

**OMAN AMBASSADOR
PRESENTS CREDENTIALS**

SAN MARINO: Governors of the Republic of San Marino Francesco Mussoni and Giacomo Simoncini received at the Presidential Palace, on Friday, the credentials of Dr. Ahmed bin Salim Baomar as the Sultanate's non-resident ambassador to the Republic of San Marino. **>A5**



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**HM CONGRATULATES NEW
ZEALAND GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Cindy Kiro, Governor-General of New Zealand on her country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of food health and happiness to her and to her country's people further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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OFFICIAL VISIT

King, Queen of the Belgians conclude Oman's visit



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik hosted an official luncheon at Al Alam Palace on Thursday in honour of Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians on the occasion of his visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

Prior to the luncheon, His Majesty the Sultan conferred the Oman Civil Order, 1st Class, on Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians, as an embodiment of His Majesty the Sultan's appreciation for the King of the Belgians and the deep bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

His Majesty the Sultan and the King of the Belgians exchanged commemorative gifts in the presence of Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed Al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman and Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem

d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians.

His Majesty the Sultan presented the King of the Belgians with an Omani sword, while the King of the Belgians presented His Majesty the Sultan a piece of art which represents the Belgian cultural heritage.

The luncheon was attended by members of the Royal Family, Chairmen of the State Council and Shura Council, some ministers and senior officers of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and Oman Royal Police (ROP).

On Friday, His Majesty Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians and Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine, Queen of the Belgians and their accompanying delegation left from Duqm, after their three-day official visit.

On their departure, they were seen off by His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy

Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan; Dr. Mohammed bin Hamad Al Romhi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Head of the Mission of Honour; Dr. Ali bin Masaud Al Sunaidi, Chairman of the Public Authority of Special Economic Zones and Free Zones; Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al Shaibani, Minister of Education (accompanying the spouse of the guest); Najeem Sulaiman Al Abri, the Sultanate's ambassador accredited to the Kingdom of Belgium and members of the mission of honour.

During the visit, a number of issues of common concern were discussed for the interest of both the countries and for achievement of aspirations of a more prosperous future in the two countries. **-ONA**

>See also A2

LIFESTYLE DISEASES COST OMAN ECONOMY OMR1.1BN EVERY YEAR

The leading cause of death among NCDs was cardiovascular diseases, responsible for 36% of the deaths, followed by cancer (11%) and diabetes (8%)



symptoms such as heart attacks and strokes and other ailments such as cancer, respiratory diseases and diabetes, according to the World Health Organization. They tend be of long duration, and are due to a combination of genetic, psychological, environmental and behavioural factors.

The revelation comes following a study that looked into investment in prevention and control of

NCDs, which was conducted by the ministry, in view of the significant burden they have on society.

Economic burden of NCDs

The study added that the treatment, prevention and cure of people suffering from NCDs cost Oman some OMR1.1 billion annually or about 3.59 per cent of the GDP in 2019. This amount can be further broken down in OM-

R486mn for lost productive capacities and disabilities that arise from NCDs and OMR609 million in healthcare expenditure.

Establishing policy and intervention procedures could save more than 18,000 lives, the study went on to say.

As of 2017, the leading cause of death among NCDs was cardiovascular diseases, which are responsible for 36 per cent of the deaths in the country, followed by cancer (11 per cent) and diabetes (eight per cent).

Policies and intervention packages required

"The cases for investment in NCDs in Oman demonstrated that Oman could reduce its burden of non-communicable diseases by investing in four cost-effective and proven policy and intervention packages until 2034," said the Ministry of Health.

"By doing so, Oman could save OMR 671 million in economic output losses," added the ministry. "Furthermore, by investing in these four intervention and policy

packages, Oman could save 18,724 lives at least, and reduce the incidence of diseases."

The study also demonstrated that each of the intervention packages is characterised by benefits outweighing the costs involved.

Steps taken by Oman

One of the key recommendations of this study is the importance of strengthening multi-sectoral, government and societal action on NCDs.

This would help Oman reap significant health and economic benefits and make Oman a regional leader in NCD prevention and management.

It is worth noting that the Sultanate of Oman had taken significant steps towards addressing the burden of non-communicable diseases. The most important of these steps was developing a national policy on preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases, strengthened by creating the National Multisectoral Action Plan, which was approved by the ministerial council in 2018. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Indian schools to offer free psychometric test

1 Indian school students will be provided free psychometric evaluation so that they have a clearer understanding of the career choices after they finish school and can work towards excelling in their chosen field. **>A3**

WORLD

Rescuers inch closer to trapped Morocco boy

2 Rescue workers on Saturday have gotten closer to reaching a 5-year-old boy who has been trapped in an underground well in northern Morocco. The child, called Rayan, fell down a narrow 32-metre deep well in the village of Ighran. **>A6**

MARKET

Location to help Duqm Port bag investments

3 A number of officials and businessmen have stressed the economic importance of Duqm Port to attract investments to the Special Economic Zone, as it is located strategically between the East and West markets. **>B1**

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NCSI DATA

UK remains Oman's top investor as FDI up

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The United Kingdom continues to remain Oman's biggest foreign investor as its volume of foreign direct investments rose to OMR16.43 billion until the third quarter of 2021.

Figures published by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) show that the UK invested OMR8.33 billion in Oman during the above period, compared to OMR7.76 billion in 2020.

The United States is another major investor in Oman, having invested OMR2.018bn in 2021, up from OMR1.849bn the previous year. Other key investors are China (OMR773.4mn) and India (OMR272.1mn).

Among Gulf countries, the United Arab Emirates (OMR1.187bn),



Qatar (OMR383.2mn), Kuwait (OMR914.5mn) and Bahrain (OMR398.8mn) are some of the biggest investors in Oman.

The oil and gas industry was by far the biggest target for foreign investment, attracting OMR11.13bn in total. This was followed by the manufacturing industry (OMR1.51bn), financial services (OMR1.45bn) and real estate investments (OMR1.16bn).

Diversification of sources

Oman has attempted to encourage more local and foreign investment into its economy with the aim of diversifying its sources of income to help the country withstand the impact of global events.

Diversification is also a key objective of Oman Vision 2040, the country's long-term plan towards building a sustainable economy and providing employment and enhancing the living standards of the people.

A key aspect of this investment plan is Oman's Medium Term Fiscal Plan, which runs from 2020 to 2024, and includes a set of measures and initiatives aimed at achieving fiscal sustainability, while maintaining an attractive investment climate. It is also the cornerstone of Oman's 2022 budget.

"The 2022 budget endeavours to attract more investments, enable the private sector to play a greater role in accelerating economic growth, and create more job opportunities," said the report.

Stimulus plan, 2021

To improve Oman's investment climate and alleviate some of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the economic output of the country, the government launched its Economic Stimulus Plan in March 2021.

"The economic stimulus plan aims to fuel the efforts exerted to mitigate the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national economy," said the budget report, released by the Ministry of Finance. "This is achieved through providing a set of stimulus measures and initiatives. **>A5**

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PRINGLES

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PRAYER
TIMINGS

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Asr.....	3:38pm
Maghrib.....	6:02pm
Isha.....	7:14pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:28am

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Oman, Belgium review bilateral ties

The talks touched on the fruitful cooperation between the two countries in various spheres which serve the interests of the friendly people of Oman and Belgium

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians held an official session of talks at Al Alam Palace.



The talks reviewed the good relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium.

The talks also touched on the fruitful cooperation between the two countries in various spheres which serve the interest of the

Omani and Belgian friendly people. They also exchanged views on several matters and topics of common interest.

The talks session was attended from the Omani side by His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rumhy, Minister of Energy and Minerals (Head of the Mission of Honour), Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidi, Chairman

of OPAZ, Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Najeem bin Sulaiman Al Abri, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Belgium.

Talks session
The talks session was attended from the Belgian side by Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians, Sophie Wilmès, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Tinne Van der Straeten, Minister of Energy, Pol De Witte, Secretary General of the Household of the King of the Belgians, Jeroen Cooreman, Director-General for Bilateral Affairs, Machteld Fostier, Secretary to the Queen of the Belgians and Dominique Minior, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Sultanate of Oman. Afterwards, His Majesty the Sultan and the King of the Belgians held a closed-door meeting. -ONA

AL ALAM PALACE

HM receives Belgian King and Queen

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians, and Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians who embarked on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

Upon the arrival of the motorcade of the monarchs to Al Alam Palace courtyard, they were accorded an official welcome led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik accompanied the monarchs to the Dais of Honour where the Royal Anthem of the Kingdom of Belgium was played, while the artillery fired a 21-gun salute for the King of the Belgians.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan greeted members of the official delegation accompanying the King of the Belgians, wishing them a pleasant stay. On his turn, the guest greeted some members of the Royal Family, Chairmen of the State Council and Shura Council, ministers, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and the Royal Oman Police (ROP), Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Belgium and members of the Mission of Honour accompanying the King of the Belgians.

After that, His Majesty the Sultan, the King and the Queen of the Belgians proceeded to the hall where they took Arabian coffee.

Upon the arrival of the guests at Al Alam Palace, they were welcomed by His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, His Highness Sayyid Fatik bin Fahr Al Said, Special Envoy of His Majesty the Sultan,



His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, Khalid bin Hilal Al Ma'awali, Chairman of the Shura Council, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Nasr bin Hamoud Al

Kindi, Secretary General of the Royal Court Affairs, Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Salmi, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Dr. Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rumhy, Minister of Energy and Minerals (Head of the Mission of Honour), Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidi, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Sa'eedi, Minister of Health, Dr. Madiha bint Ahmed Al Shibani, Minister of Education (Escort of the King's spouse), Sheikh Al Fadhl bin Mohammed Al Harthy,

Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of State, Governor of Muscat, Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Sa'eedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Lt.Gen Hassan bin Mohsin Al Shraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, Dr. Abdullah bin Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information, Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, Lt.Gen Said bin Ali Al Hilali, Head of the Internal Security Service, Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said Al Busaidi, Minister of State, Governor of Musandam, Eng. Issam bin Saud Al Zedjali, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, Dr. Saud bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Dr. Khalfan bin Said Al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, Dr. Rahma bint Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Dr. Said bin Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), Qais bin Mohammed Al Youssef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Dr. Laila bint Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, Dr. Mahad bin Said Ba'Owain, Minister of Labour, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al Ra'eesi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), Maj.Gen Mattar bin Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), Air Vice Marshal Khamis bin Hammad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) and Maj.Gen Musalam bin Mohammed Jaboub, Commander of the Sultan's Special Force (SSF). -ONA

MEETING

HH the Honourable Lady receives Belgian Queen



MUSCAT: Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed Al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman received at Al Alam Palace Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians within the framework of her visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

HH the Honourable Lady welcomed the Queen of the Belgians and wished her a pleasant stay in Oman. She also expressed her best sentiments to the Queen of the Belgians, wishing her country further progress and welfare.

