

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr 12:15 pm
Asr 3:42 pm
Maghrib 6:28 pm
Isha 7:40 pm
Fajr (Tomorrow) 4:39 am

IFTAR 6:28 pm



6 085010 120010

HM RECEIVES THANKS FROM GREECE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Katerina Sakellaropoulou of Greece in reply to His Majesty's condolences cable on the death of Karolos Papoulias, former president of Greece. In the cable, President Sakellaropoulou expressed her utmost appreciation for His Majesty's heartfelt sentiments and sympathy. **-ONA**



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Stronger efforts on public hygiene front

Times News Service

MUSCAT: To ensure people are able to shop safely during Ramadan, municipalities across many governorates of Oman have tightened measures to ensure the shops follow proper hygiene practices.

With souqs and supermarkets witnessing more footfall during the month of Ramadan – which today entered its second day – inspection teams increased the number of visits to stores, restaurants, butchers, fishmongers and other supermarkets to make sure all establishments comply with public health codes.

Municipality officials also ensured vendors complied with the precautionary measures associated with COVID-19, as issued by the Supreme Committee, while also taking legal actions against

those found violating health protocols.

Dhofar Municipality took all the required steps to ensure souqs operate under prescribed guidelines during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The Health Affairs Department at the Directorate General for Salalah Municipality has taken special efforts in the field of health control, which will continue during this month. The department has also set field regulation plans and programmes for the inspection teams.

Teams are required to make sure that all personnel at stores and restaurants comply with these protocols, and meet the various standards required. Conditions that commercial establishments must follow include availability of licences and permits for their activities. **>A3**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
SalamAir to link Indian cities to Sohar, Salalah

1 More travel options will soon be available between Oman and Indian cities, following the announcement of more flights to the subcontinent by low-cost airline SalamAir. It has drawn up plans for operations from three cities in Oman. While some of them are already underway, announcements regarding the rest will be made soon. **>A3**

WORLD
Massive protests continue in Sri Lanka

2 Sri Lanka continued to witness protests across the country with people breaking the government-imposed curfew amid a crackdown. **>A6**

MARKET
Sohar equity services for Apollo Hospitals

3 Sohar International bank has acted as the sole financial adviser to Apollo Hospitals Muscat, on raising its equity capital from investors. **>B1**

RAMADAN SHOPPING IN OMAN SET TO BE BIGGER THIS YEAR

Retail experts say they expect a big surge in online shopping, because consumers still prefer to limit their exposure to potential COVID-19 infections

SALEH AL SHAIBANY

MUSCAT: With fewer COVID restrictions in place this Ramadan, shopping in Oman is expected to see a big increase.

Supermarkets and souqs are already reporting a rise in customers who have turned up in larger numbers to do their shopping.

Surge in online shopping

Meanwhile, retail experts say they expect a big surge in online shopping, because consumers still prefer to limit their exposure to potential COVID-19 infections, and they want to be free of the hassle of queuing up for long periods of time.

“Many people still want to be on the safe side even though the COVID situation is getting better in the country. They want to keep their distance and at the same time be free to enjoy their evenings and do something else,” Mohammed Al Fizari, a retail expert at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, told *Times of Oman*.

Oman has seen fewer instances of COVID infections since the beginning of this year, compared to the summer of last year when the daily average of infected people was recorded at over 2,000.

This is the time of the year when people look forward to shopping – a report by consumer research company RedSeer forecast that this Ramadan people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are likely to spend about \$6.2 billion on shopping.

Ramadan in Oman began on Sunday, 3 April 2022, and ordinary Omanis are on the same



\$6.2b

Is the amount people in the Middle East are expected to spend on shopping this Ramadan, according to a report by consumer research company RedSeer

Ramadan when I was doing my food shopping. I don't want to go through the same experience. I will stay at home this time and order my food online. It is safer that way,” Kareem Al Jufaili, a resident of Al Khuwair, said.

Retail workers also expect a surge in online shoppers this Ramadan.

Samer Hakeem, operations manager of online supermarket Rafeeq, said, “A lot of supermarkets expanded their online operations during the pandemic, and these facilities are here to stay. Around the world, online shopping is steadily expanding and people know that with platforms like ours, they are guaranteed freshness, quality and punctuality.

“Online shopping has a big advantage, particularly for people with young children or old folks living at home, as they might be needed to look after them, and more importantly, do not wish to expose themselves to potential infection that could harm those back home,” he added.

