

HIS MAJESTY GREETES PRESIDENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Paula Mae of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on her country's Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Mae and the friendly people of her country. — **ONA**



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HM THE SULTAN SENDS CABLE OF GREETINGS TO KING OF MALAYSIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Sultan Abdullah Ahmad Shah, King of Malaysia on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to the King of Malaysia. His Majesty also wished the friendly people of Malaysia further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

'Hope travel to UK will normalise soon'

1 Britain's ambassador to Oman Hamish Cowell hopes people in the country, including students and his own countrymen, who wish to travel to the United Kingdom will soon be able to do so. **>A3**

WORLD

Hurricane Ida wreaks havoc in Louisiana

2 Hurricane Ida wreaked havoc in Louisiana on Sunday, causing extensive damage and leaving thousands without power. One person was reported to have died after being hit by a falling tree. **>A7**

MARKET

Bank Nizwa rights issue announced

3 Bank Nizwa announced the opening of its Rights Issue with a subscription period from September 7 until September 16 at an issue price of 95 baisas per share. **>B1**

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MUSCAT

The forum seeks to establish commercial and economic partnerships in target sectors stated in Oman Vision 2040 and Saudi Vision 2030



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman and Saudi Arabia have decided to collaborate in various sectors like oil and gas, renewables, infrastructure, transport, logistics, IT, mining, tourism, and health.

Available economic and investment opportunities in the Sultanate and Saudi Arabia were explored during the Omani-Saudi Investment Forum organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in collaboration with Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones

(OPAZ) and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday.

The aim of the forum, held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, is to reach agreements and partnerships between Omani and Saudi firms.

During the forum, Qais Mohammed Al-Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said that the existing investment structures provide an attractive environment for promising projects. These factors affirm the existence of suitable opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors from Saudi Arabia to enter into partnerships with their Omani

counterparts.

Al-Yousef pointed out that Saudi investors get the same treatment as Omani investors and that the Ministry will provide technical support and other services to help accelerate steps towards the conclusion of deals for each individual investor.

Al-Yousef said that Oman and Saudi Arabia seek to achieve prosperity for their citizens and that this partnership, based on solid grounds of integrated action, constitutes an opportunity for the two countries' people.

Eng. Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Saudi Minister of Investment, said that the forum benefits from the development approaches of

both countries and respond to the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and Oman Vision 2040. Both visions, he observed, roll out a broad range of investments and strategic partnerships.

Target investments

Al-Falih pointed out that the volume of target investments in Saudi Vision 2030 stands at 12 trillion Saudi Riyals while Oman Vision 2040 targets raising the percentage of foreign investments in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 10 per cent and raising the contribution of non-oil sectors to the GDP by 90 per cent.

>A5



KEY AREAS OF OMAN-SAUDI PARTNERSHIP

- Both countries to collaborate on Saudi Vision 2030 and Oman Vision 2040

- Saudi investors urged to set up businesses in Ibri Industrial City

- Saudi delegation visits Oman's first tech park

- Pacts and MoUs signed to benefit Khazaen projects

- Oman and Saudi Arabia border checkpoint to open soon

- Joint ventures in oil and gas, renewables, infrastructure, transport, logistics, IT, mining, tourism, and health

- Investment opportunities in Oman's infrastructure, airports, seaports, free zones, industrial estates, business hubs

OMANI-SAUDI INVESTMENT FORUM



Oman, Saudi Arabia to explore new investment opportunities

MUSCAT: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion met at Oman Convention and Exhibition Center on Monday with Eng. Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Minister of Investment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The two sides explored prospects for trade cooperation and promising investment opportunities in various economic fields.

They also discussed joint efforts to meet the priorities of the Sultanate and the KSA.

They also reviewed fields of co-operation in the trade and industry sectors between the two countries, in addition to matters of common interest and ways to boost them.

Food security

Also, Dr Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries

and Water Resources, met with Eng. Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Minister of Investment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The two sides explored areas of cooperation related to food security sectors, investment opportunities between Oman and the KSA, as well as ways to overcome all obstacles to expand cooperation in various economic, commercial and investment spheres. **-ONA**

PANDEMIC

COVID recovery rate up by 77%, deaths drop by 32%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Recoveries from COVID have risen by 77 per cent in the week from August 22 to 28, with deaths from the disease dropping by 32 per cent during the same period.

According to data published on the OmanVs COVID19 page, new infections from the virus have also fallen by 25 per cent during this period.

The number of patients in intensive care has decreased by 33 per cent, while the total number of people admitted to hospital has fallen by 25 per cent. Similarly, during this period, the immunisation rate has risen five per cent.

Oman recorded 6,455 people infected with COVID on August 30, down from 6,543 on the 29th, and 7,124 on the 22nd August. Recoveries increased during this period from 290,144 on the 22nd, to 291,721.

Hospital admissions dropped from 183 on the 22nd August to 122 on the 30th August, with ICU numbers also falling from 89 to 57.

More than 2.5 million people have been vaccinated as well, representing 70.5 per cent of the target vaccination population. 1,256,008 have been given the first dose, representing 35.3 per cent of the target population, while another 1,248,206 people have been provided both the



More than 2.5 million people have been vaccinated as well, representing 70.5 per cent of the target vaccination population

doses. They account for 35.2 per cent of the population eligible for vaccination. More than 3.75mn doses have been administered to people.

To help bring down the infection rate in the country, people eligible for the vaccine have been asked to get themselves immunised as soon as possible.

"People who refuse taking the vaccine must know of its value, to preserve their own health, and that of family and society," said Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Saidi, Oman's Minister of Health, during a press conference of the Supreme Committee held last Thursday. "Vaccination is one of our tools to protect the community."

"There are employees in the public sector who haven't yet

registered for their second dose," he added. "Thus, I urge them all to register and get vaccinated. By the end of September, we hope that all citizens have received two doses of the vaccine."

There are currently eight COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Oman: Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Sinovac, Sputnik, Sinopharm, both the Oxford and Covishield versions of the AstraZeneca vaccine, and the single-shot Johnson & Johnson jab.

"Pfizer/BioNTech and AstraZeneca are the two vaccines most used in the Sultanate, with limited use of others," added Al Saidi. "Johnson and Johnson is the only vaccine offered in a single dose. Those who have taken it are not required to receive a second dose of the vaccine to enter the country."

BACK TO SCHOOL

With the reopening of schools for students in the Sultanate scheduled in September, Muscat Media Group would be offering special, discounted advertising packages for schools and educational institutions across its print, digital, radio and social media platforms of Times of Oman & Al Shabiba to showcase their establishment and invite enrolments.

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Dhuhr.....	12:12pm
Asr.....	3:40pm
Maghrib.....	6:31pm
Isha.....	7:43pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:32am

TIMES



Chief Editor RANA N. PARVEZE

OMAN

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PRICE BAIZAS 200

OIL PRICES TO INCREASE IN SEPTEMBER

INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES SHOULD LOWER PRICES OF EXPORTED GOODS IF THEY WANT TO STOP ANY FUTURE PRICE SPIRAL

Bahrain : (By our Correspondent)

A nominal increase in oil prices is most likely to be enforced by the oil exporting countries. But the future framing of a policy by OPEC for anymore increase may depend largely on major factors like the prices of exported goods from industrialised nations. This is what the well-informed observers here feel very strongly in the matter of increase in oil prices.

At the same time the oil-exporting states of the Gulf are watching with keen interest the energy policy dispute between President Gerald Ford and the United States Congress.

But they dispute a suggestion by the U.S. Federal Energy Administrator, Mr. Frank Zarb, that the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would be encouraged to raise oil prices next month if Congress rebuffed President Ford on energy policy.

OPEC is expected to announce a small price increase early in September, probably long before Congress ends its debates on whether to sustain or override the President's announced veto of legislation to extend price controls on domestically produced oil, they added.

The new price was aimed at more than doubling the price of domestically produced U.S. oil over 30 months from 5.25 Dollars a barrel, which is a little over half the current world market price.

The observers here said that American President's goals are OPEC policy—the conservation of oil reserves and the development of alternative energy sources.

When President Ford said that oil and natural gas were becoming too costly to burn, he was echoing, though less dramatically the feelings about an asset which is too precious to burn, the observers added.

They admitted, however, that a weak American Energy Policy

may encourage oil exporters to press for a big increase in oil prices at the OPEC Ministerial council meeting in Vienna next month.

But a big increase has already been ruled out by Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter which has a virtual veto at OPEC because of its dominant position in the world oil market.

The Saudi Minister of Petroleum and Minerals, Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, told an Italian magazine last week that his country would do its best to keep oil prices frozen "if the industrialised states would lower the prices of exported goods".

He added, "we realise that if we don't want to ruin the world economy, we must oppose the policies of some OPEC members.

Crude oil posted prices (tax reference prices) have been virtually unchanged since January 1974 when they were raised for the first time in a series of increases which quadrupled oil price.

The oil-exporting states say, however, that inflation and currency fluctuations had wiped out much of the benefits.

Observers said that last month's decision by the International Energy Agency, organ of the major oil consuming nations, to increase members' strategic stocks by 10 days to 70 days should mean an increase in demand over the next few months.

The need to replenish commercial stocks in anticipation of price increase share would amount to slow climb towards economic recovery already evident in some western states such as the U.S. West Germany and Italy. The observers said that a recovery in demand for industrial commodities would invariably mean more demand for oil.

Royal audience

Muscat : (By our Staff Reporter)

H.M. Sultan Qaboos received in his Palace at Salalah, Southern Province, on Tuesday Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Jordan.

Hinai discusses Islamic Affairs with Saudi envoys

Muscat : (By our Staff Reporter)

H.E. Shaikh Waleed bin Zaher al-Hinai Minister of Auqaf and Islamic Affairs t h u r s d a y received in his office Sheikh Abdullah Ibrahim Fantukh and Sheikh Ali Saleh al-Houti from Saudi Arabia. The meeting lasted 3/4 hour.

Many Islamic affairs were discussed during the meeting.

Middle East Pact shall be signed monday

Cairo : (By our Correspondent)

A spokesman for Egyptian President Anwar Sadaat said that there was every likelihood of Sinai agreement to be signed on Monday next in spite of the fact that there remained a few points which needed reconsideration.

Haile Selassie passes away

Addis Ababa : (By our Correspondent)

Haile Selassie, the diminutive "conquering Lion of Judah" who ruled backward Ethiopia for 57 years until he was deposed in 1974, died on Wednesday at the age of 83. The former Emperor who was swept from power by a military junta committed to a socialist-style nation, was found dead in bed by a servant early Wednesday.

HOLY MONTH OF RAMADHAN

Revised working hours ordered

Muscat : (By our Staff Reporter)

Acting Minister of Sultan's Diwan Affairs, Mr. Maqbool Hamid has ordered revised working hours commencing from the month of Ramadhan, September 7.

