

OMAN'S REPRESENTATIVE TO UN ELECTED 4TH PANEL HEAD
The UN General Assembly elected by acclamation Dr. Mohammed Awad Al Hassan, the Sultanate of Oman's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) as the Chairman of the Fourth Committee "Special Political and Decolonisation Committee" during the 77th session of the General Assembly. **>A2**



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HM THE SULTAN GREETES KING OF JORDAN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Abdullah II of Jordan on the occasion of the anniversary of his accession to the throne. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to King Abdullah II, wishing him good health, happiness and a long life. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty for the return of this and similar occasions on King Abdullah II and the people of Jordan while they realise further aspirations of progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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**SAYYID SHIHAB
RECEIVES
AMBASSADOR
OF KOREA**

His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs received Kiejoo Kim, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Sultanate of Oman, in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Wednesday. The two sides reviewed bilateral ties and exchanged views on several matters of common interest. **-ONA**

GLOBAL OUTLOOK TO FUEL LOCAL GROWTH



\$227mn

In February this year, the US imported over OMR 87.6 million (\$227 million) worth of Omani products, the third highest monthly recording in 10 years



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Over 500 drowning incidents reported

1 More than 500 drowning incidents were reported in Oman in 2021. A report by the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDA) said on Wednesday that the water rescue teams dealt with 521 calls of drowning accidents in 2021. **>A3**

WORLD

**Car drives into crowd
in Berlin, one dead**

2 A vehicle struck a crowd of people in Berlin on Wednesday, killing at least one person and leaving eight others injured, according to emergency services. **>A7**

MARKET

**GCC banks' aggregate
net profits top \$10bn**

3 GCC banks' aggregate net profits crossed \$10 billion in Q1-2022, one of the highest quarterly levels on record, backed by higher profits across the bloc. **>B1**

More Omani firms, particularly SMEs, must think global and raise the country's export-led growth

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Companies in Oman that adopt a global outlook by setting up export and service channels for overseas customers will benefit from increased revenue which, in turn, will enable them to



Maymuna Al Adawi,
Director, MoCIIP

contribute to the internal growth of the country.

That is according to economic experts, both at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP) as well as private sector bosses.

"Our economy is at an inflection point," said His Highness Sayyid Dr Adham Al Said, founder of The Firm. "While current challenges in global trade persist and Omani businesses continue to adjust to a post-COVID environment, local firms need to have an eye on the future opportunities."

"We have to work together to get more companies, particularly SMEs, thinking global and increasing Oman's export-led growth in sustainable goods, services and technologies," he added.

"Exports help companies become more competitive, diversified and more likely to survive tough economic times. In fact, it makes them more attractive to potential clients and partners at home and overseas," he went on to say. **>A4**



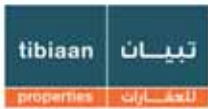
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China Media Group discusses news cooperation with Muscat Media Group



Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali praised the bilateral relations between Oman and China in political, economic, cultural and social spheres

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An official delegation from China Media Group (CMG) visited the headquarters of Muscat Media Group (MMG) yesterday, 8th June, to discuss the scope of cooperation and exchange of news reports between the two groups.

The visit and the agenda of the meeting was aimed at promoting cooperation between the two countries in economic and investment sectors and promotion of the Sultanate's tourism landmarks in China.

The Chinese delegation was represented by the regional office of

China Media Group for the Middle East. The delegation was headed by Chang Lee, executive director of the Regional Office and included a number of officials from the group.

Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali, Chief Executive Officer of MMG and Editor-in-Chief of Al Shabiba, represented the MMG.

The meeting was attended by Ali bin Hamad Al Rahbi, General Manager for Institutional and Government Communication in MMG, Hamda Al Balushi, Manager of Shabiba FM and Khalid Orabi, Business Development Manager of MMG.

Stressing the significance of cooperation and exchange of news between the two groups, Ahmed

Essa Al Zedjali, CEO of MMG, said the move would significantly reflect in the bilateral relations between the two countries. Exchange of news reports, video footage and photos generated by the two groups would go a long way in facilitating positive ties between the two countries.

Praising the good relations between the two countries, Al Zedjali pointed out that media could play a significant role in highlighting economic and investment opportunities in both the countries. It could also disseminate information on tourism sites and landmarks in both the countries, thus facilitating tourist traffic between the two countries. In this context, he said the media could encour-

age the Chinese tourists to visit the Sultanate, particularly in view of the oncoming winter season.

Al Zedjali said the MMG would provide news about the investment opportunities in the Sultanate, either in special economic zones or in the industrial estates, in a bid to attract Chinese investors.

He further said MMG has made its presence felt in the local and regional media, adding that it is the largest media group in the Sultanate with diverse media channels, including FM radio stations and platforms in the social media which reaches 3.6 million viewers on a daily basis and represents over 50% of the media market in the Sultanate.

Executive Director of the regional office of China Media

Group (ME) spoke on the media potentials of her group and its worldwide reach. She said that her group has tens of thousands of media persons who would provide MMG with similar reports on latest news and developments in China and cooperation opportunities between the two countries.

The two sides agreed on the release of such news and reports in various channels mainly the Arabic speaking channels CCTV, CCTV+ and AMSP.

Following the meeting, CEO of Muscat Media Group accompanied the delegation on a tour of the MMG, where the delegation acquainted itself with the equipment used for live broadcast of programmes.

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CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Cultural Days to showcase Oman's rich arts in Italy



ROME: Activities of the Omani Cultural Days began at the Colosseum Archaeological Park in the Italian capital, Rome.

The event is organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, with the aim of extending cultural communication between the Sultanate of Oman and the countries around the world through culture and arts. The Omani Cultural Days run through till 10 June 2022.

Sayyid Said Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the ministry is keen to be present in global events that enhance cultural communication between the Sultanate of Oman and other countries of the world.

He added that these fora represent an opportunity to promote for the Sultanate of Oman and highlight Omani culture and its rich arts in various fields.

He pointed out that these international participations are an opportunity to enhance the Sultanate of Oman's presence in the international arena at the art level, to gain more experiences and review rich blend of cultures



between the Sultanate of Oman and the rest of the world.

The opening ceremony included presentation of joint musical notes by Omani and Italian musicians, whose pieces varied between traditional and international, classical and contemporary works.

After the opening ceremony, the audience toured sections of the two exhibitions of photographs and fine arts. The exhibitions spotlight the wonderful nature of the Sultanate of Oman, its history and ancient civilization, as well as Oman's civilizational

and cultural landmarks, the authentic Omani customs, traditions and wildlife.

The photo gallery includes 38 pictures of Omani artists and 3 pictures of Italian artists.

The Fine Arts exhibition also includes 26 artworks by a number of Omani fine artists.

The opening ceremony was attended by Dr. Ahmed Salim Ba'omar, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Italian Republic, heads of diplomatic missions in Italy, officials from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Italian officials. -ONA



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More than 500 drowning cases reported in Oman

The usual places of drowning for children are swimming pools, bathtubs, buckets and natural bodies of water

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 500 drowning incidents were reported in Oman in 2021, a recent statistics has revealed.

A report by the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) said on Wednesday that the water rescue teams dealt with 521 calls of drowning accidents in 2021. “So, swimming requires caution and should not be carried out in undesignated sites,” it warned.

Irina Samakar, a swim coach at the Nautilus Swimming Club in Oman, said it is important for all to learn swimming.

Extremely important

“Often, I see that some adults who accompany their children to pools do not have any swimming abilities of their own,” she said.

“Adults feel ashamed of admitting that they don’t know how to swim. However, this is an extremely important skill that is needed when you need to save your child’s life.

“Let us not forget unfortunate news we sometimes read of children and adults drowning in

Irina Samakar, a swim coach at the Nautilus Swimming Club

wadis because they did not know how to swim, and because there wasn’t anyone around to immediately save them,” she added.

Experts say there is a high like-

lihood of drowning among people in three age groups; “children aged five and under, adolescents and the elderly are the vulnerable groups.

Risk factors

“The usual places of drowning for children are swimming pools, bathtubs, buckets and natural bodies of water. Epilepsy, medical illness and use of alcohol or illicit drugs are risk factors for drowning among children and adolescents,” she said.

She also said that lack of parents’ education, infants or children under five (especially males) left unsupervised are factors that enhances significantly the risk of drowning.

“Given Oman’s vast coastline that covers most of the southeastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, we found that incidents of drowning in the country are quite common, especially in wadis and involve those who do not know how to swim, and occur mostly in summer months,” she added.

CREDENTIALS CEREMONY

Greetings of HM conveyed to President of Tanzania

MUSCAT: Saud bin Hilal Al Shizani presented his credentials as the Sultanate of Oman’s Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania, when he was received by President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania in the Tanzanian capital of Dodoma, yesterday.

During the meeting, the ambassador conveyed the greetings and wishes of good health and happiness of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Tanzanian President and to her coun-

try’s people further progress and prosperity.

In her turn, President Samia-Suluhu Hassan asked the ambassador to convey her greetings and appreciation coupled with her best wishes to His Majesty the Sultan and for the Omani people further progress and prosperity.

The credentials ceremony was attended by deputy chairman of the Sultanate of Oman’s mission at the Sultanate’s embassy in the United Republic of Tanzania and a number of officials from the Tanzanian side. -ONA

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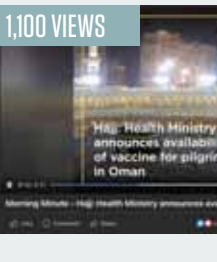
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MEETING

Royal Office Minister meets envoys of France, Hungary

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received on Wednesday Veronique Aulagnon, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Sultanate of Oman.

The ambassador expressed her thanks and appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman in achieving the joint interests of the two countries.

The two sides also discussed several matters of common interest.

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office also received here today Dr. Tibor Szatmari, Ambassador

of the Republic of Hungary to the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of the end of his tour of duty as his country's ambassador to Oman.

The two sides reviewed the march of relations between Oman and Hungary. The ambassador expressed his appreciation for the care extended to him from all officials in the Sultanate of Oman.

On his turn, Al Nu'amani thanked the ambassador for his efforts in enhancing the bilateral relations between the two countries in various fields, wishing him continuous success. -ONA



ZIPLINE PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION IN MUSANDAM



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ministry of Education announces names of candidates for post of teachers in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education announced in coordination with the Ministry of Labour names of candidates for the position of teacher of both genders in the various specialisations for those who have passed the written tests conducted last March, and who were on the waiting lists.

The Ministry of Education urged candidates to approach the directorates of education in the governorates where the candidates reside for undergoing personal interviews and for completion of appointments procedures from 19 June to end of Thursday, 28 July. The ministry also urges those who have completed appointments procedures to proceed (with their official documents) to the directorates of education where they were appointed effective from 28 August to commence their duties at the schools set for them.