“Online food shopping has been steadily increasing in the last one year and I am not surprised the trend will continue this Ramadan,” Shaikha Saleh, a cashier at Carrefour, told *Times of Oman*.

page as retail experts saying they are not very keen to be among the crowds out shopping during Ramadan.

Proliferation of stores

“Why should I push around with people this Ramadan in a supermarket when I can order online? All the big food outlets deliver right at your home through their online portals. I want to be free to do other things, especially in the evenings, instead of queuing up for food,” Harith Al Farsi, a banking executive, said.

Most of the shopping crowds in Ramadan are found in the evenings after iftar and when the

weather is cooler. Some consumers cite tight parking spaces as a deterrent for overcrowded Ramadan shopping.

Parking is a big problem

“Parking is a big problem during Ramadan. It is no fun pushing trolleys while securing your car. If you go a little late for your shopping, you will never find parking space. I will settle for online shopping this Ramadan than go through the hassle,” Fatma Al Darei, told *Times of Oman*.

Other consumers still harbour old, painful memories that linger from last year's bad experience.

“I contracted COVID last

T-TALK

Pakistan envoy finds some traits of his countrymen in Oman ‘unique’

MADIHA ASIF
madiha@timesofoman.com

MUSCAT: Pakistani nationals living in the Sultanate of Oman are eager to improve the lives of blue-collared countrymen, noted the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Talking exclusively to TTV on its weekly show, T-Talk, H.E. Mohammed Imran Ali Chaudhary, Ambassador of Pakistan to Oman, said he noted some unique traits of Pakistani nationals living in Oman which includes helping the needy fellow countrymen.

“The good things are that some of the Pakistani nationals have done very well in Oman and all of them want to do something. They may not be sure, but they certainly want to do something for those Pakistanis who are in blue-collar jobs.

“This feeling of everyone want-

ing to do something, I found unique in the Pakistanis living in Oman,” the Ambassador noted.

He added that the other thing he has observed so far is that “they [Pakistani nationals] are very law abiding.”

Furthermore, talking about the feedback he has received as the newly appointed Ambassador of Pakistan, he said: “The feedback I have got is that everybody I have met has been here for 30 years, 15 years or 10 years – these are pretty long periods of time.

Peace and calm

“I always ask them if they did not want to go to European or North American countries or elsewhere, but they said no, there is a strange peace and calm in this country.”

He also praised the efforts of the



H.E. Mohammed Imran Ali Chaudhary, Ambassador of Pakistan to Oman



former Ambassador and his team as well as the community in Oman for delivering exceptional services during the time of the pandemic and reaching out to those who lost their jobs owing to COVID-19.

Good combination

“The embassy and the community combined very well. From what I studied here, the embassy and the community helped a lot of people during the pandemic.

“And I think about 15,000 Pakistanis were removed or repatriated at that time.

“Again, the Government of Oman was very generous in waving off conditions for going out. So, they [Pakistani nationals] went out on maybe 40 flights scheduled from Oman to Pakistan,” the Ambassador shared, adding that “God

forbid, if anything of that magnitude hits us, we will do the same. Hats off to the previous Ambassador of Pakistan and the officers working under him.”

Lastly, the Pakistani envoy praised the efforts made by both Oman and Pakistan in tackling and curbing the spread of COVID-19 in their respective countries.

Done very well

“I feel very encouraged by the fact that both countries have dealt with COVID-19 in one of the most successful ways as compared to the rest of the world. The Sultanate of Oman has done very well and so has Pakistan. And I think in both these countries as well as the rest of the world, we are past the last variant; now let's hope another variant doesn't come up,” he said.





OMAN



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Researcher finds plants a great way to dispel negativity around COVID-19

Research done during the peak of the pandemic by Dr Priyanka Verma, a botanist who has more than 15 years' experience with medicinal plants, has revealed that plants could break the monotony of social distancing and increased isolation brought about by COVID



Times News Service

MUSCAT: A plant scientist living in Oman has found out that plants have a great way of keeping away the negative emotions associated with COVID-19, and the other impacts related to the disease.

Research done during the peak of the pandemic by Dr Priyanka Verma, a botanist who has more than 15 years' experience with medicinal plants and how they can be grown without soil, has revealed that plants could break the monotony of social distancing and increased isolation brought about by COVID.

"It is a well-known fact that the pandemic did bring with it a lot of isolation stress, fear and anxiety that made us look at it as more than just a disease," she said. "Some people became highly pessimistic regarding the recovery of individuals and societies. The stress brought about by the pandemic can be considered to be at par with thinking continuously about meeting with an accident while driving, rather than just enjoying the journey."

