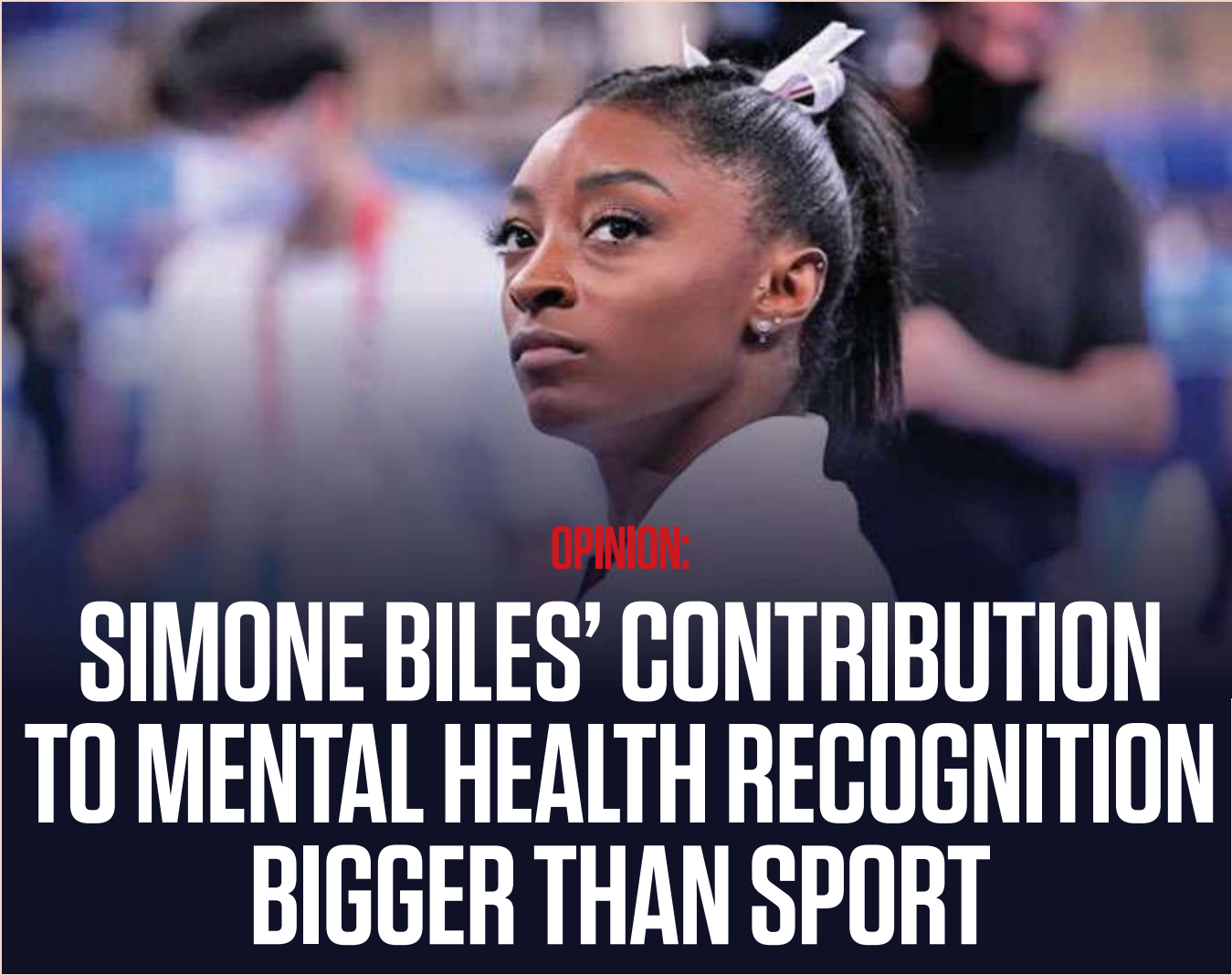
on all working days between 08:30 to 13:00hrs & 14:00 to 17:00hrs

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“Out of all of my achievements, I would say a medal at the Olympics is very special, because even though I have been a major winner, we have five majors every year, [so] in four years we have 20 chances to win a major. So I would say it’s much harder to get a medal at the Olympics. It was the most important moment in my career, I would say that.”

Feng Shanshan, China



SUPERSTAR gymnast Simone Biles has won the bronze medal on the individual beam after taking a break to deal with her mental health. “I truly feel the weight of the world on my shoulders,” she wrote on her Instagram account before Tuesday’s beam final, where she finished behind two Chinese gymnasts. “The Olympics is no joke!”

While her sporting achievements undoubtedly place her among the greatest sportspeople already, it’s her actions away from sport which will make a real difference for so many people, myself included.

A few years ago, I started suffering from several panic attacks a day. Some of them were so bad I ended up being

admitted to hospital. Back then, I didn’t know what a panic attack even was. I thought I had a physical problem of some sort which needed solving, like a cold or a virus.

Once a person close to me suggested it might be an idea to check if the panic attacks have psychological reasons, I felt confused. I didn’t want to acknowledge I might be suffering from a mental health situation. After being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), I felt ashamed. What would my family and friends say? Would I lose my job?

I felt like there was no one else like me on the planet. I felt alone.

Anyone can suffer from mental health issues

But the hardest part was yet to come. Dealing with your mental health means not only battling with a disease, but also with other people’s perceptions and stigmas. Moreover, many of us are expected to perform regardless of our situation, be it at the workplace or in social terms. Often, you just need a break to take care of yourself, just like anyone would rest if they’re suffering from a cold.