Those interested for transfer from the governorates where they were appointed to the governorates of their residence, should apply for transfer in accordance with the annual application for transfer, said the Ministry, adding that transfer is restricted to available vacancies and applicable controls. -ONA



TEJARAH TALKS

< FROM A1 'Boosting non-oil exports promises many opportunities'

"Boosting Oman's non-oil exports promises many opportunities for productivity, decent jobs, balance of trade and quality of life," HH Sayyid Dr Adham Al Said

Tejarah Talks

Trading internationally is a natural step for many Omani businesses looking to grow and seeking increased opportunities in existing export markets. New possibilities emerge for Oman-made and grown products in countries around the region as well as further afield.

The prospects, options and resources available to international

ally minded manufacturers along with potential pitfalls, problems and risks will be explored at an upcoming session of Tejarah Talks, on Wednesday 22 June at the Civil Aviation Authority Training Centre in Al Hail North.

Organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP) in association with the Ministry of Culture, Sports & Youth, Oman Business Forum and supported by HSBC and Sohar Port & Freezone, the evening's discussion will be moderated by His Highness Sayyid Dr. Adham Al Said,

founder, The Firm. Expert insights and information will be provided by panellists Salem Al Bortmany, CEO, Areej Vegetable Oils; Abdullah Al Badri, CEO, Voltamp Oman; Ali Taqi Hassan, assistant general manager and head of global trade and receivables finance at HSBC; Faisal Ahmed Khan, COO, A'Saffa Food Processing; and Shayan Sumar, director, operations, Apex Transgulf Manufacturing. Despite the world economic slowdown, Omani companies are consistently demonstrating that they are not simply surviving, but performing exceptionally well in international



markets. In 2021, for example, Oman's non-oil exports to India increased to OMR478 million (\$1.2 billion), a jump of 172 per cent over 2020.

In February this year, the US imported over OMR 87.6 million (\$227 million) worth of Omani products, the third highest monthly imports recorded in 10 years.

Challenges before exporters

"We often hear companies saying exporting is difficult and with this in mind the Tejarah Talks panellists will also delve into the challenges would-be exporters should be aware of and how to combat them," said Maymuna Al Adawi, director at MOCIIP and Tejarah Talks organiser.

"These include overcoming ex-

change rate fluctuations; breaks in supply chains; dealing with cultural, legal and language issues; meeting labelling requirements; coping with extended payment terms and maintaining a healthy cash flow"

According to Al Adawi, this is a defining moment in Oman's trading story.

"We understand local businesses are at different points on their exporting journey," she added, "Some are already highly successful exporters but want to sell more products or reach new markets. Others are yet to take the leap and export for the first time."

UNGA

Oman's representative to UN elected as 4th Committee Chairman



NEW YORK: The UN General Assembly elected by acclamation Dr. Mohammed Awad Al Hassan, the Sultanate of Oman's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) as the Chairman of the Fourth Committee "Special Political and Decolonisation Committee" during the 77th session of the General Assembly.

In his speech to the General Assembly, Dr. Mohammed stated that Oman was keen to chair the "Special Political and Decolonisation Committee," stemming from its belief in the freedom of peoples and their independence, as well as the importance of ending colonization in line with the UN's

related decisions.

He also reiterated the importance of the committee's provisions regarding the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, issues related to media, the Palestinian cause, the occupied Syrian Golan region, the effects of nuclear radiation and means of limiting them, peacekeeping operations and the University of Peace, among other provisions.

Dr. Mohammed affirmed that Oman will work closely with the President of the General Assembly and all member states in all matters of concern to the committee in a bid to realise aspirations of all countries. -ONA

OMAN AND ILO

Pact inked on new national decent work programme



GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Labour, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and the General Federation of Oman Workers signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The MoU deals with jointly setting up a new national decent work programme in Oman for 2023-2025. The signing of the agreement comes on the sidelines of the 110th edition of the International Labour Conference.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Mahad Said BaOwain, Minister of Labour, Ruba Jaradat, Regional Director of the ILO for Arab States, Eng. Ridha Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of OCCI and Nabhan Ahmed

Al Battashi, Chairman of the General Federation of Oman Workers.

BaOwain said that the new programme will enhance social dialogue among the parties to production, as well as boosting productivity and effectiveness.

Ruba Jaradat said Oman proved its commitment to decent work since it joined the ILO over two decades ago.

The new national programme for appropriate work focuses on employment, grooming skills, entrepreneurship, social protection, international standards and work management.

Meanwhile, the Sultanate of Oman approved five agreements with the ILO since it joined the organisation back in 1994.

- ONA



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NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

Pakistani delegation visits NDC



MUSCAT: A delegation from the National Defence University in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, led by Brigadier Sajjad Hussein today visited the National Defense College (NDC). The guests were greeted upon their arrival at the college by Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakron, Commandant of the NDC. Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the college's facilities and equipment, as well as its various departments and halls designed according to the latest specifications and equipped with the best educational systems, training aids and multi-purpose electronic network systems.

-DNA

Rescued green turtle returns to sea

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A green sea turtle, an endangered species, was rescued, treated and returned to the sea by a team from the Environment Authority. The turtle was treated at the Oman Aquarium. The Authority said in a statement: "In conjunction with the celebration of World Oceans Day, the Environment Authority returns a green sea turtle to the sea. Action was taken after receiving a report that there is a weak turtle which was unable to move. It received treatment and care by specialists at the Oman Aquarium." The green turtle is a species of large sea turtle of the family Cheloniidae.



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TENDER NOTICE

TENDER NO. 003/2022-2023

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1. Refurbishment of toilets, passage water supplies and drainage maintenance works at Indian School Salalah , wilayat Salalah - Dhofar Governorate
2. Refurbishment of roof slab, terrace passage, waterproofing and drainage maintenance works at Indian School Salalah , wilayat Salalah - Dhofar Governorate
3. Refurbishment of water supplies, fire-fittings pipelines and drainage (MEP and fire fighting) maintenance works at Indian School Salalah , wilayat Salalah - Dhofar Governorate

Interested parties shall remit the tender fee of OMR 50/- each tender at the School fee counter (main building) and can collect the tender document between 8.30 am to 12.30 pm on all working days from 09 June 2022 to 13 June 2022.

Submission from: **Last Day 15 June 2022 (Wednesday)**

Indian School Salalah reserves the right to accept or reject any tender.

LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION

15/06/2022 before 12.30 pm at School Fee counter



Ministry of Social Development

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Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)
69/2022	Completion of balance works of Omani women association building at al-klabourah	Companies specialized in building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Tuesday 28-6-2022 02:00 PM	Monday 18-7-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at theTender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Thursday 9/6/2022

❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.

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Invitation to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting of National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG

The Board of Directors of National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG (the "Company") are pleased to invite the shareholders for the Company's Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") to be held **at 3 p.m. on Sunday, 26th June, 2022**, at Crowne Plaza, Muscat and through the electronic platform for holding General Meetings, which can be accessed through Muscat Clearing and Depository Company ("MCD") website (www.mcd.gov.om).

In the event, that the quorum for the first EGM is not met, **Sunday, 3rd July 2022, 3 p.m.** will be the date of the second EGM, at the same meeting venue and the electronic platform mentioned above, to consider the following agenda:

- 1- To consider and approve the Company's proposal to acquire 49.99998% share capital of Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance (Middle East) B.S.C (c), Bahrain shares ("Target Company") in return for the issuance of upto a maximum of 133,374,343 new shares through private placement in the Company in exchange for the shares acquired in the Target Company, which will result in an increase in the issued share capital of the Company from RO 26,500,000 up to a maximum of RO 39,837,435, in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the Explanatory Note in Annexure No. (1). The issuance of new shares will be subject to regulatory approvals and authorization of the Board of Directors to undertake all actions necessary to conclude the private placement
- 2- To consider and approve the increase in the authorized share capital of the Company from RO 50,000,000/- to RO 100,000,000/- and amend the Company's Articles of Association in accordance with the form set out in Annexure - (2).
- 3- To consider and approve to increase the number of seats in the Board of Directors of the Company from 7 to 11 seats and amend the Company's Articles of Association in accordance to the form set out in Annexure - (2).
- 4- To consider and approve the authorization to the Board of Directors of the Company to do all such acts, deeds and matters, and carry out actions/decisions which may, in the Board's sole discretion be necessary, proper and expedient with regard to the acquisition of the Target Company, including pricing and number of new shares to be issued and that any two directors, signing jointly, shall be authorized to sign all documents, file and register any documents with any relevant authority which may, in the sole discretion of the Board, be deemed appropriate or necessary in connection with the acquisition.

Important Notes:

Pursuant to the Company's articles of association and general meeting regulations, through modern technology means issued by the Capital Market Authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following

(a) A juristic person, exclusively, has the right to authorize a natural person to attend the general meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCD.

(b) Voting on any of the items on the agenda begins no more than three days before the date set for the Meeting until the end of the voting process on the day of the meeting, and in the event that the shareholder's balance is increased or decreased, the voting process will be invalid, and he must re-vote again on the day of the Meeting.

Any questions relating to this Notice should be addressed to Mr. Badar Salim Al Marzouqi (Telephone No. +968 24730930).

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MISSILE TESTS

South Korea, US condemn North Korea missile tests

PYONGYANG: In a joint statement, senior diplomatic officials from the United States, South Korea and Japan have denounced North Korea's recent missile tests, calling them "serious, unlawful" provocations.

The comments came after a top-level meeting in Seoul on Wednesday between US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and her South Korean and Japanese counterparts, Cho Hyun-dong and Takeo Mori. The statement said Sherman reaffirmed "steadfast" US commitments to the defense of South Korea and Japan, including "extended deterrence," referring to an assurance to defend its allies with complete military capabilities, including nuclear.

"The United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan are fully and closely aligned on the DPRK," Sherman said at a press conference, using the initials of North



Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The diplomats of the three countries also urged North Korea to return to dialogue and accept offers of COVID-19 aid.

"They stressed that a path to serious and sustained dialogue remains open and urged the DPRK to return to negotiations, while also expressing their hope that the DPRK will respond positively to international offers of assistance to fight against COVID-19," the statement said.

Sherman's Asia tour came just days after Pyongyang launched eight ballistic missiles from multiple locations into the sea in what has been called North Korea's biggest-ever single-day test launch event.

Following the test fires, the US and its allies in Asia responded with missile launches and aerial demonstrations involving dozens of fighter jets in a tit-for-tat show of force. **AW**

DERAILMENT

17 killed in Iran train accident

TEHRAN: At least 17 people were killed and dozens injured after four train carriages derailed between the towns of Mashhad and Yazd.

A passenger train derailed in eastern Iran early Wednesday, killing 17 passengers and injuring dozens, state media reported. The train was reportedly carrying 350 passengers.

