

OMANI CHARITIES TO RECEIVE FUND BOOST FROM COMPANIES

Companies and institutions in Oman are required to put aside 20 per cent of their budget allocated towards corporate social responsibility projects, and donate these funds towards charity organisations. **>A5**



SYSTEM TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE COMES INTO FORCE FROM JANUARY 2

The Sultanate of Oman's government will launch next Sunday, January 2, the Excellence System (Ejadah), which is designed to measure individual performance and institutional proficiency. This system is among the main enablers for Oman Vision 2040. It comes at the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik aiming at boosting the efficiency of the State's Administrative Apparatus. **>A5**



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Oman's path towards the digital honour identified important fields in the digital space, cyber security and innovation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's place in the backbone of global trade, its ability to become a global centre for data exchange, strong digital capabilities and infrastructure, a technically capable young society, and submarine cables that enable high-speed digital exchange have all contributed to Muscat being named the Arab Digital Capital for 2022.

Saeed bin Hamoud Al Maawali, the Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, added that these qualities have been enhanced

by modern logistics services, developed highways, and globally connected ports and airports, modern transportation and warehouses, and free zones, which enhance opportunities to attract investments to Oman.

"Muscat's victory as the Arab Digital Capital for 2022 reflects the confidence of Arab countries in the digital and legislative capabilities that the Sultanate of Oman enjoys in the ICT sector," he added.

"The latest of these was the Cabinet's adoption of the National Digital Economy Programme, which aims to contribute to the digital economy and expand the



Saeed bin Hamoud Al Maawali, the Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

national economy."

The decision to award Muscat the title came during the 25th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Communications and Information Technology, which was held virtually.

Oman's aspiration is to put its digital footprint on the Arab

world, as the country's candidacy for the title came under the slogan "A digital future that creates opportunities" - consistent with the directions of the Oman Vision 2040.

Oman's candidacy identified three important fields in the digital space, namely cyber security, digital innovation and digital capabilities. The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology aims to develop digital talent and skills in the Arab world, enrich Arab digital content, enhance cooperation in cybersecurity, and encourage investment in the digital economy.

"The Governorate of Muscat is leading the country's digital transformation process and adopts advanced technologies that enhance economic and social growth, empowers all other sectors, and attracts local, regional and international investments, in addition to enabling digital integration among Arab countries," said Al Maawali. **>A2**

APPOINTMENT

His Majesty issues six Royal Decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik on Sunday issued six Royal decrees reading as follows:

Royal Decree No. 74/2021 on the appointment of a non-resident ambassador.

Article (1) appoints Nassir Mohammed Khalifa Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the People's Republic of China, as Oman's Non-Resident Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Korea and Mongolia.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. 75/2021 on the appointment of a member of the State Council.

Article (1) appoints Maha Sulaiman Barakat Al Lamki as member of the State Council in lieu of Lubna Mohammed Sameer Al Kharousi.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. 76/2021 on the ratification of the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, dated 27 January 1967.

Article (1) ratifies the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, dated 27 January 1967, in accordance with the

version attached to this decree.

Article (2) instructs the authorities concerned to deposit the above-mentioned treaty's joining document in accordance with its provisions.

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

Royal Decree No. 77/2021 ratifies the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, dated 14 January 1975.

Article (1) ratifies the Sultanate of Oman's joining the above-mentioned Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, dated 14 January 1975 in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) instructs the authorities concerned to deposit the above-mentioned Convention's joining document in accordance with its provisions.

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

Royal Decree No. 78/2021 on the ratification of the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, dated 22 April 1968.

Article (1) ratifies the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, dated 22 April 1968 in accordance with the version attached to this decree. **>A4**

COVID-19

Supreme Committee lifts ban on arrivals from a number of African countries

MUSCAT: The Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic held a meeting on Sunday under the chairmanship of Sayyid Hamoud Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior.

The Committee reviewed updates about the pandemic, measures of protection against the



disease and ways of curbing its spread and addressing its different impacts.

The committee studied the epidemiological situation of COVID-19 locally and internationally in light of the latest data that points to a spate in confirmed lab cases in many countries around the world, including the Sultanate. **>A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Omran begins work on Musandam Zipline

1 As part of the strategic development agreement signed with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to develop a number of touristic projects in the governorate, Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) commenced the works on the zipline project and its ancillary facilities in Wilayat of Khasab, the Governorate of Musandam. **>A3**



WORLD Archbishop Desmond Tutu passes away

2 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu, 90, has died in Cape Town, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on Sunday. Alongside late Nelson Mandela, Tutu was one of the most important voices against the old system of white minority rule known as apartheid. **>A6**

MARKET BankDhofar signs pact with Visa

3 BankDhofar has recently signed, a strategic partnership agreement with Visa, the world's leader in digital payments, to strengthen the business ties between the two parties and to enhance the bank's customer experience. The signing ceremony took place at BankDhofar's head office. **>B1**

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Isha.....6:49pm

Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:27am

How Ibri became a hotspot for paragliding in the Sultanate

The Al Dhahirah amateur team at Ibri Club is the mastermind behind providing Ibri more recognition, and their team currently has the youngest glider pilot in the Arab world



Times News Service

MUSCAT: A paragliding club's concerted efforts towards encouraging youth to develop the skills to fly gliders, paraglide, learn to control drones and remote control cars, and take up an interest in hobbies like photography, has made Ibri a centre for paragliding enthusiasts and adventure tourists who come to Oman.

The Al Dhahirah amateur team at Ibri Club is the mastermind behind providing Ibri more recognition, and their team currently has the youngest glider pilot in the Arab world: 12-year-old Rashid bin Khalid Al Kalbani.

The head of the amateur team, Khalid bin Rashid Al Kalbani, has also organised teams from Ibri Club that represent Oman at inter-governorate competitions,

in which they have achieved great success.

"When we organise paragliding shows, we see large numbers of people coming to witness them, thanks to which these have become tourist attractions," he explained. "There is also an annual celebration organised by us in Al Dhahirah, where we organise paragliding and drone displays."

The amateurs also have in their ranks the youngest female glider pilot in the Arab world, 14-year-old Aisha, who is Khalid's sister.

"Both of them are skilled glider pilots who fly with great skill," said Khalid.

The interest shown in paragliding and other outdoor activities by people in Ibri reflects the great passion developed over the years by enthusiasts of the sport across many governorates.



CONDOLENCES

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may he rest in eternal peace.



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Haffaf Muscat

KEY INVESTMENTS

OIA apprises Shura on local, foreign investment portfolios

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Through a video presentation delivered by Abdulsalam Mohammed Abdullah Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and a number of chief executive officers of OIA-owned companies, Majlis Al Shura got acquainted with the key investments managed by OIA along with its contributions to the General Budget of the State.

The presentation was delivered in the presence of Sheikh Khalid bin Hilal Al Mawali, Chairman of Majlis Al Shura and the Secretary General of Majlis.

The Chairman of Oman Investment Authority reaffirmed that OIA was keen to establish an investment portfolio in consistent with its objectives represented by enhancement of economic diversification, attraction of investments and empowerment of private sector through its partnership with Oman Investment Authority. This, he said, would result in creation of job opportuni-



ties for citizens and achievement of financial sustainability.

To reduce the risks, OIA has dispersed its investments to cover local and external investments on the basis of the geographic and sector-wise distribution of investments, he said, adding that the local investments included bonds, equity and deposits besides partnership with companies and factories in over ten different sectors, besides funds with other countries.

Al Murshidi also spoke on the programmes and initiatives launched by Oman Investment

Authority including the In-Country Value Programme aimed to accord priority to local products. The speech also tackled the OIA initiatives for the support of SMEs through a number of procedures besides the support of SMEs goals and initiatives associated with training and employment of the national manpower.

The members of the Majlis enquired about the assets, net annual profits and the size of external investments of Oman Investment Authority among other issues. The presentation and discussions also tackled investment in health sector and security.

The members of the Majlis discussed the financial performance of the OIA-owned companies and stressed the significance of investment in the mining sector. The members also enquired about the potential risks involved in external investments and the experiences of the boards of directors in management of these external companies to achieve their objectives.

DIGITAL CAPITAL

< FROM A1 Stimulate digital creativity in city

Adding to this, Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, the Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, explained that Muscat being named 2022's Arab Digital Capital will go a long way in helping the city's efforts towards digital transformation, helps create smart and integrated technical systems that stimulate digital creativity, and develop capabilities and knowledge skills. All of these are important elements of Vision 2040.

"This will help consolidate partnerships between the parties of common interests, including institutions, bodies and individuals, to work together to achieve the sustainable development goals of the country," added Al Busaidi.

"The Muscat Governor's Office seeks, with this hosting, to make the programmes and objectives of

the digital capital homogeneous with the axes the four aspects of our strategy for excellence."

"These include: sustainable environment, corporate governance, economic development, society, and the trend towards embodying the hoped-for digital reality that will be reflected in the various details of the daily lives of individuals and organisations," he added.

Choosing Muscat is also an indication of the existing technical and digital capabilities and elements, with the capital presenting an ideal environment to attract promising investments in the fields of technology and communications.

Oman's delegation to the 25th meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers of Communications and Information Technol-

ogy was led by Dr Ali bin Amer Al Shidhani, the Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology at MTCIT, alongside Omar bin Hamdan Al Ismaili, the CEO of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, and a number of other representatives. Arab Digital Capitals are chosen annually to present and incubate various successful initiatives and concepts in the digital space, with the selected city launching many local and regional impact initiatives.

Digital capitals are also named on the basis of the proposals put forward by the countries that wish to nominate their cities: Riyadh was named the first digital capital of the Arab World in 2020, while Cairo was named last year.

With inputs from ONA

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Work on Musandam zipline begins

Project marks the development of first adventure-oriented attraction in Musandam

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of the strategic development agreement signed with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to develop a number of touristic projects in the governorate, Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) commenced the works on the zipline project and its ancillary facilities in Wilayat of Khasab, the Governorate of Musandam.

The Group is currently deploying the 1,800-metre dual zipline project, which begins from Jebel Fitt and passes through scenic landscapes of Khor Qadi and the Mokhi area over the coast of Wilayat of Khasab.

The landing point of the zipline will be connected to the upcoming Atana Khasab Hotel, where a



SCENIC LANDSCAPES: The 1,800-metre dual zipline project, which begins from Jebel Fitt and passes through scenic landscapes of Khor Qadi and the Mokhi area over the coast of Wilayat of Khasab.

visitor center will be established to offer a host of facilities and book tourist experiences, including various leisure and adventure activities that can be carried out in the area.

The project is currently being developed in a prime location with exceptional sea views of the Strait

of Hormuz, complemented by the active movement of ships, yachts and major cruise ships, making it an important touristic attraction for visitors from inside and outside the Sultanate. The abundance of exceptional natural components, and the cultural richness that is unique to the Governorate

of Musandam, offers several horizons for future development.

Sayyid Ibrahim bin Saeed Al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Musandam, said: "The Musandam zipline project represents the cooperation between the Office of the Minister of State and the Governor of Mu-

sandam and Omran Group, within the framework of implementing Musandam's development strategy for 2040. This project will also effectively contribute to adding a variety of exciting activities for tourists, and serve as a model for entrepreneurs to create multiple assets and services that support the tourism sector, particularly adventure tourism."