"Overall, the stresses of the disease, coupled with loneliness brought about by COVID, made COVID-19 much more difficult to handle for many," she added. "People were exposed to a lot of negativity. Here comes the role of plants: they first break the monotony and distract your mind from negativity. They soothe the mind and keep you busy, while encouraging you to observe renewal and life...a great sign of positivity. Even a bud growing from a dying plant can give you the strength and belief to appreciate life."

A PhD in botany from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in India, Verma did her post-doctoral work as a scientist with the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) under the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India.

The body was set up to encourage more research in science and engineering, provide financial assistance to scientists, academic institutions and R&D laboratories, and to award fellowships for advanced research and innovation.

Verma was invited in 2021 to travel to France for a year, to conduct research under Le Studium Fellowship, a research initiative organised by the Loire Valley Institute for Advanced Studies.



However, the pandemic meant she could not move there. Having lived in Sur since 2018, Verma has used the time during the pandemic to further her knowledge on the therapeutic and psychological impact plants can have on people.

Better still, she has been able to find out which plants thrive better in arid conditions, thereby enabling more people in Oman and other Arab countries to benefit from her research. She is now looking for more opportunities in the country that will enable her to take up formal research and lecturing.

"As COVID-19 has strongly impacted our lives, I realise that plants could be connected to better recovery. I strongly believe that hospitals, clinics and rehab centres can include growing and cultivating plants as part of their recovery. They have direct positive impact on patients' attitude towards life, which gives them the strength to fight back."

"Even taking care of a single plant is enough to boost your energy," she revealed. "I have allotted one plant to my four-year-old daughter for watering. She is so excited to see its growth and the emergency of new leaves."



Similarly, I shared some plants with my friends. They are so excited to share their growth updates and nutrition requirements with me."

Keen on bringing plants into her Sur home to generate positive vibes even before the pandemic began, Verma first began growing



ornamental plants bought from nurseries in the area, but they soon died because of the challenging environmental conditions brought about by the heat and sandy soil.

She slowly came to know about their limitations, and instead switched to growing plants that



could withstand high temperatures and thrive in desert-like conditions. She used her botany expertise to make homemade fertilisers, and provided them with water recycled from her kitchen chores to reduce costs and make her efforts more sustainable.

"After coming to my home, people

experience the positive impact the plants have had on them, and have begun seeking my advice to build their home gardens," said Verma. "It's not just here in Oman, but my Indian friends who also felt the mental impact of COVID who are now excited to raise plants in their homes."



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SalamAir to link Indian cities to Sohar, Salalah

SalamAir has drawn up plans for operations from three cities in Oman, and while some of them are already underway, announcements regarding the rest will be made soon

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More travel options will soon be made available between Oman and cities in India following the announcement of more flights to the subcontinent by low-cost airline SalamAir.

The airline has drawn up plans for operations from three cities in Oman, and while some of them are already underway, announcements regarding the rest will be made soon, said Captain Mohammed Ahmed, the CEO of SalamAir.

“As you may already be aware, we announced our strategic partnership with national carrier Oman Air, which furthers our codeshare agreement, and we are very pleased to announce the introduction of our scheduled flights from Muscat to Trivandrum, Lucknow and Jaipur in India,” he said.

“In addition, we are also now flying non-stop from Salalah to Calicut and we hope to soon introduce four non-stop flights from Sohar to Calicut as well, which



Captain Mohammed Ahmed, CEO, SalamAir

we will announce soon,” he added. “India has always been a very important market for us, and we will keep looking for more opportunity in the coming future.”

Flights from Salalah to Calicut will operate on Friday and Sunday, starting from April 3 onwards. Services from Muscat to Jaipur and Thiruvananthapuram will both operate six days a week. While the airline also flies to Pakistan, it is currently looking at expanding routes to other South Asian countries.

Impact of COVID

During his interview with *Times of Oman*, Ahmed also shed light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SalamAir. The travel and tourism sector was

after all not just among the first to be impacted by the virus, but also among those that was most strongly affected.

“I think COVID-19 affected every airline in the industry across the world and we were no exception,” admitted Ahmed. “But I’m proud to say that the SalamAir board of directors, management and staff weathered the storm.”

“Our whole organisation worked as a team and family, and put in a lot of effort to find innovative ways of staying in business and assisting passengers’ movement, while upholding the highest safety standards and adhering to directions of the authorities. We managed to assist communities, medical staff and other passengers with charter flights to many countries, some of which

we operated in for the first time,” he added.