The hours will be from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. After the completion of the month of Ramadhan the official working hours shall be from 8.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. This was disclosed in a Ministerial order No. 15/75.



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Hope travel curbs to UK will be eased soon: Envoy

Oman is currently on the UK's red list, which means entry to the UK is only permitted for British nationals, as well as those who have residency rights

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Hamish Cowell, Britain's ambassador to Oman, hopes people in the country, including students and his own countrymen, who wish to travel to the UK will soon be able to do so. Oman is currently on the UK's red list, which means entry to the UK is only permitted for British nationals, as well as those who have residency rights. However, if they have travelled through a red list country in the 10 days before arriving in the UK, they must take a COVID-19 test at least three days before flying to the UK, complete a passenger locator form, and book a 10-day mandatory quarantine package in a hotel, including two COVID tests. "I know many in Oman, whether British nationals, Omani students preparing to study in the UK, or others, will have been disappointed to see that travel restrictions to the UK remain in place, following the latest review," said Hamish Cowell, the UK's ambassador to Oman. "I understand that disappointment," he added. "The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) assessment

process is highly detailed, and covers a range of issues, including genomic sequencing ability, COVID-19 transmission risks, and variant transmission risk." The JBC is part of the UK Health Security Agency and works with British health administrators to develop public health risk assessment methods that determine ministerial decisions on red, amber, and green list countries, as well as the associated border measures for arrivals from these territories. **JBC review** The JBC reviews more than 250 countries, with islands that are part of some countries being treated as separate entities, where allowed. As a precautionary approach, countries, territories, and island groups are assumed to be medium public health risk unless there is specific evidence to suggest they are either low or high public risk to the UK from all COVID-19 strains. Ambassador Cowell added in this context: "The JBC cannot share data provided by other gov-

ernments to inform that process. But I wanted to assure you that the embassy is working exceptionally closely with the Omani authorities, and in particular the Ministry of Health, to make progress on this issue." JBC assessment consists of four parts. The first is variant assessment, which is dependent on transmissibility, disease severity, escape from natural and vaccine-induced immunity, transmission from animals to humans, and current epidemiology. The second - triage - contains indicators such as testing and infection rates, test positivity, presence of COVID variants, cases exported to the UK, genomic sequencing, and evidence of travel links with countries known to have community transmission of variants. All countries and territories that pass triage undergo a more comprehensive risk assessment of additional information from publicly available platforms such as GISAIID and the World Health Organization (WHO). To support decision making,

JBC focuses the final assessment around three main criteria so that ministers know where the risks lie: genomic surveillance capability, COVID-19 transmission risk, and variant transmission risk. **Normalised travel** Cowell hoped that with infections, hospitalisations, and deaths in Oman from COVID significantly reduced, normalised travel could start soon. "Under the guidance of the Supreme Committee, Oman has made good progress in bringing the recent wave of COVID-19 deaths and hospitalisations under control," he said. "I would like to join others in thanking the committee, and frontline workers in health and emergency services, for the work they have done and continue to do to keep us all safe. "I would be delighted to see travel between our two countries back to normal," added Cowell. "We will continue to work intensively with our Omani friends and counterparts to achieve that goal as soon as possible."

More than 50 countries Oman is one of more than 50 countries on the UK's red list. The others include Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, DR Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, French Guiana, Georgia, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mayotte, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Briefing held on performance and proficiency system

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The first briefing session on the System for Measuring Individual Performance and Institutional Proficiency was held on Monday by the Ministry of Health (MoH) in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour (MoL). The event was attended by the Minister of Health, a number of undersecretaries, in addition to MoH's directors general, and with the participation sub-teams of governorates. The meeting reviewed the overall System for Measuring Individual Performance and Institutional Proficiency framework and its relation with the Oman Vision 2040. It further outlined the System implementation mechanism, methods of developing individual plans following methodology of objectives and main outcomes. A simulation of the system (objectives form) was presented by the MoL for training prior to its official launching. The objectives form consists of employee main information, objectives, and outcomes.

It should be noted that the System accords His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik's full attention and support as it aims at developing human resources system by building a culture of proficiency in job performance, improving the system for performance appraisals, linking productivity with incentives thus raising employee's performance and productivity. The system also aims to set goals by employees, in cooperation with the direct manager, derived from the five-year plan, the operational plan, and job assignments in line with the initiatives of the Oman Vision 2040. The Ministry of Health is planning to activate the system during January 2022. It is hoped that it will achieve success according to the plans and goals set for the system by the main team. The MoH employees will be engaged in a pilot application and training starting from September to the end of December 2021. They will be familiarised with the mechanism for setting goals and outcomes along with how to calculate each ratios.

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SOHAR FORT MUSEUM TELLS ABOUT OMAN’S GLORIOUS PAST

SOHAR FORT is considered one of the most important castles and forts in the North Batinah Governorate due to its outstanding location and the significant role it played over past centuries. This fort dates back to the end of the thirteenth century and beginning of the fourteenth. Archaeological excavations carried out at the fort confirmed that it was completed in the fourteenth century.

Unlike many of the other forts in the region, which are traditionally the colour of the mud bricks that they are made from, a colour that is similar to that of the desert sands, the walls and crenellations of Sohar Fort are completely white.

Built during the 13th century, Sohar Fort now houses a small museum in its largest tower but an original 10 km long tunnel that served as an escape route in the event of a siege is still intact.

The Sohar Fort Museum was opened on November 17, 1993 on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of the country’s National Day to highlight the history of the city of Sohar and historical landmarks. The museum showcases Sohar’s role in the cultural world and in trade as well as Islamic history and the contribution made by Omanis in the field of navigation. Their role in spreading Islam in many parts of the world is also highlighted in the museum.

The museum also deals with the major role played by the city in ancient times in copper trade and its relationship with the city of Canton in China, in addition to a lot of artefacts found during archaeological excavations in the fort.

Sohar Fort Museum is full of artefacts giving information about the glorious past of the country which are of great historical value. It is one of the most important tourist destinations for visitors to the city and for students who want to discover history of Sohar and the depth of the Sultanate’s trade links with neighbouring civilisations.



Sohar Fort Museum is full of artefacts giving information about the glorious past of the country which are of great historical value.





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DATA

Oman’s power production rises 9.6% by the end of June 2021

MUSCAT: The Sultanate’s total electricity production by the end of June 2021 increased by 9.6 percent to reach 19,497.7 GW per hour compared to the end of the same month in 2020, when the total production was 17,793.5 GW per hour.

Meanwhile, water production by the end of May 2021 went up by 195,225,600 cubic metres, comprising a rise by 3.8 percent compared to the same period in the previous year, according to statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The total electricity production in the Governorates of North and South Al Batinah and A’Dhahirah reached 12,134.9 GW per hour by the end of June 2021 compared to the same period of 2020, when the production was 10,896.9 GW per hour, comprising a rise by 11.4 percent.

The total electricity production in the Governorates of North and South A’Sharqiyah reached 4,473.0 GW per hour by the end of June 2021 compared to an output of 3,915.5 GW last year, recording an increase of 14.2 percent.

Meanwhile, total electricity production in the Governorate of Dhofar grew by 1.2 percent, reaching 1,934.7 GW per hour by the end of June 2021 compared to the same period in 2020 when it amounted to 1,911.0 GW per hour. The Governorate of Al Wusta recorded a surge in total electricity production by 41.6 percent to reach 376.6 GW per hour by the end of June 2021 compared to 266.0 GW in the same period in 2020.

Governorate of Musandam
The total electricity production in the Governorate of Musandam reached 193.0 GW per hour by the end of June 2021 compared to 188.6 GW per hour during the same period in 2020, comprising a rise by 2.3 percent.

The total electricity production in the Governorate of Muscat went down by 34.8 percent in June 2021 to reach 385.5 GW per hour compared to 591.0 GW per



hour in June 2020.

The net figures are inclusive of purchases by Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP) and the Rural Areas Electricity Company (RAEC).

The Sultanate’s net electricity production by the end of June 2021 increased by 10 percent to touch 18,858.7 GW per hour compared to 17,144.4 GW per hour achieved during the same period in 2020.

Al Wusta Governorate scored the highest increase rate by 46.2 percent with a net electricity production of 370.2 GW per hour compared to 253.2 GW per hour in June 2020.

The Governorates of North and South A’Sharqiyah saw a rise by 14.5 percent as net electricity production reached 4,372.1 GW per hour as at the end of June 2021 compared to 3,816.9 GW per hour during the same period in 2020.

The Governorates of North and South Al Batinah and A’Dhahirah also saw an increase in net electricity production by 11.7 percent as it reached 11,709.2 GW per hour as the end of June 2021 compared to 10,481.1 GW per hour in the same period of the previous year.

The net electricity production in the Governorate of Dhofar went up by 2.1% to reach 1,836.9 GW per hour as at the end of June

2021 compared to 1,799.9 GW per hour in June 2020.

In the Governorate of Musandam, the net electricity production reached 187.5 GW per hour as the end of June 2021 compared to 183.2 GW per hour during the same period in 2020, comprising a rise by 2.3 percent.

The net electricity production in the Governorate of Muscat saw a fall by 34.7 percent and reached 382.9 GW per hour compared to 586.6 GW per hour in June 2020.

Moreover, in the Governorate of A’Dakhiliyah the net electricity production stabilised at 23.5 GW per hour.

Water production
On the other hand, the water production of the Sultanate reached 195,225,600 cubic metres by the end of May 2021, with an increase of 3.8 percent from the end of May 2020. In Muscat, the water production rose by 0.9 percent to reach 82,987,800 cubic meters by the end of May 2021. Meanwhile, water production dropped in the Governorate of Dhofar by 0.8 percent to reach 25,862,300 cubic metres. The total water production of other governorates by the end of May 2021 was 86,375,500 cubic meters, comprising a rise of 8.3 percent from the end of May 2020. -ONA

OMAN-SAUDI BUSINESS COUNTERPARTS

Key agreements signed at B2B meetings

MUSCAT: On the sidelines of the ongoing Omani-Saudi Investment Forum, Omani businessmen and their Saudi counterparts held joint meetings, which led to the conclusion of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs), thanks to the presence of representatives of related government and private organisations.

The agreements and MoUs deal with ways to benefit from Khaz-aen project to facilitate the introduction of Saudi “Naqil” services. They included sealing two MoUs between Oman Integrated Logistics Services (ILSOMAN) companies and the companies of Mandooab and Zajel of Saudi Arabia.

Entrepreneurs from both sides highlighted the importance of the forum. Nasir al-Sahli, Chairman of Saf Holding of Saudi Arabia, underscored the significance of bilateral meetings which, he said, provides a platform for building business partnerships, accelerate the pace of two-way trade and augment the volume of investment.

Al-Sahli commended the services offered by the Sultanate to the Saudi business community which, he said, lay emphasis on investment in the sectors of pet-



rochemicals, tourism, entertainment, energy and logistics.