Eng. Saif Ali Al Hinai, Chief Development Officer at Omran-Group, said: "The zipline project will be a new tourist site in the Governorate of Musandam, adding to the existing touristic facilities established by the Group such as Atana Hotels and Resorts. We will continue to develop and implement plans and programs for a promising future of this vital sector in the Sultanate of Oman

Strategic elements

Yusra Khalaf Al Subhi, Assistant General Director of Planning at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism said, "We are delighted to begin the first phase of the Musandam Adventure Centre, which will comprise of strategic elements of investment and development in the Governorate of Musandam.

"This project comes in line with our relentless pursuit to achieve the outlined objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the National Tourism Strategy, in addition to

supporting the economic diversification in the Sultanate.

"We are moving forward to enhance the offerings at the prominent tourist sites in the country, that will make Oman an important destination for visitors to spend their holidays and to explore its rich natural, heritage and cultural treasures."

Wide array

It is worth mentioning that the agreement signed between Omran Group and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism comes within the framework of supporting the efforts to achieve the outlined objectives of the National Tourism Strategy 2040.

By promoting tourism growth in the sector's value chain, Omran Group endeavours to contribute to the nation's socio-economic development, thus stimulating development and investment in vital tourist sites in the Sultanate.

The scope of the agreement also includes the implementation of a wide array of multi-use spaces, hotels and resorts, entertainment activities and projects, and specialised facilities for adventure tourism. It further aims to strengthen the investment through establishing local and international partnerships, along with launching a number of activities in the short-term.

COVID-19

First COVID death in 47 days

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The first death due to COVID-19 in 47 days has been recorded in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Ministry of Health announced on Sunday the registration of one new death from COVID-19.

Ministry of Health

The statistics of the Ministry

of Health indicate that the last death recorded in the Sultanate of Oman was on Monday, November 8, 2021, bringing the cumulative number of deaths due to this disease in the Sultanate to 4,114.

It is worth noting that in November 2021 two deaths were recorded, while in October 2021, the Sultanate of Oman witnessed the registration of 15 deaths as a result of COVID-19.

The ministry has also recorded 121 new cases of the virus during the past three days, 43 on Thursday, 31 on Friday, and 47 on Saturday, bringing the total number of cases registered in the Sultanate of Oman to 305,105, while the recovery rate reached 98.4 per cent.

With three new hospitalised cases, the total rose to 13 cases, including two in intensive care.

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ROYAL DECREE

< FROM

A1

Joining convention

Article (2) instructs the authorities concerned to deposit the above-mentioned agreement's joining document in accordance with its provisions.

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

Royal Decree No. 79/2021 on the ratification of the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, dated 29 March 1972.

Article (1) ratifies the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, dated 29 March 1972 in accordance with the version attached to this decree. Article (2) instructs the authorities concerned to deposit the above-mentioned Convention's joining document in accordance with its provisions.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of publishing. -ONA

SUPREME COMMITTEE

< FROM

A1

New decisions issued by Committee

The committee took note of instances of non-abidance with the precautionary measures endorsed by the authorities concerned.

To protect members of society against this disease and, to safeguard Oman health system's capacity to deal with this disease and other diseases (while at the same time maintaining other health services), the COVID-19 Supreme Committee took the decisions listed below, which apply with effect from date of publication of this statement till 31



January 2022.

Firstly, to apply two-dose vaccination as a prerequisite for entry of non-Omanis aged 18 years and

above to the Sultanate of Oman from all checkpoints.

Secondly, to allow entry to Oman only for arriving passengers who show negative PCR test issued within a maximum of 72 hours.

Thirdly, to cancel the decision that bans entry of arrivals from countries listed before, namely South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Eswatini and Mozambique.

COVID-19 Supreme Committee reaffirms that vaccination remains as a condition to enter public and private establishments. It stresses that all precautionary measures have to be applied: prohibiting people who suffer from pulmonary diseases from entering workplaces and applying all precautionary measures within and outside workplaces, including wearing face masks properly, observing physical distance, keeping the hands clean, avoiding unauthorised assembling and crowding and physical greeting like shaking hands and embracing.

- ONA

ENJOY THE SUNSHINE AND THE SWIM AT YITI BEACH

Just 28-kilometres from the centre of Muscat, lies Yiti Beach, the perfect place for an escape from the hectic city life. Accessible by a steeply sloping road that would otherwise be obscure if not for the sign that points to the beach, Yiti is unlike the other places where the surf meets the sand in the Sultanate. One of the must visit tourist spots of Muscat, Yiti beach is the place where the clear turquoise blue sea against the golden sands and craggy cliffs create a perfect setting for someone who wants to relax. While the sand itself is of a darker and coarser nature than that found on other beaches in Oman, the beach alone is not the only place to create fond memories on your trip there.

The twisting, turning mountain passes, for example, that take you there, crossing little hamlets outside Muscat, are truly an example of symbiosis between human architecture and natural wonders.

These settlements also offer the perfect rest stop for those who are looking to stretch their legs, as well as soak up a bit more of the local culture and experience some more of its history. Before the advances of modern technology, the long, winding mountain paths were defended by fortresses and watch towers placed at regular intervals.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, "The Yiti Beach, located beyond the village of Yiti, is a small beach - about one kilometre long - that can be easily reached by car. Frequented by locals as well as tourists, it is a great spot to enjoy barbecues, camping, and fishing."

"The sand takes on an orange hue and the water changes to a deeper blue as the sun sets and the light changes. Lay on the rocks overlooking the beach at twilight or find an area along the strip of soft sand. The weekends bring revellers to the area, enjoying the sunshine and swimming with music, long into the evening, with some even sticking it out and camping overnight."



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COMMERCE MINISTRY

Omani charities to receive fund boost from companies

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Companies and institutions in Oman are required to put aside 20 per cent of their budget allocated towards corporate social responsibility projects, and instead donate these funds towards charity organisations.

The requirement comes following the issuance of Ministerial Resolution No. 205/2021, issued by Qais bin Muhammad Al Yousef, the Minister of Commerce, Industry, and



Investment Promotion.

The decision concerns the deduction of a percentage of the budgets that institutions and

companies have earmarked for CSR, for the benefit of the Omani Authority for Charitable Activities. The resolution was issued with the aim of providing more support to the authority, so that it could play its role in providing charitable assistance to people in need of aid.

The decision issued by Minister Al Yousef was welcomed by Saif Al Badi, the head of the Dhahira branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

OMAN VISION 2040

System to measure performance comes into force from January 2

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's government will launch next Sunday, January 2, the Excellence System (Ejadah), which is designed to measure individual performance and institutional proficiency.

This system is among the main enablers for Oman Vision 2040. It comes at the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik aiming at boosting the efficiency of the State's Administrative Apparatus.



The Ministry of Labour supervises the implementation of this system, which seeks to find the tools and standards necessary to build a culture of proficiency in job performance and improve performance measuring systems.

This can be accomplished by governance and assessment of individual performance of employees and comparing it with the key objectives and indicators of the unit.

The system covers 57 civil units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other public legal persons, as more than 175,000 employees in the public sector benefit from the system.

It will also contribute to



achieving Oman Vision 2040 and improve the quality of government services for individuals and institutions. Consequently, it will reflect positively on boosting beneficiaries' confidence in government units.

Additionally, the Excellence System (Ejadah) will clearly define employee's work tasks, create harmony between organization's plans and the employee's plan, as well as enhancing the level of transparency in the distribution of work among employees, and linking incentives and rewards with the level of productivity.

SHARPENING SKILLS

Etimad programme receives second batch of trainees

MUSCAT: The National Leadership Programme to Empower Omani Median and Senior Leaderships in the Private Sector "Etimad" received the second batch of trainees, which comprises 255 senior leaders in the private sector, of them 25 are entrepreneurs.

The programme aims to empower national human resources in the private sector and to sharpen their leadership and supervisory skills.

The programme's trainees come from various sectors, such as tourism, technology, industry, communications, transportation, logistics, constructions, banking, mining and energy.

Sayyid Salim Musallam Al Bussaidi, the Ministry of Labour's Undersecretary for Human Resources Development said that the objectives of the ministry's Human Resources Development sector's focus on elevating national cadres on the leadership



level and in various development sectors.

In her turn, Dr. Yasmin Shanan Al Balushi, Project Manager of the programme said that Etimad was designed in collaboration with prestigious international universities. She affirmed that it is comprehensive and relies

on modern and diverse training techniques.

As many as 500 trainees were in the first batch of the programme.

It should be noted that Etimad targets thousands of national cadres in the private sector as it contributes to achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040. -ONA

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

45,805 REACH

Oman

The tally of Omicron cases in Maharashtra breached the 100 mark on Friday.



7-day home quarantine story

A story on 7-day home quarantine mandatory for Dubai passengers reached 45,805 people and had 2,370 engagements on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

414 VIEWS

Joining hands to create a brighter future for Oman

Page 1 story video

The Page 1 story video on joining hands to create a brighter future had 414 views and 25 likes on Instagram.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

1,700 VIEWS

Postcards from Oman series episode

The Postcards from Oman series episode had 1,700 views and reached 6,100 people on Facebook.

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30 ريال

GM7085

31% خصم

58 ريال

40 ريال

GM1085

70% خصم

1.2 ريال

3.6 ريال

GEK300

71% خصم

2 ريال

2 ريال

GEK200

60% خصم

4 ريال

4 ريال

GKA3SPB

31% خصم

22 ريال

15 ريال

GKA80HMC

25% خصم

40 ريال

30 ريال

GKA39SLM

33% خصم

16 ريال

12 ريال

GKA70SM

33% خصم

30 ريال

20 ريال

GKA606PC

33% خصم

150 ريال

100 ريال

GTD8KV

33% خصم

125 ريال

125 ريال

GCTR97FB2

33% خصم

200 ريال

150 ريال

GCM5000TC

15 برنامج ذكي

عرض الصمام

البرملي المحظف

مستوى الطاقة س

بدء تأخير من 1-24 ساعة

*15 Smart Program

*Led Display

*Galvanized drum

*Energy level C

*1-24 hour delay start

15 برنامج ذكي

عرض الصمام

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بدء تأخير من 1-24 ساعة

*15 Smart Program

*Led Display

*Galvanized drum

*Energy level C

*1-24 hour delay start

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150 ريال

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SOUTHAMPTON

Armed intruder arrested from Windsor Castle grounds

LONDON: A 19-year-old armed intruder from Southampton was arrested on Saturday after breaking into the grounds of Windsor Castle on Christmas Day. Officers responded to reports of a security breach around 8:30 am, according to police. Thames Valley Police Superintendent Rebecca Mears said in a statement that security protocols were initiated “within moments of the man

entering the grounds.” The suspect, a 19-year-old man from Southampton, did not enter any buildings, she said, reported CBS News. Britain’s Queen Elizabeth was celebrating this Christmas at Windsor Castle with Prince Charles and Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, after cancelling her traditional plans of going to Sandringham. He remains in custody and an investigation is ongoing,

reported CBS News. “The man has been arrested on suspicion of breach or trespass of a protected site and possession of an offensive weapon,” Mears said. “We do not believe there is a wider danger to the public.” The royal family typically spends Christmas and the New Year at Sandringham House in Berkshire, but cancelled those plans amid rising COVID-19 cases and opted to spend the holiday at

Windsor Castle instead, according to the UK-based media. “This Christmas will be different to what so many of us had planned,” the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge said on Saturday on Twitter. “From those who are alone or having to isolate away from loved ones, to the incredible people supporting our NHS and caring for those most in need -- we are thinking of you.” **ANI**

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Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu passes away

Alongside late Nelson Mandela, Tutu was one of the most important voices against apartheid

CAPE TOWN: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu, 90, has died in Cape Town, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced in a statement on Sunday. Alongside late Nelson Mandela, Tutu was one of the most important voices against the old system of white minority rule known as apartheid. The Anglican cleric also headed the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the post-apartheid era, and was seen by many as the conscience of the troubled nation. Tutu “died peacefully at the Oasis Frail Care Center in Cape Town this morning,” said Ramphela Mamphela, the acting chairperson of the Archbishop



DEATH OF AN ICON: Tutu won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his efforts in leading the non-violent struggle against apartheid.