Having taken delivery of the airline’s second A321neo, SalamAir’s eight-plane fleet expects to be busy during the summer months post-Ramadan, when many families will embark on their summer holidays. Excitement at travelling is higher this time of the year, with many people forced to stay grounded on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the measures enabled to curb its spread.

“I think people are extremely relieved to hear those restrictions are being lifted in many destinations and travel is almost becoming what it used to be,” said Ahmed. “Yes there might still be a little reservation, however people seem to be a bit more reassured to travel, and we will provide our customers safe and convenient travel options to ensure their travel is pleasant.”

Developments

A number of developments have taken place at SalamAir since the start of the year: the positive travel trends globally were complemented by the delivery of the new aircraft, while the airline also introduced its new Luban fare class that offers passengers a range of all-inclusive benefits.

The airline’s strategic partnership with Oman Air means it can offer passengers easier connectivity to more cities, with more expansion planned in the coming months. “I believe we are almost at full operation..thankfully, we see a healthy demand for travel and with most of the countries withdrawing COVID-19 restrictions, many are more confident to travel. We see a lot of business travel picking up, as well as leisure,” said the CEO. “We hope this trend continues throughout the year and we will continue to expand our network to more favourable destinations.”

His Majesty greets Senegalese President

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Macky Sall of the Republic of Senegal on the occasion of his country’s National Day.

His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and his best wishes of good health and happiness to President Sall and the people of Senegal further progress and prosperity. — **OMA**

Bollywood movie highlights Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A new Bollywood movie starring John Abraham, Jacqueline Fernandez and Rakulpreet Singh has a reference to Muscat that will surely catch the attention of everyone who lives in Oman.

Attack, which opened in theatres in Oman last Thursday, features a reference to the Omani capital, early in the film, during a scene set in an airplane, where Abraham, a veteran of the Indian Army, is chatting with Jacqueline Fernandez, who plays a flight attendant. When asked why she chose to become a flight attendant, she answers: “I am from a conservative family in Muscat,” adding that she opted for this particular career choice because it helps her escape their conservatism.

The plot of *Attack* features John Abraham as an army veteran, selected for the most dangerous of missions. After a successful combat mission against insurgents, he is sent home on leave. On the plane back home, he meets Jacqueline Fernandez, who is employed as a flight attendant. The two begin a relationship, which comes to a tragic end when she is fatally shot during an attack on an airport while trying to help get others to safety during the chaos. As an army veteran, Abraham’s first instinct is to swing into action and

save as many as he can, but while trying to save Jacqueline he is shot in the spine by one of the attackers. Although he survives the attack, the ordeal leaves him paralysed from the neck down with only slight movement in his right hand.

Enter Rakulpreet Singh, a scientist working on an artificial intelligence system that will help people with paralysis walk, run and jump again, by bypassing those areas of the body that have been damaged.

Her research is co-opted by the Indian Army, which wants to use it to create the country’s first supersoldier, armed with advanced combat skills, lightning-fast reflexes and access to the latest information and intelligence reports.

Rakulpreet allows the military to use her technology with a condition: It must be used on a soldier who is already paralysed. In this case, the soldier happens to be John Abraham, who is still coming to terms with being confined to a wheelchair for life and is completely dependent on his mother taking care of his needs, including bathing and feeding him.

Once the AI super soldier platform is surgically implanted into him, Abraham’s first test of his new abilities is to get back at the goons who threatened his family. It’s a good thing his test run is a success. *Attack* is now playing on screens in cinemas all across Oman.

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA



MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

52,189 REACH

Will you be jailed for eating in public during Ramadan? Read here to know more



Story on fines for eating in public during Ramadan



MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

726 VIEWS



Midday Update video

The Midday Update video had 726 views and reached 1,700 people on Facebook.



MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

684 VIEWS



Tejara Talks episode

The Tejara Talks episode had 684 views and 37 likes on Instagram.

Ministry of Education organises special exhibition for people with disabilities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An exhibition of educational material for the people with disabilities was organised here by the Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Special Education and Continuing Learning, in cooperation with the Directorate-General of Private Schools and the Educational Departments of the governorates of Muscat, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, North Al Sharqiyah, and South Al Sharqiyah; and the International Schools Office.

Titled “For You We Create”, the exhibition was held to celebrate the World Autism Day, which falls on April 2nd each year, under the patronage of Majid Al Bahri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs, in the presence of Dr. Fathia Al Saddi, Director General of the Directorate-General of



FOR YOU WE CREATE: Titled “For You We Create”, the exhibition was held to celebrate the World Autism Day.