One of the world’s most famous athletes decided to do just that, and talked about how mental strains can hit you harder than any physical disease; how everyone can suffer from mental health issues, regardless of how physically fit, famous or rich you are; that it’s no shame

to talk about it and live with it.

People like me can easily relate to Biles’ decision to only compete once her mental health situation allowed it. The way she wasn’t scared of publicly admitting the reason for taking a pause from the biggest sporting stage on Earth, with many millions looking forward to her performance and expecting her to deliver, meant many people like me felt seen, people whose struggles have often been belittled, sometimes even ignored.

Due to her decision, more people will understand mental pressure is “no joke.”

For that alone, her achievements at Tokyo 2020 should be considered to be far more important than any gold medal. **AW**

Taha Al Kishry named as coordinator for FINA World Championship in Abu Dhabi

Times News Service

TOKYO: Oman’s board member in FINA (World’s swimming governing body) Taha Al Kishry took part in the second FINA bureau meeting on Tuesday at Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Headed by Dr Hussain Al Musallam, the meeting commenced with the welcoming of all the board members who attended the session both online and physically.

The FINA president appreciated all the efforts from the members during the past period since election of the new board in June in Doha. Kuwait’s Al Musallam praised the tremendous efforts taken by the organising committee to host the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games with the implementation of all precautionary measures which ensured the safety of all the participants.



MEETING: Oman’s Taha Al Kishry presented the FINA bureau the updates for the FINA World Swimming Championship.

Also, the chief of FINA congratulated all the swimmers who bagged medals during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and to those who registered new world and Olympic records.

Six world and 33 Olympic records have been registered in swimming competitions during the current Olympics. The FINA bureau reviewed the FINA staff manual policy.

The members raised their amendments and suggestions ahead of the policy approval in the forthcoming meeting as part of the FINA World Swimming Championship in next December in Abu Dhabi.

FINA board members approved the broadcasting rights for 2023 World Aquatics Championships in Doha. Also, the members reviewed the marketing plan and raised their amendments prior to the final approval.



DO MORE

MEDALS TALLY

Top 30 as of 6PM (Oman time)



Rank		G	S	B	T
1	PRC	32	21	16	69
2	USA	24	28	21	73
3	Japan	19	6	11	36
4	Australia	14	4	15	33
5	ROC	13	21	18	52
6	Great Britain	13	17	13	43
7	Germany	8	8	14	30
8	France	6	10	8	24
9	Netherlands	6	7	7	20
10	Republic of Korea	6	4	9	19
11	New Zealand	6	4	5	15
12	Italy	5	9	15	29
13	Hungary	4	4	3	11
14	Cuba	4	3	4	11
15	Czech Republic	4	3	1	8
16	Canada	3	4	7	14
17	Switzerland	3	4	5	12
18	Brazil	3	3	8	14
19	Croatia	3	3	2	8
20	Chinese Taipei	2	4	4	10
21	Sweden	2	3	0	5
22	Poland	2	2	2	6
23	Denmark	2	1	3	6
24	Jamaica	2	1	2	5
25	Norway	2	1	1	4
25	Slovenia	2	1	1	4
27	Ecuador	2	1	0	3
28	Greece	2	0	1	3
28	Uzbekistan	2	0	1	3
30	Kosovo	2	0	0	2

COMMENTARY

Can Team India seize the key moments?

INDIA HAVE their task cut out when they face England in the first test match against England in the high profile Test Series starting today.

If the injury to Shubhman Gill was a big blow last month then Team India got a bigger blow, with the latest injury to Mayank Agarwal when he was hit on the head by Mohammed Siraj in the nets.

This has put India’s think tank in a dilemma as to who would now partner Rohit Sharma for the opening position.

India has Abhimanyu Easwaran as a backup opener but he has very little experience and India might have to go back to KL Rahul who last played a test match for team India in 2018.

In 2018, India started as favourites but could not seize key moments in that series. The score line read 4/1 but the series was much closer than the scoreline suggested.

This year too India looks a more experienced side compared to England but will their experienced batsman come to the party.

India’s senior players like Virat Kohli, Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane all average below 30 since the start of 2020 and it would be a matter of concern as if they don’t perform well in the swinging conditions of England, India has a long tail in Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami who hardly contribute with the bat.

The reason why England won the 2018 series was that England had Sam Curran and Ben Stokes the all-rounders who contributed with the bat and bailed England out when in trouble.

Can India’s All-rounders in Ravindra Jadeja and



Anis Sajan, Vice Chairman, Danube Group.

Ravichandran Ashwin do the same for Team India? Moreover the evolution of Rishabh Pant as a batsman after the Australian series should give India the boost as he can single-handedly take the game away from England as Adam Gilchrist used to do for team Australia.

India has the bowlers to match England but will its batsman score enough runs for their bowlers to compete. Bowlers win you matches but they need the bank support of their prime batters. Can Virat Kohli and his team pass this acid test?

Only time will tell but this India’s golden chance to get past this inexperienced side.

India are generally poor starters for their overseas tour but this time around India has already had one loss in the World Test Championship finals, can they start this first against England with lessons learnt from that WTC finals.

Oman’s football team prepares for 2022 FIFA World Cup

MUSCAT: Preparations continue for the Oman football team’s World Cup qualifiers, which are crucial to them booking a place at next year’s event in Qatar.