In her turn, Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians expressed her happiness at meeting HH the Honourable Lady, wish-

ing her good health, happiness and a long life. She also wished for the Sultanate of Oman further development and prosperity.

Private luncheon
Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed Al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman hosted at Al Alam Palace a private luncheon in the honour of Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians on the occasion of her visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The luncheon was attended by high-ranking ladies, including members of the Royal Family, members of the State Council and Shura Council and undersecretaries. -ONA



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EDUCATION

Indian school students to get free psychometric evaluation

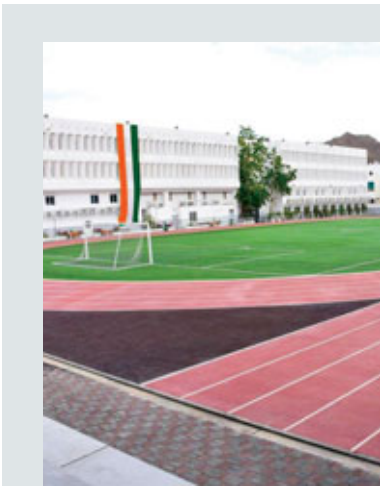
Times News Service

MUSCAT: Indian school students will be provided free psychometric evaluation so that they have a clearer understanding of the career choices after they finish school and can work towards excelling in their chosen field.

The initiative was launched by the Board of Directors of Indian Schools in Oman and is available to students free of cost. It is currently being rolled out to students of grade IX and X and is likely to be extended to students in those grades who have a career path immediately ahead.

Psychometric assessments help students get a better understanding of what career options is suited to them, their personality and skills. Understanding one's own abilities and aptitudes is important to succeed in life. Designed by psychologists, these assessments provide clear ideas as to what career path are apt.

It is hoped that the assessment, carried out by the board's Samriddhi Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, will help improve key skills of students, as well as identify areas that need attention. After taking this assessment, students will receive a comprehensive report



Psychometric assessments help students get a better understanding of what career options is suited to them, their personality and skills

about their abilities and aptitudes along with recommended career options.

Eventually, this will help students choose the right stream after class X. Psychometric assessments for students of classes IX and X were conducted on Saturday, 5 February 2022.

"By conducting this psychometric assessment for students, the board aims to help them discern their cognitive abilities and attitudes so that they can choose the right stream at higher secondary level," said Dr Sivakumar

Manikkan, chairman of the board. "It is the first time such a centralised assessment is being done for the students of Indian schools in Oman free of cost."

There are about 39,000 students enrolled at 21 Indian schools across Oman. About 5,000 of them are in grades IX and X.

"Right now, it is not all that applicable to students of other grades, so we will do it for students of these two standards alone," added Manikkan. "It is possible that in future, we could roll this out for others as well."

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Track 2: Agriculture, Food Management & its impact on Economy
Track 3: Water Management
Track 4: Entrepreneurial Interventions and Innovation
Track 5: Emerging Business Practices
Track 6: Digital transformation in financial services
Track 7: Digital Media and Communication

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• Full Paper Submission: **Feb 21, 2022**
• Paper Acceptance Notification: **Mar 07, 2022**
• Final Paper Submission: **Mar 14, 2022**
• Conference Presentation: **Mar 28 - Mar 30, 2022**

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TURTLE MUSEUM, RAS AL JINZ:



PART OF THE RAS AL JINZ TURTLE RESERVE that was set up in the Sharqiyah Governorate to promote conservation of turtles, the Turtle Museum offers visitors an insight into the behaviour of these amazing reptiles, as well as scientific programmes aimed towards their research, care and conservation.

This museum contains several state-of-the-art laboratories where experiments on optimal turtle care are conducted, and visiting it is part of the turtle-watching trips that many people who both live in and visit Oman regularly embark on. That these expeditions often begin early in the morning, before the sun has risen, which is peak egg-laying time for the turtles, shows the curiosity, interest and passion people have in learning more about this amphibian.

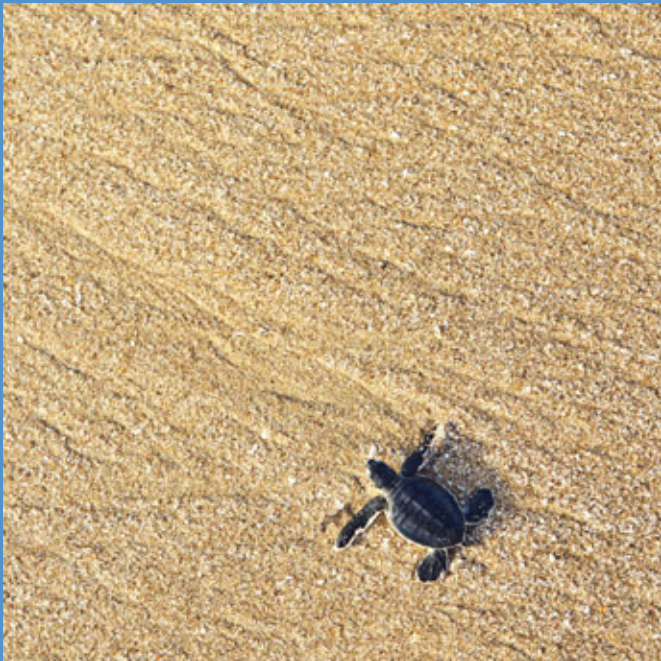
“Turtle nesting tours at Ras Al Jinz allow visitors to witness the spectacle in an intimate fashion without fear of interrupting the creatures themselves,” said the reserve’s management team. “The turtle sanctuary at Ras Al Jinz combines an interactive museum with research laboratories and a wide range of amenities for visitors to learn all about the wonders of these ancient creatures in a family-friendly environment.”

Close to the reserve is Ras Al Hadd, where around 13,000 sea turtles come ashore every year to lay their eggs. It is among the largest nesting sites in the Indian Ocean and the only one in the world where Green Turtles come ashore every night all year round. The area is also home to an ancient



“
TURTLE NESTING TOURS AT RAS AL JINZ ALLOW VISITORS TO WITNESS THE SPECTACLE IN AN INTIMATE FASHION WITHOUT FEAR OF INTERRUPTING THE CREATURES THEMSELVES.

fishing village which dates back to about 3,000 BC, proof that man and animal had been sharing the beach for close to 5,000 years. “One of the most popular eco-tourism activities in Oman is turtle viewing,” added the reserve. “Oman is home to several important nesting sites for four different species of turtle: the endangered Green Turtle, the Olive Ridley Turtle, the Loggerhead Turtle, and the critically endangered Hawksbill Turtle.



AN INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE OF TURTLES







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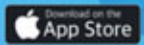


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SAN MARINO

Oman’s ambassador presents credentials

SAN MARINO: Governors of the Republic of San Marino Francesco Mussoni and Giacomo Simoncini received at the Presidential Palace, on Friday, the credentials of Dr. Ahmed bin Salim Baomar as the Sultanate’s non-resident ambassador to the Republic of San Marino.

The ambassador conveyed, during the meeting, sincere greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq coupled with His Majesty’s wishes of good health and happiness to the gov-

ernors and for the friendly people of San Marino further progress and prosperity.

In their turn, the governors asked the ambassador to convey their sincere greetings and wishes to His Majesty the Sultan and for the Omani people further progress and prosperity under His Majesty’s wise leadership. The governors also wished the ambassador success in his duties and for the relations between the two countries further development and growth. —**ONA**

INITIATIVES

< FROM A1 Economic recovery

“Such measures and initiatives aim to support economic recovery efforts, enhance the performance of economic activities and attract more foreign investment.”

Another key scheme launched to boost investments was the Investor Residency Programme launched by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion. This scheme grants investors residency rights lasting for five or 10 years, depending on the nature of their investment, and is extendable.

Improving Oman’s credit rating and investor confidence is also one of the nine key economic and social objectives of the country’s 2022 budget plan.

“Oman has achieved positive outcomes and indicators in 2021 as a result of government measures and efforts towards achieving national objectives,” said the MOF’s budget report. “Such an approach, if maintained, will ensure better outcomes in 2022, and strengthen rating agencies and investors’ confidence.”

NCDS

< FROM A1 Study by research team

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Health, conducted this study as part of a joint Gulf Cooperation Council project, which was supervised by the Gulf Health Council.

The research team included members from several organisations, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Interagency Task Force for the Prevention

and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Health in Oman, represented by the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases at the Directorate General of Primary Healthcare. Oman is one of the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The other five are the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain.



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A story on PCR test requirement waived for entry to Bahrain reached 28,389 people and had 1,166 engagements on Facebook.

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9,400 VIEWS



The Maghrib Minute video in Hindi had 9,400 views and reached 36,800 people on Facebook.

 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

2,319 LIKES



Photo album of the King and Queen of the Belgians at Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque had 2,319 likes on Instagram.

AVIATION

Iran airlines begins flight to Sohar

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Airport received on Friday evening, 4th February 2022, the first flight From Shiraz operated by the Iranian airlines, Taban.

This is a direct flight between Sohar and Shiraz and will be operated once in a week, that is, on Friday.

With this Iranian airlines’ flight, the number of international carriers which operate their flights to Sohar Airport will go up to 5. The other carriers are flydubai, Air Arabia, Qasham Air and Salam Air.

The flight was launched as part of Oman Airports’ initiatives to re-

store air traffic at the Sultanate of Oman’s civil airports which were restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the restrictions as per the recommendations of the Supreme Committee dealing with the pandemic, Sohar Airport implemented new travel protocols which curbed the number of flights.

Welcoming the flight, the Oman Airports authorities hope that the direct flight from Shiraz would serve the passengers of the two friendly countries, besides boosting commercial and tourism traffic in both North and South al-Batina Governorate.