Investment opportunities

In his turn, Fahmi Said al-Hinai, Manager of Oman Polyporpylene, said joint meetings contribute to the development of insights on available investment opportunities in economic sectors.

The direct talks also help re-

move obstacles to the smooth flow of two-way trade, said al-Hinai.

Echoing a similar view, Ghanim Dhahir al-Bat'hari, an Omani businessman, said that the forum creates rapprochement between representatives of major and medium firms operating in different specialties. He spoke about investment in promising sectors that are the focus of Oman Vision



2040 and Saudi Vision 2030—like energy, converting industries, logistics and tourism.

Al-Bat'hari added that the land checkpoint between Oman and Saudi Arabia, expected to be officially opened soon, will pave the way for better economic exchange and facilitate logistic supplies, among other services.

Sheikh Abdullah Ali al-Mahri,

CEO of Emar Al Jazeera Trading and Contracting, expressed the keenness of the Saudi business community in investment in the Sultanate. Al-Mahri called upon entrepreneurs from both countries “to tap the opportunities made available in the appropriate investment environment—in terms of laws, easing procedures and incentives.” — **ONA**

CABLE

HM the Sultan greets President of Kyrgyzstan

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Sad-yr Japarov of the Kyrgyz Republic on his country's Independence Anniversary.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Japarov. His Majesty also wished the friendly Kyrgyz people further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**

REPUBLIC OF GREECE



Dr Elias Nikolakopoulos receives consular licence

MUSCAT: Dr Elias Nikolakopoulos on Monday received the consular licence and appointed as Honorary Consul of the Republic of Greece to the Sultanate.

Protocols Department

The licence was handed over by Dr Khalid Said Al Jaradi, Head of the Protocols Department at the Foreign Ministry.

He wished the consular success in enhancing the bilateral relations for the benefit of the two countries' friendly peoples. — **ONA**

INVESTMENT FORUM

< FROM A1 Oman, Saudi seek to float more joint ventures

The investment forum, he said, seeks to float more joint ventures in different services and industries in the fields of oil, gas, renewable energy, infrastructure, transport, logistics, information technology, mining, tourism, health and other sectors.

Eng. Ridha Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of OCCI, affirmed that the forum aims at establishing commercial and economic partnerships in target sectors stated in Oman Vision 2040 and Saudi Vision 2030, and he pledged the support of the OCCI

to the joint endeavours.

After the speeches, bilateral sessions were held by counterparts from both countries and working papers were reviewed. The first working paper dealt with the Omani and Saudi visions.

The second working paper, titled “Invest in Oman”, reviewed the investment opportunities in the Sultanate and the supporting infrastructure in terms of airports, seaports, free zones, industrial estates and the business hubs' vicinity to international trade routes.





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Tender Announcement

MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY S.A.O.C INVITES INTERESTED COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOLLWING TENDER

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (R.O)
MEDC-15/2021	CONSULTANCY SURVEY SERVICES FOR ELECTRICITY NETWORK AT MUSCAT GOVERNORATE (WITH SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2022-2024)	16/9/2021	12/10/2021	DCRP Grad (Consultants Network Survey & Design)	157.500

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5 % VAT. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - For payment procedure and to obtain the tender document, please contact us via e-mail Contract@medcoman.com 24588600 – Ext: 8577 - 8726
Purchase timing	Tender documents can be purchased at the official working time between 08:00 – 13:00 hours
Enquiries	Any inquiry can be sent using clarification available in the tender documents , one week before bid submission date
Tender Submission	- Tenders should be submitted in a sealed and stamped envelope addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION CO. marked only with tender number and the subject - Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER mentioned in clause 20.0 in Prime Document
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of OMR 6,000 valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY S.A.O.C. - Any bid that does not meet the bank guarantee will not be considered Any bid that does not meet the bank guarantee will not be considered
Terms and Conditions	- The name of the bidder, other marks or any reference must not be specified on the envelope - Tenders received after the deadline stated in the Invitation to Tender, including any extension thereof, for any reason whatsoever will not be considered - The Tender shall be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date - MEDC is not bound to consent the lowest Bid or any other Tenders. - Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization - Muscat Electricity Distribution Company gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. - For projects whose value is less than OMR 10K, the priority to award will be given to registered companies that hold a valid certificate Of Reyadah
Bid Placement	The Completed Tender should be deposited in the Tender Box No. 1 in the ground floor of MEDC Head Office building at Airport Heights, before 10 a.m. on the assigned date of tender submission



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AFGHAN CRISIS

US evacuation operations continue at Kabul airport despite rocket attack



WASHINGTON: The evacuation operations at Kabul airport continue to remain “uninterrupted” following the rocket attack, confirmed the White House on Monday.

In a statement, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said US President Joe Biden was briefed about the rocket attack by National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Chief of Staff Ron Klain. “The President was informed that operations continue uninterrupted at HKIA (Hamid Karzai International Airport), and has reconfirmed his order that commanders redouble their efforts to prioritize doing whatever is necessary to protect our forces on the ground,” Psaki said.

On Monday, at least five rockets were fired toward the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, a US official

told ABC news.

The US military engaged the C-RAM missile defence, but, according to ABC News, it is still unclear whether all of the rockets were successfully intercepted.

There have been no initial reports on casualties.

According to video footage from Pajhwok Afghan News and Tolo News reports, the rockets were fired from a car in Kabul’s Khair Khana area toward the airport on Monday morning and hit different parts of the city.

The security situation has deteriorated near Kabul airport as the US winds down its evacuation operations. US forces on Sunday conducted an airstrike targeting a suspected suicide bomber who posed an “imminent” threat to the airport. As many as nine people, all members of the same family, were killed in the attack. **ANI**

WHO

Europe may see 236,000 COVID-19 deaths by December

LONDON: The World Health Organization (WHO) expressed concern on Monday about the rising transmission rates of coronavirus in Europe.

“Last week, there was an 11% increase in the number of deaths in the region — one reliable projection is expecting 236,000 deaths in Europe, by December 1,” the agency’s Europe director Hans Kluge told a press conference in Copenhagen. So far Europe has recorded around 1.3 million coronavirus deaths since the pandemic began.

Why are COVID deaths set to rise in Europe?

The WHO Europe chief explained that there were three worrying factors: high transmission rates, slowing vaccinations and the easing of restrictions.

Kluge said that 33 out of the WHO Europe’s 53 member states had an infection rate greater than 10% in the past two weeks, largely driven by the highly contagious delta variant.

The rapid spread of the virus was “deeply worrying, particularly in the light of low vaccination uptake in priority populations in a number of countries,” Kluge said.

“In the past six weeks, it has fallen by 14%, influenced by a lack of access to vaccines in some countries and a lack of vaccine acceptance in others,” he added.

Although around half of Europeans are now fully vaccinated, the number of people receiving shots has slowed. The rate of vaccination was lower in poorer European countries, with some only having managed to vaccinate around 10% of healthcare workers.

An “exaggerated easing” of restrictions and a surge in people traveling abroad for the summer have also added to the spread of the virus. WHO Europe also countered a claim made by the global WHO body earlier in the month that data did not support the use of COVID-19 booster shots. **DW**

Hurricane Ida slams Louisiana, disrupts power

All of New Orleans was left without power as the hurricane left “catastrophic transmission damage” in its wake



WASHINGTON: Hurricane Ida wreaked havoc in Louisiana on Sunday, causing extensive damage in the Gulf Coast region and leaving thousands without power.

At least one person was reported to have died on Sunday after being hit by a falling tree, a local Sheriff’s office announced.

What’s the latest on the storm?

All of New Orleans was left without power as the hurricane left “catastrophic transmission damage” in its wake, according to Entergy New Orleans, the electric and natural gas utility that serves the city.

The only power in the city came from generators, the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness said in a tweet.

“Catastrophic storm surge, extreme winds, and flash flooding continue in portions of southeastern Louisiana,” the Miami-based National Hurricane Center (NHC) said in an update on the hurricane.

The NHC downgraded Ida to a tropical storm on Monday morning as it passed over southwestern Mississippi, 16 hours after making landfall, with maximum sustained winds of 60mph (95 kmph). This was down from the maximum sustained winds of 130 mph (209 kmph) recorded just a few hours after making landfall.

Experts forecast that it would continue to weaken throughout Monday morning.

The city of New Orleans was under a flash flood warning, with the storm causing damage to buildings in the historic French Quarter. In other parts of the state, NBC New Orleans anchor Christina Watkins tweeted the storm also blew off part of a roof of a hospital in the southern Louisianan town of Galliano.

The damage to the hospital comes as the state grapples with a surge in coronavirus cases, making it more difficult for health authorities to respond to the ongoing pandemic.

The power outage tracking web-

site poweroutage.us showed over 1 million people in Louisiana had been left without electricity by Monday morning.

Another video shared on Twitter showed winds and rain blowing around a large building in New Orleans.

Biden vows federal support for hard-hit areas

President Joe Biden visited the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. on Sunday, where he promised assistance for areas heavily impacted by Ida.

Biden said federal support in the Gulf Coast region would remain “for as long as it takes.”

“I want to make sure that we’re ready to surge all the response capacity, capability that we have to deal with whatever comes next, and a lot’s going to be coming,” Biden said while meeting with FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell. **DW**

COVID CASES

India reports 42,909 new COVID cases

NEW DELHI: India reported 42,909 new COVID-19 cases and 380 related fatalities in the last 24 hours, informed the Union Health Ministry on Monday.

Here, of the total cases reported in the country, Kerala logged 29,836 fresh cases of this virus yesterday and 75 fatalities. The test positivity rate is at a historic high of 19.67 per cent. With this, the total death toll in the country touched 438,210 including the fresh fatalities. Of the 380 fresh fatalities, 75 deaths were from Kerala, 131 deaths were from Maharashtra, 67 deaths were from Odisha and the rest 107 deaths were reported from the rest of the states. **ANI**

AL BUSTAN PALACE
A RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL

Tender Announcement

Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel invites sealed bids for the below.

Description	Last Date of tender submission	Tender Fee
1. Supply of Electric Golf Cart	15th September 2021	10 OMR

Companies of Excellent & international grades, having proven track record in this area may obtain detailed Scope of Work from Finance Department from Tuesday 31st Aug, 2021 onwards between 09:00 – 14:00 hours.

Tender must be submitted in a sealed Envelope along with companies Trade License and certificates addressed to:

**Coordinator of the office of The General Manager,
Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel
On or before 15th Sep 2021 before 2 pm.**

Note: Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel is not obliged to accept the tenders with least prices or any other tenders.