Special Education and Continuing Learning, and specialists in special education for people with disabilities from the Ministry’s General Office and from the Governorates. The exhibition was held at the lobby of the Ministry’s main building.

The exhibition included fifteen

corners of joint educational materials between public, private and international schools in the field of people with disabilities, representing models, panels, educational and electronic bags for the categories of “learning difficulties, intellectual disability, hearing im-

pairment, and autism spectrum disorder”. The exhibition aimed to highlight the role and importance of educational materials in the educational process, and to shed light on the services provided by the Ministry of Education in the field of people with disabilities.

The Director General of Special Education and Continuing Learning said: “This exhibition contributes to the exchange of experiences and information between specialists in the field of people with disabilities, and to see the means and methods of teaching, and how to present them in an interesting and attractive way to achieve the goals in teaching this group of students during the educational process through the presentation and explanation provided by exhibitors; how to produce the material, how to use it, and what the results of its use with students with disabilities.”

Inspection teams to take samples to check food quality

At some establishments, including butchers, fishmongers and restaurants, inspection teams during Ramadan will take samples of commodities such as meat, fruit, vegetables and water to make sure

they are fit for consumption even after cooking.

Similar to the efforts of their colleagues in Dhofar, South Al Sharqiyah Municipality has intensified its efforts and prepa-

rations for the holy month of Ramadan in the various services sectors.

The Municipal Affairs Department in Saham has put up a work plan for the supervision of souqs

and outlets to ensure availability of food commodities for consumers, and to familiarise them with the items available and the promotional offers being run by the establishments.



» IFTAR TIMING

6:28 pm

» PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:15 pm
Asr	3:42 pm
Maghrib	6:28 pm
Isha	7:40 pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:39 am

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» IFTAR RECIPE

CRISPY DEVEILED EGG BOATS

Cut ends from romaine leaves to make 5-inch long 'boats.' Spoon and spread the remaining filling mixture over bottom lengths of romaine boats and arrange on a serving platter. Sprinkle with chives.



- INGREDIENTS**
- Crispy garlic crumbs:
 - 4 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil, divided use
 - 1 clove garlic, mashed with fork
 - 1/8 teaspoon sea salt
 - 1/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
- EGG FILLING:**
- 8 eggs, hard-cooked
 - 2 tablespoons very soft butter, divided use
 - 2 1/2 tablespoons mayonnaise
 - 1/2 teaspoon yellow mustard
 - 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 - 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
 - 1/8 teaspoon freshly cracked pepper
 - 1 1/2 tablespoons finely chopped sundried tomatoes (not oil-packed)
 - 1 tablespoon minced pickled jalapeños (regular or tamed, or minced dill pickles if preferred)
 - 1 teaspoon white vinegar
 - 12 inner romaine heart leaves
 - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

- PREPARATION**
- Heat 2 teaspoons of olive oil in a pan. Remove from heat and stir in garlic and salt; let stand for 10 minutes. Return pan to medium heat and add breadcrumbs, folding until well-coated. Toast until golden brown, stirring and watching to prevent burning; this will take about 3 minutes. Scrape crumbs onto a large plate to cool; wipe out skillet, reserving for further use.
 - Slice 6 hard-cooked eggs in half lengthwise and remove yolks to a large plate. Smash yolks with a fork until very smooth and scrape into a medium bowl. Stir in 1 tablespoon of the butter, mayonnaise, mustard, Worcestershire, salt, pepper, tomatoes and jalapenos, blending thoroughly. Stuff into cavities of egg whites and smooth top with a butter knife to make an even covering of filling over the entire flat surface (there will be extra filling; reserve it.) On the same plate that yolks were smashed, coarsely chop and finely smash the remaining 2 hard-cooked eggs. Fold into the reserved excess filling, add vinegar and remaining butter and set mixture aside.
 - Place flat sides of stuffed eggs on top of the crispy garlic crumbs, coating well and leaving on a plate until all are coated (do not coat rounded sides.) Return the large skillet to medium heat and brush remaining 2 teaspoons of olive oil over the pan bottom. When hot, place all eggs in the skillet, crumb side down, and fry until browned, about 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat.

» HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

FASTING HAS LASTING BENEFITS

Fasting is not only a physical but also a spiritual exercise that has many lasting benefits. It enables a person to develop sustained consciousness of God, helps one to choose a healthier lifestyle by small but meaningful changes in the dietary habits, and helps to make a person more humble and purposeful in daily life.