Remote area

Ambulances and three helicopters with rescue teams were arriving at the accident site in the remote area where communication is poor, reports said.

What we know about the derailment

The derailment took place some 50 kilometres (30 miles) to the desert city of Tabas, on the rail that connects the town with the central city of Yazd.

Four of the seven cars in the train derailed in the early morning darkness, according to media reports.

A railway official told state news agency IRNA that the train crashed into an excavator before going off the rails. **AW**



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100 FEET RAVINE

22 killed in Balochistan as van plunges into ravine

BALUCHISTAN: At least 22 people were killed and a child was injured after a passenger van plunged 100 feet into a ravine near Killa Saifullah in Balochistan.

The incident took place on Wednesday morning when the ill-fated van, with approximately 23 people on board, had left Loralai for Zhob, reported Dawn. "The vehicle fell from a hilltop near Akhtarzai and 22 travellers aboard were reportedly killed in the accident," said the district's deputy commissioner, Hafiz Muhammad Qasim.

Rescue 1122 officials said that a minor boy was injured in the accident and was referred to Quetta for medical treatment.



The bodies of all the deceased passengers, they added, have been shifted to the Killa Saifullah District Headquarters Hospital. The deceased included five children, five women, and 11 men, reported Dawn.

The DC said that an emergency had been imposed at hospitals located in the area, and said teams from Quetta had been called in for the rescue operation, which ended at around 1 pm. **ANI**



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Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)
23/2022	Provision of a programmer & database supervisor for a Takaful system	Companies specialized in the field of information technology services that are registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the Excellent and first degree	Tuesday 28-6-2022 02:00 PM	Monday 18-7-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Thursday 9/6/2022
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry , please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200)

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry"

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One dead as car drives into crowd in Berlin

According to witnesses, the man drove his vehicle onto the sidewalk, then back on the road, until finally crashing into a shop window



BERLIN: A vehicle struck a crowd of people in a popular shopping area in Berlin's Charlottenburg neighbourhood on Wednesday. The suspected driver is now in police custody. Emergency services confirmed that at least one person had died and eight were wounded — at least five of them with life-threatening injuries. The incident happened on the street of Tauentzienstrasse near the popular Kurfuerstendamm shopping boulevard.

The incident took place around 10:30 am local time (0830 UTC) located in the west of the German capital. According to witnesses, the man drove his vehicle onto the sidewalk, then back on the road, until finally crashing into a shop window. Dozens of emergency personnel responded to the scene and are investigating the site. DW reporter Joel Dullroy, who

is on the scene in Berlin, said that although authorities have not yet released information on those who were injured, those who were injured appeared to be “young people.” “This is a very busy shopping area it's a very busy time in Berlin with lots of tourists here. It's actually very lucky that there weren't more people injured given the number of people who were out and about shopping at the moment,” Berlin Mayor Franziska Giffey said she was “deeply affected by the incident” and closely watching developments. European Parliament President Roberta Metsola said that the body's “thoughts are with the loved ones of the person killed and with all the survivors.” The incident took place close to the scene of a fatal attack on December 19, 2016, when Islamist extremist Anis Amri, hijacked a truck, killed the driver and then plowed it into a crowded Christmas market in Breitscheidplatz. The attack killed 11 other people and injured dozens of others. **bw**

Biden signs nine bipartisan bills into law to improve veterans' healthcare



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Tuesday signed a bill to provide better access to mammograms for veterans exposed to burn pits as part of nine bills signed into law aimed to improve veterans' healthcare. He also signed eight other pieces of legislation Tuesday focused on veteran health care, including a bill to improve breast imaging services for veterans regardless of if they're exposed to burn pits or not and to compensate veterans who developed cancer and medical conditions from the World War II-era nuclear programs, The Hill reported. “Less than one per cent of the population risk everything to defend our nation and our values and everything we hold dear. And you know, the 99 per cent of us who don't, we owe them, we owe them big,” Biden said at the bill signing. “And that's what today is all about, is paying a debt in my view,” he said adding. Biden has been focused on expanding benefits for veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and were exposed to toxic chemicals from burn pits and has always called it a “sacred obligation” to prepare those serving in the armed forces and to care for them and their families when they return home. The issue of burn pits strikes a personal note for the president who believes related chemicals may have contributed to the brain cancer that ultimately killed his son, Beau Biden, The Hill reported. The legislation aims to ensure that veterans who serve near burn pits get preventative care and requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct breast cancer screenings for women who experience toxic exposures. The Dr Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act was named after Marine Corps Officer Kate Thomas, who served near a burn pit in Iraq and died in April from breast cancer. According to The Hill, Biden honoured her in remarks at the White House and acknowledged her husband and son, who were at the bill signing. Lawmakers who attended the bill signing included Republican Sens. John Boozman (Ark.), Susan Collins (Maine), and Joni Ernst (Iowa), and Democratic Sens. John Hickenlooper (Colo.), Mazie Hirono (Hawaii), Ben Ray Lujan (N.M.), Joe Manchin (W.Va.), and Jon Tester (Mont.), the report added. **ANI**

Scientists warn of more La Nina events in eastern Australia

SYDNEY: Australia's eastern states are likely to become more flood-prone in the coming decades due to increasing La Nina events, according to a new study. The report, published in the Nature Climate Change journal on Tuesday, said the destructive weather pattern could become more prevalent because climate change has slowed down the “conveyor belt” of currents in the Atlantic Ocean. The oceanic feature, known as the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation, involves the regular movement of a massive flow of warm tropical water which, in turn, has a major influence on weather across the planet. The report's authors from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) said the Atlantic overturning had been relatively stable for about 5,000 years but had slowed down in recent decades. A contributing factor has been the release of greenhouse gases which have triggered the melting of trillions of tons of polar ice caps in Greenland and Antarctica, which has led to massive amounts of freshwater entering the ocean system, altering its buoyancy characteristics and upturning marine ecosystems. Australians in the eastern states including Queensland, New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria have become familiar with the impact of prolonged La Nina events during the past year. **ANI**



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إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology
In AL Khuwair invites for the Following Project:

TENDER NO	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
47/2022/MTCIT/HQ-15	CODING BOOTCAMPS	08-06-2022	23-06-2022	26-07-2022	Experienced Companies And Registered With The Secretariat General of Tender Board In Service (Excellent, First and Second Class)	(25/-) Twenty Five Omani Rial Non-Refundable

Interested Companies registered with The Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted online on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by local bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of (1%) of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to (Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee).

CORRESPONDANCE:

1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
2. E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: **Tel: +968 24402200 e-mail: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om**

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Energetic Italy take care of business against Hungary

Roberto Mancini's men put in another impressive performance following their draw with Germany

ROME: Italy have moved top of the Nations League A Group 3 standings after controlling proceedings en route to a 2-1 victory over Hungary in Cesena on Tuesday.

Roberto Mancini's men put in another impressive performance following their draw with Germany over the weekend, as the Azzurri continue to try and put their World Cup qualifying disaster behind them.

The deadlock was broken, thanks to a Nicolo Barella scorer from distance, as his right-footed strike found the top



corner and left Denas Dibusz with no chance.

After Alessandro Bastoni almost doubled the advantage, Lorenzo Pellegrini did just that soon after. Matteo Politano sprinted down the right and pulled back from the by-line, allowing the Roma man to tap home from eight

yards out, the Spanish MARCA newspaper reported.

Hungary, who stunned England last Saturday, were handed a lifeline in the 61st minute when Gianluca Mancini tried to divert a Attila Fiola cross out of play, only to put it behind Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Despite the setback the Azzurri kept their cool and saw out the rest of the match with relative ease, with coach Mancini even finding time to hand a debut cap to Alessio Zerbin.

The result sees Italy top the group with four points, one up on Hungary. **ONA**

FOOTBALL



Real Madrid to set stage for Modric's extension and Marcelo's departure

MADRID: Following the official confirmation of the signing of Antonio Rudiger and the completion of the signing of Aurelien Tchouameni, Real Madrid continue to shape their future ahead of the new season.

Now, they are set to officially present Luka Modric after his one-year extension as well as say farewell to long-serving full-back Marcelo.

The renewal of Luka Modric, announced by the Spanish MARCA newspaper at the end of the match against Liverpool that gave Real Madrid their 14th Champions League title, will be presented

later today at an official ceremony at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid. The agreement between the club and the Croatian player, 36, has long been sealed by both parties, but the veteran will now get the chance to be celebrated amongst his fans.

At the same time, Real Madrid are working on a very special farewell event for Marcelo, the man who lifted the club's last Champions League title in Paris.

It was his 25th title with Madrid, more than any other player in the history of the club, so Los Blancos are working on an event worthy of the legendary No.12. **ONA**

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Harry Kane's 50th goal earns England 1-1 draw against Germany

MUNICH: England captain Harry Kane scored his 50th international goal from the penalty spot late on to deny Germany three points in the UEFA Nations League in Munich.

Kane's spot-kick in the 1-1 draw on Tuesday against Germany was his 50th goal for England, taking him above Bobby Charlton and into second place in his country's all-time scoring charts, three behind Wayne Rooney. In a lively opening, Kai Havertz tested Jordan Pickford from a tight angle before Kyle Walker was forced into an important intervention to deny Thomas Muller a tap-in.

At the other end Kane stung the palms of Manuel Neuer with a vicious right-footed strike from just inside the box, before the Germany goalkeeper spilled a corner into the path of the England captain, who could only blast over.

England looked to be in the ascendency just before the break but fell behind shortly after the interval. Jonas Hofmann, who had earlier had a strike ruled out for offside, was afforded space in the area and, after collecting Joshua Kimmich's pass, powered in a fierce right-footed shot that Pickford could only help into the net.



Pickford had to be at his best to push Muller's half-volley around the post but it was Neuer who upped the goalkeeping stakes shortly after. Kane did well to reach Jack Grealish's inviting cross and tried to direct his strike out of the keeper's reach, but Neuer was perfectly positioned to deflect it away from danger.

The Tottenham man would not be denied and finally levelled with just two minutes remaining. Hauled down by Nico Schlotter-

beck, Kane sent Neuer the wrong way from the spot to ensure the spoils were shared.

Muller won his 114th Germany cap, overtaking Philipp Lahm to go fifth in Die Mannschaft's all-time appearance makers. Hofmann has scored two goals in his last three internationals after finding the net only once in his opening nine games for Germany. Germany have won just two of their 12 UEFA Nations League matches. **ANI**

CRICKET

Hazlewood, Finch make advances after match-winning performances against Sri Lanka

DUBAI: Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood has risen to number 2 in the latest ICC T20I Bowling Rankings.