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Barca win but fail to impress at home to Getafe in La Liga

Things looked to be going as per plan for Barcelona in the second minute when Sergi Roberto opened the scoring from close range

MADRID: FC Barcelona beat Getafe 2-1 on Sunday in a less convincing performance from Ronald Koeman's men. Things looked to be going as per plan for Barca in the second minute when Sergi Roberto opened the scoring from close range from Jordi Alba's pass. Barca's joy didn't last for long before former Barca player Sandro Ramirez levelled with a low shot from outside of the penalty area. Memphis scored what turned out to be the winning goal in the 31st minute with an impressive individual goal, working space with a stepover before firing home. Koeman's side held on for the win but failed to impress against a rival that has lost the first three games this season. Meanwhile, Atletico Madrid's home match against Villarreal was a 10pm kick-off.

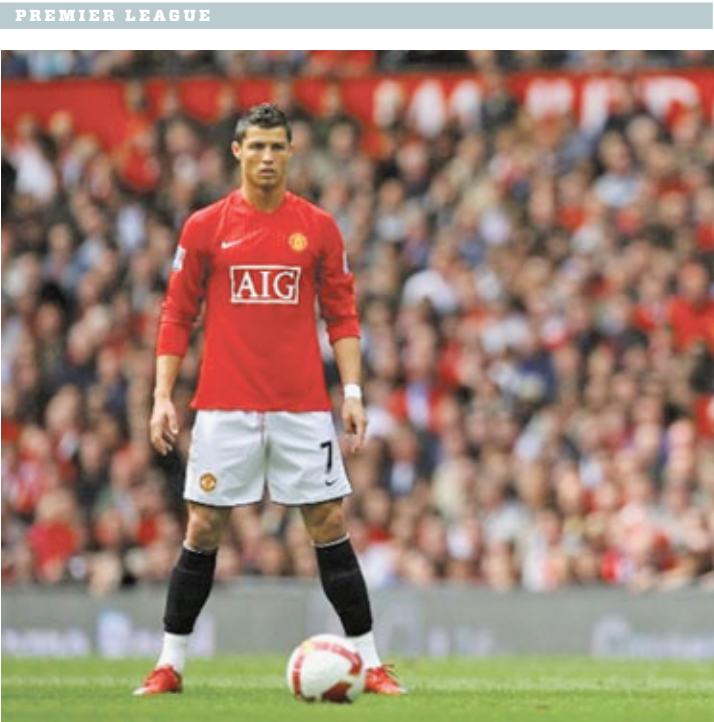


BARCA VS GETAFE: Barca's joy didn't last for long before former Barca player Sandro Ramirez levelled with a low shot from outside of the penalty area.

Rayo Vallecano celebrated the return of top-flight football to their Vallecas Stadium with a 4-0 thrashing of Granada. Alvaro Garcia opened the scoring in the second minute and Oscar Trejo's penalty doubled the lead 20 minutes later before Randy Nteka assured the points before the break and Santi Comesana added a fourth in the 57th minute. Osasuna rallied to beat Cadiz 3-2 with two injury-time goals in a game of three penalties - all for handball. Alex Fernandez put Cadiz in front before Kike Gar-

cia leveled for Osasuna from the spot, only for Alex to re-establish Cadiz's lead after another handball with 25 minutes remaining. The third penalty came at the start of injury time and this time Roberto Torres netted from the spot before David Garcia's far post finish in the 94th minute gave Osasuna a win that had looked unlikely moments earlier. On Saturday Dani Carvajal's goal saw Real Madrid win 1-0 away to Betis, while Sevilla drew 1-1 away to Elche with the goals scored by Enzo Roco for the home

side and Youssef En-Nesyri for the visitors. Inaki Williams's first-half strike gave Athletic Club Bilbao their first win of the season as they defeated Celta 1-0 in Vigo and Ander Barrenetxea's deflected effort was enough to see Real Sociedad win 1-0 against Levante. On Friday, Mallorca won 1-0 at home to Espanyol, while Valencia enjoyed a comfortable 3-0 victory at home to Alaves, who have kicked off the new season with three defeats. **Xinhua**



Man Utd's Ronaldo return becomes most liked team post on Instagram

MANCHESTER: The Instagram post by Premier League club Manchester United on the return of the Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo has shattered the record on the social networking site. The announcement of his return by Manchester United on Instagram has garnered 12,915,652 likes as of now. With more than 12 million likes, Manchester United's post became the most liked post by a sports team on Instagram, as per Goal.com. But the record of most liked sports photo on Instagram still belongs to Paris Saint-Germain's Lionel Messi whose photo with the Copa America trophy went viral and has more than 21 million likes.

Manchester United on Friday confirmed that the club has reached an agreement with Juventus for the transfer of Cristiano Ronaldo, subject to agreement of personal terms, visa, and medical. They wrote on Instagram: "Welcome home, @Cristiano #MUFC #ManUtd #CristianoRonaldo #Ronaldo." Cristiano is a five-time Ballon d'Or winner, has so far won over 30 major trophies during his career, including five UEFA Champions League titles, four FIFA Club World Cups, seven league titles in England, Spain, and Italy, and the European Championship for his native Portugal. In his first spell for Manchester United, he scored 118 goals in 292 games. **ANI**

COMMENTARY

Is this Indian team as good as it appears?

Anis Sajan, Vice Chairman, Danube Group

ENGLAND CAME back strongly in the third test match beating India by an innings and 76 runs and squaring the series one all. Going into the third test match, it was England who needed to pull up their batting with only Joe Root looking in form and rest all their batters barring a fifty from Jonny Bairstow, all looked at sea against the Indian seamers and were in fact bowled out in less than 60 overs in the Lords test match giving India the lead in the series. All the pressure was on England and in fact the great Sunny Gavaskar had predicted India would win this series 3/0 or even 4/0 but the way England bounced back at Leeds in the third test match, the tide has turned so much that it looks like a repeat of the 2014 series where after the first test match was drawn, India went on to win the Lords test but then lost the last three test matches to lose the series 3-1. In fact when the 2018 series had begun, India were again favourites going into the series but lost the series 4-1. Everyone said that India did not seize the vital moments in 2018 series and that is why they lost the series but the score line said something else. In the current series England did not have the services of Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer as well as Chris Woakes due to injury and mental fatigue and their batting on paper also looked weak barring their captain Joe Root whereas India had almost everyone available and fit except for Shubman Gill who had to miss the full tour because of injury. And his place was grabbed with both hands by KL Rahul who is India's highest scorer with 252 runs. India were in England this time from June 2 and even played the World Test Championship and were acclimatized to the English conditions and were once again said to be favourites going into the series and they did show by dominating the first test and could have won had it not rained at Trent Bridge on the last day but proved in the sec-



ond test match that they had the fire power and went on to win the Lords test in the last hour of the fifth day. All looked rosy for team India going into the third test but the only thing which went their way was the toss as first they were bowled out for 78 runs in the first innings and then England batsman hammered 432 runs with their top four all getting fifties and Joe scoring his third consecutive century to take this tally in the series to 507 runs which is double the score of what India's KL Rahul. India's second best scorer is Rohit Sharma who has 230 runs but rest all Indian batters like Cheteshwar Pujara with 162 runs, Virat Kohli 124, Ajinkya Rahane with 95, Rishab Pant with 87 runs and Ravindra Jadeja 133 runs. The total of all top 7 Indian batters for the series is 1,083 runs in three test matches with KL Rahul the only centurion in the series so far which shows that the Indian batters are still finding it difficult to adjust in the tough English conditions. All the pundits said that India misread the pitch and paid the price but England scored 432 wherein both the innings Indian first lost all their ten batters for just 78 runs and in the second innings the last eight for only 63 runs which showed how good the English bowlers were and how poor the Indian batsmen were in adapting to the conditions. Virat Kohli after the loss

said that if six batters can't do the job then there is no guarantee that seventh extra batsman will bail you out. I totally agree to what the skipper says but the question which begs to one and all is, are your six batters good enough in English conditions baring Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul? Even in the bowling, both Ishant Sharma looks a pale shadow of himself and Ravindra Jadeja looks more like a bowler who has been kept in the side to give rest to the fast bowlers as he has bowled totally 77 overs in three test matches and picked up just 2 wickets in five innings with an average of 93 for his bowling which shows that the balance of the team is simply not right. If Virat Kohli has said that the template has been set for the series of playing four fast bowlers and one all-rounder, why can't that all-rounder be Ravichandran Ashwin who has five test centuries as compared to one by Ravindra Jadeja. This Indian side definitely has shown from the Australian series that they can bounce back and their captain did say that they love such situations and they will come back with a lot of determination and intensity than what they showed in the last test but can they prove it in English conditions against a team which has been led from the front by their captain Joe Root and their main strike bowler James Anderson, only time will say.

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

IOC announces demise of ex-president Jacques Rogge

LAUSANNE: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Sunday announced the demise of former IOC President Count Jacques Rogge. He was 79 years old. Rogge was the eighth President of the IOC, from 2001 to 2013, after which he became Honorary President. He was married to Anne, and leaves a son, a daughter, and two grandchildren. Rogge was an orthopaedic surgeon with a degree in sports medicine. A life-long sports fan and an accomplished athlete, Rogge was a Belgian rugby champion and represented his country on the national team. He was a 16-time Belgian national champion and a world champion in sailing. He also competed in sailing at three editions of the Olympic Games, in 1968, 1972, and 1976, in the Finn class. "After his career as an athlete, he became President of the Belgian and European Olympic Committees, and was elected President of the IOC in 2001. After his IOC Presidency, he also served as a Special Envoy for Youth, Refugees, and Sport to the United Nations," the IOC said in an official statement. Remembering his life, IOC President Thomas Bach recalled:



"First and foremost, Jacques loved sport and being with athletes - and he transmitted this passion to everyone who knew him. His joy in sport was infectious. He was an accomplished President, helping to modernise and transform the IOC. He will be remembered particularly for championing youth sport and for inaugurating the Youth Olympic Games. He was also a fierce proponent of clean sport, and fought tirelessly against the evils of doping." As a mark of respect, the Olympic flag will be flown at half-mast for five days at Olympic House, at The Olympic Museum, and at all

IOC properties, and the IOC invites all National Olympic Committees and International Federations to join in this gesture of remembrance and honour. The family has asked that their privacy be respected at this time whilst they grieve for their loss, and that any communication during this period be made through the IOC. Following a private family ceremony, a public memorial service will take place later in the year, where members and friends of the Olympic Movement will be able to remember his life and his great contribution to the sport. **ANI**

PARALYMPICS

Indian Paralympian Sumit wins gold, creates new world record

TOKYO: India's Sumit Antil very comprehensively won gold in the men's javelin throw (Sport Class F64) here at National Stadium in Tokyo on Monday. Sumit dominated the show from the word go as he improved the World Record three times in the final. He threw a monstrous throw of 68.55m in his fifth attempt to climb on the top of the podium. Australia's Michal Burian won silver with a throw of 66.29m and created a new World Record in Sport Class F44. Dulan Kodithuwakku of Sri Lanka captured bronze while creating his personal best. Another Indian in the final Sandeep Chaudhary



finished fourth with a season-best of 62.20m. Sumit who went first in the field gave an almost uphill task to all contenders as he started the final by breaking his own World Record with a throw of 66.95m. The previous world record was 62.88m, which Sumit improved by almost 4 meters in his very first attempt. Sandeep meanwhile went for

61.13m in his first attempt. Sumit looked like a man on a mission as he threw javelin for another world record in the second attempt of the final for 68.08m. The Indian improved the previous best which he created on his first attempt by 1.13 meters. Meanwhile, Sandeep's second attempt was invalid while for the third he went for 62.20m which landed him in the fourth position. The man in red-hot form, Sumit threw 65.27m and 66.71m in the third and fourth attempt. For his fifth attempt, the Indian again went big and this time again shattered the world record with a throw of 68.55m. **ANI**

INFLATION-SENSITIVE

At 5.4 per cent, US CPI inflation in June reached the highest level since September 1990, with the core PCE rate (personal consumption expenditures) overshooting the US Federal Reserve's target rate of 2 per cent by 1.5 percentage points.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 3,969.91 points, up 0.10 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.17 per cent at 592.51 points. National Aluminium Products, up 7.63 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Education & Training, down 6.61 per cent, was the top loser.

