

>> PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:13 pm
Asr	3:40 pm
Maghrib	6:32 pm
Isha	7:44 pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:31 am
>> IFTAR	6:32 pm



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SHARED HERITAGE LEADS TO STRONGER TIES BETWEEN OMAN AND SWITZERLAND

Oman and Switzerland are not only friends, but share some similar elements of heritage as well. That's according to the Embassy of Switzerland in Muscat which, on the occasion of World Water Day 2022, produced a short video on the similarities in traditional irrigation in the two countries. **>A2**



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NEW INITIATIVES AIM TO BRING MORE INVESTORS TO SULTANATE IN 2022

The goal is to raise the country to the ranks of the developed nations around the world

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Creating new industrial investment opportunities, development of a general mark of quality, promoting Oman as an investment destination globally, launching a national e-commerce plan, a fast-track plan to develop the local business environment, and setting up a dedicated investor services centre are some of the initiatives the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP) has decided to take in 2022, as part of its efforts to boost investment in the country.



The ministry, at a press conference on Monday, outlined the plans it has for investment promotion in 2022, as well as shed light on the achievements in 2021. "Our goal is to raise the Sultanate of Oman to the ranks of the

developed countries around the world, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040," said Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. "The attention paid by His Majesty the Sultan – may God protect him – towards the national economy and the continuous role of the private sector, which plays its role

as a partner of the government, reflects the importance of the role played by the various commercial and industrial sectors, alongside investment promotion, competition protection and preventing monopolies so that we may advance in economic development." Under six categories, the ministry has drawn up some 41 initiatives to create a positive

business environment in Oman and attract more investors to the country in 2022.

Six initiatives are under the commerce sector, the most important of which are linking commercial transactions to the Bayan Platform; a national e-commerce plan; and e-documentation services. Nine initiatives are planned for the industrial sector, among which are the launch of new investment opportunities, improving the identity of national products and introducing Arabic e-certificates of origin.

When it comes to specifications and measurements, seven plans have been chalked out; key among them are the development of a compatibility system in the Sultanate of Oman and the development of a general quality mark.

Global promotions and the creation of an investment map are both considered key areas – alongside the Invest in Oman Portal – when it comes to the field of investment promotion. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN What water tanker colours signify

1 If you've ever wondered why water tankers in Oman are painted in three different colours, it is to distinguish them on the basis of what they transport. Laws governing the registration of vehicles that transport water state that water tankers shall be painted blue if they carry potable water, green if they carry non-potable water and yellow for sewage carriers. **>A3**

WORLD



Shehbaz Sharif new PM of Pakistan

2 Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and former leader of Opposition, was elected the 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan by the National Assembly of the country on Monday. "Mian Mohammad Shehbaz Sharif has secured 174 votes," announced PML-N leader Ayaz Sadiq, who was chairing the session. **>A6**

MARKET Sohar International approves 4% dividend

3 Sohar International recently held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the shareholders on March 31. The meeting was presided over by Mohammed Mahfoudh Al Ardhi, Chairman of the Board. The Annual General Meeting also discussed and approved the distribution of cash dividends to shareholders at the rate of 4 baisas per share. **>B1**

OBITUARY

Oman bids final farewell to a renowned doctor and novelist

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman bid farewell to doctor and novelist Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Farsi, Senior Consultant and Head of Adult Oncology department at the Royal Hospital, who passed away on Sunday night.

He worked as a Senior Specialist Physician in the Oncology department at the National Cancer Centre in Muscat and was a member of the International Union for Cancer Control.

His prominent publications are: 'Earth Cries, Saturn Laughs', 'Finally the Bear Woke Up' 'The Gray Box', 'The Balcony Man' and 'Not Far From the Moon'.

The Royal Hospital in its condolence message said: "He was a doctor and writer, and left a smile and a good impact on the souls of his colleagues, patients and their families. The Royal Hospital mourns late Dr. Al-Farsi."

Samah Abdullah Al Araimi, Senior Nurse at the Royal Hospital



Late Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Farsi

said: "Thinking of Dr. Abdul Aziz as an oncologist and writer brings to me the same face, smile and attitude as his. Whenever we met on the go, he greeted and smiled in a humble, quiet way. Last time we met during a meeting with the Royal Hospital media committee to discuss the strategy. He listened

attentively to all opinions and ideas. What you witnessed in the social media was a great reflection of him as a human being, a kind physician and an exceptional writer. He will definitely be missed by his colleagues and friends, patients and their families and, of course, by the world of medicine and literature.

"The doctor was caring for his patients and their families. In case a patient died, he continued to communicate with their families." Sumaya, the sister of a cancer patient, says: "Our condolences go out to the family of Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Farsi and all the cancer patients and their families. How do I explain the sincerity of this doctor in a few words?"

"He will remain in our prayers as if he was a member of the family and not because he was the doctor of my brother. May God have mercy on him for his sincerity to my family even after my brother's death."



AL-SALIF VILLAGE – A WINDOW INTO OMAN'S PAST

Featuring an ancient fort and several houses surrounded by a wall and watchtowers, Al Salif, in the region of Ad Dhahirah is a testament to Oman's ancient past. The ancient wonders located here are indicative of the rich culture and storied past of the Dhahirah region as a whole: once situated in a prime position on ancient trade routes, the Dhahirah Governorate still occupies that role, traditionally serving as the bridge between Oman's lofty mountain ranges, and the country's neighbours the UAE and Saudi Arabia, according to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. Archaeology and history play a major role in the heritage of Ad Dhahirah, which extends all the way from the Al Hajar Mountains to the Empty Quarter, known locally as the Rub Al Khali.



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WATER RESOURCES: The Embassy of Switzerland in Muscat produced a short video on the similarities in traditional irrigation in the two countries on the occasion of World Water Day 2022. – Supplied picture

Shared heritage leads to stronger ties between Oman and Switzerland

While five Aflaj in Oman are registered as UNESCO World Heritage (Al Katmeen, Al Malki, Daris, Al Jeela and Al Muyasser), Switzerland's Bisses have their own Museum in the canton of Valais: Le Musée des Bisses

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman and Switzerland are not only friends, but share some similar elements of heritage as well.

That's according to the Embassy of Switzerland in Muscat which, on the occasion of World Water

Day 2022, produced a short video on the similarities in traditional irrigation in the two countries.

The video follows a presentation made by the embassy in December 2020 on mountain farmers in both the countries which talked about strikingly similar experiences.

"Even though Switzerland is

famous as a country rich in water resources, there are some very dry regions, where agriculture would be difficult without an irrigation system," said the embassy.

"Therefore, in the mountainous region of the Valais, farmers used a system called the 'Bisse', which is very similar to the Omani 'Aflaj'.

While most of the Bisses have disappeared, some farmers still use them.

While five Aflaj in Oman are registered as UNESCO World Heritage (Al Katmeen, Al Malki, Daris, Al Jeela and Al Muyasser), Switzerland's Bisses have their own Museum in the canton of Valais: Le Musée des Bisses.

"In both countries, water is gathered high up in the mountains and transported through a system of canals to the fields," added the embassy. "The Omani Aflaj and

the Bisses of Switzerland are both centuries-old systems that allow farmers to grow crops in places that would otherwise be too dry for agriculture.

"Until today, this technique allows water to be transported over long distances without any use of fuels or electricity, which otherwise would have necessitated the use of deep wells or water pumps," said the embassy. "This helps preserve the ground water reserves and makes agriculture more sustainable. Additionally, the systems are an integral part of the community as they are owned and cared for by the farmers of the villages themselves."

"So, next time when you are in the mountains of Oman or Switzerland, follow one of the Aflaj or Bisses on a hike to explore their long tradition."

FOR VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

Education ministry signs cooperation programme with Sohar Aluminium



SIGNING CEREMONY: The programme was signed by Her Excellency Dr. Mona bint Salem Al Jardaniya and Eng. Saeed bin Mohammed Al Masoudi, CEO of the Company. – OMA

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation and Sohar Aluminium Company signed a cooperation programme to develop vocational colleges and the Vocational College for Marine Sciences in Al Khaboura.

The programme was signed on the part of the Ministry by Her Excellency Dr. Mona bint Salem Al Jardaniya, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Vocational Training, and on the part of the Company, Eng. Saeed bin Mohammed Al Masoudi, CEO of the Company.

This cooperation between the ministry and the company comes in the belief in the importance of strengthening the strategic partnership with the private sector and benefiting from the company's expertise and using it in developing vocational colleges and the vocational college for marine sciences, and providing an educational and training environment that contributes to developing the quality of vocational training.

It also comes within the frame-

work of Sohar Aluminium's commitment to its role in supporting sustainable educational and innovative projects within the framework of its social responsibility. Sohar Aluminium Company has hired an international expert house for professional consultancy in the technical evaluation phase of the project to develop the vocational colleges and the vocational college for marine sciences in Al Khaboura, where it worked within the framework of developing the vocational education and training system in line with the objectives of Oman 2040 vision.

A comprehensive action plan has also been drawn up for the development of colleges in specific initiatives according to an updated time frame to accommodate more students, train and qualify them according to the needs of the labor market, in addition to developing programs theoretically and practically to align them with the rapid development in the field of vocational training. – OMA

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NEW FLIGHTS BETWEEN OMAN AND IRAN ANNOUNCED

The Civil Aviation Authority has approved the operation of two weekly flights from Shiraz to Muscat International Airport by Pars Air, starting from May 4, 2022. – Supplied picture



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ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Drug smuggling operation busted in Oman

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has seized large quantities of khat and tobacco from six smugglers while they were trying to enter the Sultanate of Oman illegally.

According to the ROP, the boats of the Coast Guard Police, led by the Dhofar Governorate Police, were able to seize two boats in two separate locations off the shores of the governorate, with six smugglers on board. Large quantities of khat and tobacco were in their possessions. Legal procedures are being completed against them.