» GOOD DEEDS

TIME FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The Holy Month of Ramadan is the perfect time for spiritual development. Apart from fasting and performing daily prayers and reading the Holy Quran, it is also time to do a good deed. From donating to charity or helping a person

in difficulty there are many ways to do a noble act. It is also an opportunity to appreciate our loved ones and be grateful. When we engage ourselves in acts of worship our relationship with God strengthens further.





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GOVERNORATE OF DHOFAR

Field survey of migratory Steppe Eagles concludes

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Environment Conservation Office in the Governorate of Dhofar, affiliated with the Environment Agency, completed the annual field survey to count the numbers of Steppe Eagles visiting Thumrait in Dhofar Governorate during winters. A migratory bird, Steppe Eagle is classified as 'endangered', according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Dr. Hadi bin Muslim Al-Hakmani, Director of the Environmental Affairs Department in Salalah, in the Environmental Conservation Office of the Environment Agency, said in a statement to the Oman News Agency, that this year's field monitoring survey recorded the highest number of Steppe Eagles on January 25 near Al-Safa farm, where the presence of nearly 550 Plains Eagles was recorded.

He added that the survey team carried out 84 field visits to two sites for the first survey near Al Safaa Farm and the second near Mardam Hakbeet between October 2021 and March 22, 2022, and recorded the presence of 142 Steppe Eagles in Mardam Hakbeet on February 8, which was the



highest during the period.

He said the Steppe Eagles visit the south of the Arabian Peninsula during the winters. But now, with the beginning of Summer season in March-end, their numbers have begun to decline at the two sites.

This is the time when the Plains Eagles leave the Arabian Peninsula and return to their nesting areas in central Asia.

The steppe Eagle study project is being implemented by the Environmental Conservation Office in the Governorate of Dhofar since 2018, in cooperation with bird research scientists from Austria and Germany, and with the support of the British-Omani Society in London. At the beginning of the project, a number of

satellite tracking devices were installed to study the behaviour and paths of the migration of this bird of prey to obtain accurate scientific data that would help the competent authorities to take appropriate environmental measures to protect and preserve them from extinction.

The Steppe Eagle is unique in its dark brown colour and long wings and a short, rounded tail. Females are larger than males with the weight of an adult female ranging between 2.3 and 4.9 kg, while the weight of the male is between 2.5 and 3.5 kg.

These birds of prey feed on carrion (dead animals), rodents, medium-sized mammals, other birds, various reptiles, insects etc.

24TH MEETING



Oman participates in GCC environmental affairs meet

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Authority, today took part in the 24th meeting of the GCC Committee of Ministers Responsible for Environmental Affairs.

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation was led in the meeting, held

via video-conferencing, by Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority. The meeting reviewed a memorandum of the GCC Secretariat General on the communiqué and Riyadh Declaration of the 24th GCC Summit.

The meeting also discussed non-tariff restrictions on envi-

ronment, the GCC Environment e-Portal and cooperation with the programme of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as the proposal study of the Kingdom of Bahrain to reduce plastic pollution.

-ONA

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2	Al-Kamil Sugar	1 KG	9	Vermicelli	400 GM
3	Cooking Oil	750 ML	10	Baked Beans	400 GM
4	Flour	5 KG	11	Jelly Strawberry	75GM
5	Al-Kamil Masoor Dhal	500 GM	12	Cream Caramel	75GM
6	Table Salt Iodized	1 KG	13	Oats Pouch	500GM
7	Dates Khalas	1 KG	1		

Ramadan KAREEM رمضان كريم



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3	Cooking Oil	1.8 Ltr.	12	Vermicelli	400 GM
4	Atta	5KG	13	Baked Beans	400 GM
5	Al-Kamil Masoor Dhal	500 GM	14	Coffee	250 GM
6	Al-Kamil White Chick Peas	500 GM	15	Omani Masala	250GM
7	Dates Khalas	1 KG	16	Custard Powder	285 GM
8	Oats Pouch	500GM	17	Jelly Strawberry	75GM
9	Tomato Paste	800GM	18	Cream Caramel	75GM

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Massive protests on amid crackdown, curfew in Sri Lanka

To counter the protests, the Sri Lankan government has also imposed a nationwide social media blackout after midnight on April 3