 OMAN CHROMITE CO. (S.A.O.G) P.O. Box: 346, PC 321, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman Tel: 26845115, Fax: 26845155			
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021			
CHAIRMAN’S REPORT	STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021		
In the name of God, the Grateful, the Merciful			
Dear Shareholders, On behalf of the Board of Directors of Oman Chromite Company (SAOG), I am pleased to present to you the annual report on the activities and performance of the Company for the financial year ending 31st December 2021.			
1) Production: The company achieved - thanks to God Almighty - in 2021, the highest production quantity in its history, as the quantities produced during the year amounted to 45,194 tons, compared to a production quantity of 10,597 tons during the year 2020, with an increase of 426%. The increase in production achieved as a result of the company's efforts in the development of its exploration and mining operations and as a result of the start of work in the Mahrah mine, for which the mining license was obtained in June 2021.			
On the other hand, the decrease in the amount of strategic ore reserve, remains the biggest challenge for the company's future. Despite the company's possession of several exploration permits, the company was not able to obtain large reserves. The company was only able to convert one permit into a mining permit during the year. Work is ongoing with the concerned authorities to obtain permits for new sites and to converts the exploration permits to mining permits. It is also expected that the company's exploration efforts in the current sites in 2021 will result in achieving a good level of production and profitable returns in 2022.			
2) Marketing: The total quantities sold internally and externally during 2021 amounted to 45,677 tons, an increase of 502% over the company's sales during the year 2020, which amounted to 9,096 tons. The quantities sold locally amounted to 27,407 tons, represent 60% of total sales.			
3) Income and Profits: A- The total value of sales for the year 2021 amounted to 2.963 million Omani riyals, compared to 1.1 million Omani riyals in 2020, an increase of 170%, mainly due to the increase in the company's sales and the good reputation of the company and its products. B- The net profit after taxation in 2021 amounted to 369,249 Omani riyals, (includes a provision for taxes in 2017 due to the tax assessment by the Tax Authority with amount of 161,428 Omani riyals) compared to net losses amounting to 163,986(Omani riyals in 2020. A tax objection has been submitted to the Tax Authority and the objection procedures are being pursued. The increase in net profit is due to the increase in sales and the company's efforts to reduce production costs.			
4) Investments: The company's investments during the year 2021 were represented in bank deposits, where the total interest on bank deposits during the year 2021 amounted to 87,023 Omani riyals, compared to the amount of 82,980 Omani riyals during the year 2020. The increase in the total interests on deposits in 2021 is due to the increase in interest rates on deposits and the increase in the value of deposits.			
5) Donations, Grants and the Local Society Development: The Company continuously supports the community by communication with the offices of the Walis and Governors, and through the direct interaction with the citizens of the region. Whereas, 1% of the revenue in 2021 was allocated as support to the local community, with an amount of 29,635 Omani riyals.			
Thanks And Gratitude: At the end we are pleased to extend our thanks and appreciation to the honorable shareholders for their trust and permanent support to the company, to the respected members of the Board of Directors for their efforts and constructive cooperation, and to the executive management of the company and all its employees for their effective efforts during the fiscal year 2021 and the previous years. Looking forward, God willing, to be able to overcome the obstacles and challenges facing the company's and to achieve better future results, God willing. In this regard, we put pray to God Almighty to perpetuate His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq - may God protect him - with good health, wellness and long life, and to perpetuate this country with more progress and development. We also appreciate the efforts made by the wise government to support all sectors in the Sultanate, including the mining sector, in line with Oman's Vision 2040.			
Humaid bin Masoud AL Maqbali Board Chairman			
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021			
	2021 RO.	2020 RO.	
Revenue	2,963,490	1,098,861	
Cost of revenue	(1,541,166)	(1,275,448)	
Gross profit/(loss)	1,422,324	(176,587)	
Other income	24,511	29,894	
Salaries and other related staff costs	(272,569)	(308,591)	
Selling and distribution expenses	(435,129)	(184,933)	
General and administrative expenses	(191,722)	(182,732)	
Finance charges	(7,939)	(5,590)	
Profit/(loss) from operations	539,476	(828,539)	
Unrealised fair value losses on investments at fair value through profit or loss	(1,847)	(264)	
Interest income	87,023	82,980	
Profit/(loss) for the year before taxation	624,652	(745,823)	
Income tax	(255,403)	111,833	
Profit/(loss) and total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	369,249	(633,990)	
	0.123	(0.211)	
Basic earnings/(loss) per share	=====	=====	



WORLD



5-YEAR-OLD BOY

Rescuers inch closer to boy trapped in Morocco well

IGHRAN: Rescue workers on Saturday have gotten closer to reaching a 5-year-old boy who has been trapped in an underground well in northern Morocco.

The child, called Rayan, fell down a narrow 32-metre (100-foot) deep well in the village of Ighran in the country's Chefchaouen province on Tuesday. Rescuers said it was difficult to ascertain Rayan's condition.

Low temperatures in the region and passing time are raising concerns over him being retrieved alive.

Lead rescuer Abdelhadi Tam-rani told state television, "we hope we will rescue him alive."

A helicopter is on standby to take Rayan to a hospital as soon as he is rescued.

Thousands took to social media to express their solidarity for the boy and his family, with the Ara-



bic hashtag #SaveRayan trending for hours in Morocco and North Africa.

The well narrows as it descends from 18 inches diameter at the top. Rescuers will not be able to go down themselves to re-

trieve the child.

A massive trench has been cut in the hill next to the well. By Saturday morning, rescuers were digging horizontally toward the well and installing PVC tubes to protect against landslides and get

the boy out.

Moroccan media reported on Thursday that rescuers had managed to get water and oxygen delivered to the bottom of the well.

"I keep up hope that my child will get out of the well alive. I thank everyone involved and those supporting us in Morocco and elsewhere," Rayan's father told state broadcaster 2M on Friday evening.

Rayan's mother told the media that he had been playing nearby before disappearing on Tuesday evening. "The whole family went out to look for him then we realized that he'd fallen down the well," she said.

The incident has attracted crowds of supporters to the village, where they are currently camping. Police have been sent to the venue, and authorities have called upon the masses to let the rescuers do their job. **-bw**



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Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

COVID MANDATE

Spain to revoke outdoor facemask mandate

MADRID: The Spanish government will next week revoke the mandate for wearing facemasks against the infection from COVID-19, Spanish Health Minister Carolina Darias said on Friday. A proposal for that will be approved in a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, the minister told local radio station Cadena Ser, adding

the measure will be published in the Official State Gazette on Wednesday and come into effect on Thursday. The Spanish government previously lifted the mandate for wearing facemasks outdoors in June 2021 but reintroduced it on Dec. 23 as COVID-19 cases soared in the country due to the Omicron surge. **AW**



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AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the report of Muscat Thread Mills SAOG for the year ended December 31, 2021.

Preview of Results:

During the year 2021, severity of Covid-19 pandemic was lesser compared to the previous year 2020, though overall environment was still not conducive for economic / business activities throughout the world. Due to improved business activities and their approaching towards normalcy, your company could perform better during the second year of pandemic 2021.

Improved performance has resulted in taking revenue for the year 2021 at OMR 3,696,852 compared to OMR 2,778,093 achieved during previous year 2020. Increased input costs had put pressure on margins, which resulted in achieving modest profit after tax of OMR 75,463 for the year 2021, as against net loss of OMR 38,188 incurred during previous year 2020. Net worth as on 31 December 2021 was as at OMR 1,860,666 compared to OMR 1,785,203 as on 31 December 2020.

Operations:

During the year under review, company sold 1,198 metric tons of sewing thread as against 852 metric tons sold during the last year. Company's revenue is mainly generated from exports, which accounts for about 90 - 95% of total revenue.

Dividend:

Your Board has proposed for distribution of cash dividend of OMR 0.00275 per share of OMR 0.100 (2.75%) and stock dividend of one share for every one hundred shares (1.00%). Dividend distribution is subject to approval by shareholders in their Annual Ordinary General Meeting to be held on 2 March 2022.

Directors' Remuneration:

The Board of Directors recommends to the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting to approve the total Directors' remuneration of OMR 27,900 (including meeting attendance fees) to be paid to the Board of Directors, in recognition and appreciation of their guidance and support to the management.

Outlook:

It is believed that business environment would further improve during the current year from prevalent adverse impact of pandemic. The company is taking focused approach to establish its presence in new markets, to diversify into different product categories, to obtain optimum product mix of volume business, along with high value items, for long term sustainability.

International Accreditation:

During the year under review, company has maintained its upgraded international quality certification of Iso 9001 Standard 100 to annexe 6, class 1 level that is related to the product and had also successfully renewed its quality system accreditation of ISO 9001:2015.

Human Resources:

Company encourages recruitment and retaining of local talent in each area of activity. Providing on the job training and as per the identified needs, outsourced professional training is awarded to local employees to motivate them and to increase their participation in various activities. Company provides healthy and cordial working atmosphere to its employees to obtain best results from them.

Corporate Governance:

Board of Directors and the Management are committed to the principles of Corporate Governance as laid down by the Capital Markets Authority.

Internal Control Systems:

Company is employing adequate resources commensurate with the nature and size of its operations to ensure that effective internal control systems are in place and to comply with all applicable laws, regulations and ensure safeguarding of company's assets.

The Board, through the Audit Committee, reviews the adequacy, effectiveness and compliance of the control procedures. Further, internal and external auditors submit their reports with their observations and recommendations for improvements in the existing internal control systems. Management reviews those recommendations and takes necessary steps for continuous improvement.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

Company acknowledges and appreciates Capital Market Authority's initiative on the Corporate Social Responsibility and looks at various alternatives in reaching out to the needs of the society. The CSR charter is in place and management have made necessary plans for CSR as approved by your Board.

Acknowledgement:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and employees of the company, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for his wise leadership and generous support to the private sector. We also thank the government, under his leadership, for taking timely and effective measures to protect the people and to support the economy during this critical period.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to shareholders for continued confidence reposed in the company and to employees for their dedication and hard work.

We also thank the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment promotion, other government authorities/ ministries, the Capital Market Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange, Muscat Clearing & Depository Co. and our bankers for their support.

On behalf of Board of Directors,

Chairman

2 February 2022

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2021 RO	2020 RO
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	669,055	698,619
Right-of-use asset	173,402	218,814
Deferred tax asset	84,525	81,370
Total non-current assets	926,982	801,803

CURRENT ASSETS		
Inventories	1,339,893	857,402
Trade and other receivables	1,100,144	969,970
Bank balances and cash	18,929	213,007
Total current assets	2,458,966	2,040,379

Total assets	3,385,948	2,842,182
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EQUITY AND LIABILITIES

Equity		
Share capital	1,591,352	1,591,352
Legal reserve	208,996	201,450
Retained earnings / (accumulated loss)	60,318	(7,599)
Total equity	1,860,666	1,785,203

Liabilities		
Non-current liabilities		
Non-current portion of term loan	60,223	97,423
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	169,201	10,553
Employees' end of service benefits	106,175	105,700
Total non-current liabilities	335,599	213,676

Current liabilities		
Current portion of term loan	37,200	33,600
Bank borrowings	308,415	306,798
Current portion of lease liabilities	5,140	14,147
Trade and other payables	818,008	483,217
Taxation	20,920	5,551
Total current liabilities	1,189,683	843,303

Total liabilities	1,525,282	1,056,979
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Total equity and liabilities	3,385,948	2,842,182
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Net assets per share	0.117	0.112
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STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	2021 RO	2020 RO
INCOME		
Revenue from contracts with customers	3,696,852	2,778,093
Cost of goods sold	(2,735,831)	(2,047,976)
Gross profit	961,021	730,117
Other income	2,428	6,089
Provision for slow moving inventories written back	11,746	-
	975,195	736,206

EXPENSES		
Selling and distribution	575,705	478,268
General and administration	216,941	188,027
Provision for slow moving inventories	-	10,210
Allowance for expected credit losses against trade and other receivables	49,395	55,000
	842,041	731,505

Profit from operations	133,154	4,701
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Finance charges	(41,801)	(49,012)
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Profit / (loss) for the year before taxation	91,353	(44,311)
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Taxation	(15,890)	6,123
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Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the year	75,463	(38,188)
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Basic earnings / (loss) per share	0.005	(0.002)
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REINFORCEMENTS

First batch of US troops arrives in Poland amid fear Russia could invade Ukraine

MOSCOW: The "first batch" of US soldiers reinforcing NATO allies arrived in Poland on Saturday, Polish army major Przemyslaw Lipczynski told the AP news agency on Saturday.