Bank Nizwa announces rights issue for 95 baisas per share

The issue consists of new 789.473 million ordinary shares at an issue price of baisas 95 per share aiming to increase the bank's capital by OMR75 million

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa announced the opening of its rights issue with a subscription period from September 7 until September 16.

The rights issue consists of new 789.473 million ordinary shares at an issue price of baisas 95 per share aiming to increase the bank's capital by OMR75 million. The rights share shall be payable in full on submission of the application form with the issuer bearing all issue-related expenses. All shares shall be listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange after allotment. By increasing the

paid-up capital, Bank Nizwa will be geared up for the next phase of growth and increased returns for shareholders.

Broad strategies

As the leading and fastest-growing Islamic bank in the country, Bank Nizwa has outlined broad strategies for the next phase of growth. Firstly, by strengthening capital while simultaneously continue playing its part in contributing to the development of the economy and leading the way as the most prominent Islamic bank in the Sultanate. Observing and learning from the challenges during the

pandemic, Bank Nizwa takes benefit in drawing Sharia-compliant banking further and ensure that it registers growth even in exceptional situations.

The growth of Islamic Banking in the Sultanate is most encouraging and has become significant in a short space of time through various support and policy measures adopted by the Central Bank of Oman.

In less than eight years, Oman has become the world's 15th largest Islamic banking industry and commands a 15.1 per cent share of the Sultanate's total banking assets as of end-June 2021.

In upholding values of transparency, ethics and fairness in all its endeavours, Bank Nizwa conducts its operations in accordance with the Banking Law, the Islamic Banking Regulatory Framework, and the bank's well-defined policies and procedures.

Bank Nizwa has established its position as a bank built on strong corporate principles and has therefore earned the support of its customers and shareholders alike.



PAID-UP CAPITAL: By increasing the paid-up capital, Bank Nizwa will be geared up for the next phase of growth and increased returns for shareholders. - Supplied picture

DELEGATION VISIT

Madayn woos Saudi investors to invest in Ibri Industrial City

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Eng. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Falih, Investment Minister of Saudi Arabia, accompanied by a delegation, visited on Monday the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates - Madayn at its headquarters in the Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM).

Welcoming the delegation, Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, and Chairman of Madayn's Board of Directors emphasised the robust bilateral ties between the Sultanate and Saudi Arabia and the significance of economic integration and trade relations between the two countries.

Masan encouraged Saudi investors and businessmen to set up businesses in Ibri Industrial City, which is strategically located on the road leading to the new border between Oman and Saudi Arabia. "Ibri Industrial City will offer sig-



OPPORTUNITIES: Ibri Industrial City will offer significant opportunities for Saudi industries targeting the Omani market and vice versa. - Supplied picture

nificant opportunities for Saudi industries targeting the Omani market and vice versa and shall feature a variety of industries, most notably the logistics industry," he pointed out.

He informed that the total area of Madayn's existing industrial cities and those that are under development has touched around 140

million square metres with 2,200 projects operating in these industrial cities, and the number of the workforce has surpassed 62,000.

"The total investment volume has reached OMR6.8 billion in the various industrial cities where the manufacturing industries represent the majority of the total investments, as they constitute ap-

proximately 83 per cent of the total investments," Masan added.

According to last year's industrial survey on the existing industries within the industrial cities, the value of raw materials used in production has exceeded OMR1 billion and the imported raw materials constitute more than 71 per cent. This shall act as an incentive for the Saudi cluster industries to expand in the Sultanate's industrial cities. Moreover, the value of products by factories and projects based in the industrial cities has exceeded OMR3.7 billion during 2020, with exports from these amounting to more than 73 per cent.

The high-profile Saudi delegation also got acquainted with Oman's first tech park and Madayn's technology arm - the Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM). KOM is home to over 190 local, regional and global companies, institutions and organisations ranging from flourishing home-grown SMEs and leading higher education providers to thriving busi-

nesses capitalising on KOM's well-established reputation as a centre of excellence and opportunity.

Madayn vision

On her part, Ibtisam bint Ahmed Al Farooji, Director General of Investor Services at Madayn, elaborated on Madayn Vision 2040, incentives offered to investors and available investment opportunities. Al Farooji explained that Madayn's vision revolves around building world-class business cities based on partnership while maintaining the Omani identity.

"Madayn aims to achieve an enhanced government role for comprehensive and sustainable economic and social development. This enhanced role shall be achieved through firming up a partnership with the private sector to develop and operate business cities with integrated services and rapid response to variations while adopting best solutions and technologies that meet the needs of investors," she pointed out.

REPORT

GCC corporate profits soar in second quarter

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The resumption of economic activity in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to almost full scale was reflected in corporate profits booked during the second quarter of 2021.

"Aggregate profits during the quarter breached pre-COVID levels to reach \$45.0 billion during 2021 second quarter against \$14.2 billion during 2020 second quarter," the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest said in its report. "The sequential growth in net profit was also healthy at 17.6 per cent as a majority of the sectors posted growth as compared to last year," it added.

Saudi Arabian companies reported the biggest absolute increase in earnings that rose by \$26.5 billion or 356.6 per cent year-on-year to reach \$33.9 billion during the second quarter of 2021.

HIGHEST GENERATION LEVEL

Dhofar Wind Power achieves new record

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Rural Areas Electricity Company (Tanweer) - a member of Nama Group- announced a new highest generation level at Dhofar Wind project exceeding 30 gigawatt-hours (GWh) in July, the highest since the wind farm commenced commercial operation in November 2019.

Power project

The plant, Oman's first wind-based power project and one of the most prominent renewable energy projects, managed to reach this level of power generation at an average wind speed of 12.6 meters per second (m/s).

On this occasion, Ahmed Said Al Harthy, Tanweer Acting CEO, said, "Tanweer seeks to develop and implement studies to support economic diversification plans, promote sustainable energy, and achieve optimal energy use by focusing on renewable energy projects in the company's concession areas."

"Dhofar Wind Power Plant is part of the electricity transmission grid in the province and supplies customers with more than 190 GWh of clean electricity," he added.

The wind farm has a generation capacity of 50 MW with 13 wind turbines, each turbine with a production capacity of 3.8

MW. The generated electricity is transmitted via high voltage lines (132 kV) connected to the main grid in the Governorate of Dhofar to supply the customers connected to it.

Al Harthy added that Dhofar Wind Power Plant is only one component of the greater good Tanweer seeks.

The company concentrates on strengthening the electricity system in its concession area in the governorates, in line with its relentless efforts to develop and safely operate its grid.

Celebrating this achievement comes as an important milestone in achieving the company's vision, which aims to produce at least 20 per cent of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025, thus supporting the Sultanate's efforts to reach 30 per cent of clean electricity production by 2030.

Tanweer's projects to reach this end include inaugurating a solar power plant in the Wilayat of Al Mazyona in the Dhofar Governorate in 2015 on 8000 square metres and an annual production capacity of 550-MWh. Al Mazyona Solar Power Plant is the first commercial project to produce electricity using renewable energy in Oman. In addition, it promotes the use of clean, renewable energy through its contribution to reducing 433 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually.

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MARKET

MSX index ends higher

National Aluminium Products, up 7.63 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Education & Training, down 6.61 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 3,969.91 points, up 0.10 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.17 per cent at 592.51 points. National Aluminium Products, up 7.63 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Education & Training, down 6.61 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of OIFC was the most active in terms of the number of shares traded and in terms of turnover. A total number of 760 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.35 million, with more than 18.64 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 18 advanced, 8 declined and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net buyers for OMR47,000 while local investors were net sellers for OMR27,000 followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR20,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 6,321.10 points, up 0.26 per cent. Prices of Takaful Oman, Global Financial Investments, Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, and Al Anwar Investment were up by 5.21 per cent, 2.94 per cent, 2.7 per cent, 2.02 per cent, and 1.7 per cent respectively. Prices of National Life & General Insurance closed down by 1.07 per cent. Industrial Index closed at 5,967.09 points, up 0.19 per cent. Prices of National Aluminium, and Oman Cables Industry were up by 7.63 per cent, 2.04 per cent, 0 per cent, 0 per cent, and 0 per cent respectively. Prices of Gulf International Chemicals, and Raysut Cement were down by 6.14 per cent, and 0.37 per cent respectively. Services Index was up by 0.10 per cent before closing at 1,712.74 points. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%	
MSX 30 INDEX	3,971.66	3,966.24	3,969.91	3,965.94	3.97	0.10	
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,321.10	6,305.79	6,321.10	6,304.68	16.42	0.26	
Industry Index	5,967.80	5,957.54	5,967.09	5,955.58	11.50	0.19	
Services Index	1,716.18	1,711.17	1,712.74	1,711.00	1.74	0.10	
MSX Shariah Index	595.32	591.64	592.51	593.53	-1.02	-0.17	
MSX TR INDEX	5,032.73	5,025.86	5,030.50	4,860.02	170.49	3.51	

Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
18,640,947	2,351,714	760	21,689,442,175	18	8	23	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 30