– Times News Service



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KNOW OMAN

Significance of water tanker of different colours in Oman



Times News Service

MUSCAT: If you’ve ever wondered why water tankers in Oman are painted in three different colours, it is to distinguish them on the basis of what they transport.

Laws governing the registration of vehicles that transport water state that water tankers shall be painted blue if they transport potable water (i.e. that which is fit for drinking), green if they carry non-potable water and yellow if they are sewage carriers.

Furthermore, clear and distinct lettering must be used to mark all these vehicles so that the contents of what they carry are easily understood by all.

The phrase ‘potable water’ must be written in white on both sides of a blue tanker, while green trucks must have the words ‘non-potable water’ in yellow and sewage carriers must have the ‘sewage water’ written in black.

The rules regarding water carrier colours are governed by Local Ordinance No. 21/90, which determines colours that distinguish water transportation vehicles and was issued by the Diwan of Royal Court, which supervises Muscat Municipality. “The municipality shall maintain a record of registration of all the vehicles used for transporting water and determine the colour of such vehicles,” says he text of the law.

The municipality will deter-



SEWAGE



POTABLE



NON-POTABLE

mine the degree and density of each colour mentioned above. Furthermore, the owners of water carriers and sewage tankers shall repaint the vehicle whenever the colour on them fades or changes due to natural factors.

“All vehicle owners shall repaint them in a way agreeable with the provisions before the date of licence renewal with the

police,” added the local ordinance. “Whoever violates any of the above mentioned provisions shall pay a fine of not more than OMR50 towards the first and second offences and imprisonment of not more than two months and a fine of not more than OMR100, or any of these punishments for the third violation or any subsequent violation.”



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Times OF OMAN

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82,111 REACH

More than 95,000 employees in the Sultanate receive a monthly salary between OMR325 and OMR400.



Story on salaries in Oman

A story on salaries in Oman reached 82,111 people and had 10,800 link clicks on Facebook.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

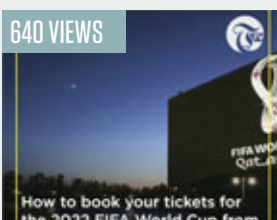
1,300 VIEWS



The Maghrib Minute video in Hindi had 1,300 views and reached 8,100 people on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

640 VIEWS



The Morning Minute video on booking tickets for Qatar 2022 had 640 views and 41 likes on Instagram.



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Ramadan

» IFTAR TIMING

6:32 pm

» PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:13 pm
Asr	3:40 pm
Maghrib	6:32 pm
Isha	7:44 pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:31 am



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» RAMADAN WORDS

Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in providence, both its good and its evil.

» IFTAR AROUND THE WORLD

EGYPT

Around the world, each culture has its own Iftar customs and traditions.

IFTAR is usually held at the house of the family’s eldest member and streets are decorated with lanterns hung on the doors of each house. Most Egyptian families break the fast with a dish prepared from fowl medames which is eaten with brown bread. As beans are healthy and not heavy on the stomach hence, in most homes they are mixed with hot oil, salt and pepper, but some people prefer to cook them with onion and tomatoes.

Egyptians also make some special drinks called qamar al deenandarasyi, which is made from dry apricots that have been soaked all day. It’s a delicious and healthy way to break the daylong fast. There are also traditional beverages such as Karkade (hibiscus tea), and Tamr Hindi (tamarind).

During the Holy Month of Ramadan, many traditional dishes are made. These include mahshi (rice and herbs stuffed veggies), bechamel pasta, molokhia, and more. Another Ramadan speciality is the crescent-shaped bread or khaboos.



» HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

INCLUDE PRE-MEALS

For Suhoor include nuts and seeds that are rich in protein as well as fibre. These also keep you full for longer periods. After a break of 30 minutes, consume your main meal.



» GOOD DEEDS

ZAKAT, AN ACT OF FINANCIAL CHARITY

By time, verily man is in loss. Except such as have faith, and do good deeds, and (join together) in the mutual enjoining of truth, and of patience and constancy. (Sura Al Asr 103:1-3)

One of the seven pillars of Islam is Zakat, an act of financial charity, which is obligatory for those who have excess wealth.

The literal meaning of Zakat is ‘to cleanse’. In the Islamic faith, Zakat means purifying your wealth for the will of Allah by acknowledging that everything we own belongs to Him and as a means of working towards the betterment of the Muslim Ummah.

The main purpose of Zakat is to provide for the poor so that they can celebrate the festival of breaking the fast along with the rest of the Muslims. Every Muslim is required to pay Zakat as a token of thankfulness to God for having enabled him or her to observe the obligatory fast.

However, giving Zakat is not the only way to bless those around you during the Holy Month, and there are other charitable acts that can be performed in the name of Allah and as a blessing on both the giver and the recipient.

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Oman’s public-private partnership crucial for economic development

Qais Al Yousef has urged the private sector to create new partnerships and gain knowledge and experience to support the sectors associated with economic diversification

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s private sector – including businessmen and overseas investors – has a key role in job creation and stimulating economic growth alongside initiatives taken by the public sector, said Qais Al Yousef, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP).

“We urge the establishment of partnerships that contribute to increasing the volume of trade with our friendly countries as well as joint investments,” said Al Yousef, during a press conference

“

We urge the establishment of partnerships that contribute to increasing the volume of trade with our friendly countries as well as joint investments

”



Qais Al Yousef
Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion

organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

“It is our responsibility, first of all, to take care of and support young Omani people in cooperation with the SME Development Authority and other concerned organisations,” he added.

With the ministry having launched several investment opportunities across the industrial sector in collaboration with several government agencies, the minister urged the private sector

to make use of these opportunities to develop business, create new partnerships and gain knowledge and experience to support the sectors associated with economic diversification.

“Over the past two years, we have passed through the most difficult and challenging phase and we must now build on what we have achieved and seize the opportunities that come our way,” he added.

“Strengthening our partnership with the private sector is a

goal that we keep in mind,” said Al Yousef.

“We believe that the private sector, businessmen and local and foreign investors across various sectors, have a major and pivotal role in stimulating economic growth and providing job opportunities for young people, both today and in future.”

With Oman launching its investor residency programme, the minister explained that this would be developed in the coming months so that organisations in the country can learn from the international experiences of investors and attract quality investments.

“The national output has a share in everything we seek to achieve,” he explained. “Do not forget that supporting national products locally and focusing on national industries and opening new markets for export are other gains for the national economy, and for the private sector in particular.”

The minister added: “Integrated initiatives have been set up to consider strengthening the presence of our national products, both locally and internationally. Within the same framework, and to take into account the complementarity of efforts and goals, the ministry has put in place initiatives to improve and develop standards and specifications to encourage the privatisation of some related services.

‘SHABAB OMAN II’ LEAVES FOR EUROPE

The Royal Navy of Oman vessel ‘Shabab Oman II’ leaves Oman for the European continent for its sixth international voyage. – ONA



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

FROM A1 Efforts being taken to increase funds

Similarly, in terms of the nine investment services plans, establishing a fast track plan to develop the business environment in Oman that will work alongside an investor services centre is considered a priority.

Furthermore, the Centre for Competitiveness, Protection and Prevention of anti-Monopoly has been asked to study the competitiveness conditions for the retail sector, as well as the prices of automobiles and their spare parts.

“We reached 100 percent completion among 17 initiatives implemented by the ministry in 2021. Some initiatives have been carried forward to this year and work continues on some more initiatives,” said Minister Al Yousef.

The minister added that the new initiatives of the ministry

would enhance the impact of the economic stimulus plan that was drawn up to develop the governorates of Oman.

Efforts taken under this plan include raising funds allocated to the governorate development programme from OMR10 million to OMR20 million, creating a pricing guide for government services and reducing fees across a number of services.

“These are incentives for us to do more to create a stimulating environment for business, to achieve a diversified and sustainable economy, to meet the developments and changes that come our way, to be able to compete in the international community, and be ready to meet the needs of our citizens, both now and in future,” explained the minister.

Ramadan Iftar Program



The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "He who provides a fasting person something with which to break his fast, will earn the same reward as the one who was observing the fast, without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter."

The Oman Charitable Organization is pleased to announce that it will receive donations for Ramadan Iftar Program in Sultanate of Oman for the year 1443 AH AD 2022

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TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Sale of Al Kamil Power Plant Equipment

Al Kamil Power Company SAOG (under liquidation) is offering for sale all the Plant equipment as part of winding down its business operations in the Sultanate of Oman, with preference given to buyers interested in purchasing the entire plant either for continuing operations in Oman or dismantling the equipment and transporting it to their own jurisdiction for their own use. To the extent that a buyer for the entire plant cannot be found, the equipment will be sold at the best price offered.

The Plant comprises of three (3) General Electric Frame 9171E gas turbines designed for operation in open cycle configuration, together with related ancillary equipment required for a fully independent operation. Turbines are also designed to run on both natural gas and light distillate fuel oil. Gas is supplied through a pipeline from Oman Gas Network, while light distillate is transported by road tankers to the site.

The entire plant and individual equipment items are being offered for sale on an "as is where is" basis, with bid prices to be submitted to the Company no later than May 23, 2022.

Tender documents which include further detailed information and data about the power assets can be obtained by downloading the Tender Document from the Company's website at:

<http://www.alkamilpower.com/Tenders/Tender.pdf>



The bid price for all or some part of the equipment shall be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to:

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Office No. 53G, Landmark Building, 5th Floor (Located Opposite Al Amine Mosque and next to Fraser Suites Hotel) Bousher, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

View of Three Gas Turbines

Mian Shehbaz Sharif becomes 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) legislators resigned en masse from the National Assembly

ISLAMABAD: Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and former leader of Opposition, was elected the 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan by the National Assembly of the country on Monday.