He also said the bulk of a contingent of 1,700 US soldiers would come "soon."

A Polish military source said the plane was carrying US chain of command personnel.

TV footage showed temporary accommodation being prepared at the G2A Arena in the southern Polish town of Jasienka, while workers could be seen building a fence around the venue.

The deployment comes amid fears that Russia could invade Ukraine. The US already has some 4,500 troops in Poland.

US sending 3,000 soldiers

Washington said last week it would send about 3,000 additional troops to eastern Europe to defend NATO members against any "aggression."

This will include 2,000 troops being moved from the US to Germany and Poland. Another 1,000 US soldiers already in Germany are being sent to Romania.

The US and its allies have accused Russia of amassing some 100,000 troops on the borders of



Ukraine in preparation for an invasion of its neighbor.

The US and EU have vowed to impose devastating sanctions on Moscow if it attacks.

Russia has denied the plans, but says it could take unspecified military measures if its demands are not met. Among other demands, the Kremlin want NATO to pledge never to admit Ukraine as a member.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko complained that the US deployment would make it harder for a compromise between the two sides.

NATO defense ministers are expected to discuss further rein-

forcements at their next meeting on February 16-17.

German chancellor to travel to Washington

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is expected to discuss Ukraine during his first meeting with US President Joe Biden on Monday.

Berlin's refusal to ship arms to Ukraine, its often muddled messaging on potential sanctions and above all its refusal to scrap the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project to provide cheap Russian gas to Germany have all irritated Washington.

Scholz is also due to visit Moscow later this month. **bw**

FIRED

Peru's President Castillo sacks PM accused of domestic violence

LIMA: Peru's President Pedro Castillo sacked Prime Minister Hector Valer Pinto three days after appointing him, after revelations that he was accused of domestic violence.

"I have decided to recompose the cabinet," he said in a television address, where he did not mention Pinto by name.

This is Castillo's third cabinet reshuffle. He said he would reconstitute the cabinet, after leaders in Congress declined to hold a vote of confidence on the Cabinet named Tuesday. The opposition and some other cabinet members were opposed to Pinto's presence in the government.

Pinto came under pressure af-

ter newspapers said his wife and daughter had reported him twice for domestic violence in 2016. He has denied being an "abuser," and said he was never convicted.

A judge had issued a protective order for his wife.

He had said he would stay in his job unless Congress passed a vote of no-confidence. **bw**

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BEIJING 2022



Rank		G	S	B	T
1	Norway	2	0	0	2
2	Slovenia	1	0	1	2
3	China	1	0	0	1
3	Netherlands	1	0	0	1
3	Sweden	1	0	0	1
6	Italy	0	2	0	2
7	Canada	0	1	1	2
7	ROC	0	1	1	2
9	France	0	1	0	1
9	Germany	0	1	0	1
11	Austria	0	0	1	1
11	Hungary	0	0	1	1
11	Japan	0	0	1	1

timesofoman.com

2022 Winter Olympic Games opens in Beijing

Beijing becomes the first-ever city to stage both summer and winter editions of the global sporting gala

BEIJING: Beijing is basking in the glow of the Olympic flame for a second time after the 2022 Winter Olympics officially opened on Friday night in the Bird's Nest Stadium - an iconic 2008 Summer Games venue.

At 21:51 Beijing time, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared the Games open, in front of about 40,000 home audience and a host of state leaders and international dignitaries, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Having already successfully hosted the Summer Olympics 14 years ago, Beijing becomes the first-ever city to stage both summer and winter editions of the global sporting gala.



The torch was relayed inside the stadium between seven prominent Chinese athletes, each of the first five representing a decade of birth from the 1950s to the 1990s. Then, in what promised to be a revolutionary way of lighting the Olympic cauldron, Chinese female cross-country skier Dinigeer Yilamujiang and male Nordic combined athlete Zhao Jiawen, both born after 2000, jointly placed the torch in the middle of a giant snowflake-shaped cauldron, which ascended to the top of the stadium.

Instead of a blazing fire burning in the cauldron, this time, the Olympic flame was dancing lightly in the air at the heart of the cauldron.

The innovation of the lighting ceremony represents China's commitment to an eco-friendly and low carbon footprint, in line with the principle of hosting a "green, inclusive, open and clean" Games put forward by President Xi, who has guided the preparatory work since China won the bid for the Games in 2015.

"Today, we witness here how Beijing becomes the first city ever to host both the summer and winter editions of the Olympic Games, and how China writes a new chapter in the history of the Olympic Movement," said Cai Qi, president of the Beijing 2022 Organizing Committee (BOCOG), in his address at the opening ceremony.

China's path to Olympic glory wasn't without challenges.

In early 2020, the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the Games preparations. Key meetings between the BOCOG and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials in Switzerland were forced to be held virtually.

What's more, the pandemic resulted in the postponement or cancellation of a number of test events. There were even concerns that the 2022 Games could be postponed, as the 2020 Tokyo Olympics was.

Nevertheless, the organizers have managed to get everything ready for the Winter Games. A range of strict COVID-19 countermeasures have been put in place to ensure the safety of the Games participants and the local population. IOC president Thomas Bach hailed the opening of the Games and thanked the Chinese organizers.

"Unfortunately, the global pandemic is still a reality for all of us. Therefore, our gratitude is even deeper for the Beijing 2022 Organizing Committee, the public authorities and all the Chinese people. Thank you for making these Olympic Winter Games happen and making them happen in a safe way for everyone," said Bach. **Xinhua**

WINTER OLYMPICS

Xi and his wife host banquet for guests attending Winter Olympics opening ceremony



BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan hosted a banquet at the Great Hall of the People on Saturday noon to welcome distinguished guests from around the world who attended the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

Giving a toast at the beginning of the banquet, Xi, on behalf of the Chinese government and people, extended a warm welcome to all the distinguished guests traveling to China and attending the Games, and sincerely thanked all governments, peoples and international organizations that care about and support the Beijing Olympic Winter Games.

In his speech, Xi noted that China, committed to organizing a green, inclusive, open and clean Games, has made every effort to counter the impact of COVID-19, earnestly fulfilled its solemn pledge to the international community, and ensured the smooth opening of the Beijing Olympic Winter Games as scheduled.

He said that China has achieved the goal of engaging 300 million Chinese in sport on snow and ice, and made new contribution to the cause of Olympism worldwide.

The Olympic Movement has carried humanity's aspirations for peace, solidarity and progress since ancient times, Xi said.

"We shall keep in mind the original aspiration of the Olympic Movement and jointly uphold world peace," Xi said, calling for upholding mutual respect and equality and working together for a world of durable peace.

"We shall promote the spirit of the Olympic Movement and meet the common challenges facing the international community through solidarity," he said, highlighting the need to practice true multilateralism and work together to build an international family of harmony and cooperation.

He also called for staying true to humanity's common values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom, promoting exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations, and working together to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Noting that tiger is a symbol of strength, courage and fearlessness, Xi wished all Olympic athletes excellent performance with the strength of the tiger.

"I am confident that with the

joint efforts of us all, Beijing 2022 will surely go down in history as a streamlined, safe and splendid Olympic Games," Xi said.

President of the International Olympic Committee Thomas Bach and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also made speeches at the banquet, saying that they will never forget the extraordinary and splendid opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games. They said that China has fulfilled the goal to engage 300 million people in winter sports ahead of schedule, which will permanently change the pattern of world ice and snow sports and benefit both China and the world.

Uniting the world through peaceful and healthy competition is the mission of the Olympic Movement, which should also become the goal of all countries, they said.

They hoped that the international community should take the Beijing Winter Olympics as an opportunity to rise above differences and work together for a shared and better future.

Senior Chinese leaders including Wang Huning and Han Zheng also attended the banquet. **Xinhua**

THRILLING RUN-CHASE

UAE beat Oman by 4 wickets

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The United Arab Emirates got off to a winning start in the three match ODI series after beating Oman by 4 wickets in a nail-biting encounter.

Having won the toss, the UAE decided to bowl first at the Oman Cricket Academy ground, and it was a decision that the hosts were keen to prove wrong.

Opener Jatinder Singh anchored the innings with a brilliant 106, smashing 14 boundaries and 4 sixes. Ayaan Khan provided able support from the other end, making 77 runs of his own.

It was this partnership that saw Oman reach a commanding 167/1 before the UAE were able to claw their way back into the game with some impressive bowling and tight fielding.

But just when it looked like they had done enough to keep the target below 270, Naseem Khushi stepped up to play a gem of an innings. His 42 off 21 deliveries propelled Oman to a mammoth 307 at the end of 50 overs.

The run-chase got off to the worst possible start for the UAE, as opener Muhammed Waseem, who had inflicted two crucial run-outs to keep his side in the game earlier, was dismissed for a duck in the very first over.

However, the two batsmen that took the crease subsequently



stayed there until the 34th over, putting on a batting clinic that tilted the scales in the visitors' favour.

Chirag Suri matched Jatinder's efforts from the first innings and then raised it, making 115 off 125 balls. He picked up a leg injury in the middle of that innings too, but kept at it, in what was a show of remarkable class, maturity and resilience. Vrittya Aravind kept the other end tied down with a 93 ball 89, and this 180-run stand laid the foundation for UAE's historic victory.

Both batsmen were dismissed trying to clear the boundary and just as the hosts started to pile on the scoreboard pressure, Basil Hameed came in and took control. His 33 ball 61, studded with 6 boundaries and 2 timely sixes powered UAE past Oman's final bout of resistance.

This was a match of two eerily similar innings. A huge partner-

ship in the middle overs before an innings that any pinch-hitter would be proud of. But ultimately, the 115, 89 and 61 made by Chirag, Aravind and Hameed bested the 106, 77 and 42 made by Jatinder, Ayaan and Khushi. The hosts were a scintillating watch with the bat, but their efforts on the field will no doubt give Head Coach Duleep Mendis a lot to work on before the next game.