Fresh from a consistent performance in the ICC T20 World Cup in Dubai last year and an eye-catching effort at the recent IPL, Hazlewood showed his class with a four-wicket haul for Australia during their dominant 10-wicket victory over Sri Lanka on Tuesday. That match-winning spell helped Hazlewood overtake England spinner Adil Rashid and claim second place on the latest rankings for bowlers, with South African spinner Tabraiz Shamsi now within striking distance for the Australian right-arm.

Shamsi has a total of 784 points, with Hazlewood's rating rising to 778 points and just a total of six points behind the experienced left-arm.

There was also some movement in the T20 batter rankings following Australia's victory in Colombo, with veteran skipper Aaron Finch regaining his position in the top five following his unbeaten knock of 61.

Finch looked to be back somewhere near his best during his 40-ball innings as the right-hander overtook New Zealand's Devon Conway into fifth place on the rankings.



Fellow opener David Warner finished with 70* in that match and jumped eight spots to claim 45th place on the rankings in the process, but it was not just the Australia players that made some large gains.

Sri Lanka opener Pathum Nissanka looked good for his 36 against Australia and was rewarded as he rose to a career-high rating of 689 and seventh place on the rankings for batters.

Team-mate Charith Asalanka - who top-scored for Sri Lanka with 38 - jumped a whopping 14 spots to move to 29th overall.

While there was not much change near the top of the latest ICC ODI batting rankings, a pair of Afghanistan players made a move on the bowling and all-

rounder rankings. Veteran right-arm Mohammad Nabi has six wickets to his name during the first two matches of Afghanistan's ODI series against Zimbabwe and his good form has seen him rise eight spots to 11th overall on the bowler rankings.

Team-mate Rashid Khan is one spot ahead of Nabi in 10th on the bowler rankings, but the champion white-ball spinner has jumped one place to third on the list of T20 all-rounders.

Rashid has 39 runs and four wickets to his name through the first two games of the series and both he and Nabi could continue to climb as Afghanistan's series against Zimbabwe comes to a close. **ANI**

LEGEND DEPARTS

India legend Mithali Raj retires from all forms of international cricket

NEW DELHI: The Test and ODI captain of the Indian women's national cricket team, Mithali Raj, on Wednesday announced her retirement from all formats of international cricket.

Mithali is retiring as the leading run-scorer in the women's ODIs. She represented India in 232 matches, scoring 7,805 runs at an average of 50.68.

In Tests, Mithali has smashed 699 runs in 12 matches with a brilliant average of 43.68. She also has 2364 runs in 89 T20Is.

Mithali, who made her debut in 2002, is regarded as the greatest Indian women's batter. She captained the side to two 50-over World Cups.

At 16, Raj scored an unbeaten 114 on ODI debut and soon established herself as a vital cog in India's batting order. In October 2019, Raj, at 36, became the first woman to complete two decades

in ODI cricket.

"I set out as a little girl on the journey to wear the India blues as representing your country is the highest honour. The journey was full of highs and some lows. Each event taught me something unique and the last 23 years have been the most fulfilling, challenging & enjoyable years of my life," Mithali said on social media on Wednesday.

"Like all journeys, this one too must come to an end. Today is the day I retire from all forms of International Cricket," she added.

"Each time I stepped on the field, I gave my very best with the intent to help India win. I will always cherish the opportunity given to me to represent the tricolour. I feel now is the perfect time to call curtains on my playing career as the team is in the capable hands of some very talented

young players and the future of Indian Cricket is bright."

"I'd like to thank the BCCI & Shri Jay Shah Sir (Honorary Secretary, BCCI) for all the support I have received - first as a player and then as the Captain of the Indian Women's Cricket Team. It was an honour to have led the team for so many years. It definitely shaped me as a person & hopefully helped shape Indian Women's Cricket as well," she continued.

"This journey may have ended but another one beckons as I'd love to stay involved in the game I love and contribute to the growth of Women's Cricket in India and world over. Special mention to all my fans, thank you for all your love & support," Mithali concluded.

Mithali Raj is currently in the seventh position in the latest ICC Women's ODI batting rankings, released on Tuesday. **ANI**



CRICKET LEGEND: Mithali, who made her debut in 2002, is regarded as the greatest Indian women's batter. She captained the side in two 50-over World Cups.



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,130.78 points, up by 0.03 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.07 per cent at 460.53 points. SMN Power Holding, up 6.82 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Qatar Insurance, down 6.05 per cent, was the top loser.

IATA REPORT

Middle Eastern carriers see 11.9% fall in April cargo volumes



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle Eastern carriers experienced an 11.9 per cent year-on-year decrease in cargo volumes in April, according to IATA. "Significant benefits from traffic being redirected to avoid flying over Russia failed to materialise. This is likely due to persisting supply chain issues in Asia. Capacity was up 6 per cent compared to April 2021," the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said while releasing the April 2022 data for global air cargo markets. Data for global air cargo markets also is showing a drop in demand and contraction in capacity. The effects of Omicron in Asia and the Russia-Ukraine war continue

to create a challenging operating backdrop that is driving the decline, the IATA said in its report. Global demand, measured in cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs), fell 11.2 per cent compared to April 2021 (-10.6 per cent for international operations). Global demand is down 1 per cent compared to April 2019. Capacity was 2 per cent below 2021 (+1.2 per cent for international operations). Both global capacity and international capacity decreased slightly in April compared to March. Asia experienced the largest falls in capacity, the IATA said in its report.

Key factors
The war in Ukraine led to a fall in

cargo capacity used to serve Europe as several airlines based in Russia and Ukraine were key cargo players. And the zero-COVID policy in China led to capacity challenges due to flight cancellations because of labour shortages, the report said. New export orders, a leading indicator of cargo demand and world trade are now shrinking in all markets except the US. Global goods trade has continued to decline in 2022, with China's economy growing more slowly because of COVID-19 related lockdowns (among other factors). The lockdowns have brought much of the world's largest port, Shanghai, to a standstill. Supply chain disruptions due to the

Ukraine-Russia conflict are also adding to the downward pressure on trade. "Air cargo demand fell by 11.2 per cent in April and capacity contracted 2 per cent compared to April 2021. The combination of the war in Ukraine and COVID-19 lockdowns in China have pushed up energy costs, intensified supply chain disruptions, and fed inflation," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director-General. "The operating environment is challenging for all businesses, including air cargo. But with China easing lockdown restrictions, there is cause for some optimism and the supply/demand imbalance is keeping yields high," he further added.

Aggregate net profits of GCC banks top \$10 billion

Banks in five of six GCC countries reported double-digit aggregate growth in profits while Kuwait's growth was only slightly lower at 9.0 per cent during the first quarter of 2022

Times News Service

MUSCAT: GCC banking sector continued to record improving results during the first quarter (Q1) of 2022 backed by solid economic recovery and demand post the pandemic, according to a new report. "The gain in oil prices since the start of the year also supported the growth and business confidence as governments across the region stepped up economic investment plans backed by the additional oil earnings," Kamco Invest, the Kuwait-based investment strategy & research firm, said in its GCC Banking Sector Report - Q1-2022. Moreover, the loose fiscal policies in the region and globally that were implemented last year with an aim to boost investments also supported investment in businesses, the report added. Aggregate net profits for the sector soared to \$10.9 billion in Q1-2022, one of the highest quarterly levels on record, backed by higher profits across the Gulf Coopera-



GCC BANKING SECTOR REPORT: The year-on-year performance also showed healthy growth in profits across the markets. - File photo

tion Council (GCC). Banks in five of six countries reported double-digit aggregate growth in profits while Kuwait's growth was only slightly lower at 9.0 per cent. The year-on-year performance also showed healthy growth in profits across the markets. The bottom line was supported by marginal growth in net interest income and flattish non-interest income. Also supporting was a quarter-on-quarter drop in a cost-to-income ratio that came at 39.6 per cent led by a steep quarter-on-quarter (q-o-q) drop in operating expenses. Shareholders' equity on the other hand showed a much smaller q-o-q growth of 0.4 per cent during Q1-2022 to reach \$355.2 billion. This resulted in a return on equity

of 10.8 per cent in Q1-2022, one of the highest on record for the sector in the GCC. The increase in profit was also supported by a steep q-o-q decline in loan loss provisions booked by banks in the region. Total provisions dropped by a quarter to \$2.9 billion during Q1-2022 as compared to \$3.8 billion in Q4-2021, whereas the y-o-y decline came in at 21.4 per cent. All countries in the GCC reported a double-digit q-o-q drop in provisions during Q1-2022 barring Kuwaiti banks that reported a marginal increase of 0.6 per cent. Lending activity remained robust during Q1-2022 resulting in record-high loan books at the end of the quarter. Aggregate gross loans reached \$1.8 trillion, up 2.1 per cent q-o-q and 10.1 per cent

y-o-y, mainly led by strong growth in Saudi Arabia and UAE that was partially offset by a decline in gross loans mainly by Omani and Bahraini listed banks. Net loans showed a slightly higher growth of 2.5 per cent q-o-q to reach \$1.68 trillion, backed by growth in all markets, barring Bahraini banks that reported a decline of 2.1 per cent. Customer deposits also showed growth, albeit slightly smaller at 1.7 per cent q-o-q and 9.9 y-o-y during Q1-2022 to reach \$2.1 trillion. The sequential growth was led by strong growth in Saudi Arabia and Qatar partially offset by a decline in Bahrain. The net impact on the loan-to-deposit ratio was a q-o-q gain of 60 bps to regain the 80 per cent mark with the ratio at 80.5 per cent.

LLP declines
Loan loss provisions (LLP) once again witnessed a steep double-digit drop across the GCC in Q1-2022, barring Kuwait which showed a marginal increase as compared to Q4-2021, the report said. Total LLP reached \$2.9 billion during the quarter, a \$0.9 billion decline as compared to \$3.8 billion in Q4-2021. The decline came after the bulk of the banks in the region reported smaller provisions during the quarter. Qatari banks reported the biggest absolute decline in provisions with a drop of \$0.4 billion to reach a total LLP of \$0.9 billion followed by UAE and Saudi Arabian banks with declines of \$0.3 billion and \$0.2 billion, respectively. That said, Qatari banks overtook UAE banks in terms of the size of quarterly provisions which stood at \$0.88 billion in Q1-2022 closely followed by \$0.85 billion and \$0.58 billion for UAE-listed banks and Saudi Arabian banks, respectively.