"Mian Mohammad Shehbaz Sharif has secured 174 votes," announced PML-N leader Ayaz Sadiq, who was chairing the session after the resignation of Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri ahead of the vote. Ahead of the voting, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) legislators resigned en masse from the National Assembly and walked out of the National Assembly after a speech by former Foreign Minister and PTI candidate for prime ministerial post, Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Earlier, former Prime Minister Imran Khan had resigned from the membership of the House after holding a meeting with his parliamentary party delegation.

The younger brother of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was set to grab the top post after former Prime Minister Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)



NEW PRIME MINISTER: Sharif's candidature as the Opposition's choice for the Prime Ministership was revealed by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during a joint press conference.

government was ousted from power following the no-confidence motion against the regime.

The voting on the no-confidence motion had resulted in the Imran Khan-led government losing with 174 votes in favour of the no-confidence motion.

Sharif's candidature as the Opposition's choice for the Prime Ministership was revealed by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during a joint press conference of the opposition parties on March 30.

He was elected as the Prime Minister in the same National Assembly session which saw the ouster of Imran Khan, in accord-

ance with the order of the Pakistan Supreme Court. Pakistan's Supreme Court in a historic judgement on Thursday had called for the convening of the session of the National Assembly "not later than 10:30 AM on Saturday" after setting aside the April 3 ruling of the Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri against the no-confidence motion on "Constitutional grounds".

Declaring the ruling of the Deputy Speaker "to be contrary to the Constitution and the law and of no legal effect", the Court set aside all the subsequent steps taken, including the dissolution of the National Assembly, while also restoring Prime Minister Imran

Khan and all the Federal Ministers to their respective positions as of April 3.

The court also fixed the Saturday session with the conditions that the session cannot be prorogued unless the motion is voted upon, and in case Imran Khan loses the no-trust vote, the next PM had to be elected in the same session.

Shehbaz Sharif, born in an industrialist family in Lahore in 1950, is the younger brother of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who has served for three terms. Shehbaz Sharif has been the Chief Minister of the crucial Punjab province of Pakistan for three terms. **ANI**



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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Emmanuel Macron to face Marine Le Pen in runoff at end of the month



PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron will go head-to-head against far-right candidate Marine Le Pen in a runoff later this month, after the two secured the most votes in the first round of France's presidential election.

Exit polls released on Sunday evening put the two leading the pack out of a crowded field of 12 presidential candidates.

Incumbent French President Emmanuel Macron, a centrist, is running for reelection.

Macron's term has been marked by ups and downs. The so-called yellow vest movement in 2018 was triggered by his business-friendly policies and tax cuts for the wealthy.

With his term coming to an end, he is leading opinion polls.

He seemed to have put aside traditional campaigning — until two weeks ago — and rather focused on diplomatic efforts, most notably with Russia and Ukraine.

Macron's opponent will be far-right leader Marine Le Pen, who also faced off against him during the 2017 presidential election.

Unlike Macron, Le Pen has been campaigning for months, focusing on inflation and incomes.

But she has been criticized in Europe for her 2017 stance against the EU and NATO — currently two major players in the response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

She also has drawn controversy for wanting to ban Muslim headscarves in public, as well as getting rid of halal and kosher butchers. Le Pen has also campaigned for years in favor of significantly reducing immigration from outside Europe.

When is the next round?

France will head to the polls again on Sunday, April 24 to vote in the second round.

Around 48.7 million voters are registered for the election, but it remains to be seen whether voter

participation will rise for the second round.

The next few weeks will likely see more intensive campaigning, particularly from Macron, as he seeks to secure a second term.

New polls released late Sunday indicate a close second round.

The Ifop-Fiducial group said Macron would receive 51% of the vote to Le Pen's 49%. Meanwhile, the Elabe group projected Macron would receive 52% to Le Pen's 48%.

What have the reactions been?

Macron urged citizens to block his far-right challenger from the presidency, and said "nothing was decided yet" after the first round of voting.

Le Pen said the second round of the presidential election offers voters "two opposing visions for the future."

"What is at stake on April 24 is not a choice of circumstances, but a choice of society, a choice for civilization," she said.

Other candidates who fell behind in the voting rallied against Le Pen.

Left-wing candidate Jean-Luc Melancon, who came in third place, urged citizens to "not give a single vote to Madame Le Pen."

Conservative candidate Valerie Pécresse called on voters to support Macron, saying if Le Pen ascends to the presidency there would be "disastrous consequences for the country and for future generations."

What are the main issues?

France's response to the war in Ukraine, strains on the health system triggered by two years of the coronavirus pandemic and the economy are all high among voter concerns.

Tackling a surge in energy and food prices has been at the core of most of the candidates' campaigns. **DW**

SRI LANKA CRISIS

Sri Lanka will choose constitutional provision to oust govt: Opposition leader

COLOMBO: Dismissing the possibility of a no-confidence motion like Pakistan to oust the present government in Sri Lanka, Leader of the Opposition Sajith Premadasa said that they will use their Constitutional provisions to change the government. Speaking to ANI, the Opposition leader said, "Pakistan has its own method of conducting democratic politics while we have our own Constitutional provisions and we will not be following anything else other than the Constitution of our country."

Premadasa further said, "we have homegrown problems and we need a homegrown solution. We will represent hundreds of thousands of citizens and will have an organic uprising but will ensure that this will be a peaceful uprising. We'll use all methods available through constitutional procedures to achieve the expectations of the people."

Reacting to the former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's statement over the huge bilateral loans that Sri Lanka has to pay, Premadasa said that the country has not only taken bilateral loans



but also taken multilateral loans from various international monetary markets and also have ISBN. He said, "We need to pay the loan in the month of April. Our composition of tet is multifaceted. So we need to adopt certain procedures but first and foremost we need an orderly process."

He said that their proposals for the inclusion of financial experts in the government were accepted within 24 hours. He further stated that if the government follows the roadmap and if the initiative was taken timely and the process will be fast track then Sri Lanka can survive as a country.

Premadasa urged the world to help Sri Lanka in such a situation. He said, "As a responsible citizen, my appeal to all leaders, to everyone in the international community, financial institution and political organisation to help Sri Lanka to the maximum possible extent."

Meanwhile, in Colombo, Sri Lankans continue to protest against the government as the country faces an economic crisis. "This protest will not end until this govt is brought down. We will stay here for months, years. It's not about a single-family but the entire corrupt system," says a protester. Earlier, on April 9, Sri Lanka's

main opposition party Samagi Jana Balwegya announced that it will move a no-confidence motion against President Gotabaya Rajapaksha if it fails to provide immediate relief to the people of the island nation adversely impacting the economic crisis.

Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa had earlier said that Sri Lanka must abolish the all-powerful Executive Presidency and strengthen Parliament without paying the way to a similarly dictatorial premiership while ensuring adequate checks and balances.

"For nearly 20 years every leader promised to abolish the Executive Presidency but only strengthened it," Premadasa said in a strongly worded speech in parliament on Tuesday reminding the Parliamentarians about the necessity to introduce a new electoral system.

It is pertinent to mention that since the introduction of the presidential system in 1978, every election which ensued was fought on the promise to abolish the presidency. However, once elected all presidents chose to ignore the election promise. **ANI**

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WORLD



MOSCOW VISIT

Austrian Chancellor Nehammer to meet Putin in Moscow



MOSCOW: Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on Monday will become the first European leader to visit Moscow and meet Russian President Vladimir Putin since the invasion of Ukraine began on February 24.

The meeting is intended to tell the Russian president “the truth” about the war, Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg said.

“It makes a difference to be face to face and tell him what the reality is: that this president has de facto lost the war morally,” Schallenberg said upon his arrival for talks with EU counterparts in Luxembourg.

“It should be in his own interest that someone tells him the truth. I think it is important and we owe it to ourselves if we want to save human lives.”

‘Humanitarian hell in Ukraine’

Austria’s foreign minister said Nehammer is taking “very clear messages of a humanitarian and political kind” to the meeting with his opposite number in the Russian capital. The visit is aimed at mitigating “the humanitarian hell” notably by pleading for “humanitarian corridors,” Schallenberg said.

While “this is not an EU-

mandated trip,” Nehammer informed key EU leaders of his plan in advance, Schallenberg said. He added that Nehammer decided to make the trip after meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv on Saturday.

Schallenberg said: “We don’t want to leave any opportunity unused and must seize every chance to end the humanitarian hell in Ukraine.”

“Every voice that makes clear to President Putin what reality looks like outside the walls of Kremlin is not a wasted voice.”

Schallenberg said that Nehammer and Putin will meet one-on-one without media opportunities.

Scholz backs ‘diplomatic effort’

The visit has been welcomed by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Berlin supports any “diplomatic efforts” to end the war in Ukraine, Christiane Hoffmann, a government spokesperson, said on Monday.

Putin and Nehammer plan to focus on the conflict when they meet but they may also discuss issues relating to gas supply, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Monday, according to the Interfax news agency. **rw**

TWITTER

Tesla CEO Elon Musk will not join Twitter board

CALIFORNIA: Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal tweeted that the company’s largest shareholder, Tesla CEO Elon Musk, will not be joining Twitter’s board of directors as the company previously announced.

On Twitter, Agrawal wrote, “Elon Musk has decided not to join our board.” He added, “Elon’s appointment to the board was to become effective” on April 9, “but Elon shared that same morning that he



will no longer be joining the board.”

The news follows a weekend of Musk tweeting possible alterations to the social media platform. Among his suggestions was making Twitter free of advertising despite the fact that nearly 90% of the company’s revenues come from advertisements. Despite being Twitter’s largest shareholder, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings revealed last week, it is not

known why Musk is not taking up the seat on Twitter’s board as he was offered. He has a 9.1% stake in the company.