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST&FIN	4,131,956	537,016	133	0.129	0.132	0.129	0.130	0.126	0.004	3.175	0.132	0.131	0.132	0.100	30,810,000
OM000001160	NATIONAL GAS	174,700	25,235	17	0.142	0.145	0.142	0.144	0.140	0.004	2.857	0.145	0.145	0.150	0.100	12,240,000
OM000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR	15,000	15,000	2	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.980	0.020	2.941	1.000	0.972	1.000	0.100	80,700,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV	489,500	49,200	38	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.099	0.002	2.020	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.100	9,900,000
OM000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,510,000	181,200	16	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.118	0.002	1.695	0.120	0.119	0.121	0.100	24,000,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	747,885	47,400	31	0.064	0.064	0.063	0.063	0.062	0.001	1.613	0.064	0.063	0.065	0.100	19,350,218
OM0000006920	VISION INSURANCE	459,969	37,243	26	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	8,100,000
OM000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN.S	10,000	1,160	1	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.001	0.870	0.116	0.115	0.120	0.100	33,864,480
OM000001533	OMINVEST	600	191	1	0.318	0.318	0.318	0.314	0.314	0.000	0.000	0.318	0.310	0.336	0.100	253,640,511
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	23,000	5,240	4	0.228	0.228	0.227	0.228	0.228	0.000	0.000	0.228	0.227	0.228	0.100	75,438,978
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	22,589	8,408	15	0.374	0.374	0.370	0.374	0.374	0.000	0.000	0.370	0.374	0.374	0.100	46,711,857
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	500,120	54,013	12	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	210,563,006
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	614,910	270,781	22	0.442	0.442	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.000	0.000	0.440	0.420	0.442	0.100	1,572,768,908
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	463,514	42,643	5	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.092	0.093	0.100	275,085,731
OM0000003968	QOREDOO	9,000	3,474	3	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.000	0.000	0.386	0.382	0.388	0.100	251,264,473
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	101,590	47,138	3	0.464	0.464	0.464	0.464	0.464	0.000	0.000	0.464	0.464	0.468	0.100	25,520,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	40,421	10,914	14	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	-0.001	-0.369	0.270	0.266	0.275	0.100	54,000,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	113,238	86,518	22	0.768	0.768	0.764	0.764	0.768	-0.004	-0.521	0.764	0.756	0.764	0.100	573,000,000
OM0000002234	RENAISSANCE SER	131,000	58,950	6	0.450	0.450	0.450	0.450	0.454	-0.004	-0.881	0.450	0.448	0.450	0.100	106,384,500
Total	19	9,558,792	1,481,751	369												

OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	2,912,062	395,155	128	0.139	0.144	0.135	0.141	0.131	0.010	7.634	0.144	0.141	0.144	0.100	4,733,574
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	55,000	5,540	6	0.102	0.102	0.100	0.101	0.099	0.005	5.208	0.100	0.097	0.102	0.100	10,100,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV H	2,014,690	140,128	60	0.069	0.070	0.068	0.070	0.068	0.002	2.941	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.100	14,000,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	1,302,834	98,409	48	0.077	0.077	0.074	0.076	0.074	0.002	2.703	0.076	0.076	0.080	0.100	5,262,500
OM0000004925	ALBATTINAH POWER	98,000	4,968	3	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.050	0.001	2.000	0.051	0.050	0.052	0.100	34,419,259
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INV	60,490	3,693	4	0.061	0.063	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.001	1.687	0.063	0.061	0.063	0.100	4,270,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	50,000	4,650	5	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.092	0.001	1.087	0.093	0.093	0.095	0.100	12,000,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	13,217	1,282	3	0.098	0.098	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.001	1.042	0.097	0.098	0.100	0.100	222,078,947
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	319,451	33,532	18	0.105	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.962	0.105	0.104	0.107	0.100	18,375,000
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR	29,000	3,943	1	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.137	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.135	0.138	0.100	16,800,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	511	85	1	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.166	0.000	0.000	0.166	0.166	0.000	0.100	4,980,000
OM0000001301	DHOOFAR CATTLE	28,632	2,291	5	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.084	0.100	5,488,000
OM0000001485	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	126	24	1	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.000	0.000	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.100	304,051,869
OM0000001517	HISCB BANK OMAN	11,620	1,089	2	0.092	0.094	0.092	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.093	0.094	0.100	188,029,402
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	518	101	1	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.207	0.207	0.000	0.000	0.195	0.195	0.207	0.100	14,097,457
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	549,004	32,545	14	0.059	0.060	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.100	20,599,520
OM0000002549	BANK DHOOFAR	371,500	43,837	5	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.117	0.118	0.100	353,569,469
OM0000003281	TANGIER FINANCE	172,200	14,129	20	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.100	12,753,153
OM0000003521	GULFAR ENGINEER	302,985	24,239	17	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.100	16,238,916
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	9,316	1,202	4	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.100	10,500,955
OM0000004932	AL SUWADI POWER	249	18	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.100	27,149,130
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	539,000	24,794	11	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	67,279,667
OM0000007407	DHOOFAR GENERATING	126	16	1	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.000	0.000	0.126	0.122	0.126	0.100	28,002,240
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	3,000	990	1	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.000	0.000	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.100	1,000,000
OM0000007043	NATIONAL LIFE INS	6,582	2,435	5	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.374	-0.004	-1.070	0.370	0.368	0.370	0.100	98,050,000
OM0000004735	SEMOBOP SALALAH	101,000	8,181	2	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.080	0.081	0.100	77,320,328
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	32,000	2,630	3	0.083	0.083	0.082	0.082	0.084	-0.002	-2.381	0.082	0.082	0.083	0.100	12,753,153
OM0000002028	GULF INT'CHEMI	152,642	16,333	13	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.114	-0.007	-6.140	0.107	0.107	0.109	0.100	2,247,000
OM0000002580	OMAN EDU TRAINING	10,000	2,400	2	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.257	-0.017	-6.615	0.240	0.232	0.250	0.100	16,800,000
Total	39	9,041,255	988,677	388												

INDIA RATINGS AND RESEARCH

Indian states' fiscal deficit to moderate to 4.1% of GDP

MUMBAI: India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) expects the aggregate fiscal deficit of India's states to moderate to 4.1 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The agency's earlier forecast for FY22 was 4.3 per cent. The impact of the second COVID wave on the economy notwithstanding, Ind-Ra estimates nominal GDP to grow 15.6 per cent in FY22, higher than its February estimate of 14.5 per cent in FY22. The revenue receipts of state gov-

ernments are expected to improve, backed by an economic recovery, resulting from a large section of the populace receiving vaccinations. This will lead to states further easing restrictions on business and commercial activity. -ANI

CONSTRUCTION

L&T Construction gets significant contracts for its various businesses

Times News Service

MUSCAT: L&T Construction, the construction arm of L&T has won a slew of orders in Saudi Arabia and India for its various businesses.

Power Transmission & Distribution

The Power Transmission & Distribution business has bagged an order for the turnkey construction of a substation in Saudi Arabia. The scope of the Gas Insulated Substation project involving four different voltage levels up to 380kV comprises the associated control, protection, automation, telecommunication systems and civil & electromechanical works.

Smart World & Communication

The Smart World & Communication business has bagged yet another Smart City project. The project has been awarded by the



Moradabad Smart City Limited to design, develop, implement, and manage the operations & maintenance of a Command-and-Control Centre (CCC), CCTV surveillance, smart traffic solutions, and to integrate various ICT components with an Integrated Command and Control Center Platform (ICCC) for Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh.

The vision of this project is to establish an Integrated Com-

mand and Control Center Smart City Platform/applications to monitor and operate Smart City services terminating onto these applications. The scope of work includes Intelligent Traffic Control System with traffic enforcement, Adaptive Traffic Control System (ATCS), City Surveillance System with video analytics, Citizen Web Portal, a mobile app and helpdesk, Smart Parking Management Solution etc.

Buildings & Factories

The Buildings & Factories business has secured an order to construct Multilevel Parking and Advocates Chamber for The High Court at Allahabad with an approximate built-up area of 20 Lakhs Sq. ft. This project consists of 2,294 advocate chambers, 2,323 car parking spaces in a multilevel car parking, 1,552 two-wheeler parking spaces with associated utility buildings.

SHARE MARKETS

Asian shares rise on dovish Fed chair, oil up as hurricane batters Louisiana

HONG KONG: Asian shares started the week with

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Filipino, with over 21 years of experience (airport, seaport, infra, buildings) Working as a consultant since 2010 Having Oman D/L and NOC.

Contact: +96899075683
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Syrian Female seeking suitable placement with Bachelor in Business Management, 6 years experience in Accounting, Finance, Administration, Office Coordinator with excellent communication skills in Arabic & English. Family Visa with valid D/L.

Pls contact 91917771

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Omani 37 yrs, second secondary, 6 courses in health and safety, public relation and debt collection, Driving license for 19 yrs. Languages known Arabic, English. Resident in al Khuwair,

Contact 99340475
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Indian Male, 45 Yrs, MBA Marketing, having 20+ years experience (7 yrs Gulf) looking for suitable Senior Management position in Purchase, Contracts, Supply Chain Management. Oman DL & NOC available.

Contact No. 97228393

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

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With 15years experience in 5 countries including GCC & Africa. Handled accounts of Trading, Manufacturing, Oil & Gas, Construction & service company. Available for full time employment in Muscat with transferable visa.

Contact 93270023
rajugetme10@yahoo.com

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Email: kramct2021@gmail.com

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junaidsalaahi@gmail.com

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Indian Male B. Com, MBA having 14 yrs Exp in Accounts/Finance & Admin, upto finalisation, OODO, ERP, Tally & Online Softwares. Oman D/L, Noc/Release Available. Can join immediately.