Desmond Tutu IP Trust and coordinator of his office. The statement, issued on behalf of Tutu’s family, did not provide details on the cause of death.

Tutu praised as ‘patriot without equal’ “Desmond Tutu was a patriot without equal; a leader of principle and pragmatism,” Ramaphosa

said in a statement. The Nelson Mandela Foundation said, “His contributions to struggles against injustice, locally and globally, are matched only by

the depth of his thinking about the making of liberatory futures for human societies. He was an extraordinary human being.” Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama said, “He was a true humanitarian and a committed advocate of human rights.” UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson tweeted Tutu “will be remembered for his spiritual leadership and irrepressible good humour.” **Elections like ‘falling in love’** Tutu won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his efforts in leading the non-violent struggle against apartheid. While other leaders, like Mandela, were incarcerated, Tutu traveled and spoke widely, using his senior position in the Anglican Church and the esteem the Nobel Peace Prize brought to promote his anti-apartheid message worldwide and elevate the stories and lives of Black South Africans. Following Mandela’s release from prison after 27 years, Tutu led him onto a balcony at Cape Town City Hall where Mandela delivered his first public speech. Tutu likened voting in the country’s first democratic election in 1994 to “falling in love.” When Mandela was sworn in as the country’s first black president, Tutu

was at his side. The archbishop’s life was a testament to the hope and strength he placed on reconciliation in the divided nation, Ramaphosa said. **Dream of a ‘rainbow nation’** While Tutu preached against the tyranny of apartheid, he would go on to be just as critical of black political elites. He even publicly criticized his ally Mandela over what the cleric describes as the “grave train mentality” of Mandela’s party, the African National Congress. Later, Tutu would castigate Mandela for his open affair with Graca Machel, who Mandela would eventually marry. In 2013, Tutu withdrew his support for Mandela’s party, describing South Africa as “the most unequal society in the world.” In recent years, Tutu started to campaign in favor of the assisted dying movement. “Dying people should have the right to choose how and when they leave Mother Earth,” he wrote in the Washington Post in 2016. “I have prepared for my death and have made it clear that I do not wish to be kept alive at all costs. Towards the end of his life, Tutu also spoke with regret that the dream of a true “rainbow nation” had yet to be realized. **ANI**

DEADLY BOMBING

5 killed in suicide attack on DR Congo restaurant



KINSHASA: Several people were killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on Saturday evening after a suicide bomber attacked a crowded restaurant on Christmas Day. The attack took place in the eastern city of Beni, in an area where extremists are known to operate. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the deadly bombing. Saturday’s bombing marked the first known time that a suicide bomber has killed victims in eastern Congo. **What we know so far** At least five people, including the attacker, died in the bomb blast, local officials said. Two children were among those killed, according to Mayor Narcisse Muteba. “Investigations are underway to find the perpetrators of this terrorist attack,” he told the Associated Press. Muteba urged residents to return to their homes for their own safety. Another 13 people are being treated for their injuries in hospital, but their condi-

tion was not immediately known. The attacker attempted to enter the building where many people had gathered to celebrate Christmas, but was stopped by security guards. The bomber then detonated an explosive device at the entrance, with images from the scene showing broken chairs and tables scattered at the blast site. “The suicide bomber, prevented by security from gaining access to the bar, packed with clients, activated the bomb at the entrance,” said a statement from military officials running the North Kivu. The statement blamed the attack on the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a group that traces its origins to neighboring Uganda and considered to be the deadliest of the militia active in the region. The ADF did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack. In a statement, General Sylvain Ekenge, spokesperson for the governor of North Kivu, said people must “remain vigilant and to avoid crowded areas during the holiday season.” “In the city and territory of

Beni, it is difficult, in these times to know who is who,” he added. **Beni devastated by ongoing insecurity** The latest attack has prompted fears that religious extremism is taking hold of a region already plagued for years by violence, despite an army offensive and the presence of United Nations peacekeepers. Congolese and Ugandan forces have also launched a campaign against suspected Islamic extremist militants in the region. In June, the IS group’s regional branch, dubbed ISCAP, said it was behind the explosion at a Catholic church that injured two people as well as another blast at a busy intersection on the same day. From 2018 to 2020, Beni also suffered through an Ebola epidemic that became the second deadliest in history. In addition, more than 2,200 people died in the eastern region of the DRC as vaccination campaigns were at times disrupted by insecurity in the region. **ANI**

45 COVID-19 CASES

New Zealand detects seven new cases of Omicron variant

WELLINGTON: New Zealand detected seven new cases of COVID-19 Omicron variant in international arrivals over two days, taking the country’s total Omicron cases to 45, the Ministry of Health said in a statement on Sunday. Whole-genome sequencing has detected seven more COVID-19 cases of Omicron variant at the border over two days. There were now a total of 45 COVID-19 cases with the Omicron variant detected at the New Zealand border, said the ministry. New Zealand reported 136 cases of COVID-19 over two days, including 126 community cases and 10 imported cases at the border, said the Ministry. Among the new community infections, 88 were recorded in the largest city of Auckland, 17 in Wai-kato, 13 in the Lakes region, six in Bay of Plenty, one in Taranaki and one in Northland, according to the Ministry of Health. The reporting period for the community cases in the past two days included Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, said the ministry. The total case number of COVID-19



ID-19 in the current Delta variant outbreak in the New Zealand community reached 10,619, mainly in Auckland and peripheral regions, said the ministry. There were 47 COVID-19 patients in New Zealand hospitals including seven cases in intensive care unit (ICU) or High Dependency Unit (HDU), it said. New Zealand recorded 13,485 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the beginning of the pan-

demic, said the ministry. According to the ministry, 91 percent of eligible New Zealanders have now fully vaccinated against COVID-19. New Zealand is introducing the COVID-19 Protection Framework or traffic lights framework to deal with the pandemic. The largest city Auckland and part of the North Island are at red settings. The rest of the country is at orange settings. **ANI**

TYPHOON RAI

UN humanitarian agency to raise \$107 million for the Philippines typhoon aid

NEW YORK: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has appealed for over \$107 million required to help the Philippine government provide life-saving assistance to people affected by Typhoon Rai. The typhoon, known in the Philippines as Odette, killed at least 177 and injured 275, displaced over 630,000 people and damaged 200,000 houses, the UN agency said. “The Humanitarian Country Team in the Philippines today launched the Humanitarian Needs and Priorities [HNP] plan

to respond to the needs of 530,000 people in the worst-affected areas in CARAGA and Eastern Visayas following the onslaught of Super Typhoon Rai,” OCHA said, adding that “the HNP calls for USD 107.2 million to support the Government in responding to the most urgent humanitarian needs for the next six months.” The NHP initiative aims to provide food, shelter, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene, while also manage evacuation camps, restore access to cut-off areas through decentralized communication and support government coordination of response efforts.

“The response set out in the plan will also prioritize COVID-19 protective measures,” UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez, who visited the Philippine island of Mindanao earlier this week to personally assess the damage, said. Typhoon Rai hit the Philippines on December 16, becoming one of the deadliest in the country’s recent history. According to the Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the toll of casualties counts 367 people killed and more than 700 injured, with 62 still missing. **ANI**

Myanmar’s NUG terms Karenni killings as ‘Christmas massacre’

At least 30 people, including women and children, were killed in the eastern Myanmar state of Kayah

NAYPYIDAW: After more than 30 people, including women and children were killed and their bodies burned in Myanmar, the National Unity Government (NUG) on Sunday called it a “Christmas massacre in Karenni state.” Myanmar’s National Unity Government (NUG) called it a “Christmas massacre in Karenni state,” stating that junta troops “detained an unconfirmed number of [villagers] and travellers and destroyed their properties,” reported CNN. “As the world celebrates Christmas and its message of peace, the NUG repeats its demands on the international community to act immediately and decisively to end the military junta’s escalating war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Myanmar people,” the NUG statement added. At least 30 people, including women and children, were killed



CHRISTMAS MASSACRE: The Myanmar military, which seized power of the country in a February 1 coup, said it had shot and killed an unspecified number of “terrorists with weapons”

in the eastern Myanmar state of Kayah on Friday, according to the Karenni Human Rights Group, with two members of the international humanitarian group Save the Children still missing. The “charred remains” were discovered and identified close to Hp-ruso Township in the state, which is also known as Karenni, on December 25, according to the group, reported CNN. The Myanmar military, which seized power of the country in a February 1 coup, said it had shot and killed an unspecified number of “terrorists with weapons” from the opposition armed forces in the village, according to state media. The people were in seven

vehicles and did not stop for the military, it said. The international NGO Save the Children said two staff members who were traveling home for the holidays were caught in the incident and remain missing, reported CNN. “We have confirmation that their private vehicle was attacked

and burned out,” said the organization in a statement. “The military reportedly forced people from their cars, arrested some, killed others, and burned their bodies,” said the NGO. Save the Children added that at least 38 people were killed in the attack, and the charity has suspended its operations in Kayah,

Chin, and parts of Magway and Kayin in response. “Save the Children condemns this attack as a breach of International Humanitarian Law. We are horrified at the violence carried out against innocent civilians and our staff, who are dedicated humanitarians, supporting millions of children in need across Myanmar,” said Inger Ashing, Chief Executive of Save the Children in a statement. “Investigations into the nature of the incident are continuing but attacks against aid workers cannot be tolerated,” added Ashing. Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military overthrew the previous elected government and detained many top officials, including ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who was jailed earlier this month. Since the coup, the military has tried to assert its power over the people through bloody force. UN agencies, rights groups, and local journalists have documented massacres, mass arrests, torture, forced displacement, men, women, and children being murdered with impunity, heavy weaponry used by junta forces to attack villages and root out armed resistance groups, and the blocking of humanitarian aid. Junta forces have killed more than 1,300 people and arrested over 11,000, according to advocacy group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, reported CNN. **ANI**

CORONAVIRUS

Three members of K-pop sensation BTS test positive for COVID-19

SEOUL: Three members of the South Korean K-pop sensation BTS have been diagnosed with coronavirus after returning from abroad. Rapper RM and vocalist Jin tested positive for the virus on Saturday evening, the group’s management agency Big Hit Music said. Earlier, the agency announced that another member, Suga, received positive COVID-19 test results on Friday while self-quarantining but was asymptomatic and “administering self-care at home.” The seven-member superstar boy band recently returned from the United States, where they held their first in-person concerts since the start of the pandemic. The concerts were held in Los Angeles from late November to the beginning of December. The band members had been on vacation since the end of their concert series. Each of the three infected artists returned to South Korea on different dates, and the three members are fully vaccinated. **How are the band members feeling?** While RM appears to be asymp-



tomatic, Jin has reported mild symptoms with light fever and is undergoing self-treatment at home, the agency said in its statement. On Friday, Big Hit Music had said that Suga was not showing any symptoms. RM had tested negative after returning from the US but was diagnosed with COVID-19 ahead of his release from self-quaran-

tine, the agency said. Jin took two COVID-19 tests upon his arrival and before his release from self-isolation, testing negative both times. However, he exhibited flu-like symptoms on Saturday afternoon and took another test that returned positive. The US and South Korea are witnessing surging COVID-19 cases as the omicron variant of the virus spreads worldwide. Big Hit Music said it places the “highest priority on the health and safety of our artists.” BTS gained global fandom with their super-hit single “Dynamite” that was placed number one on the Billboard Hot 100 last year. In October, their collaboration with British rock band Coldplay, “My Universe,” reached No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, making it BTS’ sixth Hot 100 No. 1. **bw**