However, Agrawal did drop a significant hint when he wrote the Twitter board “believed having Elon as a fiduciary of the company, where he, like all board members, has to act in the best interests of the company and all our shareholders, was the best path forward.” **rw**



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Atta	5 kg 1
Al Kamil Masoor Dal	500 gm 1
Al Kamil White Chick Peas	500 gm 1
Dates Khalas	1 kg 1
Oats Pouch	500 gm 1
Tomato Paste	800 gm 1
Table Salt	1 kg 1
Macaroni	400 gm 1
Vermicelli	400 gm 1
Baked Beans	400 gm 1
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South Africa sweep Test series against Bangladesh 2-0

The win solidified South Africa's position in the ICC Men's World Test Championship standings

PORT ELIZABETH: Keshav Maharaj again came big with his bowling heroics to complete his second seven-for of the series as South Africa defeated Bangladesh by 332-run in the second and final Test.

Bangladesh's resistance lasted just around an hour on day four as Maharaj spun a web around the batters. The visitors were bowled out for 80 in their second innings as South Africa swept the series 2-0. The win solidified South Africa's position in the ICC Men's World Test Championship standings, where they are currently second with a points percentage of 71.42. Bangladesh are second from bottom with 16.66.

Starting the day at 27/3, Bangladesh lost their veteran batters, Mushfiquur Rahim and Mominul Haque, in consecutive Maharaj overs. Yasir Ali didn't look to hang around and went for a big shot, but holed out in the deep for a duck.



BANGLADESH VS SOUTH AFRICA: Bangladesh's resistance lasted just around an hour on day four as Maharaj spun a web around the batters.

The 25-run stand between Liton Das and Mehidy Hasan Miraz was Bangladesh's highest of the innings. But as Das looked to find the fence, he strayed out of the crease to Maharaj and was stumped - it was Maharaj's second five-for of the series.

The left-arm spinner picked two more wickets in his next over to complete his second seven-

wicket haul in as many games. In doing so, he became the first player in Test history to complete two seven-fors in the fourth innings of consecutive Tests.

Simon Harmer finished off the game, trapping Taijul Islam for a duck as South Africa walloped Bangladesh by 332 runs.

Maharaj was the unanimous choice for the Player of the Match

award and with 16 wickets and 108 runs in the series, he also took home the Player of the Series crown.

Brief Scores: South Africa 453 (Maharaj 84, Elgar 70; Taijul 6-135) and 176 for 6 dec (Erwee 41, Verreynne 39*; Taijul 3-67) beat Bangladesh 217 (Mushfiquur 51; Mulder 3-25, Harmer 3-39) and 80 (Litton 27; Maharaj 7-40, Harmer 3-34) by 332 runs. **ANI**



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FOOTBALL



Manchester City play 2-2 draw against Liverpool

MANCHESTER: Manchester City and Liverpool played a 2-2 draw here at Etihad Stadium on Sunday with Kevin De Bruyne and Gabriel Jesus scoring for City and Diogo Jota and Sadio Mane scoring for the Reds.

Hosts Manchester City took an early lead in the fifth minute of the match as Kevin de Bruyne scored for them. Eight minutes later brought the match on level terms as he turned home Trent Alexander-Arnold's pass.

The Citizens made it 2-1 in their favour as Gabriel Jesus netted a goal for them in the 37th minute and both the teams went into half-time with City leading by one goal. Pep Guardiola's side dominated

the first half of the match with more possession.

At the beginning of the second half birthday boy, Sadio Mane scored for Liverpool with the help of Mohamed Salah's assist to make it 2-2. The match ended with the same scoreline as Manchester City maintained their one-point lead in the Premier League points table with 74 points in 31 matches with Liverpool having 73 points in as many matches.

In the match, City had 55 per cent possession in comparison to Liverpool who had possession of 45 per cent. The hosts also had more shots on target than Liverpool having five in comparison to four. **ANI**

ICC MEN'S CWC LEAGUE 2

Scotland edge past Oman by four runs in UAE tri-series

Times News Service

DUBAI: Scotland beat Oman by 4 runs at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on April 10, 2022. The match was Oman's first of 4 in the double round-robin tri-series played as part of the ICC Men's CWC League 2.

Batting first after winning the toss, Kyle Coetzer, Matthew Cross, Calum Macleod and Richie Berrington got starts, but none of them were able to convert them into substantial scores. Cross's tally of 33 was the highest among the 4.

The only one that did so was George Munsey. First, he built a 51-run partnership with Berrington to bring some stability to the Scottish innings, but once the latter was dismissed in the 34th over, Munsey assumed total command. He remained unfazed by the regular loss of wickets at the other



end and made his way to a superb 74-ball 62.

Safyaan Sharif chipped in with a valuable 19 runs at the death and Scotland were bowled out for 215 with 2 balls to spare.

With the ball, Oman's three-pronged pace attack proved effective. Fayyaz Butt was the most impressive and finished with figures of 3/48. Bilal Khan and Kaleemullah picked up 2 wickets apiece. Ayaan Khan and skipper Zeeshan Maqsood claimed the rest.

In response, Oman started well. Jatinder Singh picked up right where he left off against Namibia at the same venue, a month prior. He dazzled on the way to a half-century. Kashyap Prajapati, Shoaib Khan and Khawar Ali missed out, but Zeeshan Maqsood and Ayaan Khan erected a 65-run stand in the late-middle overs to keep the run-chase on track. It was the former's run-out, 4 runs shy of

a deserved 50, that brought Scotland back into the tie.

Adrian Neill, in just his third-ever ODI, sent Sandeep Goud and Naseem Khushi packing as part of his brilliant late-innings spell. Ayaan continued to lock down one end of the wicket, but the flux on the opposite side proved highly disruptive.

Scotland collectively redoubled their efforts with the ball and on the field too, making Oman work extremely hard for every single run. They also kept their nerves under pressure. Bowling the penultimate over of the match, Mark Watt embodied that spirit and collected 2 wickets at the cost of just 1 run. Ultimately, with 6 runs

needed off the final 6 balls and just 1 wicket left in the bank, Adrian Neill and Hamza Tahir combined to dismiss Ayaan for a magnificent 72-ball 68.

His innings brought Oman to the cusp of victory, but proved 4 runs short of sealing it.

Zeeshan Maqsood (Oman Captain) - The way the bowlers bowled was great. 215 in the first innings was a chasable total on that track. Jatti (Jatinder Singh) played well, Ayaan Khan batted very well but we just couldn't make it in the end. Scotland came back very strongly too. We had some good performances in that game so we will take those positives into the next one.



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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by June 2022 reaching \$97.42, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 40 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$97.82. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,241.20 points, up by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.43 per cent at 487.68 points. Al Batinah Development Company, up 25 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman United Insurance, down 5.85 per cent was the top loser.

Sohar International shareholders approve 4% dividend at AGM

The annual general meeting (AGM) also saw the approval and appointment of new Sharia Supervisory Board members for Sohar Islamic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar International recently held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the shareholders on March 31.

The meeting was presided over by Mohammed Mahfoudh Al Ardhi, Chairman of the Board, and attended by board members, the executive management team of Sohar International and shareholders.

The shareholders were briefed on the bank's performance in 2021 along with discussions on other agenda items that covered 15 main items starting with the review and approval of the Board of Directors' Report for the financial year ended December 31, 2021.

The Annual General Meeting also discussed and approved the distribution of cash dividends to shareholders at the rate of 4 bai-



DISCUSSION: The shareholders were briefed on the bank's performance in 2021 along with discussions on other agenda items that covered 15 main items starting with the review and approval of the Board of Directors' Report for the financial year ended December 31, 2021. - **Supplied picture**

sas per share. The shareholders also appointed a new Board of seven members. The meeting was held at the Mandalon Hall, Crown Plaza Hotel - Muscat and also was streamed online via the electronic general meeting platform of the Muscat Clearing and Depository.

Commenting on the bank's overall performance, Mohammed Mahfoudh Al Ardhi, who was reappointed as a director and a Chairman of Sohar International's Board, said, "The year 2021 witnessed Sohar International con-

tinue on its growth trajectory, demonstrating institutional strength and resilience as it entered a new phase of excellence paving way for the organisation to reach new heights. We continue to deliver on multiple fronts, contributing to the country's progress, supporting the larger community in which we operate, creating shareholder value and being an employer of choice. The financial results for the year 2021 are a testament to the compelling value propositions offered by Sohar International, and the

progress we have been making on our strategic agenda towards realising our vision of becoming a world-leading Omani service company that helps customers, communities and people to prosper and grow."

Amongst the various agenda related items, the AGM approved the Directors' Report, Corporate Governance Report, Board Performance Report, Auditor's Report, and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Besides reviewing the corpo-

rate social responsibility (CSR) engagements and charitable donations carried out throughout 2021, the bank's shareholders also approved OMR 250,000 for charitable donations and social corporate responsibility for the year 2022 and authorised the board to allocate it the way it deems fit.

The AGM also witnessed the approval and appointment of new Sharia Supervisory Board members for Sohar Islamic.

Other agenda items included ratification of sitting fees paid to

directors during the year 2021, determination of sitting fees for the year 2022, remunerations payable to the directors for the financial year 2021, reappointing Deloitte & Touche as the external auditors for Sohar Islamic, in addition to noting the Sharia Supervisory Board's report on the legitimacy of Sohar Islamic's transactions for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.

Sohar International's shareholders also ratified the generous contributions to the local community made by the bank towards the national efforts to mitigate the social impact of the cyclone Shaheen.

It's worth noting that Sohar International recorded spectacular financial performance and an exceptional year of growth in the year 2021 recording an increase in the net profit of 41.6 per cent to OMR28.3 million for the year ended December 31, 2021, up from OMR20.0 million for the previous year. With a healthy increase of 14.5 per cent in total assets, the year 2021 also witnessed Sohar International raising its Tier I capital by OMR50 million.