The team are currently at a training camp in Serbia, with two

tough qualification games on the horizon.

Oman will first play Saudi Arabia in their third-round qualifier on 7 September, followed by an away game against Australia a month later.



OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by October 2021 reaching \$71.80, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.42 from the price of Monday, which was at \$73.22. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 3,999.28 points, down 0.20 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index up 0.15 per cent at 585.10 points. Ahlia Insurance, up 9.09 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Financial Services, down 5.60 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman's financial wealth grows to \$64bn despite pandemic challenges

Oman's wealth has been favourable over the past five years, demonstrating resilience despite pandemic-related tailwinds, with economic productivity accelerating as per Oman Vision 2040 aspirations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's financial wealth grew by a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 3.8 per cent annually from 2015 to reach a high of \$64 billion in 2020 - 49 per cent of which is investable wealth - as the Sultanate's market showed resilience in the face of the protracted COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

The report, titled 'Global Wealth 2021: When Clients Take the Lead', reveals that despite the pandemic's enduring financial impact, global prosperity and wealth grew significantly throughout the crisis and are likely to continue to

expand significantly over the next five years, in line with the emerging economic recovery.

"The Sultanate of Oman's wealth has been favourable over the past five years, demonstrating resilience despite pandemic-related tailwinds, with economic productivity accelerating as per Oman Vision 2040 aspirations. Activities in this direction have encouraged Omani citizens to engage in the global economy, which has, in turn, driven sustained increases in wealth growth," said Mustafa Bosca, Managing Director and Partner at Boston Consulting Group.

Oman, which represented 3 per cent of the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) financial wealth in 2020, is expected to witness



“

Looking ahead, wealth demographics will continue to shift, facilitating a subsequent shift in client needs and expectations which compels local wealth managers to ensure their offerings are geared towards local needs or younger wealth segments

Mustafa Bosca

Managing Director and Partner at Boston Consulting Group

strong growth of 5 per cent CAGR to reach \$82 billion by 2025, an \$18 billion increase from 2020. Meanwhile, the region's financial wealth is forecast to reach \$2.7 trillion in 2025 from \$2.2 trillion in 2020.

A spotlight on onshore asset allocation shows that equities and investment funds (55 per cent) accounted for the largest proportion of assets in 2020. Looking ahead, the allocation of onshore assets

is expected to be similar with equities and investment funds expected to be the largest share of onshore assets in the Sultanate, amounting to 54 per cent.

Changing landscape of the wealthy in Oman

BCG's report also shows Oman's changing landscape of the wealthy in the coming years, with the rise of the next-generation affluent

and high-net-worth clients. These individuals, between 20 and 50 years of age, have longer investment horizons, a greater appetite for risk, and often a desire to use their wealth to create positive societal impact as well as earn solid returns. Many wealth managers are not yet ready to serve these new clients.

"Greater economic attainment is a primary driver behind the Sul-

tanate's increased wealth. Looking ahead, wealth demographics will continue to shift, facilitating a subsequent shift in client needs and expectations which compels local wealth managers to ensure their offerings are geared towards local needs or younger wealth segments," concluded Bosca.

To win the new segment of the next-generation segment, wealth managers must bring a bold and new digital business model to life. The five pillars of the new digital model include:

Supercharged relationship management: All of the legwork is done with the use of technology and relationship management to become the key support in the digital conversion funnel.

Contextual and consumable learning: Streamlined, gamified, 100 per cent digital content, placed strategically to nudge conversion.

Smarter user and experience design: Simple to use platforms, enriched with tools and simulators that clients can play with.

Simplified pricing: Hybrid model combining asset-based pricing with flat subscription fees.

Democratised access to "Haute" investments: Customisable discretionary mandates, and scale-down of (U) HNWI products.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Treasury bills worth OMR192mn issued

MUSCAT: Oman's central bank raised OMR192 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 28 days, from August 4 until September 1, 2021.

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 (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

The average accepted price reached 99.951 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 99.950 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.64160 per cent and 0.64192 per cent, respectively.



It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 0.5 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 0.75 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills pro-

mote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

IMF approves historic \$650bn increased lending capacity

WASHINGTON: The Board of Governors of the IMF (has approved a general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) equivalent to \$650 billion (about SDR 456 billion) on August 2, 2021, to boost global liquidity.

"This is a historic decision - the largest SDR allocation in the history of the IMF and a shot in the arm for the global economy at a time of unprecedented crisis. The SDR allocation will benefit all members, address the long-term global need for reserves, build confidence, and foster the resilience and stability of the global economy. It will particularly help our most vulnerable countries struggling to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis," IMF

Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said.

General allocation

The general allocation of SDRs will become effective on August 23, 2021. The newly created SDRs will be credited to IMF member countries in proportion to their existing quotas in the Fund.

About \$275 billion (about SDR 193 billion) of the new allocation will go to emerging markets and developing countries, including low-income countries.

"We will also continue to engage actively with our membership to identify viable options for voluntary channelling of SDRs from wealthier to poorer and more vulnerable member coun-

tries to support their pandemic recovery and achieve resilient and sustainable growth," Georgieva said.

One key option is for members that have strong external positions to voluntarily channel part of their SDRs to scale up lending for low-income countries through the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT). Concessional support through the PRGT is currently interest-free. The IMF is also exploring other options to help poorer and more vulnerable countries in their recovery efforts. A new Resilience and Sustainability Trust could be considered to facilitate more resilient and sustainable growth in the medium term.