ECONOMIC WOES



Taliban to replace dissolved ministries with councils, citing economic woes

KABUL: Afghanistan is dissolving ministries and electoral bodies and replacing them with councils to overcome economic problems. Khaama Press reported quoting deputy minister of information and culture and spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Zabiullah Mujahid that the Taliban are working on creating a grand council and other common councils. Mujahid said that “the administrations were a burden on the government and they dissolved them due to economic woes.” He added that they have dissolved a number of government bodies and intend to create councils, according to Khaama Press. On Thursday, Taliban have decided to dissolve several minis-

tries and electoral bodies including ministry of government of peace affairs, ministry of government in parliament affairs, independent election commission and the independent election complaints commission. The Taliban have directed the administration of affairs and all relevant administrations to clarify the destiny of the staff of the ministries and the commissions, payment of their salaries, and the entities belonging to the bodies, Khaama Press reported. Earlier, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan had dissolved Ministry of Women Affairs and had replaced it with the ministry of promotion of virtue and promotion of vice, Khaama Press said. **ANI**

RETURN TO PERMANENT BASES

Thousands of Russian troops leave Ukraine border

MOSCOW: Russia announced on Saturday that 10,000 troops had finished month-long military drills near Ukraine and would be returning to their permanent bases. The news comes amid accusations from Western countries that Russia is plotting an invasion of Ukraine, something the Kremlin denies. The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement that the operations for the Southern Military District forces had taken place across a stream of southern regions, including Rostov, Krasnodar and Crimea, a peninsula Moscow seized from Ukraine in 2014. The West has accused Russia of amassing some 100,000 troops near its border with Ukraine.

Russia adds to NATO pressure In the meantime, Russia has applied pressure on NATO and the West with a raft of demands,



calling for a Russian veto on the admission of future NATO members, with one eye on Ukraine’s possible entry to the

military alliance. The United States, among others, have given the Kremlin’s request short shrift. In addition, Russia has called on NATO to withdraw its multinational battalions from Poland and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia

and Lithuania. President Vladimir Putin fanned the flames on Wednesday when he said Russia would take “appropriate retaliatory” steps in response to what he called an “aggressive stance” from the West. But he turned the volume down the following day when he said he had witnessed a “positive” reaction from Washington to Russia’s security proposals. **Talks on the horizon** Talks between the US and Russia, as well as NATO, are scheduled to take place next month. A senior US official said Washington was “ready to engage in diplomacy as soon as early January,” both bilaterally and through “multiple channels.” Talks involving Germany, France and Ukraine under the Normandy Format in the new year have been hinted at. **bw**

ZIYUAN-1 02E

China successfully launches New Optical Satellite into Orbit

BEIJING: China has successfully launched a new optical satellite, Ziyuan-1 02E, into orbit for remote sensing of Earth’s surface, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said on Sunday. The launch was carried out at 11:11 am local time (03:11 GMT) from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in the country’s northwestern province of Shaanxi, using a Long March-4C (also known as Changzheng 4) launch vehicle, Sputnik quoted the CNSA as saying. As well as taking photos of Earth’s surface, the Ziyuan-1 02E will study and systematize terrestrial natural resources, the space agency added. **ANI**



MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,122.42 points, down 0.06 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.50 per cent at 536.34 points. Al Maha Marketing, up 6.79 per cent was the top gainer while, Oman & Emirates Holding down 6.15 per cent, was the top loser.

Strategic pact with Visa to enhance BankDhofar's customer experience

Over the years, BankDhofar has worked closely with Visa to provide innovative fintech digital solutions that are in line with the bank's digital transformation vision

Times News Service

MUSCAT: BankDhofar has recently signed a strategic partnership agreement with Visa, the world's leader in digital payments, to strengthen the business relationship between the two parties and to enhance the bank's customer experience.

The signing ceremony took place at BankDhofar's head office, and the agreement was mutually signed by Abdul Hakeem Omar Al Ojaili, Chief Executive Officer of BankDhofar and Dr Saeeda Jaffar, Senior Vice President and Group Country Manager, GCC region, Visa, in the presence of a number of officials from both sides.

On signing the agreement, Abdul Hakeem Omar Al Ojaili, Chief Executive Officer at BankDhofar said, "We are glad to continue our

partnership with Visa, the world's leader in digital payments. This agreement reflects our endeavour to constantly provide seamless services and advanced payment solutions to our customers. We understand the tremendous technological development in various aspects of the financial industry, and as one of the leading banks in the Sultanate, our strategic partnership with Visa will put us at the forefront of providing cutting-edge banking solutions."

Over the years, BankDhofar has worked closely with Visa to provide innovative fintech digital solutions that are in line with the bank's digital transformation vision. BankDhofar has been one of the pioneering financial institutions that have re-shaped the banking experience in the Sultanate through adopting the latest technologies and follow-



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ing best international practices in the industry.

Dr Saeeda Jaffar, Group Country Manager, GCC region, Visa, said, "We are delighted to renew

our long-standing partnership with BankDhofar. Over the years, we have closely worked together to develop several attractive products that deliver seamless, secure

and rewarding experiences to cardholders in Oman on their daily, retail, leisure and travel spend. As we renew our partnership, we remain committed to growing dig-

ital payments in Oman by bringing more customer-centric products to market and supporting the government's ambitions of helping more consumers and local businesses enjoy the benefits of being part of the digital economy."

Providing a convenient banking experience has always been the top priority for BankDhofar since its inception, putting technology and innovation at the core of its strategy to improve the experience of customers. BankDhofar is considered one of the best banks in the region, with a strong presence in Corporate Banking, Retail Banking, Treasury, and Project Finance. The bank caters to customers' needs and requirements and sets the standard for the best customer experience within the banking industry in the Sultanate through innovative products and creative solutions. Following best international banking practices, provision of outstanding customer experience, in addition to its commitment to community development and contribution to the growth of the national economy, has placed BankDhofar at the top of the list of best banks in the region. The bank has maintained a high level of Omanisation ratio and it strives to offer Omani nationals sound career and development opportunities.

REPORT

World economy to top \$100tn in 2022 for first time

LONDON: The world's economic output will exceed \$100 trillion for the first time next year and it will take China a little longer than previously thought to overtake the United States as the No. 1 economy, a report showed on Sunday.

British consultancy Cebr predicted China will become the world's top economy in dollar terms in 2030, two years later than forecast in last year's World Economic League Table report.

India looks set to overtake France next year and then Britain in 2023 to regain its place as the world's sixth biggest economy, Cebr said.

"The important issue for the 2020s is how the world economies cope with inflation, which has now reached 6.8 per cent in the US," said Cebr deputy chairman Douglas McWilliams, Reuters reported.

"We hope that a relatively modest adjustment to the tiller will bring the non-transitory elements under control. If not, then the



British consultancy Cebr predicted China will become the world's top economy in dollar terms in 2030. - BNA

world will need to brace itself for a recession in 2023 or 2024."

The report showed Germany was on track to overtake Japan in terms of economic output in 2033. Russia could become a Top 10 economy by 2036 and Indonesia looks on track for ninth place in 2034. - BNA

KPMG 2021 CEO OUTLOOK

60% of CEOs confident about global economy's growth prospects: Survey

Times News Service

MUSCAT: CEOs of the world's largest businesses are increasingly optimistic about the outlook for their own business and, despite COVID-19 variants slowing down the 'return to normal', their confidence in the global economy have returned to levels not seen since the start of the pandemic.

The KPMG 2021 CEO Outlook, which interviewed 1,325 global CEOs from 11 major markets, found that 60 per cent of leaders are confident about the global economy's growth prospects over the next 3 years (up from 42 per cent in the January/February's pulse survey).

The prospect of a stronger global economy is leading CEOs to invest in expansion and business transformation, with 69 per cent of senior executives identifying inorganic methods (e.g. joint ventures, M&A and strategic alliances) as their organisation's main strategy for growth. A majority (87 per cent) of global leaders stated that they are looking to make acquisitions in the next 3 years to help grow and transform



Kenneth Macfarlane

their businesses.

The survey found that 30 per cent of CEOs plan to invest more than 10 per cent of their revenues toward sustainability measures and programmes over the next 3 years.

Kenneth Macfarlane, Office Managing Partner - Oman, KPMG Lower Gulf, said, "Well managed by government leadership, Oman has handled the pandemic effectively and is turning a crisis into an opportunity for growth. This stability creates a foundation for CEOs to project a positive, optimistic environ-

ment and encourage employee productivity and creativity. To tackle the potential environmental challenges, CEOs would do well to invest in digitalisation and disruptive technology. CEOs are also pushing investment in ESG strategies up the business agenda to deliver expected returns and help build a more equitable and sustainable future."

Reaching net-zero with government support.

Among the many socio-economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world, stakeholders are putting immense pressure on businesses to tackle climate change and leave a positive impact on society. Over half (58 per cent) of CEOs said that they face increased demands from stakeholders (e.g. investors, regulators and customers) for more reporting on ESG issues.

Three out of four (77 per cent) global executives believe that government stimulus will be required if all businesses are to reach net zero. Furthermore, three-quarters (75 per cent) of global CEOs have identified COP26 as a pivotal

moment to inject urgency into the climate change agenda.

More than eight out of ten (86 per cent) global leaders state that their corporate purpose will shape capital allocation and inorganic growth strategies.

The research found that corporate purpose, what the company stands for and its impact on communities as well as the planet, is driving 74 per cent of CEOs to act in addressing the needs of their stakeholders (customers, employees, investors, governments and communities). There has also been a 10-point increase since the beginning of 2020 in the number of CEOs who say their principal objective is to embed purpose into the decisions they make to create long-term value for their stakeholders (64 per cent).

When looking at risks for growth over 3 years, senior executives identified three areas they see as top risks: supply chain, cyber security and climate change. Further, about 56 per cent of global CEOs mention an increase in stress on business' supply chain during the pandemic.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

Microsoft joins Google, Amazon, others in skipping presence at CES

LAS VEGAS: Microsoft Corp said it will not participate in person at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2022 in Las Vegas, joining a list of companies opting not to have a physical presence at next month's event on concerns over the rapid spread of the Omicron COVID-19 variant.

The US software giant added that it will continue to participate at CES remotely, according to an emailed statement. The Verge was the first to report on Friday that Microsoft will not participate physically at CES, Reuters reported.