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka continued to witness protests across the country with people breaking the government-imposed curfew across the country even amid a crackdown on protestors as the country faces its worst economic crisis since independence. Protests staged by the public were reported from small streets, apartment complexes, and multiple areas around the country, the Colombo Gazette reported. The opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) also staged a protest in Colombo today against the Government with slogans of "Go Gotabaya Go", referring to the current President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Sri Lanka on Sunday arrested over 600 protestors violating the

curfew in Western Province imposed from 6 pm from Saturday to 6 am on Monday. The police said that 664 individuals were arrested in the Western Province between 10.00 pm last night and 6.00 am today, reported Colombo Gazette. During the protests, an allegedly intoxicated 53-year-old male committed suicide in front of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's house in Mirihana, local police informed. Ahead of the planned protest for Sunday, the island nation had imposed a nationwide curfew starting at 6 pm in the evening on Saturday till morning 6 am on Monday (April 4) following unrest in the country with protests outside the residence of President Gotabaya

Rajapaksa amid the ongoing economic crisis in the Island country. The island nation of 22 million people is having a hard time dealing with blackouts for up to 13 hours a day as the government scrambles to secure foreign exchange to pay for fuel imports. The island-wide curfew was declared ahead of an 'Arab Spring' style protest, reported Colombo Gazette. To counter the protests, the Sri Lankan government also imposed a nationwide social media blackout after midnight on Sunday, April 3, according to an internet observatory. Some two dozen social media platforms were affected including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp,

YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram. Responding to the ban on social media, Namal Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka Cabinet Minister of Youth and Sports said that such bans are useless due to the availability of VPNs (Virtual Private Network). "I will never condone the blocking of social media. The availability of VPN, just like I'm using now, makes such bans completely useless. I urge the authorities to think more progressively and reconsider this decision," tweeted Namal Rajapaksa. Sri Lanka is presently facing a foreign exchange shortage which has led to a food, fuel, power, and gas shortage, and has sought the assistance of friendly countries for economic assistance. -ANI

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SACRAMENTO

6 dead, several injured in California shooting



SACRAMENTO: As many as six people died and at least nine were injured in a shooting incident in Sacramento in California, said a media report citing Sacramento police. According to the police, the incident took place early on Sunday morning, reported The Washington Post. "Officers located at least 15 shooting victims, including 6 who are deceased," Sacramento police tweeted.

The media outlet cited a video posted on Twitter that showed people running through the street as the sound of rapid gunfire could be heard in the background. The video also showed multiple ambulances sent to the scene. The investigation in the matter is underway as the police informed that a "large police presence will remain and the scene remains active." -ANI

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HEAVY RAINFALL

14 dead in mudslides, heavy rainfall in Brazil

BRASILIA: At least 14 people have died in mudslides triggered by heavy rainfall in Rio de Janeiro state in Brazil, state authorities said on Sunday. Coastal towns and cities along the state of Rio were inundated by heavy rainfall this weekend, while populous regions like Baixada Fluminense of the state were also affected. Emergency rescue teams answered some 850 calls for help in the last 24 hours and brought around 144 people to safety in the affected regions, state authorities said. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said he sent military aircraft to help rescue operations in affected areas. Alexandre Lucas, the secretary for Civil Defense and Protection, was also dispatched to the state of 17.5 million people. **What we know so far** Heavy rainfall this Friday turned city streets into rivers and swept up cars. The city of Rio was affected by flooding, while other places like Paraty, a scenic coastal town along with Rio state, and Angra dos Reis, a coast city, bore the maximum brunt of intense rainfall. Paraty received 322 mm (12.68 inches) of rainfall in a day, which is the average rainfall for six months.



Local authorities said at least seven people had died in Paraty, including children. Streets were blocked by mudslides and entire neighborhoods were without power, officials added. **Several dozen families were also left homeless** The town, a tourist destination, declared a state of emergency and expects more rain in the coming days. In the nearby coastal city of Angra dos Reis, also a tourist destination, authorities declared a "maximum" alert after landslides destroyed homes.

Angra dos Reis received 655 mm (26 inches) of rain in 48 hours, authorities said. They said that kind of rainfall level had "never before registered in the municipality." At least six people died in the city, an official tally showed. Intense rainfall and consequent flooding and mudslides, especially in hilly communities, have killed hundreds of people in Brazil since December. Deadly landslides killed some 240 people in the Petropolis area of Rio state as recently as February, authorities said on March 23. -DW

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Australia win World Cup for seventh time

The bowlers did a splendid job for Australia to bowl England out for 285

CHRISTCHURCH: Australia are crowned the champions of the 2022 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup after beating England by 71 runs here at Hagley Oval, Christchurch on Sunday.