Barring Kaleemullah who was excellent, their bowling attack lacked cutting-edge too, with a propensity to bowl full-tosses in crunch moments to alleviate any pressure built up on the batsmen proving costly.

The UAE's bowlers leaked runs too, but the visitors will be far happier with the way the game went after that. Having put on a run chase for the ages, they will enter the game on Sunday with a chance to put the series to bed.

CRICKET

Big victories for Sarco, Zawawi

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sarco rode on Rakesh Patel's outstanding 6 for 27 to rout Ernst and Young (E&Y) by 109 runs in a 50-over A Division League game at Oman Cricket turf 2 in Amerat on Friday.

Sarco posted a robust 271 on the board with solid contributions from Sathisha Achary (56), Dilepa Srilal (52) and Prabathindika (32). Shrey Wilson claimed 3 for 53 whereas Rana Zeeshan and Masud Pervaz bagged two wickets each.

Nobody stayed long enough to

help E&Y make a match of it except opener Omar Sarfraz who struck a 64-ball 70 in his side's total of 162 all out in 35.2 overs. Rakesh was literally unplayable in his 8.2-over spell, taking 6 wickets for 27 runs. Sandip Patel took 2 for 51.

Zawawi win

Kalairasan Natarajan's superb 4 for 15 powered Zawawi Powertech to an impressive 54-run victory against Sunlight in an A Division T20 league match at OC Turf 2 on Friday.

Zawawi's 158 for 8 included

main scores from Nishad K (35) and Sajeev Thamarath (27). Rajesh Devashya was the pick of Sunlight bowlers, taking 3 for 15.

Kalairasan bowled brilliantly to help Zawawi Dismiss Sunlight for 104 in 17 overs, getting excellent support from pacer Prabhakaran Kannan who claimed 3 for 18. Ishtiaq Muhammed topscored with 26.

Azhar stars in big PDO win

Azhar Habib's fluent 62 off 45 helped PDO RC to 113-run win over OCT Muscat.

Ahmad Al Harthy launches Asian Le Mans Series bid at Expo 2020

Al Harthy will head into the competitive ALMS determined to challenge for honours alongside British team-mates

Times News Service

DUBAI: Expo 2020 in Dubai provided the glittering venue this week for the official launch of Oman Racing's Asian Le Mans Series programme – with driver Ahmad Al Harthy unveiling the team's Aston Martin Vantage GT3 car to the world at the Oman Pavilion.

Joined by dignitaries from his key sponsors Omantel, OQ and MHD-ITICS, Oman's most successful international racing driver had the honour of revealing Oman Racing's new motorsport livery as well as detailing his upcoming involvement in this month's Middle East-based ALMS.

Also in attendance at the prestigious event on Wednesday evening were Sheikh Salim Al Kathaeri, Chairman of the Sultanate of Oman Commercial Office in Dubai, and Brigadier Jamal Al Tai, Deputy Chairman of Oman Automobile Association.

Proudly flying the flag for Oman, as he has been so successfully doing since beginning his car racing career well over 15 years ago, multiple motor racing champion Al Harthy will head into the hugely competitive ALMS determined to challenge for honours alongside British team-mates Sam De Haan and Aston Martin factory driver Charlie Eastwood.

The trio will share the No.69 Oman Racing Aston Martin Vantage GT3 which will once again be prepared and engineered by Tom Ferrier's TF Sport squad, the UK-based team which has partnered so fruitfully with Oman Racing since 2017.

At Expo 2020, specially invited



EXPO 2020: World Expo is one of the longest standing and biggest global events with Expo 2020 having opened in Dubai back in October and reaching its conclusion at the end of March.

guests and partners were able to tour the Oman Pavilion before watching a video package of highlights centred around Al Harthy's superb racing career and his many achievements – not least in promoting Oman on a world stage. Following comments from key partners and a wider introduction and welcome from Al Harthy himself, where he outlined his Asian Le Mans Series plans, the guests headed outside the Pavilion to watch the official unveiling of the race car.

Since moving to the Middle East last year due to the ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions in the Far East, the ALMS has gone from strength to strength and the already prestigious endurance rac-

ing championship is expecting to feature a combined grid of at least 34 cars across all classes.

Beginning at Dubai Autodrome with round one taking place on Saturday, 12th February, and round two following on Sunday, 13th February, the championship will then move to Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi for round three on Saturday, 19th February, and round four on Sunday, 20th February.

World Expo is, of course, one of the longest standing and biggest global events with Expo 2020 having opened in Dubai back in October and reaching its conclusion at the end of March. The event was postponed from its intended 2020 launch due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ahmad Al Harthys said: "What an amazing honour it has been to launch Oman Racing's Asian Le Mans Series programme at Expo 2020, especially at the Oman Pavilion. I must say the biggest thank you to Oman's General Commissioner and the Head of Oman Pavilion,

Mohsin Al Balushi, and also to my incredible partners Omantel, OQ and MHD-ITICS who have made the coming season possible.

"We are all so proud to be representing Oman in the ALMS, racing in Dubai and Abu Dhabi over the next few weeks, and on behalf of the whole team I can say we are as determined as ever to deliver the very best performances possible. It's an extremely important and

high-profile championship in GT endurance racing, providing the perfect opportunity to fly the flag for Oman."

Mohsin Al Balushi – Oman's General Commissioner at Expo 2020, said, "Ahmad is a wonderful ambassador for Oman and it has been our absolute pleasure to facilitate the launch of his and Oman Racing's Asian Le Mans Series programme here at Expo 2020. His success on the international stage, over many years, is something of great pride to the Omani people. On behalf of all involved with the Oman Pavilion we are delighted to have supported the launch.

"For more than 170 years, World Expos have offered a platform to showcase the innovations which

help to shape and develop the world in which we live. Being part of Expo 2020 is hugely important for Oman as we continually develop our trade, business, innovation and tourism and share our culture and traditions with the world."

Saba Said Al Busaidi – Senior Manager Corporate Affairs at Omantel, said: "Omantel is again extremely pleased to be a key partner of Oman Racing for the coming year, continuing the incredibly positive and very successful relationship we have enjoyed with Ahmad throughout his sporting career. We are proud to have been part of the official launch at Expo 2020 at the Oman Pavilion, and looking forward to another year of success on and off the race track."

Al Mutasim Al Sariri – Head of External Affairs Management and CSI at OQ, said: "Driven by OQ's stern commitment to support Omani talents, we are delighted to support Ahmad and Oman Racing on their mission to represent Oman in the international racing arena – especially for the GT super cars. Committed to excellence and thinking big, OQ is proud to be an international success story within the integrated energy sector just as Oman Racing continues to be in motorsport."

Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish – Chairperson of Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions (ITICS) at Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC, added: "Ahmad Al Harthy has always been an exemplary Omani talent on the motor racing circuit and one we are proud to associate ourselves with and stand behind.

He has continued to raise the Oman flag proudly wherever he races around the globe. Moreover, owing to the team's prominence, having our brand adorn his new car will help showcase our brand values and promote MHD-ITICS on an international scale."

While the ALMS season will mark the official beginning of Al Harthy's motor racing year, he did actually make his first competitive outing of 2022 during the Hankook 24H Dubai a couple of weeks ago when drafted in to race an Aston Martin Vantage GT3 for Duel Racing with TF Sport.

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CRICKET AUSTRALIA

After Langer's resignation, CA appoints McDonald as interim head coach



MELBOURNE : Cricket Australia on Saturday confirmed that Andrew McDonald has been appointed as the interim head coach of the senior men's team.

This came after Justin Langer decided to resign as the coach. "Justin was offered a short-term extension to his current contract, which sadly he has opted not to accept," stated an official Cricket Australia release.

The contract extension offered to Justin was the result of a thorough review process that evaluated many factors including future requirements of the team and the upcoming extensive schedule of fixtures.

The extension was approved by the CA Board and was put to Justin last night. It included the opportunity to defend the T20 World Cup title in Australia at the end of this year.

Justin informed CA this morning he was not accepting the offer and would resign with immediate effect. **ANI**

5G SUPPORTED IPHONE

American tech giant Apple might be planning to reveal a new low-cost iPhone SE with 5G, as well as a refreshed iPad Air that adds a new CPU and 5G for cellular-equipped models.

MARKET

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PROMOTING TOURISM

Bank Nizwa recently hosted a creative two-day event titled 'What is happening in Nizwa'. The event was held in brought together 12 credible social media influencers in Nizwa and also welcomed a number of individuals from the local community as guests.

Duqm Port to attract investments due to its strategic location

Duqm Port is an important economic centre in the SEZD investments, due to its geographical location that links international shipping lines between East Asian and African markets

MUSCAT: A number of officials and businessmen have stressed the economic importance of Duqm Port to attract major investments to the Special Economic Zone, as it is located strategically between the east and west markets.

Dr Salem bin Salim Al Junaibi, First Vice President of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the Chamber's Board of Directors, Al Wusta Governorate Branch, said that Duqm Port is an important economic centre in the SEZD investments, due to its geographical location that links international shipping lines between East Asian and African markets. And under what it contains various berths, including government,

commercial and oil, which qualifies it to receive the largest container ships, goods, oil tankers and petrochemicals, and makes it a strategic transit point for goods between the markets of East and West.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, he added that the port will be an important point to attract major international investments, especially in the logistics sector, and the port is a catalyst for the establishment of multiple industries and logistic services in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

Al Junaibi said: "In the coming phase, Duqm Port will represent an integrated centre for logistics services in the Sultanate of Oman, a major station for global invest-



MAJOR INVESTMENTS: The port will be an important point to attract major international investments, especially in the logistics sector, and the port may become a catalyst for the establishment of multiple industries and logistic services in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. - **ONA**

ments in the logistics sector and a strategic crossing for international shipping lines, and this is what achieves one of the pillars of the 'Oman 2040' vision."

And he indicated that the position of Oman on the world map qualifies it to be a leader in investments in all services and activities

related to ports and logistics, as it has a large coastal strip overlooking vital international crossings and oceans linking continents, and is characterised by its international reputation as a safe area for international investments and this should be exploited economically and investment."

Al Junaibi stressed that the Duqm Economic Zone has witnessed during the past 10 years major investments, the most important of which are Duqm Airport, a dry dock for ship maintenance, a commercial port, an oil and petrochemical refinery, a cement factory, a bus factory and

several international investments, as well as a group of hotels and residential complexes. And a network of integrated roads and services, and this readiness qualifies it to be a major station for trade between East and West and an integrated industrial complex on international shipping lines. - **ONA**

OER MANUFACTURING SUMMIT AND AWARDS

Summit to focus on opportunities for manufacturing sector in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The second edition of OER's Manufacturing Summit and Awards, a flagship event by the Sultanate's premium business magazine, will be held at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel on May 18.