MANUFACTURING SUMMIT AND AWARDS

OER Summit to focus on smart manufacturing

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OER's Manufacturing Summit and Awards, a flagship event by the Sultanate's premium business magazine, will be held at Sheraton Oman Hotel on June 27. Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry will be the chief guest at the summit. OER's Manufacturing Summit 2022 will do a deep dive into the opportunities for the manufacturing sector in Oman, and the challenges impeding its growth and unlocking the potential of the sector. The topic of the summit is 'Smart Manufacturing: Enhancing competitiveness, innovation and transformation.' The summit will focus on consumer-driven manufacturing, connected services, smart factories, Industry 4.0 and the digital economy, sustainability, hyper-automation, real-time performance monitoring, lead time compression (order-to-cash), speed up a time to market, supply chain cost and reliability (inventory turns and cash conversion cycles), eliminating profit leaks across the value chain, leveraging data and analytics for superior customer insights, educating and up-skilling in quality and lean manufacturing practices and improving quality levels to achieve world-class performance. Madayn, MIZAH, Credit Oman and Oman Manufacturers Association (OMFA) are the endorsement partners of the summit, which is being organised by UMS Events. Raysut Cement is the Strategic Partner. Omifco, Muscat Thread Mills, Al Jazeera Steel Products Company, Khaz-aen Economic City, Sohar Aluminium, Oman Cables Industry, Al Tamman Indisil Ferrochrome,

Volta Oman, Atyab Food Industries and Gulf Mushroom Products Company have signed up as the Associate Partners and MHD Ford Trucks as the Official Commercial Vehicles Partner. Times of Oman and Al Shabiba are the media partners, Alam Al-Iktisaad magazine, the Arabic media partner and oerlive.com, the online media partner. SSA International is the knowledge partner. The Sultanate's Vision 2040 plan under the far-sighted leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq envisages Oman to have a modern and technologically advanced manufacturing base, fully utilising the creativity of the Omani population together with the most innovative production techniques and focused on improving the wellbeing of the peoples in the region and the world at large. The second edition of OER's Manufacturing Summit will bring in government officials, C-suite executives, consultants and analysts to discuss a cross-section of issues impacting the manufacturing sector in Oman, possible solutions and the way ahead.

Awards
Manufacturing sector Excellence Awards and Top Performing Exporters Awards in diverse categories will also be presented. The awards will recognise exceptional organisations and individuals in the sector. The exporter awards will honour companies that have shown a significant growth trajectory in regional and global export markets and have set a benchmark by their outstanding performance in export sales in the past year. Top exporters from large, medium and small-cap categories meeting the required parameters will be felicitated with the Top Manufacturing Exporters Awards.

MOODY'S REPORT

Saudi Arabia's credit rating at 'A1' with a stable outlook

RIYADH: The credit rating agency 'Moody's' updated its credit report for Saudi Arabia affirming its 'A1' rating for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with a stable outlook. The rating affirmation is based on Moody's assessment of the government's improving track record of fiscal policy effectiveness, evidenced by policy responses to both periods of low and high oil prices, which demonstrate a commitment to fiscal consolidation and longer-term fiscal sustainability. In its report, the agency expected the continuation of positive growth in real GDP by 5.0 per cent on average in the period 2021-2023, supported by further post-pandemic recovery, progress on economic diversification, capital and development projects, and a further unwinding of oil production cuts. -SPA

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MARKET



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MSX index ends higher

SMN Power Holding, up 6.82 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Qatar Insurance, down 6.05 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,130.78 points, up by 0.03 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.07 per cent at 460.53 points. SMN Power Holding, up 6.82 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Qatar Insurance, down 6.05 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 255 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR4.31 million, with more than 948 million shares changing hands. Out of 44 traded securities, 14 advanced, 13 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR838,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR796,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR43,000

worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,601.99 points, up 0.16 per cent. Prices of Ominvest, Muscat Finance, Al Madina Takaful, National Bank Oman and Bank Muscat were up by 2.63 per cent, 1.43 per cent, 1.09 per cent and 1.43 per cent and 0.37 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Qatar Insurance, Al Anwar Investment, Taa-geer Finance, Oman & Emirates Investment and Global Financial Investments were down by 6.05 per cent, 3.41 per cent, 3.26 per cent, 2.11 per cent and 1.43 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,914.44 points, down 0.08 per cent. Services Index was up by 0.01 per cent before closing at 1,591.68 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Musandam Power and Renaissance Services were up by 6.82 per cent, 5.96 per cent and 1.91 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

OMAN STOCKS

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,135.30	4,118.61	4,130.78	4,129.72	1.06	0.03
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,601.99	6,578.37	6,601.99	6,591.23	10.76	0.16
Industry Index	5,931.26	5,903.43	5,914.44	5,918.95	-4.51	-0.08
Services Index	1,591.68	1,582.64	1,591.68	1,591.57	0.11	0.01
MSX Shariah Index	460.84	459.25	460.53	460.84	-0.30	-0.07
MSX TR INDEX	5,211.27	5,190.23	5,205.57	5,204.23	1.34	0.03
FINANCIAL TR IDX	6,902.41	6,877.71	6,902.41	6,891.15	11.25	0.16
SERVICES TR IDX	1,645.76	1,636.42	1,645.76	1,645.65	0.11	0.01
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,155.65	6,126.77	6,138.19	6,142.87	-4.68	-0.08

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
9,486,091	4,307,853	255	22,459,253,551	14	13	17	44

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRI. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	500	156	1	0.312	0.312	0.312	0.312	0.304	0.008	2.632	0.312	0.304	0.312	0.100...208,530,013
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	20,000	8,540	3	0.424	0.428	0.424	0.428	0.420	0.008	1.905	0.428	0.428	0.428	0.100...101,183,480
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	709,440	1,437,733	12	0.201	0.203	0.201	0.203	0.201	0.002	0.995	0.203	0.203	0.203	0.100...330,067,110
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	3,190,266	1,729,297	52	0.534	0.546	0.534	0.540	0.538	0.002	0.972	0.540	0.540	0.540	0.100...208,727,207
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR.	100,500	33,770	2	0.336	0.340	0.336	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.336	0.340	0.100...34,000,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST&FIN.	5,738	815	1	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.142	0.156	0.100...33,654,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	11,000	2,970	3	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.100...16,525,154
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	901,780	786,356	6	0.868	0.876	0.868	0.876	0.876	0.000	0.000	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.100...657,000,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT BANK	152,800	16,023	5	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.108	0.100...313,956,540
OM0000003989	QOREDOO	375,160	117,814	22	0.312	0.316	0.312	0.316	0.316	0.000	0.000	0.316	0.316	0.316	0.100...305,698,377
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	19,980	2,428	2	0.121	0.122	0.121	0.122	0.123	-0.001	-0.813	0.122	0.121	0.128	0.100...237,858,211
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	60,000	5,520	2	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.093	-0.001	-1.075	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.100...4,280,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	18,000	6,480	1	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.364	-0.004	-1.099	0.360	0.340	0.388	0.100...44,963,266
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV H	73,430	5,080	6	0.070	0.070	0.069	0.069	0.070	-0.001	-1.429	0.069	0.069	0.071	0.100...13,800,000
OM0000002188	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,576,545	769,383	5	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.420	-0.010	-2.381	0.410	0.410	0.440	0.100...90,200,000
OM0000005281	TAGEER FINANCE	105,001	9,494	6	0.091	0.091	0.089	0.089	0.092	-0.003	-3.261	0.089	0.089	0.092	0.100...23,020,900
Total	16	7,619,940	3,647,860	129											
Parallel Market															
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	150	7	1	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.044	0.003	6.818	0.047	0.043	0.047	0.100...9,382,873
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	1,000	98	1	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.092	0.006	6.522	0.098	0.093	0.100	0.100...3,290,002
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	1,000	320	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.302	0.018	5.960	0.320	0.302	0.320	0.100...22,524,800
OM0000003028	GULF INT CHEMI	5,000	480	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.091	0.005	5.495	0.096	0.096	0.100	0.100...2,018,000
OM0000003061	VOLTAIR ENERGY	7,000	735	1	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	0.005	5.000	0.105	0.104	0.110	0.100...8,547,289
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	66,165	7,001	15	0.104	0.106	0.104	0.106	0.104	0.002	1.923	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.100...2,516,563
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	169,863	11,922	9	0.070	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.070	0.001	1.429	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.100...21,807,389
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	50,300	4,678	3	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.092	0.001	1.087	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.100...16,275,000
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM P	2,000	567	2	0.284	0.284	0.283	0.283	0.280	0.003	1.071	0.283	0.270	0.283	0.100...11,774,292
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	45,000	5,235	5	0.117	0.117	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.001	0.870	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.100...21,121,094
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	51,947	7,886	4	0.151	0.153	0.150	0.153	0.153	0.000	0.000	0.153	0.148	0.153	0.100...13,005,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	10,789	1,208	3	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.112	0.114	0.100...224,035,032
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	2,368	1,923	1	0.812	0.812	0.812	0.812	0.812	0.000	0.000	0.812	0.812	0.812	0.100...49,755,300
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	83,042	7,888	3	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.100...212,510,538
OM0000004925	ALBATHINAH POWER	43,432	2,085	4	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100...32,394,597
OM0000007043	NATIONAL LIFE INS	55,000	17,930	1	0.326	0.326	0.326	0.326	0.326	0.000	0.000	0.326	0.326	0.326	0.100...86,390,000
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	11,744	1,315	3	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.100...17,421,645
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	38,360	3,606	4	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.090	0.100	0.100...18,800,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	108,281	12,453	5	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.116	-0.001	-0.862	0.115	0.115	0.117	0.100...344,580,415
OM0000004118	RAYSUT CEMENT	263,548	42,178	26	0.163	0.163	0.160	0.160	0.163	-0.003	-1.840	0.160	0.147	0.160	0.100...32,000,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	6,384	306	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100...34,291,504
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	5,000	465	1	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.095	-0.002	-2.105	0.093	0.092	0.096	0.100...11,334,375
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	315,100	27,024	23	0.087	0.087	0.085	0.085	0.088	-0.003	-3.409	0.085	0.084	0.087	0.100...17,000,000
OM0000005985	PHOENIX POWER	11,468	577	2	0.051	0.051	0.050	0.050	0.052	-0.002	-3.849	0.050	0.050	0.051	0.100...73,130,073
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR	10,000	2,025	2	0.203	0.203	0.202	0.202	0.215	-0.013	-6.047	0.202	0.202	0.209	0.100...20,200,000
Total	25	1,363,941	159,912	122											

INFORMATIVE

Madayn holds workshop on industrial waste management

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), represented by its Inspection, Control and Occupational Safety Department and in cooperation with be'ah company, organised a workshop on 'Industrial Waste Management' intending to enhance awareness on methods of hazardous and non-hazardous industrial waste management.

The workshop, which was held

for control, inspection, and environmental health and safety officials at Madayn and its industrial cities, aimed at highlighting several topics including industrial waste infrastructure, types of industrial waste and treatment methods, engineered landfills, hazardous industrial waste transportation, challenges facing industrial units in dealing with waste, and health and safety procedures to prevent occupational accidents.

OIL MARKET

Oil prices rise on low inventories expectation

SINGAPORE: Oil prices drifted higher on Wednesday, anticipating a report of low US oil stocks, while expectations of solid demand in the upcoming driving season also lent support.