Several other companies including US automaker General Motors Co, Alphabet Inc.'s Google and its self-driving auto-technology company Waymo, Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc, Twitter Inc, Lenovo Group, AT&T Inc and Amazon.com Inc dropped in-person attendance plans earlier this week. - BNA

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Maha Marketing, up 6.79 per cent was the top gainer while, Oman & Emirates Holding down 6.15 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,122.42 points, down 0.06 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.50 per cent at 536.34 points. Al Maha Marketing, up 6.79 per cent was the top gainer while, Oman & Emirates Holding down 6.15 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Ominvest Perpetual Sukuk were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 237 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.76 million, with more than 5.85 million shares changing hands. Out of 42 traded securities, 9 advanced, 14 declined and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR17,000 while domestic

investors were net buyers for OMR38,000 followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR21,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,598.92 points, down 0.02 per cent. Oman & Qatar Insurance, Al Sharqia Investment, Oman United Insurance and National Bank Oman were up 2.88 per cent, 2.35 per cent, 2.25 per cent and 2.09 per cent respectively. Oman & Emirates Holding, Global Investment Holding, Taageer Finance, Madina Takaful and Sohar International Bank were down 6.15 per cent, 1.64 per cent, 1.39 per cent, 1.04 per cent and 0.87 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,082.86 points, down 0.13 per cent. Services Index was up by 0.51 per cent before closing at 1,611.98 points. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,128.89	4,119.05	4,122.42	4,124.94	-2.51	-0.06
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,606.13	6,591.13	6,598.92	6,600.11	-1.19	-0.02
Industry Index	6,110.28	6,082.86	6,082.86	6,090.73	-7.87	-0.13
Services Index	1,616.48	1,601.24	1,611.99	1,603.78	8.21	0.51
MSX Shariah Index	538.49	536.34	536.34	539.05	-2.70	-0.50
MSX TR INDEX	4,968.52	4,956.68	4,960.74	4,963.77	-3.02	-0.06

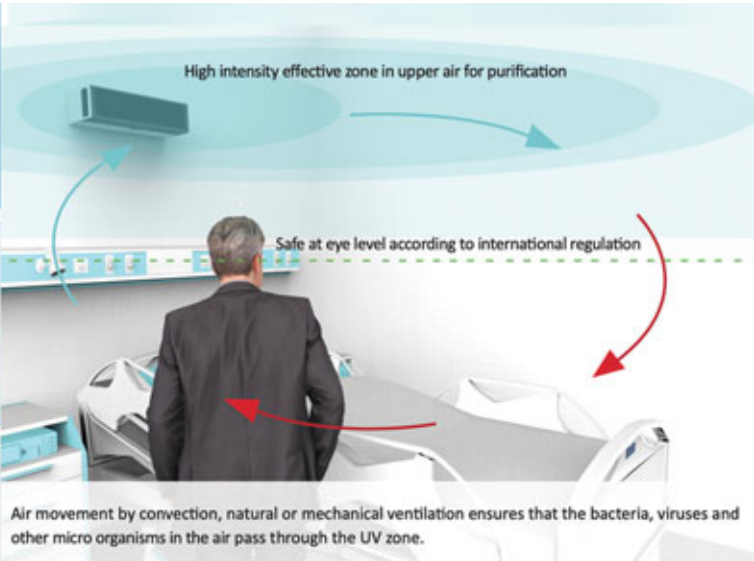
Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
5,850,574	1,768,314	237	22,161,275,979	9	14	19	42

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000003000	AI MAHA MARKTING	53,088	36,737	11	0.692	0.692	0.692	0.692	0.648	0.044	6.790	0.692	0.692	0.692	0.100	47,748,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	5,000	2,023	2	0.253	0.253	0.250	0.253	0.247	0.006	2.429	0.250	0.250	0.253	0.100	50,600,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	350,427	30,507	11	0.087	0.089	0.087	0.087	0.085	0.002	2.353	0.089	0.084	0.089	0.100	7,830,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR	50,000	18,200	1	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.356	0.008	2.247	0.384	0.334	0.360	0.100	36,400,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	10,000	4,064	2	0.404	0.410	0.404	0.406	0.400	0.006	1.500	0.410	0.396	0.420	0.100	89,320,000
OM0000003988	OOREDOO	47,080	17,470	6	0.370	0.372	0.370	0.372	0.370	0.002	0.541	0.372	0.372	0.370	0.100	242,151,254
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER	215,000	92,570	7	0.438	0.438	0.430	0.430	0.428	0.002	0.467	0.430	0.428	0.430	0.100	101,656,300
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	5,000	280	1	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.056	0.056	0.057	0.100	17,507,341
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	390,800	37,033	17	0.094	0.095	0.093	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.093	0.093	0.094	0.100	19,000,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	1,200	430	2	0.358	0.358	0.358	0.364	0.364	0.000	0.000	0.358	0.350	0.364	0.100	45,462,857
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	281,486	32,334	6	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.100	228,108,924
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	30,330	22,444	5	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.000	0.000	0.740	0.740	0.744	0.100	555,000,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	369,001	111,900	9	0.306	0.306	0.300	0.304	0.306	-0.002	-0.654	0.300	0.300	0.306	0.100	245,562,788
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	431,200	213,806	21	0.496	0.496	0.494	0.496	0.500	-0.004	-0.800	0.494	0.480	0.498	0.100	1,772,939,497
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	233,858	26,853	10	0.113	0.114	0.112	0.114	0.115	-0.001	-0.870	0.114	0.114	0.115	0.100	340,867,101
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	11,280	3,855	7	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.344	-0.004	-1.163	0.340	0.334	0.340	0.100	30,808,453
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST & FIN.	265,150	38,131	12	0.143	0.144	0.143	0.144	0.146	-0.002	-1.370	0.144	0.143	0.144	0.100	34,128,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	197,500	96,875	11	0.500	0.500	0.490	0.490	0.506	-0.016	-3.162	0.490	0.490	0.500	0.100	26,950,000
Total	18	2,950,400	785,892	141												
Parallel Market																
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	22,689	4,855	1	0.214	0.214	0.214	0.214	0.208	0.006	2.885	0.214	0.190	0.214	0.100	21,400,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	584,209	113,735	8	0.191	0.195	0.191	0.195	0.191	0.004	2.094	0.195	0.193	0.195	0.100	3,377,058,539
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	1,000	163	2	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.000	0.000	0.163	0.163	0.000	0.100	4,880,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	207,800	21,528	7	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	208,032,530
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	5,000	279	2	0.055	0.056	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.056	0.055	0.056	0.100	6,875,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	193,120	24,333	7	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.000	0.000	0.126	0.123	0.126	0.100	377,540,281
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	741	83	1	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.100	8,117,108
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	960	38	1	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.039	0.039	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.000	0.040	0.100	8,619,390
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	251,085	24,559	9	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.095	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000004833	AL SUWADI POWER	10,000	490	1	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.047	0.049	0.100	35,005,911
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	109,021	5,302	10	0.048	0.050	0.048	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.050	0.100	71,667,472
OM0000007407	DHOFAF GENERATING	7,400	496	3	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.064	0.067	0.100	14,880,080
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	424,593	40,337	7	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.095	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.087	0.097	0.100	16,625,000
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	10,000	940	1	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.095	-0.001	-1.053	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.100	18,800,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	187,823	16,807	14	0.091	0.091	0.090	0.090	0.091	-0.001	-1.099	0.090	0.082	0.090	0.100	11,700,000
OM0000003281	TAAJEEZ FINANCE	30,000	2,140	7	0.071	0.072	0.071	0.071	0.072	-0.001	-1.389	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.100	18,004,890
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	20,000	1,200	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.060	0.062	0.100	12,000,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	54,000	3,942	3	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.075	-0.002	-2.667	0.073	0.073	0.075	0.100	14,818,011
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	38,526	1,697	3	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.045	-0.002	-4.444	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.100	8,284,331
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	25,000	1,525	1	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.065	-0.004	-6.154	0.061	0.061	0.064	0.100	7,434,375
Total	20	2,182,167	264,511	89												

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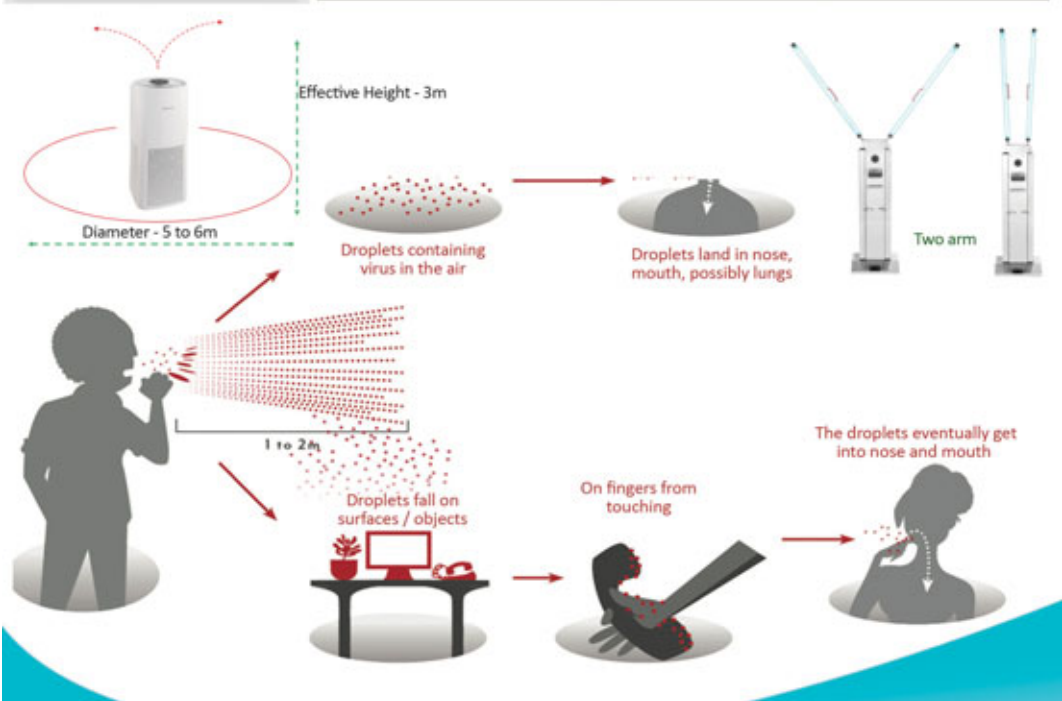
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INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Abu Dhabi Ports to explore opportunities in regional and international markets

ABU DHABI: Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, Group CEO of Abu Dhabi Ports, has said that the group aims to explore opportunities and partnerships in regional and international markets by signing international partnership agreements.

In his statement to the Emirates News Agency (WAM), Al Shamsi said the group's investments will help improve the emirate's stature as a key supporter of international trade and logistical services, in line with the group's five joint strategic partnerships with the Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC) in Jordan.

The strategic partnership agreements signed with the ADC aims to strengthen the deep-rooted ties between the UAE and Jordan, as well as support Abu Dhabi Ports Group's global expansion plans by capitalising on the strategic location of Aqaba as a regional hub in the Red Sea to attract tourism from Europe, Al Shamsi said.

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PEOPLE'S BANK OF CHINA

China central bank says it will promote healthy development of property market

SHANGHAI: China's central bank said on Saturday it will safeguard the legal rights of home buyers and better satisfy their reasonable living needs, vowing to promote healthy development of the country's real estate market. The statement from the People's Bank of China (PBOC), made following its fourth-quarter monetary policy committee meeting, is the latest sign that Chinese regulators are marginally easing curbs on the property sector to prevent a hard-landing, Reuters reported.