KAMCO INVEST REPORT

GCC real estate value transaction reaches \$64.9 billion in first half of 2021

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) real estate value transacted in the first half of 2021 reached \$64.9 billion and has approached within 26 per cent and 32 per cent of the full-year figures of 2020 (\$90.5 billion) and 2019 (\$96.5 billion) respectively, according to a new report.

"The higher transaction activity year-on-year in the first half of 2021 was largely due to opportunistic buying of bargain-priced properties, as property prices reached multi-year lows from the impact of COVID-19 in early 2020, Kamco Invest, Kuwait-based investment, strategy and research firm, said in its latest GCC real estate update.

"Moreover, a higher average value per transaction was achieved in the first half of 2021 for key markets, when compared to pre-pandemic levels of the first half of 2019, pointing towards the investment appetite for attractively priced real estate," the report added.

While Kamco Invest's view on the residential real estate market in the GCC has become more constructive than from its previous update (December 2020), the research firm still requires rents to move towards a late-stage recovery phase in the cycle, before establishing the segment as the clear leader amongst real estate segments.

The report further said that the residential real estate prices and buyer sentiment in major GCC markets have bottomed out from the impact of COVID-19, and the lows of 2020.

Prices and investor sentiment continued their momentum in the first half of 2021, and transaction activity remains strong.

However, the drivers were different, as Dubai real estate witnessed opportunistic buying from investors, especially at the higher end of the apartment and villa market. Further, developers capitalised on the demand, and also offered rent-to-own schemes, fee waivers, and lucrative post-hand-over payment plans during the period.

Saudi Arabia real estate prices recovered and were driven by government support in the form of mortgage financing and housing initiatives to achieve the Vision 2030 objective of increasing the home-ownership rate to 70 per cent by 2030.

Residential yields compressed as a result of higher prices by H1-2021, as was witnessed in Dubai where yields compressed 40bps-50bps (basic points) across apartment types since the first half of 2020.

In the office space market, operators continue to optimise their portfolios between traditional and flexible spaces.

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Ahlia Insurance, up 9.09 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Financial Services, down 5.60 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 3,999.28 points, down 0.20 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index up 0.15 per cent at 585.10 points. Ahlia Insurance, up 9.09 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Financial Services, down 5.60 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Oman Investment & Financial was 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 424 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.7 million, with more than 12 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded stocks, 9 advanced, 8 declined and 31 remained unchanged. At the session close, Local investors were net buyers for OMR391,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR332,000 followed by GCC & Arab investors for

OMR59,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,376.34 points, down 0.28 per cent. Prices of Ahlia Insurance and National Bank Oman were up 9.09 per cent and 0.56 per cent respectively. Al Omaniya Financial Services, Global Investment Holding, HSBC Bank Oman and Bank Dhofar were down 5.60 per cent, 1.45 per cent, 1.02 per cent and 0.83 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,812.86 points, down 0.07 per cent. Prices of Oman Fisheries and National Aluminum Product were up 1.28 per cent and 0.84 per cent respectively. Oman Cement was the only loser by 1.26 per cent.

Services Index was up by 0.06 per cent before closing at 1,712.56 points. The prices of SMN Power Holding, Majan College, Al Jazeera Services and Oman Investment & Financials were up 4.69 per cent, 3.33 per cent, 1.56 per cent and 0.79 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,007.44	3,998.65	3,999.29	4,007.18	-7.89	-0.20
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,394.94	6,376.34	6,376.34	6,394.94	-18.60	-0.29
Industry Index	5,817.76	5,796.49	5,812.86	5,817.12	-4.26	-0.07
Services Index	1,713.98	1,710.44	1,712.56	1,711.48	1.08	0.06
MSX Shariah Index	585.10	583.71	585.10	584.31	0.80	0.14
MSX TR INDEX	4,812.08	4,801.52	4,802.29	4,811.77	-9.48	-0.20

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
11,803,860	2,715,796	424	21,581,300,915	9	8	31	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 3

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000002236	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	50,000	19,500	2	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.384	0.006	1.563	0.390	0.368	0.390	0.100	23,869,666
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST&FIN	2,822,734	361,841	43	0.127	0.130	0.127	0.128	0.127	0.001	0.787	0.128	0.128	0.129	0.100	30,536,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,000	764	1	0.764	0.764	0.764	0.764	0.764	0.000	0.000	0.764	0.748	0.760	0.100	120,330,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	141	38	1	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.000	0.000	0.268	0.261	0.270	0.100	53,600,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	2,000	632	1	0.316	0.316	0.316	0.318	0.318	0.000	0.000	0.316	0.314	0.316	0.100	256,871,601
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	380,888	24,892	20	0.065	0.065	0.064	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.064	0.065	0.100	19,964,511
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	440,340	51,690	39	0.117	0.119	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.000	0.000	0.119	0.119	0.121	0.100	23,400,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	3,650	1,451	9	0.398	0.398	0.396	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.396	0.394	0.400	0.100	49,959,184
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	702,000	77,220	8	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.110	0.112	0.100	214,462,321
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,883,585	1,191,556	45	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.000	0.000	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.100	1,587,068,308
OM0000003000	AL MAHA MARKTING	200	156	1	0.780	0.780	0.780	0.780	0.780	0.000	0.000	0.780	0.780	0.856	0.100	53,820,000
OM0000003234	RENAISSANCE SER.	1,090,000	474,640	5	0.436	0.436	0.430	0.436	0.436	0.000	0.000	0.430	0.420	0.440	0.100	103,074,760
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT BANK	779	74	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.094	0.096	0.100	233,712,647
OM0000003620	VISION INSURANCE	100,000	8,200	4	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.082	0.087	0.100	8,200,000
OM0000003968	QOREDOO	87,522	33,812	12	0.386	0.386	0.384	0.384	0.386	-0.002	-0.518	0.384	0.382	0.384	0.100	249,862,584
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	430,868	101,311	39	0.238	0.238	0.235	0.235	0.238	-0.003	-1.261	0.235	0.232	0.235	0.100	77,755,087
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN.	125,000	14,750	3	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.125	-0.007	-5.600	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	34,448,350
Total		17	8,920,807	2,382,127	234											