OER's Manufacturing Summit 2022 will do a deep dive into the opportunities for the manufacturing sector in Oman, challenges impeding its growth and unlocking the potential of the sector. The topic of the Summit is 'Smart Manufacturing: Enhancing competitiveness, innovation and transformation.'

The summit will focus on consumer-driven manufacturing,

connected services, Smart factories, Industry 4.0 and the digital economy, sustainability, hyper-automation, real-time performance monitoring, lead time compression (order-to-cash), speed up a time to market, supply chain cost and reliability (inventory turns and cash conversion cycles), eliminating profit leaks across the value chain, leveraging data and analytics for superior customer insights, educating and up-skilling in Quality and Lean Manufacturing Practices and improving quality levels to achieve world-class performance.

The summit will bring in government officials, C-suite executives, consultants and analysts to discuss a cross-section of issues impacting the manufacturing sec-

tor in Oman, possible solutions and the way ahead.

Madayn, MIZAH, Credit Oman and Oman Manufacturers Association (OMFA) are the endorsement partners of the Summit, which is being organised by UMS Events. Times of Oman and Al Shabiba are the media partners, Alam Al Iktisaad Wal Amal magazine, the Arabic media partner and oerlive.com, the online media partner. SSA International is the Knowledge Partner.

According to the National Spatial Strategy as many as 16 industrial cities and related manufacturing zones are expected to form part of Oman's expanding industrial base by the year 2040 — up from 11 presently — with the non-

oil economy playing an increasingly important role in powering economic growth. Industrial exports are also expected to reach \$27.7 billion (OMR10.7 billion) by the year 2040. The manufacturing sector contributed 10.8 per cent of Oman's GDP in 2020 and this is expected to rise significantly by 2040. However, the sector is facing stiff challenges in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, shrinking exports, supply chain disruption, lack of skilled manpower, outdated technological practices etc.

Manufacturing sector Excellence Awards 2022 in diverse categories will also be presented during the summit. The awards will recognise exceptional organisations and individuals in the sector.

OIL PRICE

Oil hits seven-year high

NEW YORK: Oil prices surged to seven-year high on Friday, extending their rally into a seventh week on ongoing worries about supply disruptions fuelled by frigid US weather and ongoing political turmoil among major world producers, Reuters reported.

Brent crude rose \$2.16, or 2.4 per cent, to settle at \$93.27 a barrel having earlier touched its highest since October 2014 at \$93.70.

US West Texas Intermediate crude ended \$2.04, or 2.3 per cent, higher at \$92.31 a barrel after trading as high as \$93.17, its highest since September 2014.

Brent ended the week 3.6 per cent higher, while WTI posted a 6.3 per cent rise in their longest rally since October.

The market's surge accelerated in the last two days as buyers piled into crude contracts due to

expectations that world suppliers will continue to struggle to meet demand.

US jobs figures were surprisingly strong in January, despite the presence of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

Crude prices, which have already rallied about 20 per cent so far this year, are likely to surpass \$100 per barrel due to strong global demand, market strategists said this week.

Reflecting that bullish view, money managers raised their net long US crude futures and options positions in the week to February 1 by 6,616 contracts to 304,013, the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission said.

Some, however, see risks to the rally. Citi Research said it expects the oil market to flip into surplus as soon as the next quarter, putting the brakes on the rally. - **BNA**

ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY

Microsoft launches new Surface devices to empower hybrid workforce in Oman

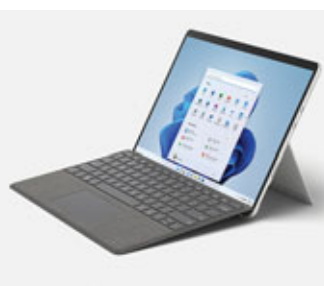
Times News Service

MUSCAT: Microsoft announced the general availability of Microsoft Surface Laptop Studio and Surface Pro 8 for organisations across industries in Oman.

Built to be modern and essential devices for today's hybrid workforce, the new Surface products protect productivity, promote innovation, and prioritise accessibility, while ensuring the safety and security of all users.

"All sectors have gone through exceptional circumstances and major changes over the past two years. To empower the workforce to further leverage technology to overcome challenges, Microsoft has designed new "Surface" solutions that enable the workforce to enhance their experiences and drive productivity," says Finn Morris, Surface Business Group Director at Microsoft Middle East and Africa. "We believe these "Surface" devices will be key enablers of the Sultanate of Oman's ongoing digital transformation. Surface devices integrate seamlessly with Windows 11, ensuring that collaboration between employees is enhanced with a high level of security," Morris adds.

Designed in concert with Windows 11, the new devices reflect Microsoft's commitment towards designing technology that fosters productivity and creativity, while also bringing inclusion and ac-



cessibility to the fore. Each new version of Windows unlocks the next generation of hardware innovation. And for the last decade, Surface has been at the forefront — challenging convention, pioneering new experiences and creating entirely new categories of devices. "Windows 11 is built on the familiar Windows foundation but reimagined to boost employee productivity and enhance collaboration on the most secure version of Windows yet," added McDonald.

In addition to ensuring productivity and innovation in the modern workplace, Microsoft is launching the Microsoft Ocean Plastic Mouse as a step forward in Microsoft's larger sustainability journey. In keeping with the organisation's goal to have 100 per cent recyclable devices and packages by 2030, the new mouse is made with 20 per cent recycled ocean plastic and its packaging is 100 per cent recyclable.

The Surface Laptop Studio will

transform the way users work with the most powerful and flexible laptop yet. It's built for performance with the highest graphics horsepower of any Surface Laptop. Seamlessly multitask and handle heavy workflows with quad-core powered 11th Gen Intel® Core™ H Series processors, blazing enterprise-grade NVIDIA® RTX™ A2000 laptop GPUs, and Thunderbolt™ 4 ports.

No matter the task, the Surface Laptop Studio provides unparalleled flexibility as it transitions from a best-in-class laptop to a natural angle for immersive Microsoft Teams calls and presentations, to a full-performance canvas. Unleash creativity and enjoy the feeling of putting pen to paper with the vibrant and sharp 14.4" touchscreen and Surface Slim Pen 2.

The all-new Surface Pro 8 is a powerful, ultra-light and slim device packed with processors to handle intensive workloads. Double-digit performance increases and 11th Gen Intel® Core™ processors mean Surface Pro 8 will handle it all whether handwriting notes on the screen, multitasking while on a video call, or crushing a spreadsheet — all in an ultra-versatile package. Enjoy the flexibility of writing in laptop mode, presenting multiple screens in desktop mode, or signing a contract on-screen with Slim Pen 2 in tablet mode.

جمعية المصارف العمانية
Oman Banks Association

Annual General Meeting Invitation for the Year 2022

Oman Banks Association

Oman Banks Association's Board of Directors would like to invite all its members to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held at **15:30**, on Monday, **29th March 2022** via Microsoft Teams and the voting shall be at the banks executive office.

Meeting Agenda:

- Present period ended 31 December 2021 Audited Financial Statements.
- Present 2022 Budget.
- Present Board of Directors Report including the past year activities and the upcoming year work plan.
- Appointment of external auditors and determining their fees.
- Voting to fill new Board of Directors positions.

Note that the last day for membership **nominations for the Board of Directors** will be on March 9, 2022 at 14:00 and applications received after this will not be considered.

All the above documents will be available to all members at the Oman Banks Association upon request.

For further information please contact
pm@omanbanksassociation.com

Telephone: 24951666
P.O. Box 2287, Postal Code 133, Al Khuwair, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

MARKET

Bank Nizwa continues to support tourism industry in Sultanate

‘What is happening in Nizwa’ event has brought together 12 credible social media influencers and also welcomed a number of individuals from the local community as guests



KEY TOURIST SITE: With the help of Bank Nizwa's extensive social media platforms, the videos will certainly contribute to inculcating interest in the minds of people and cement Nizwa's position as a key tourist site. - Supplied picture

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's leading Islamic bank, Bank Nizwa, has been at the forefront of conceptualising innovative campaigns to support the economic diversification goals of the Sultanate.

With the tourism sector being one of the key focus areas under Oman Vision 2040, the bank has

remained steadfast in its commitment to contribute to the growth of the sector and has undertaken several initiatives in partnership with government entities.

In line with the same, Bank Nizwa recently hosted a creative two-day event titled 'What is happening in Nizwa'. The event was held in brought together 12 cred-

ible social media influencers in Nizwa and also welcomed a number of individuals from the local community as guests.

The social media influencers, who were selected based on the values they exhibit and their skills in the field of videography, were divided into four groups to allow them to compete on conceptualis-

ing unique video ideas to promote Nizwa. The teams were then given a map highlighting the main attractions in Nizwa that included popular historical and tourist sites like Nizwa Fort, Nizwa Souq, amongst many others. Apart from social media influencers, each team also had a tour guide to further assist the team members.

Commenting on the event, Khaled Al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa said, "Bank Nizwa had organised a similar event in 2019 which was well-received by the community and had garnered immense praise. Hence, we decided to organise another event that would once again give us an opportunity to engage with the community in Nizwa. 'What is happening in Nizwa' is a one-of-a-kind event that portrays the abundant beauty of Nizwa through the eyes of creative videographers and social media influencers who also mirror the same vision, values and ethics that the bank takes great pride in upholding.

"This will not only give a boost to the tourism sector but will also support national talents by giving them a platform to showcase their expertise. At Bank Nizwa, we will continue to align ourselves with the national goals through meaningful endeavours that are creative, engaging and add value to the community."

With an allotted time of 24 hours to explore, document and create videos of the selected destinations, the campaign ended with a number of stunning videos that were uploaded on Bank Nizwa's account and made available for public vot-

ing. By adopting this unique approach, the bank ensured maximum reach and engagement with not just the local community but with its extensive list of followers from all over the country.

"We also commend the work done by the social media influencers who have truly demonstrated their creativity in producing striking videos. With the help of Bank Nizwa's extensive social media platforms, these videos will certainly contribute to inculcating interest in the minds of people and cement Nizwa's position as a key tourist site. The Wilayat of Nizwa is the city where the bank derives its name from and the event also played tribute to the link between the bank and this flourishing city," added Al Kayed.

A progressive bank that keeps pace with the changing market scenarios and continuously aligns itself to the economic goals of diversification, promotion of key industries in the Sultanate and empowerment of the local workforce, Bank Nizwa has established itself as a key contributor to the country's developmental journey. It has not only achieved this through strategic financing of national projects, but also through engaging community initiatives.