Email: mq_199820@yahoo.co.in
GSM: 99279626

HR & Administration Professional

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Contact 94948676

JOB WANTED

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Electrical Engineer, 8 years experience in projects, O&G, O&M, Management, valid Visa and D/L. Contact 97778314

Experienced I/Driver, Speaks English/Arabic. Contact 79250786

HSE adviser iosH certified with 4 years experience. Contact 94070019. Email: mubashirosmann89@gmail.com

MEP Mechanical Engineer with 2 years exp. Contact 79027224

A Senior general physician with valid MOH licence, data flow, prometric, ACLS BLS certificates looking for a suitable placement in Muscat area. NOC available from current employer. Contact Whatsapp 91465358

B.E Civil Engineer having 14 yrs Experience in construction of building & Roads with Consultants and Contractor. NOC available immediate joining. Contact 94011294. Email: adnanluky@gmail.com

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

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Inventory, Purchase, Sales: Indian male 30, having 8 years experience in Retail, F&B operations, Accounting and various other skills, NOC available. Contact 96219904
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Indian Female currently in Muscat having experience in office administration, Logistics management, Customer relation and data entry seeking suitable jobs Contact 79639093. Email: gokulah1993@gmail.com

SALES/MARKETING

Indian, excellent English, Masters, Arabic speaker, 18years professional Oman experience in EPC, Media, Healthcare, Aviation. Contact 99283938

Indian male experience in Sales and Marketing for 12 years with D/L looking for suitable placement. Contact 71790238

Indian male, MBA, BCOM having 7 yrs Gulf & 4 yrs India experience in HR / ADMIN & Purchaser looking for suitable placement. Contact 97914340, 95388417. Email: sampathrajkv@gmail.com

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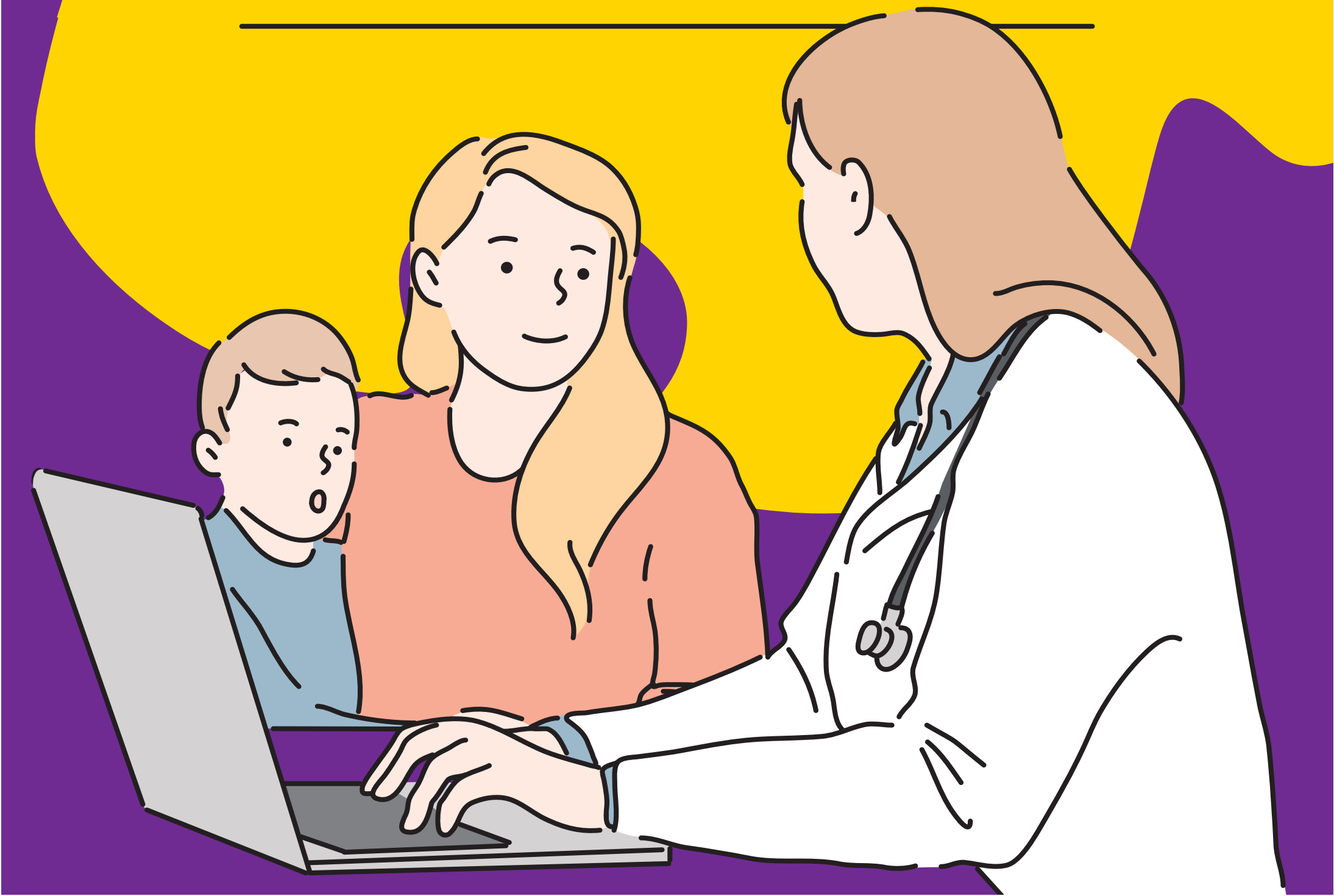
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WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES HOPE

Diagnosing and treating LGS



When Lili was six months old, her parents John and Natalie noticed something odd. As they approached their daughter's crib, Lili would have a spasm. At first they wondered if she had been frightened. But when the spasms didn't stop, their intuition kicked in — they knew something was wrong. They called Lili's pediatrician, describing her responses as "seizure like." This ultimately led to a diagnosis of infantile spasms that required hospitalisation to treat.

Over the next several months, Lili's spasms became full-blown seizures. Her parents found themselves tirelessly counting the seizures, losing track of the number and type. Overwhelmed and desperate for answers, they began researching online, eventually finding a source noting that infantile spasms could potentially lead to Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS). It was the first time they'd heard of the disease, and they wondered if it might be the root of Lili's problem.

READING THE SIGNS

LGS is a rare form of epilepsy that affects roughly 48,000 children and adults in the U.S. It is one of the most difficult-to-treat forms of epilepsy in part because symptoms can evolve over time, masking the signs needed to confirm a diagnosis. Children often experience behavioural issues, such as irritability, an inability to solve problems and attention-seeking behaviour. Up to nearly two-thirds of young children with LGS may also show signs of developmental delay before the first onset of seizures.

Typically, doctors look for three signs to confirm a diagnosis: multiple types of seizures (which can include tonic, atonic or drop), developmental delays and abnormal results from an EEG — a test that assesses brainwave patterns.

SEEKING EFFECTIVE TREATMENT

There is no cure for LGS and, once a diagnosis is confirmed, treatment options can be as diverse as the individuals they're designed

to help. This can feel daunting for families searching for the right level of care. Often a combination approach works best. Anti-epileptic medications, surgeries and dietary approaches, such as a high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet, may be recommended.

Having a strong team of specialists is pivotal to understanding what works best. Epileptologists, neurologists, pediatricians and dietitians all play an important role in helping families connect dots and find the right combination of care.

A DIAGNOSIS BRINGS HOPE

John and Natalie still recall the moment when they connected then four-year-old Lili's seizures with LGS. That knowledge empowered them to ask her doctors the questions that led to a diagnosis and the answers confirmed what they already felt to be true. With a confirmed diagnosis, they could work together to treat the syndrome.

Today Lili is twenty and according to John, "happy and easy

LGS is a rare form of epilepsy, it is one of the most difficult-to-treat forms of epilepsy in part because symptoms can evolve over time



going," but it has taken a lot of support to get her here and there may still be a long road ahead. In 80 to 90 percent of cases, LGS continues through adolescence into adulthood and while positive changes may occur along the way, seizures are usually a permanent part of life and impaired mental function and behavioural issues may result in the need for lifelong care.

John knows that support is pivotal in helping Lili live her best life. And he wants others to understand the importance of obtaining a diagnosis as soon as possible. Experience has taught him that once a diagnosis is reached, instead of targeting seizure types, doctors can target the syndrome itself and all that it encompasses. Receiving a specific diagnosis also helps ensure patients are given the right medication for the right condition. It's for this reason that inaccurate or unspecified diagnosis can do more harm than good. Having a confirmed diagnosis also allows families to find support they need through foundations, lo-

cal school systems, epilepsy centers and support groups, which are vital for connecting with people who've been there.

WHERE TO BEGIN

If your loved one is experiencing seizures, start with your doctor. Remember to seek more than one opinion. Because LGS is rare, it's important to find specialists who understand its complexity and magnitude. Seizures are Signs is a website dedicated to families seeking answers about rare forms of epilepsy, such as LGS. It provides tools for finding specialists and support groups, lists information on treatment options, and allows you to create a customized discussion guide to help you start a conversation with your doctor that could lead to a more specific diagnosis.

When beginning a journey toward a diagnosis of LGS or any difficult-to-identify condition, it's important to remember that it takes knowledge, persistence, and support to get there, but you are never alone. —BPT



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FEATURE



HOW MUSHROOMS CAN BENEFIT THE ENVIRONMENT

As we look to transition from fossil to bio-based materials, fungi are becoming the ultimate biodegradable building blocks for furniture, fashion, housing and beyond.

Mycelium, the silky thread that binds fungus, is being adapted to create everything from shoes to coffins to packaging and robust building materials. Best of all, it literally feeds on trash and agricultural byproducts, detoxifying them along the way.

The biodegradable material that is also grown vertically to save space and uses little water, has emerged as a low emission, circular economy solution in the bid to transition from extractive, carbon-based products.

There are up to five million types of fungus that constitute a “kingdom on their own,” says Maurizio Montalti, a Dutch-based designer and researcher who has been working with mycelium for a decade.

Fungi are the “fundamental agents that enable the transformation of not only nutrition but also information across living systems. We couldn’t live without it,” said Montalti of what has also been called nature’s internet.

Having experimented with mycelium furniture design, in 2018 Montalti founded Mogu, a company commercialising fungi-based bio-material products – including sound-absorbing acoustic panels created from mycelium grown on corn crop refuse, rice straw, spent coffee grounds, discarded

seaweed and even clam shells.

But fungi aren’t changing the world just yet.

“There is a lot of excitement these days when talking about mycelium,” Montalti said, adding that the challenge is in designing a “product that works and can compete in the market.”

And although shoe and apparel giant Adidas as well as fashion labels Stella McCartney and Gucci have all recently hopped on the fungi bandwagon to try and meet that challenge, mycelium is yet to go mass-scale.

Here are four products that could herald the start of a revolution.

1. Mycelium ‘living cocoon’ coffins

“Are you waste or compost?” That is the question according to Netherlands-based mycelium coffin manufacturer, Loop. The company is offering the dead a chance to birth new life via their “living cocoon” coffin, which it claims was the first of its kind.

As bodies decompose within a fully compostable mycelium cocoon, they can become part of the solution to reviving biodiversity that has depleted to the point where more than a million species are at risk of extinction.

“To be buried, we cut down a tree, work it intensively and try to shut ourselves off as well as possible from microorganisms,” Loop said in a state-

ment in reference to conventional coffins. “And for those that don’t want to be buried, we waste our nutrient-rich body by burning it with cremation, polluting the air and ignoring the potential of our human body. It’s as if we see ourselves as waste, while we can be a valuable part of nature.”

2. Mushroom ‘leather’ shoes

Mycotech, based in Bandung, Indonesia, was growing gourmet mushrooms in 2012 before it shifted its business to use fungi to create a sustainable alternative to leather products, especially shoes.

Founder, Adi Reza Nugroho says it has great environmental advantages over traditional leather. “We consume less water, we don’t have to kill animals, we can do vertical farming so we can save some space,” he said, adding that it also produces fewer emissions and requires none of the chemicals used in plastic-based materials.

Feeding on agricultural waste such

as sawdust, it only takes the mycelium a few days to grow to the point where it is ready to be harvested, tanned and further processed. The resulting material is breathable, flexible, robust and can last for years. While Mycotech is still creating limited runs of its fungi shoes, the company has orders up until 2027.