Echoing China's annual Central Economic Work Conference held in early December, the PBOC said it will prioritise economic stability, amid an increasingly severe external environment and the unrelenting global pandemic. The PBOC said it will keep its monetary policy flexible and appropriate, and liquidity reasonably ample. It will strengthen support to the real economy, with a bias toward small companies.

The central bank reiterated that it will deepen reforms of the forex market and increase the flexibility of the yuan's exchange rate while guiding companies and financial institutions to be "risk neutral". -BNA

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Contact 92772764
Email: minhajalish@gmail.com

Senior Manager (HR/Administration/Operations)
Indian male, 42, MBA, 12yrs' experience with international exposure. Having GCC experience. Also having Experience in the Education Industry (India). Presently in Muscat. D/L Available.
Contact: 94326527
Email: sreekanth.kerala987@gmail.com

FINANCE & ACCOUNTS MANAGER
MBA - Finance with 15years experience in 5 countries including GCC & Africa. Handled accounts, costing & banking of Trading, Manufacturing, Oil & Gas, Construction & service company. Available for employment in Muscat with transferable visa.
Contact 93270023 rajugetme10@yahoo.com

CIVIL ENGINEER
B.Tech graduate with 1+ years of experience working as a Site Engineer & Quantity Surveyor. Proficient in Quantity Survey, Quality Control, 2D Drafting, 3D Modelling & Project Management. Currently in Oman. Available to join shortly.
92408363
sawad.mohammed@outlook.com

MANAGER

Manager, experience in Purchase. Operations.Marketing. Accounts & Project Management seeks job. Contact 95598108 Email: bjibinu09@gmail.com.

Accounts/Finance Manager 29 years management, worked with reputed groups, expert in cashflow & budgeting, auditing etc. Contact 98803439

Indian male, engineering graduate with 28+ years executive experience in logistics, assets, purchase, disposal, inventory management and Automobile industry in Oman. Seeking managerial/suitable position in reputed firms. Contact 98504774, Email: thomasemte@gmail.com

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Indian male 30 B.com Having 7yrs on field experience in Inventory, operation assistant & Sales Executive DL & NOC available. Contact 97855282 Email: natique.ahmed91@gmail.com

8 Yrs of experience in procurement (Parts for Heavy machineries, Light motor vehicles & crushers) plus Accounting, Administration, Logistics support, B.Com, MBA. Contact 78234545.

7 yrs exp in purchase, logistics, warehouse/inventory and 10 yrs exp in commercial operations Having D/L, Contact 98531104

Indian Female (45) - B.Ed Graduate. Primary, middle school teacher.Have 6 years exp. in CBSC School, Kerala. Looking an opportunity in Muscat Indian School. Contact Nos: 968-98378518 / 91 9495442210. Email: vkalluvilayil@hotmail.com

ENGINEER
Mechanical Engineer, & Graduate Marine Engineer Indian male, 36 year old, having an experience of 12 years. Presently in Oman, having Oman D/L seeks suitable placement in Oman.
Contact: 95476011
Email: noblesimon1985@gmail.com

Project Manager - Civil
An Indian, Graduate Civil Engineer having 22+ yrs Exp. in Construction Sector on Buildings, Infrastructure & Electro-Mechanical Projects with Project Management/ Contracts Exp. looking for a Middle Management Position in the Consulting/Contracting Firm. Valid Engineer Visa & D/L, NOC available/Transferable Visa.
Contact No. 91996650

MECHANICAL ENGINEER
Indian, 23, (B.E Mechanical), fresher PG Diploma in Oil and Gas Piping and Pipeline, QA/QC, NDT, looking for suitable job.
Contact: 79056363, 99501396
Email: rejiakhil111@gmail.com

FINANCE
B.Com ICWAI (Intermediate), 18+ years Finance/Accounts/Reporting/Credit Control/ Finalisation, Expd in MFG/Retail/Service Ind, Expd in ERP-Orion/Focus/JD Edwards/D/L, NOC available, can join immediately.
Mobile: 97634372

SENIOR MANAGER SUPPLY CHAIN
Indian Male with +25 years of Experience in Supply Chain, Purchase, Sales & Distribution, MIS, Inventory & Credit Control seeks placement.
CONTACT 94619442

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CONTACT: 96211885

SALES / PURCHASE
Indian Male(31), MBA-Finance, 7 years experience as Sales Procurement Specialist, specialized in electrical & lighting for residential and commercial projects. Seeking suitable position. D/L available.
Email: qaisebukhari@gmail.com
Contact: 94560161

ENGINEER

Operations and Maintenance Engineer (Electrical), M.Tech qualified, with 2 years' experience in KSEB, India as Operations Engineer, with experience in AutoCAD, looking for a suitable placement. Contact 79926101 Email: afroossahanaa@gmail.com

Electrical Eng 10 years experience in projects, QA/QC, O&M, PMP holder, DQ approved, D/L, looking for job. Contact 71543379

B.Tech Civil Engineer, experienced in construction of residential and commercial buildings, Quantity Surveying and 3d designing. Seeking for suitable placement.] Contact 79038416

Structural Engr. of 14 years' experience expert in designing RCC/Steel structure, PT co-ordination, site inspection, tender activities & others. Contact 968-98124095 Email mukim0201004@gmail.com

Civil Engineer Indian Male, having 13 Yrs Oman Exp. seeking suitable placement. Contact 79894887

Indian Male MSc Civil Engineer, having 5 years of Oman experience, seeks suitable position having D/L. Contact No. 968-93273239 whatsapp +447466266942 Email ID: mohammedamair.bin@gmail.com

Indian male diploma in Civil Engineering, presently in Oman, seeking for suitable job. Contact 92475396 Email vithunvithuec@gmail.com

Indian Male B.E Mechanical 8yrs of experience looking for sales/purchase job with NOC. Contact 90157089

14 years exp Mechanical engineer expertise in costing,estimation & supervision of MEP systems.Currently working in an excellent grade construction company in Oman looking for Job change Contact 92026449.

RETAIL- ADMINISTRATION
Indian - 10 yrs of experience in retail, health care & telecomm as Administration, Sales & Marketing. Work experience with: Joyalukkas India Pvt Ltd, Aster DM Healthcare, Reliance JIO Infocomm Ltd. International License & Medical done.
Contact no: 78621939
E-mail: suhailkmuhammed00@gmail.com

OMANI HSE
Bachelor's degree in BA & IOSH.
10 years experience in HSE and O&M.
Contact +968 95555865

Mechanical Engineer
Sudanese mechanical engineering with 10 years experience, Firefighting & alarm system, Seeking a position as Mechanical engineer.
WhatsApp and direct phone call +968 94044896

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Contact 78599071
Email: sahaiv548@gmail.com

English Teacher
Experienced English Teacher
Bachelor's degree & Academic IELTS with a 6.5 +4 years of experience.
Contact: +968 99022926

Finance & Accounts
Indian Female (MBA Finance) having more than 15 years of Experience in Oman in Manufacturing and Trading company seeks suitable Senior Position in Finance and Accounts.
Contact # 94953826 / 92824146

OMANI HR/PRO
Omani, 15 yrs experience, PRO, Relation development, Labour & Crime law, HR & Time Management. Fluent in English, Arabic & Hindi seeks Part Time job.
Contact 97264447

DRIVER

Bangladeshi driver with 5 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 94531675

Indian, looking for driver job, with valid Oman D/L(light vehicle) & Indian heavy D/L available. Contact +968 79500069

Looking for job Heavy vehicle drive exp 6 yrs. Contact 95292064

Bangladeshi driver with 5 yrs experience seeks job. Contact 95160208

Driver (light) with 10 yrs experience. Contact 96313100

TOUR/TRAVELS

Indian Male 32 yrs Bachelors in Travel & Tourism with 7.5 yrs experience in hospitality field looking for suitable placement. Presently in Oman. Contact 72775792.

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A team of researchers from the University of Tsukuba have found that only ten minutes of moderate-intensity running can help the part of the brain that plays an important role in controlling mood and executive functions.

The study has been published in the 'Scientific Reports Journal'.

There's clear evidence that physical activity has many benefits, such as the ability to improve mood, but in previous studies, cycling was often the form of exercise studied. Running, however, has always played an important role in the well-being of humans. The unique form and efficiency of human running, which includes the ability to sustain this form of exertion (i.e., by jogging as opposed to sprinting), and the evolutionary success of humans are closely linked.

Despite this fact, researchers had not yet looked closely at the effects of running on brain regions that control mood and executive functions.

"Given the extent of executive control required in coordinating balance, movement, and propulsion during running, it is logical that there would be increased neuronal activation in the prefrontal cortex and that other functions in this region would benefit from this increase in brain resources," explained Professor Hideaki Soya.

To test their hypothesis, the research team used the well-established Stroop Color-Word Test and captured data on hemodynamic changes associated with brain activity while participants were engaged in each task.

10 MINUTES RUN CAN BOOST BRAIN PROCESSING

For example, in one task, incongruent information is shown, i.e., the word red is written in green, and the participant must name the colour rather than read out the word. To do so, the brain must process both sets of information and inhibit extraneous information. The Stroop interference effect was quantified by the difference in response times for this task and those for a simpler version of the task – stating the names of colour swatches.

The results demonstrated that, after ten minutes of moderate-intensity running, there was a significant reduction in Stroop interference effect time. Furthermore, bilateral prefrontal activation had significantly increased during the Stroop task. After running, participants reported being in a better mood.

"This was supported by findings of coincident activations in the prefrontal cortical regions involved in mood regulation," first author Chorphaka Damrongthai added.

Given that many characteristics of the human prefrontal cortex are uniquely human, this study not only sheds light on the present benefits of running but also on the possible role that these benefits may have played in the evolutionary past of humans. -ANI

FEATURE



WHERE HARRY POTTER AND SHERLOCK HOLMES LIVE

Do you remember the addresses of Bilbo Baggins or Mary Poppins?
A tour of literary addresses, from Privet Drive to Baker Street.

Characters in novels have a home. In some cases, fictional addresses are precise, complete with apartment number, street address and town.

The address 7 Eccles Street in Dublin refers to the row house of Leopold Bloom, the protagonist of James Joyce's 1922 novel, "Ulysses." The house existed but was demolished in 1967. There is now a hospital on that site.

In his stories, the author Hugh Lofting placed Doctor John Dolittle, who famously spoke with animals, in an English village he named Puddleby-on-the-Marsh.

In some cases, the authors simply give their protagonists a home in mansions and halls such as Manderley (Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca"), the Pemberley country estate (Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice") or a plantation by the name of Tara (Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind").

Harry Potter: 4 Privet Drive
The famous wizard from J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series lived with the Dursleys — his aunt, uncle and cousin — in the regular, nonmagical "muggle" world.

His room at the Dursleys' was a small dusty cupboard under the stairs in a nondescript house at 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey.

Another world-famous address in the celebrated books is Platform No. 9 3/4 at King's Cross Station. It is where Harry finds the secret entrance to a magical train station, and the Hogwarts Express, a train that takes him to the iconic Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry — where the young wizard feels really at home.

Bilbo Baggins: Bag End, Bagshot Row
"In a hole in the ground there lived a Hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a Hobbit-hole, and that means comfort."
That is the opening sentence of J.R.R. Tolkien's 1937 fantasy novel for children, "The Hobbit."
Bilbo Baggins' home is at the



very end of Bagshot Row, in Bag End, Hobbiton, in the Shire in Middle-earth.