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TECH GIANT

Apple likely to unveil first 5G supported iPhone SE in March

WASHINGTON: American tech giant Apple might be planning to reveal a new low-cost iPhone SE with 5G, as well as a refreshed iPad Air that adds a new CPU and 5G for cellular-equipped models.

According to The Verge, a reliable source for Apple rumours has provided the news, and also

divulged that the company is targeting March 8 for a spring event to show off these gadgets. Rumours of an update for the iPhone SE have been around since before the iPhone 13 launched, and now reports suggest that people should expect to see a faster chip and improved cameras inside a

shell that's similar to the existing model that has a 4.7-inch screen.

The current iPhone SE was introduced in 2020, and its USD 399 price is the same now as it was on launch day, so an A15 CPU and 5G could make it a much better value. There's no word on the fate of Touch ID. -ANI

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STATE BANK OF INDIA

SBI net profit surges 62% in third quarter

MUMBAI: State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, on Saturday said its net profit surged 62.27 per cent to Rs 8,432 crore in the third quarter of the current financial year when compared with the corresponding period of the previous year.

The government-run lender's profit in the third quarter of 2021-22 is the highest ever quarterly profit. The bank's operating profit increased by 6.86 per cent year-on-year to Rs 18,522 crore in the third quarter of 2021-22 from Rs 17,333 crore recorded in the third quarter of the previous year.

SBI's net interest income for the third quarter of the current financial year rose by 6.48 per cent year-on-year.

Gross NPA ratio during the third quarter of the current financial year stood at 4.50 per cent, which is down by 94 bps year-on-year while net NPA ratio at 1.34 per cent is down by 47 bps year-on-year, taking into consideration proforma NPAs as on December 20, 2021, the SBI said in a statement.

On an unadjusted basis, Gross NPA ratio is down by 27 bps YoY while Net NPA ratio is up by 11 bps YoY, it said. The bank's total deposits grew at 8.83 per cent YoY. -ANI

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TIPS ON HOW TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE ONLINE



Safer Internet Day to be held this year on February 8, encourages the creation of a better internet that empowers everyone to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively. In honour of their own mission to create a safer internet for everyone, here are six tips you and your family can follow to stay safe online.

1. Get creative with passwords

Many people use weak or recycled passwords on multiple accounts. While it's easier to remember a few passwords for many accounts, especially if they're shared family accounts, you are leaving your family open to identity theft and other cyberattacks.

Explain to your children the importance of keeping passwords a secret for just you and them. For older students, discuss how using the same password for all accounts and apps makes it easier for bad actors to access personal information. Update your passwords to consist of a random combination of letters, numbers and symbols.

To make things easier on your family members, create, store and remember account login information. Also, set up two-factor authentication for your accounts and, when possible, opt to use an authentication app over text verification codes.

2. Tighten up your social media privacy

Most people provide personal information like their name, birthday, job and hometown on social media without a second thought. If a bad actor wants to collect information about you, social media will be their first stop.

Posting your child's full name and birthday on your social media can be just as dangerous as posting your own.

To help prevent identity theft, sit down and discuss what information you and your family share and who might be in the audience each time you post on social media. Also, review the privacy settings for some of your most visited websites and social media platforms.

3. Don't ignore updates

Don't ignore system and browser updates as they provide critical updates that protect against bad actors and fix any critical issues in software. Explain to your children and older family members that these notifications are there to help keep us safe online. When possible, enroll in automatic updates and use antivirus software, antispyware and a firewall on your computer.

4. Avoid suspicious websites

When shopping online, it's crucial to know what makes a website safe to explore. Check to

see if "https" appears in the URL. The "S" indicates the website is secure and that the website is safeguarding the sensitive data that passes from you to the retailer.

While looking at the address, verify that the brand is not in a subdomain. Also, review the site for misspellings, grammar mistakes and low-quality images. Make sure to look for an email or phone number on the contact page and verify the validity.

5. Stay alert for phishing scams

Phishing attacks are emails, phone calls and texts that appear to come from a reputable source but attempt to instill fear and urgency in the recipient. Phishing scams offer too-good-to-be-true deals, urgent notification to reset an account login or contain an attachment or hyperlinks. The goal may be to install malware, steal credit card data or access login information.

To protect your family against phishing, teach your loved ones to:

- Review all emails closely.
- Never share credit card details or sensitive personal information like your Social Security number via email or phone.
- Don't open any attachments or click embedded links.
- Don't download software from unknown email addresses. - **BPT**

Sayyid Asa’ad presides over official opening function of Duqm Port



DUQM: At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, patronised over the official opening ceremony of the Port of Duqm.

The ceremony was attended by Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians and his spouse Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians.

Eng. Ahmed Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) stressed the importance of this remarkable milestone, reflecting the great importance of this project in contributing to the Omani economy, as a major driver for the projects in progress and others under development within Oman Vision 2040 and the renewed renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

During his speech at the opening ceremony, Al Dheeb pointed out that through OPAZ management of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, the Authority seeks to achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 that include diversifying sources of income and achieving balanced development, attracting and localizing foreign and local investments, generating job opportunities, and achieving the expected goals of the Zone by providing the infrastructure to meet the requirements of employing these investments. He added that such infrastructure include Duqm Airport, modern roads

network, telecommunications, a multi-purpose fishing port, and the Port of Duqm, in addition to providing advantages and incentives that contribute to facilitating investors' works.

He explained that this strategic Port will represent an important tributary to the economic sector, as well as a qualitative shift in improving the competitiveness of the Sultanate of Oman and a vital addition to the integration with other ports of the country.

He further added: "Given the unique geographical location of the Port, which is planned to be a logistical hub serving international shipping lines between Asia and Europe, the Port has been equipped with high specifications. It consists of 3 main berths, namely the commercial berth, the government berth, and the liquid materials berth. The total length of the breakwaters is about 8.7 km and the Port's basin depth is 18 meters, while the entry canal is 19 meters, which qualifies it to receive and handle the world's largest container ships and very large crude carriers (VLCC).

The Port provides multiple services for ships of all sizes, and through its integration with the dry dock, ship maintenance service is provided, in addition to the other services that the ships need.

Al Dheeb pointed out that one of the most important components of this Port is the containers cranes and bridge cranes. The completion rate of the Cranes Supply and Installation Project reached 60 percent, which will be placed in the commercial berth in the Port of Duqm to deal with the world's largest contain-

er ships, he affirmed.

The installation of these cranes in the Port will start in March 2022, with an expected completion to be in Q1 of 2023, he further added.

OPAZ Deputy Chairman said that the project includes the supply of 4 modern automatic cranes to transport containers from Ships to Shore (STS) and back with a capacity of 65 tons, pointing out that the project also includes the purchase of 12 RTG cranes with a capacity of 41 tons.

On her turn, Annick De Ridder, Chairperson of the board of directors of Antwerp Port Authority said that this celebration reflects a collaboration that started 12 years ago.

She said, "In 2010, the Antwerp Port Authority established the daughter company 'Port of Antwerp International', or as we call it PAI, to develop and roll out the international strategy of the Port of Antwerp. The very first international project of PAI was the shareholding participation in the Port of Duqm Company together with our Belgian partner which is nowadays 'DEME Concessions'.

While 'Port of Antwerp International' has strong ambitions for further internationalisation, the Port of Duqm is and will always remain an important part of our growing international network".

She affirmed that Port of Duqm has all the potential to become a success story, which the Port of Antwerp will continue to support.

She spoke during her speech about the Green hydrogen and the Hyport Duqm project, which is a large-scale green hydrogen project between OQ and

DEME Concessions.

Meanwhile, Eng. Abdulrahman Salim Al Hatmi, CEO of Asyad Group said that the Port of Duqm is one of most significant infrastructure developments in the logistics sector, which translates Oman's vision towards economic diversification and the acceleration of the logistics sector's advancement, as underpinned by the National Logistics Strategy- cementing the Sultanate of Oman's position as a competitive logistics hub.

He said that the inauguration represents a pivotal step in Asyad Group's continued efforts to achieve its strategy and plans of building an integrated logistics ecosystem under Asyad's umbrella, fortifying the complementary amongst Omani ports; a fundamental pillar of the supply chain and the core of the trade flows, connecting Oman to the world.

He further added, "Through the joint efforts, the sustained support of various government authorities and the fruitful strategic partnership between Asyad Group and the Consortium Antwerp Port; the Port of Duqm is proceeding at a deliberate pace towards becoming a driving force for the national economy and a commercial gateway connecting international shipping routes from east to west. Over the past three years, the Port of Duqm attracted 2242 vessels and saw an increase in general cargo handling traffic, heading towards profitability at early stages.

It is the readiness of the Port of Duqm which will help attract foreign investors and lay the foundation of a promising space that provides the business commu-

nity with opportunities and give them access to global markets, Al Hatmi said.

Al Hatmi pointed out that the Port also contributes to empowering the fisheries sector by providing logistic solutions to export fish to international markets at high standards. Moreover, it will be a major catalyst in enabling Oman to play a vital role in the international stage in the future clean energy projects, such as the green hydrogen project, he elaborated.

"Asyad Group ramped up its efforts to develop Port of Duqm's capabilities and increase its competitiveness by developing ASYAD Drydock services up to international standards, as an integral part of the port. Thanks to Asyad's container Line service as well which was the first container shipping line calling Port of Duqm, and connecting it with other ports in Oman," he further noted.

Speaking about the the strategic partnership with Consortium Antwerp Port, Al Hatmi affirmed that this partnership captures the close ties between Oman and Belgium that we look forward to consolidating, while bringing the Port of Duqm to the forefront of the regional maritime landscape. "We appreciate our Belgian partner's continuous support to our national logistics capabilities by enabling Asyad's national arm for ports and terminals management to operate Duqm's general cargo terminal since 2021, and by providing maritime services through our partnership with CTO," he added.

For his part, Luc Vandenbulcke, CEO of DEME said, "We are very proud to be partners with ASYAD

and Port of Antwerp on the development of Port of Duqm Company. Especially, as I see the partners working to a common goal, as one team".

He affirmed that the inauguration of the port is a fruit of the works done by partners with intensive and open-minded cooperation.

He explained that these interactions make Oman, and Duqm in particular, a very good place to do business for foreign investors, in partnership, with a strong Omani business network. He pointed out that the Port of Duqm Company has almost doubled its business, and is showing positive results.

He further added, "The liquid bulk terminal is ready to start the export of liquids, from the state-of-the-art refinery, and in medium term green ammonia, from HY-PORT Duqm. The process to attract a strong container terminal operator to the port is well on its way, following a worldwide approach, leveraging on the network of Port of Duqm Company's shareholders".