The bank also registered a 14.5 per cent increase in its total assets as of 31 December 2021 amounting to a total of OMR4,134 million as compared to OMR3,611 million as of 31 December 2020. Its net loans and advances also increased by 4.3 per cent to reach OMR2,612 million as opposed to OMR2,503 million as of 31 December 2020.

AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

India creates matrix for 50 farm products to boost exports

NEW DELHI: Buoyed by a record over \$50 billion worth of exports of agricultural products in the financial year ended March 31, the central government has created matrix for 50 farm products to further boost shipments, the Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry said on Saturday.

India's agricultural exports rose by 19.92 per cent during 2021-22 to touch \$50.21 billion against \$41.87 billion recorded in the previous year.

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry said the sharp increase in growth during the financial year 2021-22 was largely due to the various initiatives taken by the government through the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) such as organising B2B exhibitions in different countries, exploring new potential markets through product-specific and general marketing campaigns by the active involvement of Indian Embassies.

The Centre organised more than 300 outreach programmes in collaboration with state governments for enhancing the exports of agricultural produce.

"We have also created products matrix for 50 agricultural products which have good scope for expanding our exports portfolios," said M Angamuthu, Chairman, APEDA.

The Centre has also taken several initiatives to promote geographical indications registered with agricultural and processed food products in India by organising virtual Buyer Seller Meets on agricultural and food products with the major importing countries across the world.

The export of wheat touched an all-time high at \$2118 million in 2021-22, growing 273 per cent from 2020-21 when it touched \$567 million, while other cereals registered a growth of 53 per cent by fetching \$1083 million in 2021-22 in comparison to the previous financial year when it touched \$705 million. - **ANI**

MAYSAN SQUARE

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Maysan Properties signed an agreement with Khimji Ramdas for the first phase of construction of the Maysan Square project in Duqm. The project will include 20 buildings constructed across five phases within Oman's first lifestyle business district which is located within the Special Economic Zone of Duqm.

Sadiq Jaffer Sulaiman, CEO of Maysan Properties and Hritik Khimji, director of Khimji Ramdas signed the agreement.

Sadiq Sulaiman said that there is a demand for quality office spaces in the region, which is expected to see population growth of around 200,000 over the years. He added, "Duqm is quietly emerging as one of the fastest-growing economic hubs in the region. The response has been impressive from investors despite the pressures of the pandemic that prevailed for most of the past year. We aim to deliver and create



an iconic business district."

"Khimji Ramdas is pleased to associate with Maysan Properties on one of its renowned projects (Maysan Square). We believe that Maysan Square plays an important part in Duqm's importance as a vi-

tual business, logistics and industrial hub in the Sultanate and the region," said Hritik Khimji.

Abdul Fattah Joudi, CEO, Lines and Vision, the architectural and engineering consulting firm for Maysan Square, "Our aim isn't only

to keep up with the changing trends in the industry, but also aspire to influence them and contribute to the advancement of architecture in the region. Maysan Square - Duqm is certainly one of our prestigious projects in the region."

The project's first phase consists of an office complex with three wings and is comprised of 258 units that are divided between offices and retail spaces. All units are available to all nationalities for purchase with the benefit of having a residency visa and operating in a tax-free zone. The complex will be built on a built-up area of 25,500 m2 over a construction period of 24 months.

Maysan Square as a business district includes an office complex, residential apartments, a business hotel, entertainment venues and many other facilities that will be constructed in stages according to the growing demand in the Special Economic Zone of Duqm.

Around 50 per cent of the

100,000sqm plot will be public urban spaces that will have retail frontage and a green boulevard connected via multiple pedestrian boulevards. This will facilitate easy access and the seamless outdoor-to-indoor flow of pedestrians. Maysan Square aims to promote the fluid interaction of the business community through its open space architecture and multi-functional areas for day and night use.

Beyond the workspace, Maysan Square will satisfy the lifestyle needs of its people with a range of additional facilities including various retail options, food and beverage choices, as well as entertainment and service amenities that aim to help to boost productivity and workplace wellbeing.

Maysan Square offers residency visas to all its buyers. As it is located within the Special Economic Zone of Duqm, the project offers investors additional benefits with regard to tax and fees exemptions, among others.

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MARKET



MSX index ends higher

Al Batinah Development Company, up 25 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman United Insurance, down 5.85 per cent

was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,241.20 points, up by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.43 per cent at 487.68 points. Al Batinah Development Company, up 25 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman United Insurance, down 5.85 per cent was the top loser. Shares of National Bank Oman were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1,053 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR5.71 million, with more than 38.2 million shares changing hands. Out of 57 traded securities, 26 advanced, 10 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR118,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR104,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR14,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,707.88 points, down 0.50 per cent. Prices of Al Batinah Development Company, Muscat Finance, Taageer Finance, United Finance, and Global Financial In-

vestments were up by 25 per cent, 7.69 per cent, 4.21 per cent, 4.00 per cent, and 3.70 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman United Insurance, National Bank Oman, Al Madina Takaful, and Bank Muscat were down by 5.85 per cent, 4.5 per cent, 0.99 per cent, and 0.36 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,194.7 points, up 0.34 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, Al Maha Ceramics, National Aluminium, Gulf International Chemicals, and A'Saffa Foods were up by 9.52 per cent, 2.40 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 1.87 per cent and 1.85 per cent respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, and Voltamp Energy were down by 2.02 per cent, and 0.83 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 1.3 per cent before closing at 1,663.44 points. Prices of Phoenix Power, Renaissance Services, OIFC, Al Jazeera Services, and Al Suwadi Power were up by 4.17 per cent, 4.17 per cent, 3.50 per cent, 2.74 per cent, and 2.04 per cent respectively. Prices of Sembcorp Salalah, and Barka Desalination were down by 1.22 per cent and 0.68 per cent respectively. — United

Securities

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INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,260.69	4,236.53	4,241.20	4,240.88	0.32	0.01
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,758.99	6,694.88	6,707.87	6,741.67	-33.80	-0.50
Industry Index	6,226.97	6,194.70	6,194.70	6,173.54	21.16	0.34
Services Index	1,667.00	1,642.14	1,663.44	1,642.14	21.31	1.30
MSX Shariah Index	488.91	486.76	487.68	485.57	2.11	0.43
MSX TR INDEX	5,367.11	5,336.69	5,342.56	5,342.16	0.40	0.01
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,066.55	6,999.52	7,013.11	7,048.44	-35.33	-0.50
SERVICES TR IDX	1,717.79	1,692.16	1,714.12	1,692.16	21.96	1.30
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,462.55	6,429.05	6,429.05	6,407.10	21.96	0.34

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
38,207,163	5,706,413	1,053	22,354,901,901	26	10	21	57

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, APRIL 11

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	P&L VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE	6,816,084	479,505	239	0.069	0.071	0.068	0.070	0.065	0.005	7.692	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.100	21,500,243
OM0000002224 RENAISSANCE SER	100,000	44,580	8	0.446	0.450	0.446	0.450	0.432	0.018	4.167	0.450	0.440	0.446	0.100	106,384,500
OM0000001525 OMAN INVEST FIN	297,000	137,282	49	0.145	0.150	0.145	0.148	0.143	0.005	3.487	0.145	0.145	0.147	0.100	35,070,000
OM0000002226 ALJAZEERA SERVICES	202,002	60,642	21	0.304	0.304	0.300	0.300	0.292	0.008	2.740	0.300	0.300	0.320	0.100	18,361,282
OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	345,700	177,026	28	0.520	0.520	0.510	0.512	0.500	0.012	2.400	0.514	0.514	0.514	0.100	28,160,000
OM0000002920 VISION INSURANCE	100,000	11,000	5	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.108	0.002	1.852	0.110	0.100	0.110	0.100	11,000,000
OM0000002176 JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	124,320	50,260	22	0.402	0.410	0.396	0.404	0.398	0.006	1.508	0.400	0.398	0.404	0.100	50,458,776
OM0000002440 AL SHARGIA INV.	117,400	108,225	45	0.927	0.929	0.925	0.927	0.926	0.001	1.042	0.926	0.925	0.926	0.100	8,730,000
OM0000001435 RASUT CEMENT	193,017	37,914	37	0.200	0.200	0.194	0.196	0.194	0.002	1.031	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.100	38,200,000
OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	3,158,832	309,303	108	0.099	0.100	0.096	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.096	0.096	0.097	0.100	19,600,000
OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	23,779	23,563	16	0.992	0.996	0.992	0.996	0.992	0.004	0.448	0.996	0.992	0.996	0.100	672,000,000
OM0000001160 NATIONAL GAS	88,200	12,586	11	0.144	0.145	0.140	0.143	0.143	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.140	0.143	0.100	12,150,000
OM0000001533 OMINVEST	1,550	499	1	0.322	0.322	0.322	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.322	0.320	0.322	0.100	213,876,936
OM0000001749 OMAN CEMENT	204,500	47,857	8	0.234	0.236	0.234	0.234	0.234	0.000	0.000	0.234	0.234	0.236	0.100	77,494,214
OM0000002168 AL ANWAR CERAMIC	900	394	1	0.438	0.438	0.438	0.460	0.460	0.000	0.000	0.438	0.438	0.456	0.100	101,200,000
OM0000002200 AHLI BANK	2,539	297	2	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.117	0.124	0.100	230,059,581
OM0000002998 OOREDOO	7,560	2,535	3	0.338	0.339	0.338	0.338	0.338	0.000	0.000	0.338	0.338	0.352	0.100	220,019,150
OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	553,816	303,412	20	0.550	0.550	0.544	0.548	0.550	-0.002	-0.364	0.548	0.544	0.548	0.100	2,056,752,795
OM0000001087 OMAN UNITED INSUR.	6,000	1,124	3	0.354	0.354	0.354	0.354	0.376	-0.022	-5.851	0.354	0.360	0.376	0.100	35,400,000
Total	19	13,976,239	1,809,843	617											