Parallel Market

OM0000006912	AHLIA INSURANCE	333,493	119,884	4	0.330	0.360	0.330	0.360	0.330	0.030	9.091	0.360	0.330	0.362	0.100	36,000,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	30,000	2,000	3	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.064	0.003	4.688	0.067	0.067	0.069	0.100	13,375,585
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	13,000	2,015	2	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.150	0.005	3.333	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.100	13,950,000
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	21,500	1,690	3	0.072	0.083	0.072	0.079	0.078	0.001	1.282	0.083	0.083	0.084	0.100	9,875,000
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	99,500	11,940	21	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.119	0.001	0.840	0.120	0.119	0.120	0.100	4,028,574
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	5,500	990	3	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.179	0.001	0.559	0.180	0.175	0.180	0.100	292,670,344
OM0000001065	DHOFAR INSURANCE	5,000	979	2	0.095	0.099	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.095	0.096	0.100	500,000,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	150,000	9,000	6	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.057	0.060	0.100	20,944,695
OM0000002372	OMAN OIL MARKETING	200	188	1	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.000	0.000	0.940	0.900	0.940	0.100	57,598,500
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	618	52	1	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.081	0.084	0.100	21,301,560
OM0000003821	GALFAR ENGINEER	127,350	10,443	8	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.082	0.083	0.100	16,644,889
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	50,383	4,297	4	0.125	0.125	0.122	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.122	0.122	0.130	0.100	10,175,344
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	364,780	35,621	18	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.097	0.098	0.100	147,000,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	30,000	3,120	3	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	18,200,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	104,000	5,516	5	0.054	0.054	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.000	0.000	0.053	0.053	0.055	0.100	37,863,536
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	170,370	7,867	12	0.046	0.047	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046	0.046	0.047	0.100	67,279,667
OM0000007984	MCT DESALINATE	20,000	1,720	1	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.100	13,377,234
OM0000007290	ARABIA FALCON INS.	2,000	250	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.000	0.125	0.100	12,912,708
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	10,400	1,331	4	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.100	28,446,720
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	2,500	228	2	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.100	18,400,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	900	83	2	0.092	0.093	0.091	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.100	60,227,822
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	225,190	26,850	10	0.120	0.120	0.118	0.119	0.120	-0.001	-0.833	0.118	0.117	0.120	0.100	356,565,821
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	238,900	22,979	24	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.098	-0.001	-1.020	0.097	0.096	0.099	0.100	194,030,341
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	118,865	11,302	12	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.095	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.100	12,350,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	210,000	14,300	11	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.068	0.069	-0.001	-1.449	0.068	0.068	0.070	0.100	13,860,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	355,064	18,114	10	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.061	0.062	-0.001	-1.923	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.100	34,419,299
Total		2,687,503	314,759	182												

STEADILY INCREASING

Liquidity in credit markets is getting greener

SINGAPORE: Liquidity is steadily increasing across sustainable debt markets with a 40 per cent year-over-year increase in sustainable debt issuance expected in 2021 and interest growing in lower-rated credit sectors, S&P Global Ratings has said.

Given the surging interest in environmental, social and govern-

ance (ESG) factors, a report by S&P Global explores liquidity and pricing within sustainable debt markets.

"Liquidity is growing as issuers and investors alike seek to deliver upon their ESG goals and objectives, and this should bode well for the future growth and stability of sustainable debt markets," said S&P Global Ratings Sector Lead

Patrick Drury Byrne.

According to the report, there are some signs that sustainable bonds may be pricing at a premium in certain sectors, although it is difficult to isolate the impact of ESG factors.

"Improved standardisation within sustainable debt markets could bolster liquidity further," said Byrne. — **ANI**



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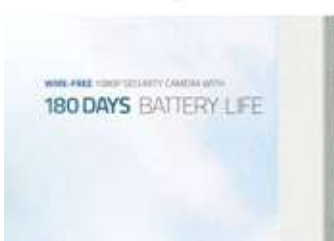
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EMPOWER NATIONAL TALENT

CCED continues to develop national talent in oil and gas industry

MUSCAT: As part of its strategy to empower national talent to excel in the oil and gas sector, CC Energy Development (CCED), has seen 95 per cent of its maintenance technicians and production team acquire the Advanced Diploma in Oil & Gas Operations from City & Guilds in the UK.