After that, HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, the chief guest of the opening ceremony unveiled the commemorative plaque, marking the official opening of the Port of Duqm, in the presence of the King and the Queen of the Belgians. The opening ceremony of the Port of Duqm was attended by ministers, undersecretaries, sheikhs and dignitaries of the Governorate of Al Wusta, as well as members of the official delegation accompanying the King of the Belgians and his spouse the Queen of the Belgians.



King and Queen of the Belgians view Duqm Port, Special Economic Zone



DUQM: Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians and his spouse Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine d'Udekem d'Acoz, Queen of the Belgians went on a helicopter tour of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and the location allocated to develop large-scale green hydrogen production.

The Monarchs also viewed presentations on the Port of Duqm and the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, delivered by Eng. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidi, Chairman of the Public Authority for Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

Al Sunaidi highlighted the Port of Duqm and the most important projects connected with the port. He also reviewed the future projects to be executed in Duqm in the areas of mining, industry and livestock, in addition to the incentives offered for investors.

In her turn, Sophie Willems, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs said that Oman and Belgium are friends and partners, affirming that the two countries share a common understanding of the present challenges

“Eng. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidi Sunaidi highlighted the Port of Duqm and the most important projects connected with the port. He also reviewed the future projects to be executed in Duqm in the areas of mining, industry and livestock, and the incentives offered for investors

and believe on the importance of developing partnerships, to nurture openness and foster dialogue.

She added, “At the economic level, this relation translates into concrete collaborations in some key areas in industrial production, in construction, or as we see today, in green energy, maritime transportation and logistics. The importance of the project that we are launching here today goes beyond the maritime sector. Indeed, the development of Hyport, will become a key piece of the development of the green hydrogen sector. It will contribute to the transition towards greener energy and a greener industry, both in Oman and in Belgium”.

After that, the King and the Queen of the Belgians went on sea tour of the Port of Duqm. They viewed facilities of the port, including the dry dock, the commercial berth and the government berth, as well as the liquid and bulk materials berth (oil berth).-ona

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ROUND-UP

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launches ‘Heart to Heart’ jewellery collection

With over 100 designs symbolising love in various ways, this unique jewellery collection serves as a perfect gift to express love to dear ones to celebrate the season of love

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest jewellery retailers globally with a strong retail network of over 280 outlets spread across 10 countries has launched a special collection of diamond and 18K gold jewellery named ‘Heart to Heart’ to celebrate the season of love.

‘Heart to Heart’ jewellery collection showcases exclusive heart-shaped jewellery that will cater to the increasing demand for such jewellery during this period. With over 100 designs symbolising love in various ways, this unique jewellery collection serves as a perfect gift to express love to dear ones.

With prices starting from just OMR 100, there is something to fit everyone’s budget.

Apart from pendants in diamonds and 18k, customers can also choose heart-shaped beautifully crafted bangles, bracelets and rings to gift their loved ones. Additionally, the brand has also launched necklace sets with double-sided pendants and earrings, in addition to rings and pendants that can be opened or closed.

Customers can also opt for personalised name rings in 18K, which can be specifically curated for loved ones in their name. This offer will be available across all outlets of Malabar Gold & Diamonds until 14th February 2022. Customers can also buy this unique collection online through

www.malabargoldanddiamonds.com.

“It is the season of love and hence the season of gifting too. Jewellery is the most thoughtful gift that can be given to your loved ones, as the charm of jewellery lasts for a lifetime, with its value appreciating each day.

“We believe that the ‘Heart to Heart’ collection, our exclusive range of jewellery launched specifically for this season will be the perfect gift for your loved ones,” said Najeeb K - Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Apart from these, Malabar Gold & Diamonds also showcases an incredible collection of unique designs in gold and diamond jewellery to suit the tastes and budget of its different customers.



SLEEK



Own powerful Camry with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Own a Toyota Camry and benefit with Service 2 Years/20,000 km (Whichever is earlier), 1-year insurance or cash gift instead of insurance OMR 250 to OMR 275. The campaign is valid until 9th March 2022. (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 Camry is available with a choice of three powertrain options, including a new 2.5-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine that produces 204 hp and 243 nm of torque and is paired with an eight-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission; a 3.5-litre V6 engine with D-4S fuel injection system that produces 298 hp and 356 nm of torque and is mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission; and an electrified hybrid system, which combines a petrol engine and two electric motors. The combined power of the two power sources is 208 hp. It is also paired with an Electronically Controlled Continuously Variable Transmission (ECVT), delivering heightened driving pleasure.

The Toyota Camry introduces a level of refinement that exceeds expectations. It provides a comfortable and stable ride with superior handling characteristics thanks to the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA). A new front fascia incorporates a more defined lower-intake area, with grille bars extending dynamically to the sides creating a refined look that is enhanced by chrome-plated ornamentation for a premium feel. The sportier grades wear a noticeably differ-

ent body style than the premium grades, with a bold redesigned lower fascia shape featuring a powerfully expressive gloss black mesh grille and larger side vents. This athletic look is further emphasized with new 18-inch bright machined-finish alloy wheels. A subtle rear spoiler lip is paired with a unique rear bumper with distinctive corner lines, as well as new-look combination lamps.

The Camry’s interior melds functionality, elegant styling, and impeccable craftsmanship. The dash design has a sporty, cockpit-like feel while treating both the driver and the front passenger to wider visibility. The exciting interior’s distinctive design offers comfort and convenience with a layer of luxury and hosts a range of advanced features. These include a panoramic moonroof, a floating 7-inch or 9-inch multimedia touch screen that comes integrated with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™, among others.

The vehicle’s advanced safety system is complemented by Toyota Safety Sense, an advanced safety technology package that includes Pre-Collision System (PCS), Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), Lane Tracing Assist (LTA), and Automatic High Beam (AHB). In addition, the vehicle features a comprehensive array of safety features to protect its occupants such as Driver + Passenger + front side and curtain SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake Force Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), and a rear-view camera, among many others.

CLASS-LEADING AGILITY

Head-turning INFINITI Q50 makes every journey a pleasure

MUSCAT: INFINITI Q50 which offers an optimal blend of ride comfort and class-leading agility continues to impress luxury motoring enthusiasts in Oman.

The INFINITI Q50 sedan, which represents dynamic and bold styling delivers empowering performance and rewarding drive. The INFINITI Q50 sedan has been the key driver of INFINITI’s success in the Sultanate due to its sensuous feel, segment-leading features and pulsating performance that delivers excellent output.

A senior spokesperson at INFINITI Oman, said, “With an athletic front bumper and a rich textured double-arch grille, the INFINITI Q50 boasts a sporty, sophisticated look. Step inside and experience premium materials with performance-inspired accents that take refinement to the next level. Above all INFINITI Q50 comes with advanced technological features like intelligent cruise control with full speed range, lane departure warning and prevention, forward emergency braking and backup collision intervention.”

Great horsepower at your command

The brand puts put high performance at the heart of the INFINITI Q50. The 400-horsepower twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 engine offers class-leading performance that’s bound to get your heart racing. With 475 Nm of torque, acceleration is effortless. You can also choose the brand’s class-leading twin-turbocharged V6 that returns 300 HP and 400 Nm of torque.

With the INFINITI Q50, you can choose from two engines: the 300 HP 3.0 L V6 Twin-turbo or the exhilarating 400 horsepower 3.0-litre Twin Turbo V6. The RED SPORT 400 has Kacchu Aluminum trim and red contrast stitching that takes the cabin to a new level.

The INFINITI Q50’s suspension shapes the drive around you. As road conditions change, it automatically adjusts your vehicle’s body roll, pitch and bounce rate for a smooth, comfortable ride.

Dynamic Digital Suspension comes equipped with two distinct settings, Standard and Sport. Select Standard mode for comfortable, dynamic handling. Engage Sport mode for firmer dampening and greater agility.

With INFINITI Q50 one can set their preference for a soft or



firm ride through the Drive Mode Selector. Electronically adjusted dampers do the rest, applying the right amount of force to keep the drive feeling balanced.

Performance-inspired design

The double-wave hood draws the eye along the car to the crescent-shaped rear windows. Strong lines and characteristic headlights create a premium sport sedan that always draws attention.

The INFINITI Q50 is available in a selection of colours, including the new Slate Gray. Or go for something that reflects your personality more, like the new Grand Blue.

Its signature Q50 headlights cast an illuminating gaze, making their presence known day or night. With their distinct crescent shape, they flow elegantly into the strong shoulder line of the INFINITI Q50.

Make every journey a pleasure

With luxurious materials, thoughtful ergonomics and meticulous craftsmanship, the INFINITI Q50 interior will make every journey a pleasure.

INFINITI Q50 is designed with the view that there would be no wasted space. The result is a class-leading interior that can easily accommodate up to five passengers. The craftsmanship and level of

finish is something one will quickly notice in the INFINITI Q50. There are a few trims to choose from including graphite, stone and gallery white interior colours, so you can create something unique for yourself.

Top safety features

With the INFINITI Q50, you can expand your periphery with sensors that can detect when someone enters your blind spot area. If you move to change lanes, the system warns you before a slight steering or braking input guides you back into position.

With an athletic front bumper and a richly textured double-arch grille, the INFINITI Q50 boasts a sporty, sophisticated look. Step inside and experience premium materials with performance-inspired accents that take refinement.

The technology in the INFINITI Q50 extends right to your fingertips. Power through your day with immediate access to your digital world – the connection is always there. Ultra-high-strength steel and INFINITI Advanced Air Bag System work to protect you and your passengers in the event of an accident. The INFINITI Q50 Around View Monitor with Moving Object Detection gives you 360-degree visibility as you reverse into tight spaces – and instantly alerts you if something is

detected in your surrounding area.

The Tire Pressure Monitoring System helps prevent you from driving on flat or overinflated tires by displaying each tire’s air pressure on the instrument panel.

Optimal lighting

From Automatic LED headlights and LED daytime running lights, to High Beam Assist, the INFINITI Q50’s advanced lighting systems extend your view and provide optimal lighting for every drive. High Beam Assist automatically dims the high beam headlights when it detects an approaching vehicle, leaving you to concentrate on the drive.

The INFINITI Q50 has sleek LED taillights that illuminate faster than traditional bulbs. So, if you use your brakes, drivers behind will know more quickly.

SBA commitment

SBA is largely committed to supporting INFINITI Oman’s growth in the Sultanate through a major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. With a national network of more than 40 showrooms, service centres and parts outlets, SBA has further built upon its legacy of trust, excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.

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A woman with short brown hair and bangs is standing in a lush garden. She is wearing a vibrant green pleated dress with a high neckline and a white textured blazer with gold buttons. She also wears a patterned headband, large square sunglasses, and several rings. The background is filled with green foliage and colorful flowers like pink lilies and purple hydrangeas.

Splash

at centrepoint



IN LOVE WITH FASHION