Parallel Market

OM0000001301 DHOFAR CATTLE	5,001	345	2	0.069	0.069	0.063	0.069	0.063	0.006	9.524	0.063	0.063	0.069	0.100	5,578,650
OM0000003281 TAAGEER FINANCE	742,553	73,621	41	0.100	0.102	0.097	0.099	0.095	0.004	4.211	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	25,697,518
OM0000005963 PHOENIX POWER	435,551	21,501	31	0.048	0.050	0.048	0.050	0.048	0.002	4.167	0.049	0.049	0.050	0.100	73,130,073
OM0000002274 UNITED FINANCE	838,700	86,881	39	0.102	0.105	0.098	0.104	0.100	0.004	4.000	0.098	0.099	0.102	0.100	38,311,019
OM0000003125 GLOBAL INV H	2,066,711	174,104	63	0.084	0.086	0.082	0.084	0.081	0.003	3.704	0.082	0.082	0.083	0.100	16,800,000
OM0000001319 ALUMINIUM PROD.	641,420	61,564	63	0.096	0.100	0.094	0.096	0.094	0.002	2.128	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.100	3,222,859
OM0000004835 AL SUWADI POWER	55,384	2,769	7	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.049	0.001	2.941	0.050	0.046	0.050	0.100	12,720,317
OM0000002028 GULF INT'CHEMI	6,159	671	1	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.107	0.002	1.869	0.109	0.105	0.117	0.100	2,289,000
OM0000002804 ASAFFA FOODS	31,456	3,460	5	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.108	0.002	1.632	0.110	0.107	0.110	0.100	13,200,000
OM0000007407 DHOFAR GENERATING	45,100	2,929	3	0.066	0.067	0.065	0.066	0.064	0.001	1.563	0.065	0.063	0.065	0.100	14,445,600
OM0000001152 OMAN NAT. ENG.	177,692	19,566	8	0.110	0.112	0.110	0.110	0.109	0.001	0.917	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000001517 HSBC BANK OMAN	52,189	5,846	4	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.111	0.001	0.801	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.100	224,035,032
OM0000002549 BANK DHOFAR	35,481	3,817	2	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.113	0.001	0.885	0.114	0.114	0.124	0.100	341,584,064
OM0000005260 OMAN ARAB BANK	5,001	635	1	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.126	0.001	0.794	0.127	0.127	0.132	0.100	212,015,070
OM0000001426 MGT REFRESHMENT	680	1,156	1	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.000	0.000	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.100	87,500,000
OM0000001568 OMAN FISHERIES	141,000	12,680	10	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	11,250,000
OM0000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO.	383,400	33,226	24	0.087	0.087	0.085	0.087	0.087	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.100	10,603,125
OM0000001982 AL MADINA INV.	135,750	6,244	7	0.046	0.046	0.044	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.044	0.042	0.046	0.100	3,723,336
OM0000002648 NATIONAL FINANCE	30,000	3,600	1	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.115	0.120	0.100	64,947,654
OM0000004420 BANK NIZWA	48,109	4,693	6	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.097	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000004689 MGT DESALINATION	10,000	1,100	2	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.106	0.118	0.100	10,768,238
OM0000004925 ALBATINAH POWER	130,672	6,403	6	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.049	0.053	0.100	33,069,484
OM0000006912 AHLIA INSURANCE	9,300	2,790	3	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.100	30,000,000
OM0000007084 MGT DESALINATION	2,050	204	2	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.114	0.117	0.100	18,199,397
OM0000008710 BARKA DESALINATION	11,000	1,611	2	0.147	0.147	0.146	0.146	0.147	-0.001	-0.680	0.146	0.145	0.147	0.100	11,028,212
OM0000003661 VOLTAMP ENERGY	20,000	2,400	6	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.121	-0.001	-0.826	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.100	9,768,330
OM0000004788 MADINA TAKAFUL	35,300	34,908	10	0.101	0.101	0.098	0.100	0.101	-0.001	-0.990	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	17,200,000
OM0000004735 SEMBICORP SALALAH	159,745	12,892	14	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.100	37,223,724
OM0000008447 OMAN RETT FUND	10,100	798	0	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.079	0.080	-0.001	-1.250	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.100	37,223,724
OM0000003521 GALFAR ENGINEER	699,407	679,905	39	0.095	0.095	0.097	0.097	0.099	-0.002	-2.020	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.100	19,689,685
OM0000007910 OMAN REAL ESTATE	11,000	1,045	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.097	-0.002	-2.062	0.095	0.092	0.097	0.100	19,000,000
OM0000001483 NATIONAL BANK OMAN	16,899,889	3,232,182	11	0.200	0.204	0.190	0.191	0.200	-0.009	-4.500	0.195	0.195	0.200	0.100	310,555,754
Total	32	24,189,964	3,884,043	429											

RAMADAN OFFER

Maisarah Islamic banking offers 3.45% profit rate on auto finance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Continuing the constant efforts to further enrich its customers' experience with tailored financial solutions, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services has unveiled an exclusive Ramadan offer with attractive profit rates on its auto finance.

Elaborating on the Ramadan exclusive offer, Mohammed Ahmed Al Maashani – Head of Distribution Network at Maisarah said, "These profit rates start from 3.45 per cent, and the offer is valid through



CELLPHONE ‘SELFIES’ MAY DISTORT FACIAL STRUCTURES

Researchers have found that cellphone selfies can distort facial features which may be driving an uptick in requests for plastic surgery.

The findings were reported in the journal, ‘Plastic Reconstructive Surgery’.

The results have highlighted an unexpected consequence of social media and the need for plastic surgeons to discuss this phenomenon with their patients.

“If young people are using selfies as their only guide, they may be coming to plastic surgeons to fix problems that don’t exist except in the world of social media,” said study leader Bardia Amirlak, M.D., Associate Professor of Plastic Surgery at UT Southwestern.

Dr Amirlak explained that patients increasingly use photographs they’ve taken with a smartphone camera to discuss their goals with a plastic surgeon. There’s a documented relationship, he added, between the increase in selfie photographs and an increase in requests for rhinoplasty – or surgery to alter the appearance of the nose – particularly among younger patients.

However, because cameras can distort images, especially when photographs are taken at close



range, selfies may not reflect an individual’s true appearance.

To investigate how selfies might alter the appearance, Dr Amirlak and his colleagues worked with 30 volunteers: 23 women and seven men.

The researchers took three photographs of each person – one each from 12 inches and 18 inches away with a cellphone to simulate selfies taken with a bent or straight arm, and a third from 5 feet with a digital single-lens reflex camera, typically used in plastic surgery clinics. The three images were taken in the same sitting under standard lighting conditions.

The selfies showed significant

distortions. On average, the nose appeared 6.4 per cent longer on 12-inch selfies and 4.3 per cent longer on 18-inch selfies compared to the standard clinical photograph.

There was also a 12 per cent decrease in the length of the chin on 12-inch selfies, leading to a substantial 17 per cent increase in the ratio of nose-to-chin length. Selfies also made the base of the nose appear wider relative to the width of the face. The participants’ awareness of these differences was reflected by how they rated the photos when compared side by side.

Carrie McAdams, M.D., PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry

at UT Southwestern and a member of the Peter O’Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, noted that these distorted images can have a lasting impact on how selfie-takers see themselves.

“Adolescents and young adults are expected to develop a stable sense of self-identity, a neurodevelopmental process related to making comparisons of oneself with others. Unfortunately, selfies emphasise the physical aspects of oneself in making those comparisons and have been associated with lower self-esteem, lower mood, and increased body dissatisfaction,” she said.

“Many changes in our society, including selfies, social media, and isolation from COVID-19, have led to escalating rates of mental health problems in this age group, including depression, anxiety, addiction, and eating disorders,” she added.

Because the images were taken with one brand of cellphone, Dr Amirlak suggested that future research should investigate how prevalent this phenomenon is across different phones.

“As the popularity of selfie photography increases. It is crucial to understand how they distort facial features and how patients use them to communicate,” the study authors concluded. - ANI





IN PICTURES

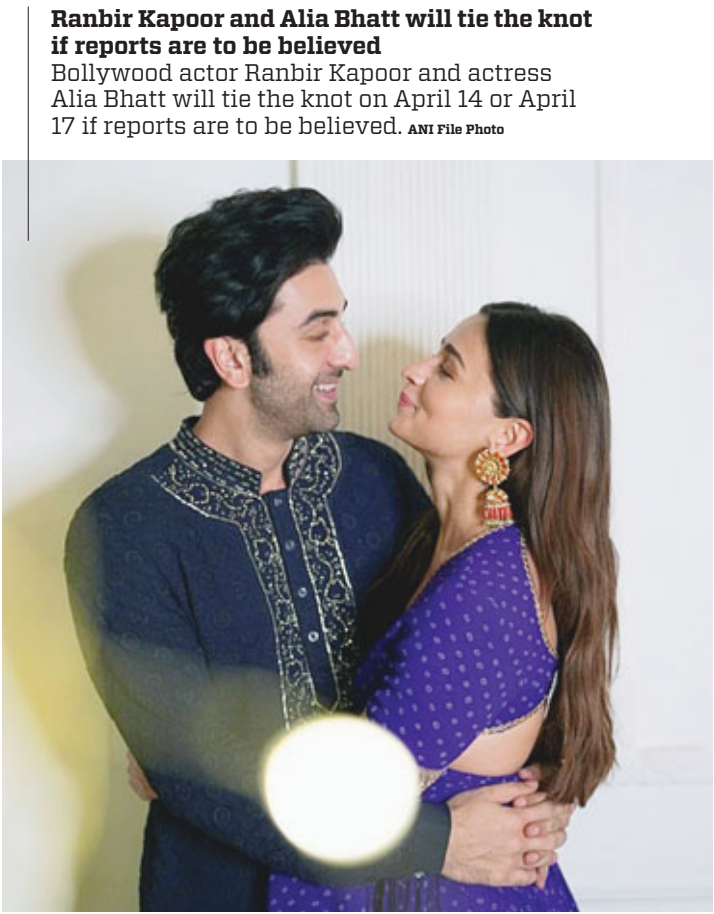


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35th Houston Art Car Parade
 An art car is seen at the 35th Houston Art Car Parade in Houston, Texas, the United States. The parade, which was suspended for two years due to COVID-19 pandemic, returned to Houston on Saturday. *xinhua*



Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt will tie the knot if reports are to be believed
 Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor and actress Alia Bhatt will tie the knot on April 14 or April 17 if reports are to be believed. *ANI File Photo*

People visit exhibitions at Times Art Museum
 People visit the exhibitions at the Times Art Museum in Beijing, capital of China. *xinhua*



Springtime in Istanbul
 People enjoy the springtime along the Bosphorus Strait in Istanbul, Turkey. *xinhua*



20th medieval festival marked in Belgium
 A rider in costumes cuts an apple as he performs during the 20th medieval festival of Ouffet in Ouffet, province of Liege, Belgium, on April 10, 2022. Highlighting performances, markets as well as various activities with the culture of the Middle Ages, the two-day festival attracted many visitors. *xinhua*

People prepare for Bangla New Year
 A student poses for a photo with traditional paper works made for the Bengali New Year in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Bangla New Year is usually celebrated amid festivities every year on April 14. *xinhua*



Daily life in Laos
 Picture shows a view of a night market along the Mekong River, in Vientiane, capital of Laos. *xinhua*



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ROUND-UP



GAC launches all-new 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander in Oman

All-new from the wheels up, the Outlander has been reimagined and reinvented in every way

MUSCAT: General Automotive Company (GAC), the official dealership for Mitsubishi vehicles in Oman, launched the all-new flagship 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander crossover SUV at a recent customer event organised by the Zubair Automotive Group (ZAG).

All-new from the wheels up, the Outlander has been reimagined and reinvented in every way. Not only does it feature a new design direction for both this vehicle and the brand but is also the best-equipped and most technologically advanced vehicle the company has ever sold in the region.

The customer event was held recently at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort and Spa, Muscat. In attendance were the members of the Board of Directors of ZAG, the Chief Operating Officer – Mohammad Al Farei, and members of the senior management of ZAG and its group companies. Also present at the event were representatives from various private and government sector institutions and prominent businessmen from various sectors who are partnered with ZAG.



Commenting on the launch of the all-new Outlander, Mohammad Al Farei said, “Compact SUVs and crossover SUVs are some of the most popular and fastest-growing segments in the market due in part to their practicality, fuel efficiency, and affordability. As a rare three-row vehicle in this space, swathed with a high-quality interior, a bold exterior, competitive pricing, and a solid driveline, the 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander is well geared to have a large impact on the local market.

“It’s not surprising then that the 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander has been one of our most highly anticipated Mitsubishi models ever. It, therefore, brings me great pleasure to finally welcome it to our model line-up here in Oman.”

The 2022 Outlander was crafted under the design language of “I-Fu-Do-Do,” which means “authentic and majestic” in Japanese. This design ethos is reflected in the vehicle’s bold proportions, muscular fenders, and the chiselled lines of the next generation “Dynamic Shield” grille. Standard 18-inch wheels and available 20-inch wheels add a robust presence that emphasises strength and security.

Inside, the Outlander is a quiet and serene space, showcasing quality and convenience through class-above materials and placing a premium on comfort and convenience. It also features seating for seven with the segment’s only standard-equipment third-row seats, together with myriad stor-

age locations and both USB-A and USB-C charge ports.

Offering more technology and connectivity than any previous Mitsubishi model, the 2022 Outlander features an available 12.3-inch, full-colour LCD digital driver display, a first for Mitsubishi Motors. Also available on select trims is a 9-inch SDA centre touchscreen with a built-in navigation system, 10-speaker BOSE audio system, and a 10.8-inch full-colour head-up display (HUD).

Also new are the engineering underpinnings of the 2022 Outlander. The new model now rides on a next-generation platform developed through its partnership in the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance. The newly engineered platform offers a stable foundation for a more confident and comfortable driving experience.

With hot-stamped ultra-high tensile-strength steel used in key areas, torsional rigidity is increased by 33 per cent over the previous model. Powering the all-new Outlander is a newly developed 2.5-litre, four-cylinder gasoline engine producing 184PS@6000rpm and 245Nm@3600rpm mated to an eight-speed continuously variable transmission (CVT) with Sport mode.

Mitsubishi’s motorsport-derived Super All-Wheel Control (S-AWC) all-wheel-drive system is available on higher-trim models, offering unmatched confidence for drivers in all environments. This

optional system features a newly developed drive mode selector which allows performance and grip to be tailored to the current driving conditions through six distinct settings, increasing on-road and off-pavement performance. Even two-wheel-drive models are fitted with the drive-mode selector, offering five distinct modes in this setup, to help drivers feel more confident in all driving conditions.

As the best-equipped Mitsubishi ever sold in Oman, the all-new Outlander also offers an impressive array of standard and available advanced driver assistance systems to increase driver convenience, confidence, and safety. Depending on trim level, the all-new Outlander offers seven airbags, Forward Collision Mitigation, Blind Spot Warning, Lane Departure Warning, Driver Attention Alert, Rear Automatic Emergency Braking (Rear AEB), Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Hill Descent Control and a Multi-Around Monitor System.

“As Mitsubishi’s new flagship model, the 2022 Outlander offers upscale styling, premium quality, rugged performance, innovative technology, and seven-seat practicality, yet it costs about the same as most of its five-seat competition. With the proven reliability of the brand and the aftersales support offered by GAC, the new model will no doubt be very popular amongst families here in the Sultanate,” added Manoj Ranade – General Manager, GAC.

The all-new 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander is now available for pre-order from Mitsubishi showrooms across the country. The model is also available for viewing at the Azaiba showroom.

EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

PROMOTION



Al Jenaibi reveals BMW Ramadan offer for 2022

MUSCAT: Al Jenaibi International Automobiles (AJIA), the official importer of BMW Group in Oman, has revealed its exclusive Ramadan offers to the nation across its BMW model lines for 2022, including the chance to win a new BMW 120i vehicle or the BMW R18 motorbike.

To mark the holy month of Ramadan, AJIA has announced that all new car buyers during the month will receive a complimentary ticket for the chance to win a brand-new BMW 120i vehicle or BMW R18 Motorbike.

Al Jenaibi International Automobiles have also revealed exclusive offers across their model range, with BMW service inclusive package, valid for up to 5 years or 100,000km, and the BMW Repair Inclusive package, valid for up to 5 years or 200,000km with any new car purchases made during the month.

Customers can also enjoy free window tinting from Auto Spa and complimentary vehicle registration for the first year during the month of Ramadan, in addition to an exclusive, free original lifestyle

accessory from BMW.

Jatin Dhawan, Sales Manager of Al Jenaibi International Automobiles said, “We are delighted to announce our exclusive Ramadan offering, and bring forward some remarkable deals to our customers in Oman to celebrate the month of Ramadan. Al Jenaibi International Automobiles is proud to provide our customers with the security and confidence throughout their ownership journey, and the opportunity to own one of the world’s best-loved vehicle marques through our exclusive offers this Ramadan.”

Attractive offers on Nissan Sunny this Ramadan

MUSCAT: Confirming its commitment to offering customers an unmatched buying experience, Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), is offering a wide range of deals for the patrons of Nissan Sunny.

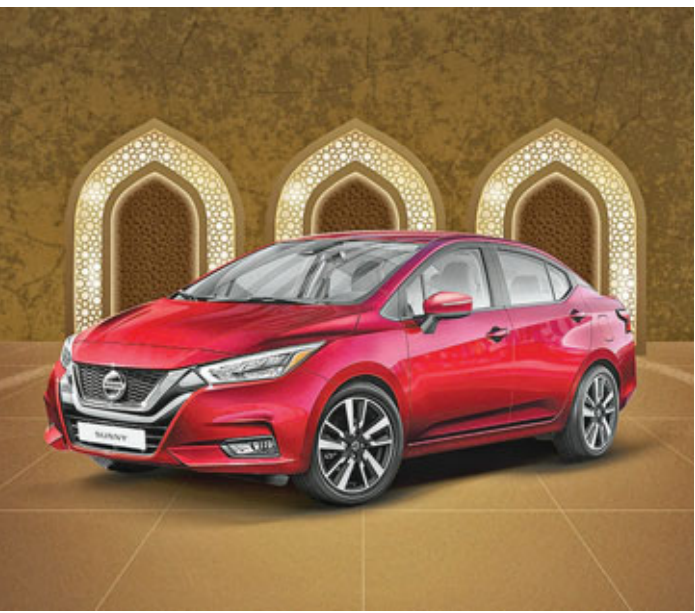
As part of the special scheme, Nissan Oman is offering a free periodic vehicle service package, free insurance, assured gift voucher, free registration and many more on Nissan Sunny. Vehicles purchased with commercial registration will not be eligible for the scheme.

Vehicles bought for taxi, driving school, ministries, fleet and rent-a-car usage will not be eligible for this scheme. The offer will be available till May 19.

A spokesperson for Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, “Nissan Sunny stands out for its wide range of innovation, reliability and versatility. It is the perfect car for customers looking for a sophisticated driving experience. The car continues to be a popular choice amongst customers in the segment because of its outstanding design, intelligent technology and remarkable performance.”

Customers can avail starting EMI of OMR 59 on Nissan Sunny 1.5L and of OMR 69 on Nissan Sunny 1.6L. These starting EMIs are calculated on the price of the base model with 20% down payment for 10 years loan tenure through Bank Muscat.

Subject to credit approvals. Conditions apply.