With 161 team members receiving the globally recognised diploma to date, the value-driven energy company continues to nurture the next generation of energy sector qualified experts through a number of on-the-job training programmes to significantly accelerate their skills development. This achievement also emphasises CCED's vision to build a world-class energy business in Oman that is dedicated to hiring and developing home-grown talent across all functions.

"Talent acquisition and development is a translation of CCED's forward-thinking strategy to build

a highly-skilled national workforce in the oil and gas industry," said Walter Simpson, Managing Director of CCED. "Effective planning and management to develop and most importantly, retain Omani talent are vital for long-term success in our rapidly evolving and fast-growing sector. We are determined to ensure that our team enjoys a rewarding career by developing the skillsets required to excel in everything they do."

Macroeconomic backdrop

Simpson added, "With the unprecedented macroeconomic backdrop due to the pandemic, we entered 2021 with strong momentum across our operations. This is a reflection of our resilient business model, prudent approach to risk management, significant technology investments, and our teams' dedication to delivering for our customers and communities." Focused on equipping its team

with the job knowledge and skills for future progression within the company, CCED is offering its team a combination of on-the-job training opportunities alongside a variety of other programmes.

Lindsay Ogilvy, Business Improvement Manager commented, "This particular learning journey began almost three years ago with a rigorous assessment of our technical trades and production process technicians. We designed not only the required technical skills and knowledge training but also a 9-month English language programme."

Ogilvy added, "CCED is very proud of what our colleagues have achieved and it has been great to see confidence levels grow as well as knowledge. During the pandemic, we adapted our training delivery and incorporated evening online courses, which allow us to safely engage with a wider audience."

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ACHIEVING GOALS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE AN OVERWHELMING PROCESS

Did you know people don't reach their goals because they get discouraged or start too many projects? If you want to learn how to achieve your goals and stay motivated here are few tips for you.

1 Try to visualise your goal
Before you decide on a goal, you should try and visualise the goal.
Consider creating a vision board. The vision board will help remind you of your different goals. Make a vision board today for your goals.

2 Ask for help
People tend to remain motivated when they share their goals with loved ones or friends. Consider having a support team who will help you stay motivated as you work on your goal.
If you want to finish a novel, consider connecting with some writers. You and your writer

friends can cheer each other on and share the journey. Talk about what you would like to achieve by a specific date.

3 Turn your goal into smaller steps
You should look at breaking down your larger goal into smaller ones.
Think about your big goals and how you could meet them. What are the steps you need to take to complete the goal? Break that larger goal into reasonable steps.

Then, you will also need to break down those steps. Divide the steps into small behavioural goals you can reach in a week or month. Some people will break down the goals, so they know what they need to achieve daily.
You want your smaller goals to be reasonable. You can increase the difficulty level over time. If a goal's too tricky, make sure you break it down into a smaller goal. You don't want to get burnt out.
Set the right pace for your goals. Make sure

you also write your goal down. Writing your goal down will help bring clarification.

4 Don't forget to reward your efforts and milestones
When you set smaller goals, you can feel motivated when you reach the goal.
When you achieve part of your goal and get momentum, you should reward yourself. You will have a chance to feel encouraged and not overwhelmed by the remaining chunk of work.
A reward should have something to do with your goal. Pick something that you will enjoy and that's not too expensive or difficult to get.
Some people who have a fitness goal will pick up new gym accessories or workout clothes when they hit a particular milestone.
Personal development doesn't have to be overwhelming. Learn more about innovation and how to achieve your goals. Create a vision board, break your goal into small parts, and reward yourself when you hit a milestone.



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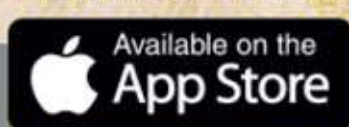
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ROUND-UP

Enjoy distinct experiences in stylish, powerful Toyota C-HR

Encouraging you to maximise experiences is the impressive mileage that the C-HR Hybrid-Electric model offers

MUSCAT: Stylish, exciting and powerful, the Toyota C-HR makes an instant mark with its inspiring design. The C-HR – promotes stylistic freedom and engineering creativity.

Encouraging you to maximise experiences is the impressive mileage that the C-HR Hybrid-Electric model offers.

It is one of the lowest fuel consumption values in its category at 23.9km/l. With this mileage, the C-HR enables customers to contribute to a greener future while enjoying the increased driving satisfaction provided by its advanced technologies. The C-HR is built on the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA) platform, which ensures a more rewarding driving experience. A low centre of gravity and double-wishbone rear suspension contribute to outstanding stability and handling with exceptional ride comfort.

Available with a 1.8-litre VVT-i full-hybrid powertrain and automatic CVT transmission, the vehicle meets all the requirements of daily commutes and weekend leisure journeys while offering peace of mind through its comprehensive array of safety features.

The C-HR's high-quality interior



is designed to delight the most discerning drivers. Exuding a genuine sense of luxury and refinement, the cabin offers an elegant contrast between curving surfaces

and crisp lines to deliver a fresh, yet comfortable environment.

The sleek control panel features a 4.2-inch colour LCD Multi-Information Display with an

onboard multimedia system. The user-friendly controls are complemented by ample storage capabilities, ultra-supportive seats and an auto air conditioning system

which ensures the utmost comfort and convenience for drivers and their passengers.

In Oman, the nationwide parts and service network of Saud

Bahwan Automotive supports Toyota's outstanding product quality. No wonder that today, Toyota is one of the most trusted and well-known brands.