Brent crude futures for August had risen 21 cents, or 0.2 per cent, to \$120.79 a barrel by 0413 GMT after closing on Tuesday at the highest since May 31, Reuters reported.

US West Texas Intermediate crude for July was at \$119.75 a barrel, up 34 cents, or 0.3 per cent, after reaching its highest settlement since March 8 in the previous session. Analysts polled by Reuters expect data for last week to show another drawdown of US crude inventories, although gasoline and distillates stocks could edge higher.

"The oil market is expected to remain tight as the supply side will continue to tell a story of low inventories. Crude oil inventories will likely post more draws as driving season and vacationing heats up," OANDA analyst Edward Moya said in a note.

However, figures from the

American Petroleum Institute showed that US crude and oil products inventories rose last week.

The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) will report last week's stock levels at 10:30 am EDT (1430 GMT) on Wednesday.

The World Bank on Tuesday slashed its global growth forecast for 2022 by nearly a third, warning of damage from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that many countries now faced recession.

Meanwhile, global crude and

oil product supplies remain tight, boosting Asian refiners' diesel margins to record levels.

The CEO of global commodities trader Trafigura said oil prices could soon hit \$150 a barrel and go higher this year, with demand destruction likely by the end of the year.

Most refineries globally are already running close to capacity to meet rising demand from pandemic recovery.

On Tuesday, China topped up its first batch of product export

quotas aimed at reducing high domestic inventories, which have risen as pandemic lockdowns have dented demand. Despite the latest additions to the quotas, their volumes remain much lower than last year, however.

"We do not see a meaningful impact to ease the current diesel tightness but will watch for the start-up progress of new refiners like Petronas RAPID and Kuwait Al-Zour," Citi analyst Oscar Yee said in a note. — **BNA**



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OMAN OASIS

BRANDS CHANGING WATER

Training programme empowers young Omanis in tourist and hospitality sectors

MUSCAT: Reflecting the Omran Group's ongoing commitment to creating national competencies, the highly specialised training for employment programme, Midhyaf, continues to succeed in empowering the national youth and enhancing their capacities to accomplish development in the tourist sector in numerous disciplines.

The programme, which was launched in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour by Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), is intended to accommodate young Omani talents, develop their skills and abilities, and provide them with the qualifications they need to work in the lucrative tourism sector.

Attesting to Midhyaf's success, a total of 111 trainees from six professional disciplines completed specialised courses, which are offered at Oman Tourism College (OTC). This comes under the first phase of the programme before they start their on-the-job training programmes in the group's hotels. Meanwhile, an additional 24 trainees under the culinary programme are scheduled to complete their specialised courses in July, following which they will also take up on-the-job training at select hotels until the end of October to continue with their careers.

Commenting on the programme's updates, Hashilbin Obaid Al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran Group, stated, "Midhyaf pro-

gramme reflects Omran Group's keen interest in investing in local talent development, which in turn contributes to sustainable development. The group aims to make a positive impact on economic and human capital development. We endeavour to keep ourselves strongly aligned with the Oman Vision 2040 which focuses on enhancing the tourism sector's competitiveness while creating jobs and promoting national abilities



THERE IS ROOM AT THE TOP FOR ALL YOU CAN GROW



The UN estimates forecast that by the year 2050 another three billion people would be added to the present seven and half billion and approximately 70% of the world's population will be living in already congested cities.



It was at the turn of this century that Dickson Despommier, an American microbiologist and Malaysian architect Ken Yeang jointly coined the term 'Vertical Farming'. What they proposed was an ultra-modern way of urban agriculture. Simply put, it meant stacking 'crop-crates' one on top of another instead of laying out farm beds horizontally.

Using hydroponics and taking advantage of augmentation of the incoming sunlight as seen in a greenhouse this process eliminates the need for any chemical pesticides and fertilizers. The keyword in this context is sustainability. Their idea to grow all kinds of fruits, vegetables, and flowers in high-rise towers 20-30 stories tall seemed Utopian two decades back but today it is inspiring and energizing farmers small and big all over the world.

The UN estimates forecast that by the year 2050 another three billion people would be added to the present seven and half billion and approximately 70% of the world's population will be living in already congested cities. Sprawling urbanization would swallow agricultural land and the world would be confronted with a serious food security challenge. Vertical farming, aka urban agriculture in multi-storied high-rise buildings envisions the cultivation and sale of fruits, vegetables, and medicinal plants in unused urban spaces reducing the transpor-

tation costs dramatically.

Those advocating vertical farming tell us that a high-rise building 30 stories tall with a basal area of 5 acres has the potential of producing crop yield equivalent to 2,400 acres of traditional horizontal farming. In other words, 1 high-rise farm is equal to 480 traditional horizontal farms!

It is not surprising that the idea of vertical farming has caught the imagination of many concerned citizens in developed nations like Singapore, Japan, the Netherlands, and the US. Governments and real estate developers from Abu Dhabi to Beijing and Bangalore to Los Angeles are getting interested in vertical/urban farming. It is estimated that approximately US \$1.8 billion were invested in vertical farm startups between 2014 and 2020.

India has been admittedly a bit slow in catching up with this emerging trend despite the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) striving to revolutionize Indian agriculture through vertical farming. Though experimental farms set up in Vishwavidyalaya in Nadia Bidhan Chandra Krishi have successfully grown brinjals and tomatoes and in Punjab potato tubers through vertical farming have been produced these are very small steps considering India's size.

State of the art climate-controlled Greenhouses, combined with advanced horticulture and engineering techniques optimize crop production

Large players in this arena use artificial intelligence and data analytics to monitor their vertical farms all across the globe. They claim to run extensive quality checks, laboratory tests, and traceability techniques to ensure the quality of what they market.



and enhance crop quality and food safety. Hydroponic produce from vertical farms is increasingly popular with consumers favouring organic fruits and vegetables. Others value them for their freshness. Harvested weekly these are delivered from rooftop to thali in hours. For instance, roots are kept intact in the lettuce which is referred to as 'living lettuce'.

Large players in this arena use artificial intelligence and data analytics to monitor their vertical farms all across the globe. They claim to run extensive quality checks, laboratory tests, and traceability techniques to ensure the quality of what they market.

With increasing awareness, some intrepid individuals have decided to take the plunge. Khetify Solutions was founded by Kaustubh Khare and Saahil Parekh, both IIT Kharagpur graduates. The startup sought to popularise food sustainability among city dwellers. They estimated that 16,000 square km of rooftop space is being wasted in urban cities in India and the youngsters campaigned tirelessly to develop this space as small rooftop farms. The venture was generating a lot of interest and was gaining traction in the NCR when Covid 19 hit. The heartbroken entrepreneurs had to close shop. However, they continue to dream and are determined to revive Khetify when times change.

Five hundred kilometres away in Sat Rakbe, a village in Uttarakhand, Darban Singh Parihar has discov-

ered that poly-houses can be profitably used to increase the production of seasonal and exotic vegetables. The government is giving a subsidy of up to 90 per cent of the costs of installation. The terrain in hill villages has little space for conventional farming. Cutting out terraced fields is laborious and irrigating these makes the challenge more formidable. Controlled temperature, drip irrigation and scientific application of nutrients make these portable greenhouses an attractive option. Results here and elsewhere have been encouraging.

However, many crucial questions remained unanswered. True, that vertical/urban farming can optimally use land and water resources but can the poor farmers in rural areas find not inconsiderable resources to take up vertical farming.

Can all employed in traditional agriculture be accommodated in vertical agriculture? What about crops that can't be grown vertically? The subsidy is tied up in knots of red tape and the relevant know-how isn't easily available. Can we turn a blind eye to the crucial role played by birds and bees in the pollination of crops?

Vertical farming can't be seen as a panacea for all that ails Indian agriculture. —ANI

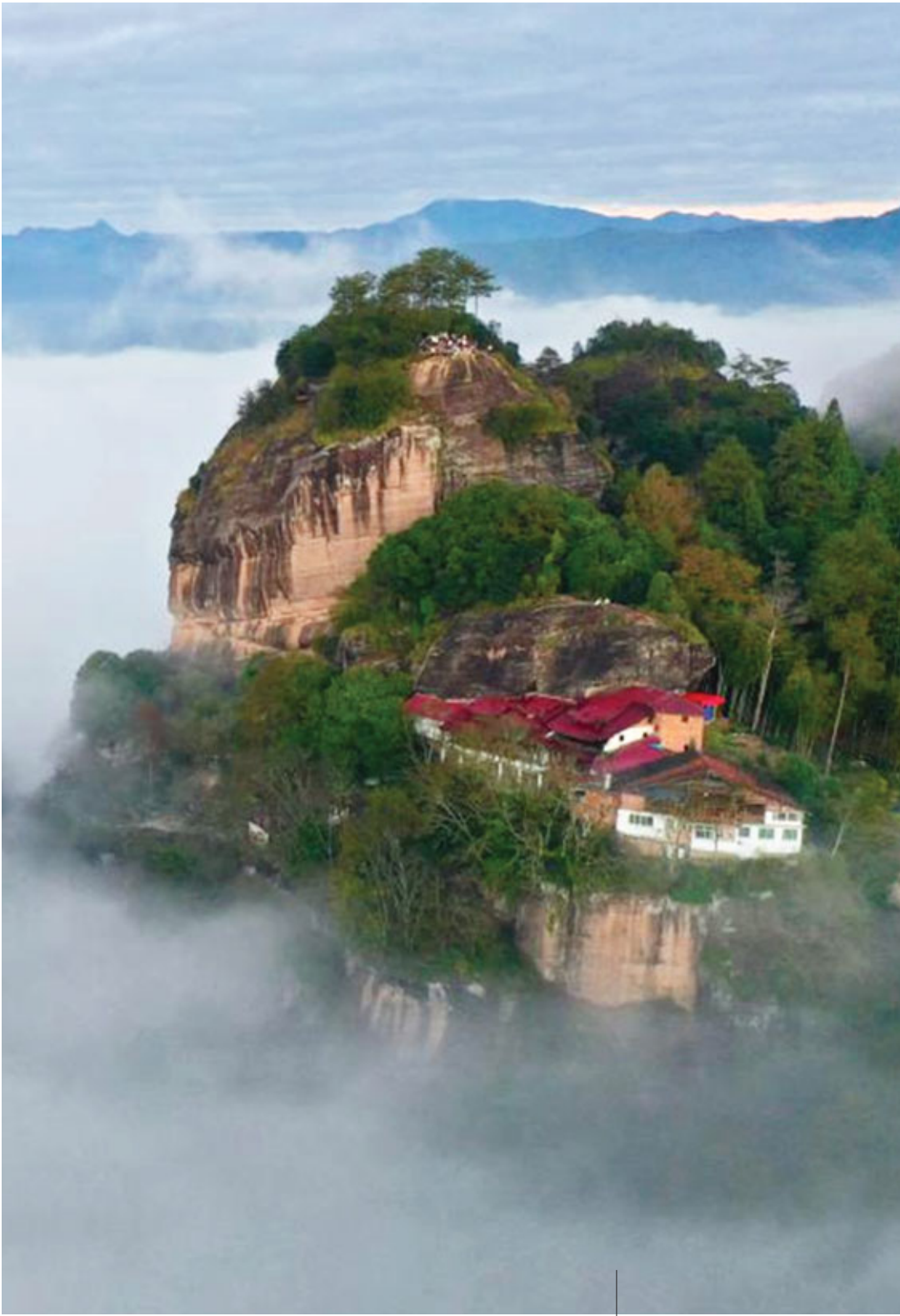
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IN PICTURES