And this relatively small-scale start-up is not alone. While leather continues to dominate Adidas’ sneaker lines, the German company is now also marketing mycelium shoes. Released in April, the Stan Smith Mylo is made using the brand’s “Mylo” mycelium material.

Fungi-based footwear is also being touted by eco-conscious grassroots designers because the shoes can literally biodegrade – as illustrated by these Mycoflex-based slippers designed by Charlotta Aman.

3. Transforming plastic and toxic waste

Since they feed on trash, mushrooms can also detoxify our waste and transform it into usable materials that are non-extractive, offering a neat solution for closing the loop on unrecyclable plastic, for example.

Established in 2018, US-based Mycocycle uses fungi to remove toxins from building materials like asphalt or petrochemical-based waste.

“We are actually using mushrooms to cycle these toxins, make them non-toxic and available for reuse in a closed loop economy,” said company founder, Joanne Rodriguez.

A response to the fact that 85 per cent of landfill space in the US has already been used up, Mycocycle aims to help in the shift to zero waste by decontaminating toxic building materials like asphalt that previously could not be reused.

Mycocycle claims that its trash-fed mycelium is fire and water-resistant and can be manufactured into a host of new products such as styrofoam, insulation, packaging and building materials.

“We take trash and make treasure, decarbonizing waste and creating a new value stream in the circular economy,” said Rodriguez.

4. A biodegradable building block

A fully compostable, zero-emissions mushroom tower called the Hy-Fy was constructed with 10,000 mycelium bricks in New York back in 2014. Numerous prototypes have been built since but mushroom-building largely remains in the conceptual stage.

“Co-create with fungi,” is the mantra for the My-Co Space, a mycelium tiny house currently being exhibited in Frankfurt’s Metzlerpark. -rw



ROUND-UP

Nissan X-Trail offers countless features to enhance city driving

A great, practical option Nissan X-Trail is roomy, has solid capabilities, next-level technologies, and offers countless confidence-inspiring innovative safety technologies, including intelligent around view monitor, rear cross-traffic alert, and blind-spot warning technology

MUSCAT: If you are looking for the best car for city driving, Nissan X-Trail, the highly customer-centric SUV, should be your choice.

A great, practical option Nissan X-Trail is roomy, has solid capabilities, next-level technologies, and offers countless confidence-inspiring innovative safety technologies, including intelligent around view monitor, rear cross-traffic alert, and blind-spot warning technology.

Making city driving easy, X-Trail delivers with best-in-class front headroom and the supreme comfort of fatigue-reducing Zero Gravity front seats. There is a second row that slides and reclines, so users can adjust for maximum legroom, more cargo space, or anywhere in between. And with available tasteful touches like Power Panoramic Moonroof and leather-appointed seats, this is one natural, relaxed, and decidedly upscale environment.

Hands full after a day of shopping? Nissan Intelligent Mobility makes everything easier. With just a swing of the foot under the centre of the bumper with the intelligent key in the pocket and the liftgate will open in seconds with the help of a motion-activated liftgate.

Intelligent Around View Monitor



tor uses four cameras to give you a virtual 360° view of your surroundings. Selectable split-screen close-ups of the front, rear and kerbside make parking easier than ever. And since all obstacles aren't stationary like shopping carts, the available Moving Object Detection system can warn you about moving objects detected in your vicinity.

Unlike traditional systems that only maintain a set speed, X-Trail's available intelligent cruise control also helps maintain an adjustable set distance between you and the car in front of you. As traffic slows down or speeds up, X-Trail will respond accordingly.

The intelligent emergency braking system keeps an eye on the speed and proximity to the vehicle ahead, warning if one needs to slow down. It can also apply braking if the driver fails to respond. If a collision is unavoidable, this feature will engage the brakes to help reduce the speed and severity of impact.

A senior official of Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, "It is the ideal car for city driving. Nissan X-Trail offers space, muscular styling, solid capabilities, next-level technologies, comfort and flexibility to drive around the city."

He adds, "In addition, from staying in touch and connected wherever you go to filling the cabin with a rich, beautiful sound, you will experience city outing on a whole new level with X-Trail's advanced technology. Nissan Intelligent Mobility transforms X-Trail from just a car into your responsive partner, always looking out for you and those around you."

Built for real family outings in the city and off-road, Nissan X-Trail is a popular SUV with the latest technologies, yet still has the traditional benefits of a crossover. Nissan X-Trail delivers an "Excellent" GSO rated mileage of 15.1km/litre. This mileage is obtained under laboratory test conditions conducted by GSO for the 2.5L SV variant.

Taking care of diversified requirements

Nissan X-Trail has earned a stamp of approval across the globe. With its strengthened qualities and advanced technologies, the Nissan X-Trail is taking care of the diversified requirements of customers in Oman.

Nissan Intelligent Mobility is the name for the brand's strategy which makes the cars more desirable by redefining how they are driven, powered and integrated into society. Powered by a range of Nissan's Intelligent Mobility technologies, the X-Trail is equipped with three new driver-friendly innovative features - Intelligent Rear-View Mirror, Intelligent Emergency Brakes, and Intelligent Cruise Control. The goal is to make Nissan drivers feel more confident, excited, and connected, while also enhancing road and passenger safety.

New dynamism

Nissan X-Trail has always been known for its sculpted and muscular styling, with chiselled lines, high wheel arches and elegant curves on the bonnet. All of those characteristics remain and are now showcased through a distinctive

and robust redesign of the front end, adding a new dynamism and more premium styling cues.

When it comes to the exterior of the X-Trail, at its heart is Nissan's latest 'V-motion' grille, wider than before for a more impactful appearance on the road and echoed in the design of the bumper beneath. The redesign makes much greater use of the X-Trail's body colour, with the visible black plastic benefiting from a smart new gloss black finish.

For shopping adventures

The Nissan X-Trail is a spacious five or seven-seat crossover aimed at adventure-loving families. The boot on the Nissan X-Trail is larger than before. Thanks to improved packaging, VDA capacity is up from 550 litres to 565 litres on the five-seat version with all seats in place.

Distinguished interiors

Nissan X-Trail has a wider range of interior door trims to distinguish the different grades, while the central armrest storage area has been redesigned. All models are equipped with the CVT XTronic automatic transmission with a restyled gear selector which features a new leather-style gaiter. Depending on the grade chosen, other available features include an opening panoramic sunroof, leather upholstery, privacy glass, dual-zone automatic air-conditioning and roof rails.

Intelligent driving

Nissan X-Trail continues to offer countless confidence-inspiring innovative safety technologies,

including Intelligent Around View Monitor, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, and Blind Spot Warning technology. These advanced technologies amplify Nissan's Intelligent Mobility philosophy and provide Intelligent Power, Intelligent Driving and Integration to increase a driver's confidence and trust in their Nissan X-Trail.

Intelligent Rear-View Mirror gives Nissan X-Trail drivers enhanced visibility making their driving experience and reversing even more comfortable with a built-in LCD monitor displaying images from a camera mounted on the rear of the vehicle.

Reflecting customer demands for a superior audio option in the X-Trail, the model features two tweeters at the base of the windscreen, a woofer in each front door and a mid-range speaker in each rear door.

Intelligent Emergency Braking (I-EB) is a system that monitors the Nissan X-Trail's speed and proximity to the vehicle ahead and warns the driver if needed to slow down. It can also apply brakes if the driver fails to respond.

If a collision is unavoidable, this feature will engage the brakes to help reduce the speed and severity of impact.

Improved driving safety

Nissan continuously develops technology to help improve driving safety. Intelligent Around View Mirror gives drivers the power to see more than just what is behind them when parking.

Nissan X-Trail offers the Intelligent Around View Monitor, which consists of four cameras that give

drivers a virtual 360° bird's-eye view of their vehicle, with selectable split-screen close-ups of the front, rear, and curbside views, for a better look. And since all obstacles aren't stationary, Moving Object Detection keeps an eye around the Nissan X-Trail and can warn drivers about moving objects detected in the vicinity.

Nissan's Front Collision Warning system is a distinct technological innovation. The system supports the driver in making a judgment by giving information about the situation which is going on outside the typical field of view. Blind Spot Warning (BSW) is a system that detects another vehicle in the blind spot area and an indicator appears in the driver's or front passenger's door pillar and on the available Advanced Drive-Assist Display. Then, if the turn signal is on, the indicator flashes with a warning chime.

Stability control

The Intelligent 4x4 is responsive and brilliantly adapts to changing conditions. Sand, rain-covered pavement or tight turn, the system automatically sends power to the wheels that need it most. Intelligent Cruise Control as mentioned earlier, allows drivers to set desired adjustable distance between them and the car in front.

As traffic slows down or speeds up, Nissan X-Trail can respond accordingly. Intelligent Engine Braking is a system that uses the CVT transmission to apply engine braking as a driver is slowing for a corner or coming to a stop.

Nissan's Hill Start Assist (HSA) is also available on the X-Trail. It also comes with two airbags as standard, plus side curtain airbags on SL models, driver assistance systems including anti-lock brakes, electronic brakeforce distribution and stability control. Other standard equipment includes cruise control with speed limiter, Bluetooth connectivity, dual climate control and alloy wheels.

Book a home test drive

Nissan Oman is extending a 'book a home test drive' service for its prospective customers. The service enables potential customers to schedule their test drives online at their convenience. A home test drive can be booked simply by logging on to the official SBA Nissan Oman website.

OMAN ARAB BANK

OAB picks winners of its Hasaad Savings Scheme for July



MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently announced the names of the most recent round of draw winners for its Hasaad Savings Scheme for July. The draw saw 101 customers winning prizes of OMR 500 each. As for Elite account holders, two customers won OMR 10,000 each from Khasab and Al Amerat branches.

Commenting on the results of the draw, Rashad Al Shaikh, Head of the Retail Banking Division at OAB, said, "Our fundamental belief as a financial institution is to be able to encourage the benefits of saving habits amongst our customers, to help them fulfil their dreams and aspirations. With the different categories of the Hasaad scheme, regular saving is an easy practice for all individuals. In turn, we look forward to rewarding them for their efforts."

The Hasaad Savings Scheme 2021 will see 101 lucky winners each month from the 53 branches winning OMR 500 each. This is in

addition to a Big Prize draw which will see two winners of OMR 10,000 each, every quarter.

The Elite Draws will see two winners every month of OMR 10,000 each. This is replaced by an Elite grand prize draw conducted every three months with one lucky winner of OMR 25,000.

"I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the winners and urge everyone to continue saving, especially in these unprecedented times, to increase their chances of winning in the remaining draws for the year," Rashad added.

Oman Arab Bank has a rich and proud history as one of the first financial institutions to be established in the Sultanate. Today, the Bank operates a nationwide network of 53 branches and representative offices with 150 ATMs spread across Oman. OAB provides a complete range of financial products and services through its OAB online app.

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