Phileas Fogg: 7 Savile Row
The protagonist in Jules Verne's 1872 novel, "Around the World in 80 Days," is an elegant 19th-century English gentleman by the name of Phileas Fogg.
To win a bet with fellow members of the Reform Club, he ventures on an exciting journey that takes him around the world — and he makes it back to London just in time, thanks to time zones and the international date line.
His home address is 7 Savile Row in London. It is described in the novel as a "fashionable address" and "the former home of Sheridan," who was an actual Irish satirist, politician, playwright, poet and theater owner from the beginning of the 19th century.

Sherlock Holmes: 221B Baker Street
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Scottish writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle published dozens of mystery novels surrounding the tricky cases solved by the world-renowned fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, along with his sidekick and friend, Dr. John Watson.
Also well known by the detective's fans is his address: 221B Baker Street, London. Holmes rents the space from Mrs. Hudson, who also serves as his housekeeper.
Though the fictional address is set on a real street, when the stories were written the address numbers on Baker Street did not go as high as 221.
Later, an extension of the street led to a long-running dispute between the building soci-



ety Abbey National, which was located at 219–229 Baker Street, and the Sherlock Holmes Museum, located between 237 and 241 Baker Street.
They were both eager to be in charge of answering the mail addressed to Sherlock Holmes.
Meanwhile, Abbey National has changed headquarters and the museum has since obtained the permission to bear the special address — and even has a blue plaque commemorating the famous character's home.
Hercule Poirot: 56B, Whitehaven Mansions
A series of novels by Agatha Christie, the author of books that sold millions of copies worldwide, center on yet another famous fictional detective — a mustachioed, retired Belgian police officer and World War I refugee turned

world-famous private detective named Hercule Poirot.
Short, vain and using the help of what he calls his "little grey cells," Poirot investigates mysteries in some of Christie's best-loved crime stories, including the 1933 "Murder on the Orient Express."
He, too, lives in London, at the fictional address of Flat 203 at 56B, Whitehaven Mansions.
A London Art Deco building called Florin Court served as the real-life location used to reproduce the exterior of Whitehaven Mansions in the "Agatha Christie's Poirot" TV series.
Tintin: Marlinspike Hall
Tintin is the hero and main protagonist in "The Adventures of Tintin," a 24-album comic series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé. The comics have been translated into

more than 100 languages.
Though the boyish-looking reporter with the blond forelock, his fox terrier, Snowy, and their friend the seafaring Captain Archibald Haddock are best known for their many adventures that take them all over the world, their home is a mansion called Marlinspike Hall (a marlinspike is a tool used by sailors) in Belgium.

Mary Poppins: 17 Cherry Tree Lane
In the children's classic "Mary Poppins," a magical nanny arrives at the Banks' family home in London, at Number 17 Cherry Tree Lane.
The Australian-born author P.L. Travers told the adventures of Mary Poppins in a series of eight books. In the 1964 musical film, two songs about the Banks family are actually called Cherry Tree Lane: "No wonder the Nannies are driven insane, We're living in a madhouse in Cherry Tree Lane."

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy: Galactic Sector ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha
The story, according to the prologue, "begins with a house."
Arthur Dent, an anxious Englishman and the protagonist of the science fiction novel "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" by Douglas Adams, lived in a house that "stood on a slight rise just on the edge of the village. It stood on its own and looked out over a broad spread of West Country farmland. Not a remarkable house by any means — it was about 30 years old, squattish, squarish, made of brick, and had four windows set in the front of a size and proportion which more or less exactly failed to please the eye."
One morning, a bulldozer shows up to demolish the house, setting an entire madcap adventure in motion.
In fact, Earth, along with Dent's house of course, was to make way for a hyperspace bypass.
The fictional sector containing the earth is given as Galactic Sector ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha — another fabulous address for the books.

ROUND-UP

Offer on Toyota Corolla Hybrid Electric vehicle



The 1.8L Toyota Corolla Hybrid Electric vehicle makes for a better option when compared to many petrol version vehicles in the category

MUSCAT: Here is the perfect opportunity to own the Toyota Corolla Hybrid Electric vehicle and benefit from impressive fuel economy and advanced technology that is based on pioneering Hybrid Electric energy.

The Toyota Corolla HEV is available with service 8 years/80,000 km (whichever is earlier), 1-year insurance or cash gift in lieu of insurance OMR175. The campaign is valid until December 30. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Visit the showroom for exact details.)

The 1.8L Toyota Corolla Hybrid Electric vehicle makes for a better option when compared to many petrol version vehicles in the category. That means lesser stops at the fuel station and more savings than expected. Based on the TNGA platform, the Corolla offers some of the smoothest and stable driving experiences too.

The Corolla HEV's striking look is characterised by a frontal treatment with a two-step rendering of the front corners, flanking a strongly projecting lower grille. The LED projector headlights with integrated daytime running lights give the Corolla HEV a sleek and stylish look. Meanwhile, the

rear of the car echoes the look of the front through the shape of the bumper and the inverted trapezium design of the boot lid. The rear lamp clusters are connected by a chrome trim, further highlighting the car's wide stance. The Corolla HEV is equipped with 17-inch alloy wheels that further express its elegance and sportiness.

The Corolla HEV's distinct personality is completed by its expansive and comfortable cabin, which displays exceptional quality and finishing throughout. The interior design adopts a simple yet appealing style, with comfortable spaciousness and integrated functional parts combined to create a refined elegance. The ergonomically designed seats, the armrest and ample legroom offer superior comfort for the rear-seat passengers.

The cabin is accentuated with an extensive range of features, which vary based on the trim level. Occupants also benefit from Auto Air Conditioner with vents for the rear seat, a moonroof, a 7-inch colour multi-information display

(MID), a 7-inch touch-screen multimedia infotainment display, rearview camera, cruise control, six-speaker sound system and 60:40 split-folding rear seats.

The Corolla's striking looks are complemented by an exciting drive personality imbued by an electrified hybrid powertrain that combines two power sources consisting of a petrol engine and electric motor with a combined power of 121 hp. It is also mated to an Electrically Controlled Continuously Variable Transmission, which provides an outstanding fuel consumption value of 27.6km/L (Fuel economy may vary due to driving conditions) while improving the driving experience.

As with any other Toyota model, safety remains a top priority for the Corolla HEV, which includes a comprehensive array of features to protect its occupants, such as four SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control, Anti-lock Braking System, Brake Assist, Electronic Brakeforce Distribution, Tyre Pressure Monitoring System, among many others.



OCS Infotech organises workshop on 'Simplifying and Maximising your Security Ecosystem'

MUSCAT: Oman Computer Services Company (OCS Infotech) recently organised a workshop on 'Simplifying and maximising your security ecosystem', with Infoblox. This workshop saw the attendance of several members from the public and the private sectors.

Commenting on the importance of conducting the workshop, Anu Cherian Philip, General Manager of OCS Infotech, said, "The main aim of this workshop is to learn how integrations and using the right tools can help to empower the security teams of companies. Moreover, by giving a better understanding of the security ecosystem and the benefit of a complementary solution, businesses can detect, contain and remediate threats even quicker through a high-level response integration system."

The workshop also saw the discussion of automatically sharing indicators of compromise across multi-vendor security systems. This will enhance visibility throughout respective extended networks regardless of infrastructure complexity.

Ali Sleiman, Regional Presale Technical Director Infoblox – the Middle East and Africa, said, "As we know the world around us is changing as organisations digitally transform through cloud initiatives. This change requires a modern networking and security architecture. Infoblox addresses DNS security by providing enforcement at the DNS control plane, on which over 90 per cent of malware activity takes place."

"Our BloxOne Threat Defense solution is a simple and quick way for customers to detect potential threats. OCS is a partner that we are closely working with Oman. This collaboration will help us better serve regional customers. Together, we can work towards educating our customer base in Oman, sharing knowledge, and generating awareness of how Infoblox and OCS can benefit them," he added.

Infoblox provides the world's leading cloud-first solutions for simplifying and scaling DNS, DHCP and IPAM and security.

OCS Infotech is one of the first Omani establishments in the technical field and one of the Zubair Group companies. It hosts over four decades of experience in developing technology solutions for data storage, virtualisation, network solutions, cybersecurity, data centre and infrastructure management, disaster recovery, business continuity and other related services. The company also provides clients with integrated consulting services for comprehensive technical transformation.

OVERWHELMING RESPONSE

Nissan Patrol Nismo satisfies Oman's long-standing love for high-performance vehicles

MUSCAT: The recently launched Nissan Patrol Nismo has received an overwhelming response from auto enthusiasts in Oman. The new race-inspired version of the legendary Patrol combines striking exteriors with the refinement of a luxury car and the exhilarating performance of a sports car. With the launch of this incredible SUV began a year-long celebration to mark the 70th anniversary of the dawn of the Nissan Patrol in 1951.

A spokesperson for Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, "With the 2021 Patrol Nismo, our customers can experience the thrill of handling a car with a racing spirit and turn heads as they glide through the streets. Patrol Nismo, the race-inspired version of the Patrol launched exclusively in Oman earlier this year, has been well received by the consumers. Many exquisitely crafted units of the high-performance SUV have already been sold and the demand continues to grow."

This response underlines the strong demand for the Nismo brand in Oman since its launch in the region in 2016. As Nissan's performance brand, Nismo is responsible for motorsports activities and speciality performance cars – and is committed to delivering thrilling driving experiences. With high-quality craftsmanship, the 2021 Nissan Patrol Nismo joins the 370Z Nismo and the GT-R Nismo to offer motorsports-inspired aerodynamics and styling, superior



handling characteristics and unmatched agility.

The latest manifestation of the bold and sporty Nissan Patrol Nismo underlines Nissan's heritage as a motorsport brand and the region's long-standing love for high-performance vehicles. It has been tailored to meet the needs and expectations of customers looking to stand out from the crowd – those who seek the premium luxury of the iconic Nissan Patrol and simultaneously crave the exhilaration that comes from increased power performance and superb handling.

Abdullah Al Adawi who recently bought Patrol Nismo appreciates it for its luxurious experience, and premium design said, "Nissan Patrol Nismo gives me a sense of confidence and pride of owning it."

"It features a sophisticated aerodynamic form and the size and presence of a premium-class SUV – which when combined with its overwhelming power makes it stand out and establishes its higher grade as a symbol of true performance."

A happy owner Yahya Al Sulaiman said, "Nissan Patrol Nismo makes an ultimate mark for performance, luxury and respect, and adds to the strong Patrol proposition. It is a class apart and I am proud to be the owner of this eye-catching SUV."

Designing Nismo road cars was both a challenge and a beautiful opportunity for the Nissan team to express Nissan's passion for design on a superlative level.

Hamad Al Saadi believes the Nissan Patrol Nismo has been designed with the customer in mind. He says, "It provides the most exciting and

authentic experience to fuel the adrenaline and inspire the imagination of the excitement-seekers."

Samir Al Wahaibi lauds the model for its durability, reliability, safety, comfort features and unmatched all-terrain performance.

He says, "Patrol Nismo's design is driven by function – to provide drivers with motorsports inspired aerodynamics and styling, enhanced handling capabilities and unmatched agility."

While its exterior has been refined to allow for optimised aerodynamics and suspension, as well as achieving zero lift force, it also features enhanced handling capabilities and stylish race-inspired ergonomic upgrades, along with the latest Nissan Intelligent Mobility (NIM) features.

The 2021 Nissan Patrol Nismo

reinforces the build of the Patrol V8 LE Platinum City model and is aligned with Nissan's new design philosophy of being bold, energizing, human and alive.