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Mount Wuyi in SE China, World Cultural and Natural Heritage site
Aerial picture shows the scenery of Mount Wuyi in southeast China's Fujian Province. *Xinhua*



Art installation 'Turn Off The Plastic Tap' on display in Toronto, Canada
People walk past the art installation 'Turn Off The Plastic Tap' outside the Ripley's Aquarium of Canada in Toronto, Canada. The art installation is on display here to raise awareness of the plastic pollution problem. *Xinhua*



World Oceans Day marked in Russia
A visitor is seen at the Primorsky Aquarium on the World Oceans Day in Vladivostok, Russia. June 8 marks World Oceans Day. *Xinhua*

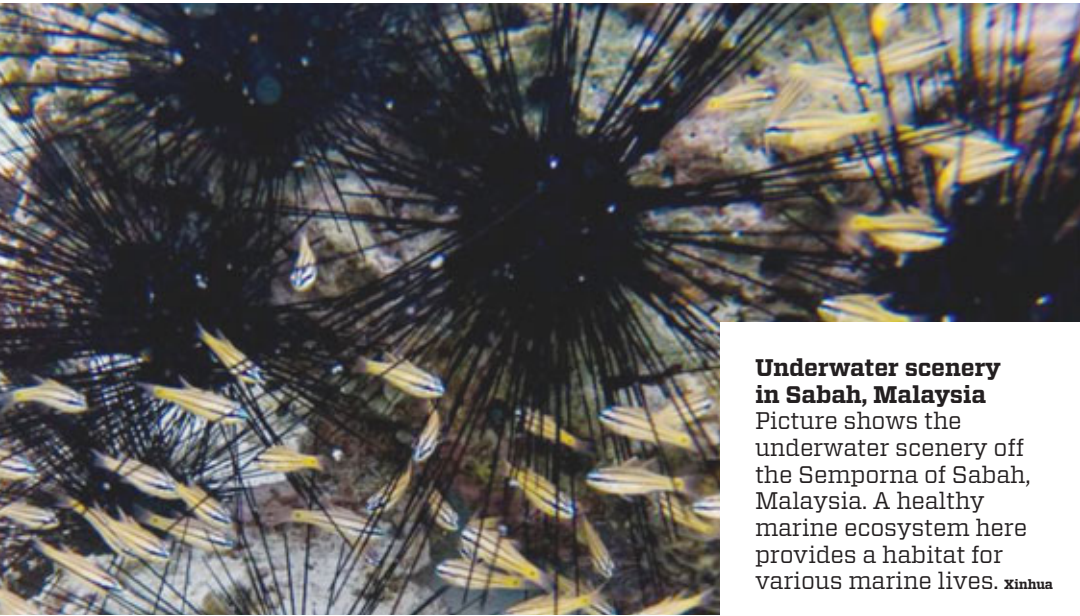


South Sudan orphanage restoring hope to young victims of civil strife
Orphans fetch water at the China-South Sudan Friendship well in Stone Orphanage Home in Juba, South Sudan. *Xinhua*

Tourists enjoy water sports in Khanpur, Pakistan
Tourists enjoy jet-ski riding at Khanpur Lake in Khanpur of Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. *Xinhua*



Vegan festival held in Tel Aviv, Israel
A little girl is seen at a stand during a vegan festival in Tel Aviv, Israel. The festival is held from June 7 to 9 in the Saron park in Tel Aviv. *Xinhua*



Underwater scenery in Sabah, Malaysia
Picture shows the underwater scenery off the Semporna of Sabah, Malaysia. A healthy marine ecosystem here provides a habitat for various marine lives. *Xinhua*



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ROUND-UP



Wafra cashback offer a win-win for ahlibank’s new customers

This fabulous 1% cash back offer is for customers who maintain a minimum average deposit of OMR 5,000 in their Wafra account for at least three months and will be credited cash back into their account within six weeks after the completion of the three-month deposit date

MUSCAT: Consistent in its endeavour to create a superlative customer-centric service, ahlibank continues its special offering that comes with a one-time cash-back of 1% for its new Omani and expatriate customers.

The Wafra cashback campaign, which will run until the end of June 2022, is a win-win for new customers of ahlibank. This fabulous 1% cash back offer is for customers who maintain a minimum average deposit of OMR 5,000 in their Wafra account for at least three months and will be credited cash back into their account within six weeks after the completion

of the three-month deposit date.

Expressing his satisfaction with the success of this new campaign, Muneer Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution, said, “The customer is at the core of everything ahlibank does. The Wafra Cashback Campaign is reflective of our commitment to enhancing customer services by offering them tangible rewards for banking with us. This one-time cashback reward is an incentive that communicates our dedication to customers. Our customers not only get to enjoy the rewards, but they also learn to cultivate long-term financial habits that will hold them

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PARTNERSHIP

NBO, Fairtrade Auto Services partner to offer private banking and Sadara customers exclusive privileges

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman’s (NBO) has signed an agreement with Fairtrade Auto Services (FAS), the authorised dealer in Muscat for Bentley and Lamborghini, to offer Private Banking and Sadara account-holders exclusive privileges when purchasing a new vehicle. Under the partnership, customers can enjoy a range of discounted finance options and exclusive offers.

Ali Mustafa Al Lawati, AGM – Head of Private Banking at NBO, said, “With our award-winning wealth management account, we continue to pioneer best-in-class banking services and are always looking for new ways to maximise return and increase rewards opportunities for our valued clients. Adding to our growing portfolio of strategic partnerships, we are delighted to team up with Fairtrade Auto Services and provide our clients with impressive rewards and



attractive finance options on some of the most luxurious and most sought-after cars in the market.”

Faisal Murtadha Al Lawati, Managing Director of FAS, added, “Our partnership with NBO reflects our shared commitment to strengthening our relationships with our customers while offering them the highest levels of service.

Purchasing a new car is one of life’s most exciting moments and we are pleased to make it all the more rewarding with the list of perks that we have designed exclusively for Private Banking and Sadara clients. We look forward to welcoming customers to our showrooms and offering a truly first-class experience.”

The exclusive privileges include a 50% down or upfront payment, a Bullet Payment for the remaining 50% in 2 years with a 0% interest rate for the period of the loan (2 years). Customers will also be offered a five-year warranty with unlimited mileage, a five-year service contract or 75,000 km, a 25% discount on accessories, a 25% discount on labour for routine services.

NBO’s Sadara Wealth Management offers a comprehensive suite of products, tailored service and industry-leading financial advisory to assist with every aspect of private banking. Through personalised investment opportunities, preferential rates, exclusive privileges and benefits, including a dedicated personal relationship manager, NBO is the only bank in Oman to offer such a wide range of wealth management product solutions to meet the banking and investment needs of customers.

ELECTRIC PURPOSE BUILT VEHICLES

Kia accelerates electrified mobility with first electric PBV plant in Korea

MUSCAT: Kia Corporation, which is in the midst of its transition into a sustainable mobility provider, has announced today that it will establish an all-new, hi-tech smart manufacturing facility dedicated to producing electric Purpose Built Vehicles (PBVs).

The intelligent new production hub for PBVs will be located within Kia’s existing Hwaseong manufacturing site in Korea. The company plans to begin construction in the first half of 2023, with the aim to commence commercial production in the second half of 2025.

The plant will initially be able to build 100,000 PBVs a year with the capacity to increase production to 150,000 units annually in line with the growth of PBV market.

“This dedicated PBV facility is one of the major pillars of our Plan S strategy as Kia seeks to claim the top position in the global PBV market,” said Ho Sung Song, President



and CEO of Kia Corporation. “We will initially explore new markets with derivative PBV models, then gradually expand our presence in global markets with dedicated PBV models featuring autonomous driving technologies.”

Kia is one of the first global organisations to make headway into the PBV market and as part of its

Plan S roadmap, the brand aims to become a PBV leader by 2030. When combined with autonomous driving technology, PBVs are expected to offer a revolutionary new means of transportation that further enrich society and communities around the globe.

The new PBV plant will feature state-of-the-art automation processes

combined with advanced technologies that reduce carbon emissions during the production processes.

The site is also equipped with clean painting and energy-saving facilities to minimise environmental impacts further.

E-Forest is the brand name for Kia’s new smart factory ecosystem that pursues innovation in manufacturing systems by organically connecting everything to realize customer value. The initial ‘E’ signifies progress in the overall mobility industry in terms of efficiency and economics. It also represents the ambition to achieve innovation for everyone by connecting elements such as artificial intelligence, robot technology and ICT to provide its customers with the very best products. The ‘Forest’ part of the nomenclature refers to an ecosystem that harmonises all these elements to function as one.



MUSCAT: The A’soud Global School Salalah Annual Sports Day took place on June 2 for its KG, primary and secondary school children.

Planned and organised by the AGS PE Team and assisted by class teachers, the excitement of the children was evident for all to see as the children participated in a wide range of sporting activities.

Teams were made up of all grades, providing each team with a range of ages and abilities competing against each other for the team prize.

Results were announced by the Principal, Damon Hewson, who said, ‘Physical Education is an essential element in the education of students who attend AGS Salalah. It encourages healthy habits and positive social behaviour through teamwork, and contributes hugely to the holistic development of children.’

Each child who took part was awarded a certificate of participation. Second- and third-placed teams received silver and bronze medals and the winning team re-

ceived gold medals and a trophy to celebrate their success.

A’soud Global School embraces a truly international approach to education in Salalah, with its British-style Cambridge curriculum allowing children to be part of a diverse community of learners.

AGS Salalah is a truly world-class facility that offers challenging learning in a stimulating, state-of-the-art environment. Spacious classrooms, a well-resourced library, an ICT suite, bespoke art, drama and music rooms and dedicated physics, chemistry and biology laboratories are complemented with a large multi-plex gymnasium and outdoor spaces.

The school also boasts a 25m swimming pool and separate ‘splash’ pool, designed to enable less-experienced swimmers to gain confidence and become assured swimmers.