LOW EMI

Mitsubishi ASX offers performance and style in one affordable package

MUSCAT: The Mitsubishi ASX offers CUV versatility, enhanced safety features, attractive styling, and value in one affordable package. It is now available from General Automotive Company (GAC), the official Mitsubishi distributor, with EMIs starting from as low as OMR106, including 6 years unlimited mileage warranty and road-side assistance.

Commenting on the ASX, Zuwaina Al Azri, Communications Manager said, "The Mitsubishi ASX is easily one of the most versatile vehicles in our line-up, offering customers class-leading features, a powerful yet fuel-efficient engine, proven four-wheel-drive system, and advanced technologies, all wrapped in a bold new design and offered to you at an extremely competitive price with affordable EMIs."

The ASX is a popular CUV that features Mitsubishi's Dynamic Shield design and offers an all-new front bumper, hood, and fenders, which provide a bold and rugged look. The front-end design is accented by the sophisticated LED headlights, which when combined with the redesigned rear bumper fascia and T-shaped rear combination taillights, helps raise the model's sporty aesthetic and allows the



ASX to stand out from the crowd.

Inside, the ASX receives all-new, high-quality materials, a new second-generation 8.0-inch Smart-phone-link Display Audio (SDA) unit, rearview camera, LED headlights with LED Daytime running

lights, Electronically controlled 4WD system, and more. Under the hood, the ASX comes standard with a 2.0L MiVEC DOHC four-cylinder making 148 horsepower at 6,000 rpm and 145 pound-feet of torque at 4,200rpm. Paired with

Mitsubishi's INVECS-III CVT, the ASX offers an optimal balance of power output, fuel efficiency, and environmental performance, together with enhanced acceleration performance and a smooth-shifting feel.

LUXURY FRAGRANCE HOUSE

Amouage eyes US to become its second-largest market

MUSCAT: Carrying the fine art of Arabian fragrance creations Westwards, Amouage, the independent Oman-based global luxury fragrance house, has set its course to the United States of America with plans for the country to become its second-largest market.

Amouage Americas, the House's newly opened direct subsidiary, with its head office located on New York's prestigious Broadway, will soon launch its new e-commerce fulfilment platform to serve the US's growing niche luxury fragrance market, which makes up the largest share of the company's 6-fold increase in online demand. Headed by newly-appointed Sen-



ior Vice President of Amouage Americas, Robert Sorce, Amouage will also be establishing a physical presence in key retailers across the country.

"For the past two years, we have been working on a new strategy to strengthen our digital presence, to

build scale, and to establish new connections with the next generation of fragrance enthusiasts. This year we have turbo-charged this strategy, having recently moved into China and now the US, while installing several structural changes to create the right capabilities to

fulfil global demand for our products, including a vertically integrated product creation in Muscat, Oman, that guarantees no compromise on quality," said Marco Parsiegla, Chief Executive Officer of Amouage. "The US is considered an important market for ultra-luxury and our projections are that it will eventually make up a third of our overall business. We look forward to installing a diverse team of exceptional industry professionals that will carry our quest to create true masterpieces and share them with our discerning clientele."

Amouage has enjoyed impressive growth since unveiling its new strategy in 2020.

INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT

ISD showcases splendid performance with centum result in AISSCE-2021



MUSCAT: Indian School Darsait (ISD) is highly exuberant as its Grade XII students brought laurels to school with 100 per cent result in the AISSCE Examination 2020-21 with an incredible all-time high school average of 87.8 per cent. Braving all odds in this extraordinarily challenging year, the batch has come out with flying colours and has clinched this remarkable fete. It is indeed a magnificent culmination of an unprecedented academic year.

In the Science Stream, Anushka Thumiki stood first with 99.0 per cent while Malavika Shaji bagged the second position with 98.0 per cent and Divyasri Udayakumar secured the third position with 97.8 per cent.

In the Commerce Stream, Abhirami R secured the first position with 97.4 per cent, followed by Farashil Ayath securing the second position with 97.2 per cent while Mydhili Nair secured the third position with 95.8 per cent.

It is heartwarming to note that while 37.4 per cent of students scored 90 per cent and above; 90.2 per cent of students scored 80.0 per cent and above and 100 per cent of students scored above 60 per cent of aggregate marks.

The subject average for various subjects is as follows- Psychology- 94.6 per cent, English – 93.9 per cent, Computer Science – 93.2 per cent, Chemistry- 90.2 per cent, Physics – 90 per cent, Informatics Practices – 88.6 per cent, Business Studies – 88.1 per cent, Marketing – 87.9 per cent, Mathematics – 85.9 per cent, Biology- 84.1 per cent, Economics – 83.3 per cent, Accountancy – 72.6 per cent.

The following are the subject toppers: English (99 per cent)-



Abhishek Renjith Krishnan, Akarsh Vincent, Akhila Vijayan Nair, Anushka Thumiki, Arunima Suresh, Ashley Dharman, Ashoka Babu Pudussery, Divyasri Udayakumar, Farashil Ayath, Fawaz Yasin Muhammed, Malavika Shaji, Mydhili Nair, Nandika Ranjit; Mathematics (99 per cent)- Anushka Thumiki; Physics (99 per cent)- Anushka Thumiki, Divyasri Udayakumar; Chemistry (99 per cent)- Anushka Thumiki, Malavika Shaji; Biology (96 per cent) - Aparna Anil Kumar Menon, Devanshi Sharma, Malavika Shaji; Computer Science (99 per cent)- Anushka Thumiki; Psychology (99 per cent)- Malavika Shaji, Shabiha Fathima; Economics (99 per cent)- Farashil Ayath, Mydhili Nair; Business Studies (99%- Farashil Ayath; Accountancy (98 per cent)- Abhirami R; Informatics Practices (98 per cent)- Bikhil B L; Marketing (99 per cent) - Farashil Ayath.