The dynamic design plays a pivotal role in highlighting the character of the Patrol Nismo – exuding aggression and sportiness with an imposing presence. It features a new front fascia, with a honeycomb three-dimensional mesh that emphasizes the SUV's front V-Motion grille, along with new front lamps and horizontal chrome lines embellished with the Nismo emblem. The rear bumper is more symmetrical in design to accentuate the car width, with dark chrome inserts and new tail lamps.

It also includes LED rear fog lights inspired by the Nissan Formula 1 car, which emits the same brightness as the car's brake lights in adverse conditions.

The signature Nismo red line wrap covers the circumference at the model's base, the contour adding a boost to its definition, while the 22-inch, two-tone 2 tone aluminium wheels sport the Nismo logo to add a distinctive aesthetic. The SUV's tuned suspension features Bilstein shock absorbers, which provide sportier and improved handling.

While the exterior of the Patrol Nismo boosts confidence, the interiors exude pure luxury and Nismo's racing pedigree in equal measure. Spacious front seats help drivers become one with their car, while the premium quality and

crafted quilting continue the Nismo's narrative in bringing performance and luxury to its owners. Alcantara fabric with side leather, the upholstery of choice for racing cars, is one of the latest design modifications to the Nismo to add to the plushness of the interiors.

The black Alcantara steering wheel also takes its inspiration from racing cars, with red carbon fibre inserts to provide a sporty and dynamic feel, while the headrests are also embossed with the signature Nismo logo.

The refreshed centre console and dashboard add to the signature Nismo interior, allowing drivers to make informed decisions in real time.

The 2021 Nissan Patrol Nismo also features improvement in cabin quietness as a result of a reduction of the frame vibration, while AC upgrades for the second row help provide a more comfortable ride. The 2021 Nissan Patrol Nismo is available in four exterior colours – namely White Pearl, Black Solid, and Grey and Silver metallic colours.

Passion for performance

Each vehicle is tuned to flawlessness by Nissan's legendary Takumi craftsmen team, a team of four master engine builders allowed to hand-build the Nissan GT-R engines at Nissan's Yokohama engine plant. Their skill in tuning the Patrol's V8 engine results in a concentrated 428hp and a torque of 560NM.

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ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat wins over 30 global, regional awards and honours in 2021

In 2021, the bank won over 30 international, regional and local awards and honours as it demonstrated excellent performance across all aspects of its operations

MUSCAT: In recognition of its outstanding achievements and commitment to offering world-class banking services to its customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, continued to win multiple awards across its different lines of business and operations. In 2021, the bank won over 30 international, regional and local awards and honours as it demonstrated excellent performance across all aspects of its operations. The bank started the year on a very positive note winning 5 prestigious awards from EMEA Finance



including the Best Bank in Oman, Best Private Bank in Oman, Best Local Investment Bank in Oman and the Middle East Sustainability Award. A prolific innovator in the financial sector in the region, 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 later during the year. Energised by the steady number of accolades, the bank continues to work steadily to further improve its excellent portfolio of services and provide greater financial inclusion across the Sultanate. In keeping with technological developments, the bank’s digital channels including Mobile and Internet banking have been witnessing tremendous

growth over the recent past. With about 2 million customers, Bank Muscat is a clear leader in the banking sector in Oman and has the largest portfolio in the country across the retail, corporate, wholesale and Islamic banking space. Hence, it was not surprising that Bank Muscat won two prestigious awards for digital banking from Global Finance – for Best Consumer Digital Bank (Oman) and Best Corporate / Institutional Digital Bank (Oman) – at the Middle East Digital Bank and Innovators Awards 2021 held in Dubai. The winners for these digital banking awards were selected based on several criteria, including their strategy for attracting and servicing digital customers, success in getting clients

to use digital offerings, growth of digital customers, breadth of product offerings, evidence of tangible benefits gained from digital initiatives, and web/mobile site design and functionality. As the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, Bank Muscat has the largest banking network in Oman with 174 branches and over 800 ATMs, CDMs and other devices. The number of customers using digital banking services has increased manifold in recent years to over 1.2 million today. A strong supporter of Public-Private Partnership, the bank has been steadily and strongly partnering with government institutions and civil society organisations to implement national goals of digital transformation and support

the growth of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. In recognition of its pioneering role in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Bank Muscat was honoured by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry at a grand event held recently under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Assistant Secretary-General of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs. The bank also won the Bank of the Year (Oman) award from The Banker as well as the Best Bank in Oman awards from many prestigious international, regional and local publications including Global Finance, Euromoney, Asiamoney, and Oman Economic Review. It is important to note that the bank is a repeat winner in the Best Bank in Oman category across these prestigious international publications based on its growth in assets, profitability, geographic reach, strategic relationships, new business development and innovation in products. Meanwhile, Bank Muscat Private, targeted at ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNIs), won three Best Private Bank in Oman awards during the year, from PWM/The Banker, Global Finance and EMEA Finance. The bank also won the Best Trade Finance Bank in Oman awards from Global Trade Review and Global

Finance, while strong performance by its Asset Management division helped garner awards from Global Investor Group and EMEA Finance during the year. Recognising its vast range of world-class offerings, the bank also won awards for the Best Bank for SMEs in Oman from Asiamoney as well as 3 Investment Banking awards from Asian Banking and Finance. Bank Muscat also won the Best Retail Bank in Oman from Retail Banker International. JP Morgan recognised the bank’s operational excellence in processing dollar payments and outstanding error-free rate for remittance transactions with two Quality Recognition awards during the year, validating the bank’s commitment to the highest standards for fund transfers. The bank was also honoured as the Best Foreign Exchange Provider in Oman by Global Finance. Going forward, Bank Muscat is focused on strategic initiatives to confront challenges and further increase its market share even as it continues to demonstrate its systemically-important place in Oman with all-round support to different sectors. The bank posted a net profit of RO 140.16 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2021 compared to RO 113.21 million reported during the same period in 2020, an increase of 23.8 per cent.

ECO-INNOVATE OMAN

be’ah continues its journey towards green economy

MUSCAT: Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be’ah) announced the continuation of Eco-Innovate Oman - its flagship accelerator programme for Omani businesses seeking to make their commercial operations even greener. EIO is a business accelerator programme designed to develop the skills sets and growth trajectories of Omani SMEs that aspire to green their businesses, fight climate change, and maximise financial, environmental, and social returns. The world is moving towards a green economy to fight climate change. Large international companies are including sustainability in their tendering decisions. Governments and others are adopting similar approaches. Investors are looking for innovative sustainable SMEs to invest in; EIO aims to increase the level of competitiveness among Omani SMEs enabling them to compete locally and internationally. EIO will train Omani SMEs to evaluate their operations and their value chains using Green House Gas (GHG) accounting which is considered the first step in identifying ways to make their operations greener and more sustainable.

Launched in December of 2019, the first Eco-Innovate Oman (EIO) contributed to accelerating the skills sets of SME owners working in waste management, resource recovery, and other eco-conscious sectors. The programme has benefited owners like Tasnim Al Dawudi, co-founder of T&S Petroleum, which has a patented date seed oil product used in the oil & gas industry who took part in the first edition of EIO. According to Al Dawudi, “EIO was a life-changing experience, giving our team the commercial maturity and skills to grow T&S into a sustainable and highly competitive organisation.” The second edition of EIO will build upon this success, attracting Omani small and medium-sized businesses which are committed to greening their operations through a practical ‘Green House Gas Accounting’ process of identifying the environmental impact of their operations and those of its suppliers and employees. EIO participants will also be exposed to international best practices in sustainable business practices, led by be’ah’s international partners and selected SMEs will have the opportunity to work with these partners one-on-one. As with the first edition of EIO,



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the second cohort will undergo a challenging “boot camp” which will quickly enhance skills sets with regards to business strategy and operations. The participants will learn practical skills in not only sustainable business practices but also financial management and the attraction of growth capital. EIO will train the participants to focus on the three pillars of impact namely, financial, social, and environmental returns. At the end of EIO, successful SMEs will pitch

for growth financing in front of angel investors, lenders, and impact investment funds. Growth financing will be in the form of equity and/or debt. Commenting on the launch of the second edition of EIO, Research & Development Manager at Environmental Center of Excellence in be’ah Dr Farah Al-Barwani stated; “Due to be’ah’s drive to support Oman’s transition towards sustainability and a circular economy, and in support of the Oman Vision 2040, we are pleased to announce the launch of the second edition of EIO as we aim to encourage further adaptation of sustainable best practices by Omani SMEs.” William Crew, CEO of Inspired Solutions stated, “Sustainable Best Practices are increasingly becoming a litmus test for doing business with large multi-national companies and governments and for attracting funding from equity investors. Through this programme, SMEs will embrace sustainable business practices within their organisations and become more competitive which will open up new horizons for SMEs growth.”

SPLASH'S 'LOVE CELEBRATION'



Light, love and celebrations

MUSCAT: This festive season, whether you are planning on celebrating with family and friends or doing the countdown to the New year over a zoom party with colleagues or just staying in to catch up on holiday movies - Splash has the perfect collection for you. With a generous dose of celebratory flair, Splash’s ‘Love Celebration’ features exclusive festive edits for men and women. Choosing comfort over extravagance, the collection breaks away from conventional designs of festive dressing by creating fashion that is authentic to your style and choices. After all, what are festivities without a little fun? Luxe velvets, comfy velvet, dazzling sequins or sporty leather - you are sure to discover your festive fit right here as you scroll through the gorgeous collection.

Shimmering light When in doubt, go sequins. There is nothing that says festive like a structured dress that flutters and dances with light. Embellished with intricate beading, this ultra-feminine dress in cream, radiant with sequins, is perfectly paired with a faux fur coat thrown over the shoulders. If you want a practical twist to the shimmer, you can take the black-sequined jumpsuit for a spin. A truly show-stopping outfit that can transition from day to night with ease, you are sure to not just reflect light but your personality too.

Jewel-toned cheer Be it velvet, chiffon, Knit or lurex — we have been dreaming festive edits in jewel tones. Regal wine-coloured dress adorned with gold foil print, lush velvet jackets in Olive with gold trimmings and vintage buttons, striking blue and magenta knitwear adding theatrical flair – there is no better way to carry the festive cheer than a bright ensemble in jewel tones! **Festive elegance** What if you love something muted, with just a hint of drama? Look no further. Inspired by our lockdown days, we have developed new sensibilities when it comes to comfort and sustainable fashion. Be the centre of attention by layering timeless staples that manage to leave a mark, no matter what occasion you wear them for. Think tailored pieces like leather jackets, tweed sets, comfy sweatshirts and knit tops – festive or sombre these chic pieces have conscious-buying and elegant styling written all over them.

Celebrate comfort ‘Love Celebration’ is about dressing for comfort without judgment. Be it the easy-going, casual vibe that the men’s collection brings with tailored key pieces or the oomph that sequined dresses and faux fur coats deliver— this festive season, we choose to wear what we love to celebrate with people we love.

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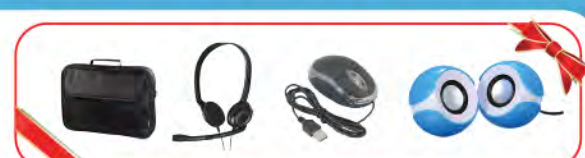
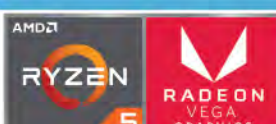
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