In addition to its indoor multi-purpose sports hall, the outside areas comprise multi-game courts and a top-quality large 3G football pitch.

HUAWEI NOVA Y70

Huawei’s latest entry-level phone with longest battery life

MUSCAT: Years ago, when smartphones were still in their evolving phase, entry-level smartphones used to get a bad rap for being mediocre. But things have changed for the better.

Entry-level phones, like the Huawei nova Y series, now often offer some solid features that are mostly seen on flagship devices. That’s why the release of Huawei nova Y70 got us seriously excited. The phone comes with a 6000mAh battery with 22.5W Huawei SuperCharge, a stunning display, a great set of cameras and ample 128GB storage space.

The best part is that the Huawei nova Y70 lets you have all of these for a very attractive price.



as a result, you can get three hours of continuous video playback on a ten-minute charge. This means you won’t have to stop gaming or pause your shows for long every time you charge up the phone.

Captivating 6.75-inch Huawei FullView Display
The large 6.75-inch Huawei Full-



View Display on the Huawei nova Y70 is great for displaying content in its full glory.

The high screen to body ratio of 90.26% takes the visual experience up a notch.

It makes everything feel captivating and helps you focus on the content. Moreover, the design of the display itself is sleek and sim-

ple, with a narrow notch, to make the most of your mobile screen.

Perfect phone for social media-worthy pictures
The cameras on the Huawei nova Y70 let to snap the perfect selfies and excellent group pictures. The AI Triple Camera on the phone is equipped with a 48MP High-res Main Camera, a 120° 5MP Ultra-Wide Angle Camera and a 2MP Depth Camera.

The Main Camera brings in more light when taking pictures, which results in better quality photos. The Ultra-Wide Angle Camera allows you to fit more content into the frame so that you can easily fit your entire group of friends or a wide landscape in a single shot. The Depth Camera helps create the bokeh effect, which blurs the background to keep the focus on the subject of the photo.

Even the 8MP front camera uses the bokeh effect when taking selfies. Huawei’s self-developed AI Beauty algorithm can apply a natu-

ral beautifying effect to selfies to make them more stylish.

The algorithm tailors the 3D beautification effect according to your age and gender to help make your skin look flawless.

It also helps improve the quality of the photo by sharpening the image and reducing digital noise. All of these features allow you to produce great selfies to post and share on social platforms and keep those memories of your adventures alive.

128GB of storage for loads of entertainment
In addition to the stable performance and immersive visuals, Huawei nova Y70 users can rely on the device to store all of their games and shows, thanks to the 128GB of storage space.

You won’t have to sacrifice any of your content to free up space. In case 128GB just doesn’t cover what you need, you can use a MicroSD card to increase the storage capacity up to 512GB.

That way, you won’t have to worry about deleting old content and can keep downloading new ones.

As icing on the cake, the trusted, innovative, user-friendly and secure AppGallery is available on the Huawei nova Y70, where users can easily navigate, explore, find and download a wide range of high-quality apps.

If you are looking for a smartphone that checks all the boxes but doesn’t break the bank in 2022, then go for the Huawei nova Y70. The phone combines so many attractive features in a single device: super long battery life with fast charging, large and immersive display, impressive camera, and a boatload of storage space.

Price and availability
The Huawei nova Y70 comes in three colours: Pearl White , Crystal Blue, and Midnight Black and is available in Oman at a price of 75.9 OMR from Huawei’s online platforms and select retailers.



ROUND-UP



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Forbes names Bank Muscat in Middle East's Top 100 Listed Companies

The bank topped the Omani companies in the prestigious listing, which was based on data gathered by Forbes Middle East from listed stock exchanges across the Arab world and then ranking companies based on their reported market value, sales, assets, and profits for 2021

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has been named as one of the Middle East's Top 100 Listed Companies in 2022 by Forbes Middle East in recognition of its leadership and achievements. The bank topped the Omani companies in the prestigious listing, which was based on data gathered by Forbes Middle East from listed stock exchanges across the Arab world and then ranking companies based on their reported market value, sales, assets, and profits for 2021. This year's list was dominated mostly by companies from the energy and financial services sectors across the region.

Bank Muscat, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2022, has been demonstrating its leadership role in the Sultanate's banking and financial services sector over the last four decades. Today, Bank Muscat is one of the leading Omani institutions supporting the advancement of the Sultanate's economy and the development of its national human resources. The listing further validates the bank's leadership role in Oman based on a strong customer-centric strategy, initiatives for sustainability, and the pursuit of overall excellence. Bank Muscat is keenly following the trends that will shape the



financial services sector in the future, and moving decisively to prepare for future developments in an age of rapid global economic and technological changes.

The bank's push for digitalisation continues to reap rich rewards in the form of enhancing customer experience, expediting transactions and service delivery,

and lowering costs and effort for both customers and employees. Today, Bank Muscat leads the financial services sector in the Sultanate with over RO 13 billion

in assets, 174 branches and more than 800 ATMs and CDMs spread across the country making it the bank of choice for over 2 million customers. The bank has a wide reach even in remote areas and is an integral pillar for financial inclusion in Oman. In keeping with technological developments, the bank's digital channels including Mobile and Internet banking have been witnessing tremendous growth over the recent past. Bank Muscat posted a net profit of RO 189.63 million for the year 2021 compared to RO 163.36 million reported in 2020, an increase of 16.1 per cent. The bank has the largest portfolio in the Sultanate across the retail, corporate, wholesale and Islamic banking space and its leadership role has been well recognised by global, regional and local publications and awards organisers, with it winning over 30 awards in 2021. Notably, the Bank has been repeatedly chosen as the Best Bank in Oman by a number of prestigious international publications like Global Finance, Euromoney, The Banker and EMEA Finance. It was also named by Forbes Middle East in its "Top 50 Banks in the Middle East" and "Top 100 Companies in the Middle East" lists earlier in 2021.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMMES

Ministry recognises 'Khedmah'

MUSCAT: In recognition of its efforts and active role to contribute to the development of the local community and achieve comprehensive development, Oman Investment and Finance Company (OIFC), 'Khedmah', was honoured among the companies supporting social responsibility programmes (CSR) in the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD). The ceremony was held by the Ministry on Sunday, June 5, 2022, under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Kamil bin Fahad bin Mahmoud Al Said, Assistant Secretary-General of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs, alongside Dr Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development. A number of excellencies, honourable, executive chief officers, representatives of private sector organisations and a large gathering of guests attended the event at the Avani Muscat Hotel in Al Seeb. This honour recognises Khedmah's contribution to supporting



a number of social initiatives in collaboration with MOSD, which came within the framework of the company's CSR programme. Khedmah aims to support primacies related to meeting the necessary needs and priorities. It is keen to join the associated efforts of various entities in Oman

to achieve greater well-being for some segments of society. In addition, the company seeks to implement several effective initiatives targeting the groups concerned by collaborating with government organisations, charities and community institutions. In this context, Khedmah has

contributed to a number of community programs under the Ministry of Social Development over the past period, including the donation of medical kits and equipment to the Safety Centre for the rehabilitation of severely disabled people. The company also provided financial support to students who are social security beneficiaries to complete their higher education through the ministry's 'Qadir' Initiative. Established in 1979, OIFC is one of the leading Investment and services companies and specialises in billing, collection and debt factoring for electricity, water and telecom services in the Sultanate. It serves as a central point for customers to pay all electricity, water and communications bills as well as payment of benefits of the General Authority for Social Insurance. The company also provides prepaid recharge of telephone and electricity connections, renewing subscriptions of recreational and entertainment digital platforms.

RENT-A-CAR



Safer Automotive takes delivery of 10-strong fleet Isuzu D-Max pickup trucks

MUSCAT: Prominent rent-a-car operator Safer Automotive has bolstered its already sizable car rental assets with a fleet of 10 new Isuzu D-Max pickup trucks – best known globally as dependable workhorses with class-leading tech and safety features. The 2022 model vehicles, favoured by motoring enthusiasts for their muscular design and powerful performance, were formally handed over to their new owners at a ceremony hosted recently by OTE Group, exclusive distributors of Isuzu in the Sultanate of Oman. Taking delivery of the stunning lineup was Mohammed Ali Musallam Al Shahri –Chairman, Safer Automotive, pleased as he was to add 10 new-generation D-Maxes to his roughly 600-strong fleet of rent-a-cars serving primarily corporate customers. The new vehicles add to around 37 Isuzu pickups and Isuzu Trucks that have long been the cornerstone of the company's car rental business. The double cabin FL D-Max, with its power-packed 3.0 litre turbo diesel engine and 5-speed automatic transmission, is a much-coveted machine globally. Highly regarded for its 4x4 performance both on and off-road, the D-Max comes with a substantially enhanced interior and driving dynamics while staying true to its core attributes as a popular

working vehicle. With its leading edge safety features and updated infotainment technology, the D-Max also guarantees all-day comfort for passengers. Easily the toughest pickup in Isuzu's history, the D-Max's lightweight body nevertheless comes with enhanced improvements in occupant protection, noise and vibration, as well as in overall stability. It is also engineered for easy and convenient maintenance with its rust protection features and maintenance-free components. All of these characteristics – the outcome of over a century of Isuzu's experience in creating world-class commercial vehicles – make ownership of the D-Max a no-brainer for clients such as Safer Automotive who take pride in offering the market's finest pickup truck to its corporate clients. Established in 2004, the company has evolved into one of Oman's biggest operators in the car rental space. In addition to a pre-owned car showroom in Salalah, Safer Automotive also operates car rental offices in Muscat, Salalah and Duqm. Ensuring long term value to Safer Automotive over its latest Isuzu D-Max fleet acquisition is OTE Group, well-known for its industry-leading sales and after-sales service support, underpinned by its nationwide service network.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Al Hashar Pharmacy's green initiative to create awareness on conservation of Earth



MUSCAT: As part of Golden Jubilee celebrations Al Hashar Pharmacy has taken green initiative to create awareness on conservation of planet earth. The CEO, Suresh Gandhi initiated the plantation drive on the office premises. "It is essential for all to realise that every little deed matters when it comes to saving the environment. No matter how small a step we take to lead a greener lifestyle, it does make a difference. Because, if everyone starts doing little deeds one by one, it will turn into something big," he said. "Always remember that the gifts and blessings which nature endows on us are priceless. It is rather essential to conserve for a better future and life for all," added Gandhi. Various teams at Al Hashar Pharmacy came together to make this historic day playing their role towards preservation of environment. 30 saplings were planted within the premises at Al Hashar Pharmacy head office by team members to mark world Environment Day. The World Environment Day is celebrated on June 5 every year to spread awareness on protecting our planet and conserving nature. The theme for this year 'Only One Earth' emphasises on the fact that there is only one planet to live on and the survival of all living beings depends upon the healthy existence of earth.





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