All customers purchasing Nissan Sunny during this scheme period are eligible for free periodic maintenance service package for three years / 60,000 km (whichever is earlier), limited to six services only. This offer includes only the service intervals of 10,000km.

All customers buying Nissan Sunny during this scheme will be eligible for Value Added Service (VAS) gift vouchers up to OMR 50. Voucher can be redeemed for purchase value-added service products, services contracts and Parts at SBA service centres. The gift voucher offer is subject to terms and conditions: VAS voucher will have to be utilised fully in one go and cannot be frag-

mented. Any additional expenses on top of the voucher amount will be paid by the customer separately. VAS Voucher will have a limited validity period and will have to be consumer before October 31. VAS Voucher is transferable. VAS Voucher will be in OMR 50 denomination. VAS Voucher can be redeemed only at the SBA workshop and the Voucher amount cannot be discounted in cash.

All customers purchasing Nissan Sunny during this scheme period will be eligible for free first year vehicle insurance (Oman and UAE only).

All customers purchasing Nissan Sunny during this scheme period will be eligible for free first year vehicle registration.



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Bank Muscat’s Contact Centre enhances customer experience

As part of its customer-centric strategy, Bank Muscat operates the largest Contact Centre in the banking sector in the Sultanate, which is manned by a team of competent and highly-trained Omani phone bankers 24/7 throughout the year

MUSCAT: In line with its customer-centric vision of “Serving you better, every day”, Bank Muscat offers a large range of services through its Contact Centre, which is an important channel of communication for customers to get in touch with the bank whenever the need arises.

As part of its customer-centric strategy, Bank Muscat operates the largest Contact Centre in the banking sector in the Sultanate, which is manned by a team of competent and highly-trained Omani phone bankers 24/7 throughout the year.

The Contact Centre uses an intuitive Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system to respond to about 64 per cent of the incoming calls, with phone bankers handling more complex queries and providing detailed clarifications to customers.

Speaking on the occasion, Talal Abdul Hameed Al Zadjali, Deputy General Manager – Operations, Bank Muscat, said: “Bank Muscat’s Contact Centre is a vital link between our valued customers and the bank and provides various banking services around the clock, seven days a week, and with a minimal waiting period. It is one of the most important Contact Centres in the Sultanate’s banking sector, and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the Contact Centre employees for their dedication and efforts to ensure the continuation of the bank’s customer-centric vision. This is especially important at a time when Contact Centre services and other digital channels are playing a major role in helping ensure business continuity and provide a convenient and alternate banking



“

Bank Muscat’s Contact Centre is a vital link between our valued customers and the bank

Talal Al Zadjali
Deputy General Manager – Operations,
Bank Muscat

channel for all.”

Talal Al Zadjali added that the bank would keep on enhancing the role of the centre by attracting qualified and talented Omani cadres, and by continually upgrading it with the latest equipment and advanced technologies in the future too. This will help Bank Muscat keep pace with all the latest telecommunications developments and further enhance the quality of services provided.

The language options available for customers include Arabic,

English and Hindi. It is a matter of great pride that the Contact Centre provides services with minimal waiting time even though it handles as many as 5.45 million calls annually. More than 85 per cent of the calls are answered within 30 seconds and all calls are recorded for Quality and Training purposes. The Contact Centre, which has 160 team members, has achieved 99 per cent Omanisation with a 65:35 male to female ratio. It must also be noted that the Contact Centre (+968-24795555) is ac-

cessible from all across the world, providing a communication channel for customers who are travelling internally and have to contact the bank urgently.

The IVR at the Contact Centre offers many services including funds transfers, bill payments, credit card payments, mobile top-ups, balance inquiries, statement details, blocking of lost cards, foreign exchange and FD rate calculators. The IVR also provides links to instant educational videos through Push SMS services. The Contact Centre is also an important touchpoint that helps the bank listen to its customers and offer them the services that they need 24/7.

Apart from incoming phone calls, the Contact Centre can also be reached through WhatsApp. To begin using the service, customers have to save the bank’s contact centre number (24795555) in their contacts list.

The number then automatically appears within WhatsApp as the verified official account of Bank Muscat. Agent assisted services are available 7 days a week from 8am to 10:30pm, while the auto-response is available 24/7 for queries regarding different products and services. It can also be used by customers to share feedback and suggestions. Currently, as many as 1.1 million customer queries are handled every year through the WhatsApp channel.

Contact Centre services are

especially important during non-banking hours. In case of a lost or stolen card, customers can block the card against any possible misuse by using the intuitive IVR mechanism. It must also be noted that the Contact Centre is on constant vigil against card fraud with transactions both online and at Points of Sale (PoS) constantly monitored for extra security.

Bank Muscat offers a sophisticated banking experience with the right mix of traditional and electronic channels to enhance financial inclusion and improve the customer experience.

The auto-response service through WhatsApp, Push SMS services through IVR and upgrading of the Contact Centre to the latest state-of-the-art technology are some of the customer-centric initiatives undertaken by the bank in the recent past.

The bank’s commitment to constant innovation and enhancement of the customer experience has resulted in it winning several accolades in the past. Bank Muscat was recognised as one of the “Top 100 Companies in the Middle East” and as one of the “Top 50 banks in the Region” by Forbes Middle East in 2021. The bank’s call centre has also previously won the Best Industry Call Centre (Banking) at the prestigious Insights Middle East Call Centre Awards and the Asian Banker’s Best Contact Centre Technology Award.

RAMADAN PROMOTION

Oman Post, and Asyad Express offer exciting new promotion



MUSCAT: Oman Post and Asyad Express, a member of Asyad Group, is launching a special promotion for the holy month of Ramadan on individual and corporate postal box services whereby new subscribers will benefit from a 20 per cent discount on their PO Box’s annual fees.

The promotion, valid throughout the holy month (April 10 to May 3), offers new subscribers reduced annual fees of OMR 16 for individuals and OMR 48 for corporate clients (VAT not included) when subscribing to the PO Box service. This offer is available online and in all Oman Post and Asyad Express branches, in addition to selected touchpoints in ONEIC (Tasdeed) and OIFC (Khedma) locations, and our new SMEs partners - One Way Travel Agency in Nizwa and King Land for Business in Muscat.

“Oman Post and Asyad Express celebrate the season with its customers by offering them great promotions and value for the services offered,” commented Ibrahim Al

Jahwari, Senior Manager of Products Development at Oman Post & Asyad Express. “The purpose of this promotion is to bring essential postal services closer to a wider customer base and support businesses and SMEs by offering them postal addresses at lower prices. The offer is also valid for new individual clients who wish to benefit from PO Box services to receive mail quickly and securely.”

Essential to business, PO boxes bring a wide range of benefits to both enterprises and individuals as they ensure faster and more efficient mail delivery to a permanent address for households and organizations. Oman Post is not only promoting this postal service by offering it at affordable annual rates, but also by providing support features to customers such as SMS notification, and 24/7 receipt.

Oman Post and Asyad Express continue to provide their customers with the best postal and logistics services and offer competitive packages and promotions to share with them the joy of blessed seasons.

OFFER



Own Toyota RAV4 with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Own the exciting Toyota RAV4 SUV avail exclusive benefits including Service 4 Years / 40,000 Kms (Whichever is earlier) and 1 Year Insurance or Cash Gift in lieu of insurance RO 250. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply.) The campaign is valid up to 19th May, 2022. Visit the showroom for exact details.

The RAV4’s stylish looks is also encompasses a thrilling driving dynamics that is powered by an option of 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine which produces 204 hp and 24.8 kg.m. of torque, mated to a an eight-speed automatic

transmission (8AT), resulting in a quicker and smoother acceleration. And, a hybrid system that combines two power sources consisting of a petrol engine and electric motor producing a combined power of 219 hp.

It is also paired to a Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) that provides the lowest fuel consumption value of 22.2km/L (Fuel economy may vary due to driving conditions.) while delivering a new level of driving pleasure.

The second addition to the RAV4 is the Adventure model, which was established as a symbolic model to appeal to active users through enhanced Waku

Doki – the equivalent of “heart-pumping excitement” in Japanese – and a more powerful image. It is distinguished by a more aggressive bumper, grille design and fog light surrounds, and exclusive 19-inch, split five-spoke wheels with matte-black accents.

The interior of the RAV4 is expansive and comfortable. The instrument panel’s horizontal layout has a slimmer profile and a lower position than before to enhance forward visibility. The center console is wider and more versatile with an expanded console storage. The RAV4’s cabin is accentuated with a range of advanced features, including wireless charging system for smart-

phones (Qi-enabled device), dual auto air conditioning system, 7-inch multimedia infotainment display, six-speaker sound system, power driver seat and front ventilated seats.

As with any other Toyota model, safety remains a top priority for the RAV4 that comes with an advanced safety system, a comprehensive array of safety features to protect its occupants, such as 7 SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Electric Parking Brake with Hold function, Down-hill Assist Control (DAC) among many others.



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Offer valid from 20th March to 19th May 2022 on applicable models purchased for personal use. Offer not available for vehicles purchased for Commercial use, Rent-a-car, Taxi, Government and Driving School. ** Voucher can be redeemed for purchase of Value-added service products, Service contracts and Parts at SBA Service Centers. #Periodic Maintenance Service only. Whichever is earlier. Offer includes only 10,000 kms service intervals. @1st year Oman & UAE only. ^ For 1st year only. @ & ^ Applicable for private registrations only. For Commercial registrations additional amount needs to be borne by the customer. *Additional PMS Service for new car, exclusive discount on labor charges, parts & trade-in benefits. Second car purchase should be either in the name of existing Nissan owner or his/her Immediate family member (wife/husband/son/daughter/brother/sister) to avail additional benefits under the scheme. Conditions apply. *EMI shown is calculated on the price of the base model with 20% down payment, for 10 years loan tenure through Bank Muscat. Subject to credit approvals. Conditions apply.

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