Amar Srivastava, Principal congratulated the students, parents and teachers for this outstanding accomplishment. He profusely thanked each and everyone who worked as a spirited team in making the school ebullient and proud.

Sebastian Chungath, President and other members of the School Management Committee also conveyed their happiness over the stupendous result.

ROUND-UP

LEADERS OF LOCAL SPORTS TEAMS HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANCE OF GREEN SPORTS PROGRAMME



Bank Muscat’s CSR programme is ‘one of its kind’ and contributes to enhancing sports infrastructure and developing the skills of the youth in various fields

MUSCAT: On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of Bank Muscat’s landmark corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme, Green Sports, a number of sports teams from across the Sultanate have appreciated and praised the bank’s prominent role in supporting the youth and local communities across the Sultanate.

The bank’s long-running CSR programme continues to benefit many sports teams across the Sultanate even as the annual programme brings together different generations on a single platform on the evergreen theme of sports. The bank’s efforts complement the government’s efforts to develop modern sports infrastructure across the Sultanate in the spirit of the Public-Private Partnership model.

The scope of Green Sports support for sports teams include greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights or water desalination equipment in areas facing problems of water salinity. The programme aims to develop a sustainable sports infrastructure across the Sultanate, thereby serving as a means to channelise the boundless energy and vast talents of Omani youth productively,

besides helping local communities develop stronger bonds and a greater spirit of partnership and cooperation all around.

Having seen the great success of the programme over the years and to celebrate the 10th Anniversary, in 2021, Bank Muscat increased the number of annual beneficiaries to 20 sports teams, up from 15 teams annually in previous years. The bank believes that this will also help it reach out to more Omani youth in the coming years and take the fruits of development to all segments of society and at all levels.

A unique programme

Speaking about the benefits of the programme, Salim Ali Al Riyami, the Chairman of Al Mustaqbal Team from the Wilayat of Bahla, said that the Green Sports programme is a truly unique programme helping young Omani talent in various fields. He pointed out how the facilities were used by the community for activities like special religious and social events before the COVID-19 pandemic. The club’s Green Sports field can also be provided to other teams on rent, thereby providing the Al Mustaqbal team with a means of revenue generation.



Salim Al Riyami said that the team and the community were eagerly looking forward to a time when pandemic-related challenges are a thing of the past and the sports team could work towards a brighter future. He said that the entire management, the players as well as the fans of the team were thankful to the Bank for its Green Sports programme, which would go a long way in developing the talents and capabilities of youth in the country, particularly in sports. He added that the programme serves to complement the development initiatives undertaken by the government of Oman.

A pioneering step

On his part, Ahmed Salim Al Alawi, the Chairman of A’Shabab

Sports Team from the Wilayat of Yanqul, said that the launch of the Green Sports programme by Bank Muscat was one of the most successful and pioneering CSR steps undertaken by the bank in strengthening the infrastructure available to youth teams across the different governorates in the Sultanate. He pointed out how youth teams constitute an important feeder line for national level clubs as well as the National team in different sports activities, especially football, which is one of the most popular sport played in the region and the world. He expressed his great happiness about A’Shabab Sports Team being a winner in 2021. He added that this achievement would have a positive effect on the team’s future.

The A’Shabab Sports Team received support from Bank Muscat for greening their field. Ahmed Al Alawi added that apart from football, the team and the community would now be able to utilise the facilities for several other activities too. Also, the team plans to complement this development with others like lighting facilities, public toilets etc., for all-round development of the club and the community. The A’Shabab Team being one of the most important teams in Yanqul would naturally help strengthen the overall wellbeing of the community in the wilayat.

Strengthening community service

Yusuf Salem Al Saad, the Chairman of the Al Waha Sports Team in Wadi Bani Khalid, congratulated all the 20 beneficiaries of the Green Sports programme in 2021. He said that the team was very

happy and proud to be chose as a winner in 2021 and that the programme would help in the implementation of the greening of the Al Waha Sports Team’s football pitch. He added that this achievement would help in attracting more young talent to the team to practice various social and sports activities. He pointed out how the Al Waha team poured time and effort into understanding the application rules, regulations and procedures and then submitted an excellent application in order to emerge as one of the 20 winners. Having a Green Sports field will also help the team in organising tournaments in the future in football as well as other sports. He concluded by saying that the team was grateful to Bank Muscat for the support to the team.

10 successful years

Bank Muscat’s landmark Green Sports programme has supported 143 teams across various governorates in the Sultanate to date. Over 36,900 members from different communities have benefitted from the programme, and more are expected to be a part of it in the future. To date, 95 teams have received support for the installation of artificial turf or natural grass on their fields, while 40 teams have received support for floodlighting and 8 teams for water desalination plants. As a ‘one of its kind’ programme, Green Sports is contributing majorly to developing the sporting skills and talents of Omani youth. Bank Muscat has been encouraged by the tremendous success of the programme in transforming sports infrastructure across the country.



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