The bowlers did a splendid job for Australia to bowl England out for 285 after Alyssa Healy's sensational 170 had helped them to a score of 356/5 to win the World Cup for the record-extending 7th time. Megan Schutt gave Australia



the perfect start in their defence of 357 in the Final. Bowling an absolute peach of a delivery, the inswinger was too good for Danni Wyatt, as she was bowled for just 4. Schutt struck again, trapping Beaumont plumb in front of the stumps to get her prized scalp for 27 as England found themselves reeling at 38/2.

Skipper Heather Knight joined by Nat Sciver, stitched together a 48-run partnership, steering England out of troubled waters. Alana King then worked her magic again in the 15th over of the innings as Heather Knight was lbw in the sixth delivery, walking back for 26. Sciver would bring up her fifty, but England had a mountain to climb in the remainder of their innings. Wickets kept falling for the English team as Sciver kept on fighting, bringing up her second century of the 2022 World Cup against the same opponent. — ANI

Mohamed Salah closing in on Liverpool contract renewal

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool are close to reaching an agreement with forward Mohamed Salah over a contract renewal after the Egypt international reportedly decided against demanding a pay rise that would see him match Cristiano Ronaldo's wages at Manchester United.

Salah's contract expires in 2023 and the Liverpool star is expected put pen to paper on a deal that would see him stay put for another four seasons.

The Reds were worried that they may need to cash in on Salah in the summer after talks between the two parties were brought to a stall a few months ago.

In fact, Salah turned down an offer that would see him earn 400,000 pounds per week, demanding half a million pounds a week. However, according to the English Mirror newspaper, the Egyptian forward is now edging towards a new Liverpool deal after lowering his demands. Several European elite clubs



including Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Barcelona were linked with a potential move for Salah in the summer.

Yet, the Liverpool star has reportedly acknowledged the support offered to him by the club and the German head coach Jurgen Klopp after failing to win the Africa Cup of Nations and missing out on 2022 World Cup qualification, the Spanish MARCA newspaper reported. — ANA

Oman Stallions crowned Premier Division Champions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: AER International beat Arabian Region Travel and Tourism (ARTT) by 3 wickets on March 30, 2022 at the Oman Cricket Academy to kick-start the final round of fixtures in the 2021/22 Premier Division Season.

Put into bat first after losing the toss, ARTT were bowled out for 190 with 11 balls to spare. Mohsin Qureshi top scored with 46 runs. AER were brilliant on the field and their bowling unit impressed collectively. Jay Ketan bagged three wickets while all of Muzahir Raza, Aamir Kaleem and Syed Amir Ali claimed 2 apiece.

The second innings saw AER chase the target down in 41.1 overs. With the top order wobbling, they found themselves precariously placed at 73/5 at one stage. But a match saving 65-run knock from Kuttiraja S'mugrajan to go with Muzahir Raza's 45, proved enough to seal the win. Ghazanfar Iqbal, Aqil Khan and Sanjaya Ravindra accounted for all of ARTT's wickets.

In the league's next fixture, Yalla Shabab defeated Renaissance by 56 runs. Electing to bat first, Yalla Shabab made a formidable first innings total of 274/10 in 49 overs. There were valuable contributions across the board, but 2 half-centuries from Muhammed



Nadeem and Imran Alam stood out. With the ball, Shahbaz Hussain and Asif Khan picked up 3 wickets apiece for Renaissance while Fawad Ali and Mehdi Hasan finished with 2 each.

In response, Renaissance could only manage 218/7 after their 50 overs. Shubo Pal and Adnan Sul-ehri matched Nadeem and Alam's efforts from earlier in the day with 50+ scores of their own, but the rest of the batting cast failed to deliver sufficiently. Dhirubhai Patel, Wasim Ali and Jitenkumar Ramanandi were Yalla Shabab's top performers in the second phase, all of them ending the day with 2 wickets each.

In the penultimate match of the season, ARTT slumped to their second successive defeat in the space of three days in their game against Majees. Bowling first after winning the toss, Majees were dominant in the powerplay. Both Obaid Ullah and Ashwin Pandya looked excellent and picked up 1 wicket each to leave ARTT at 26/2 after 10 overs. But the demolition job truly began

once Khawar Ali was introduced an over later. He single-handedly decimated the entire ARTT batting line-up and proceeded to clean them out for 68 in 26 overs, accounting for all 8 of the remaining wickets in the process. In the second innings, Majees finished the job in a hurry. They chased the total down in 34 balls, with openers Zeeshan Maqsood and Khurram Khan doing the bulk of the scoring. In the season's final encounter on April 2, 2022, Oman Stallions beat Muscat CT by 35 runs.

After winning the toss, the Stallions elected to bat first in what proved to be a high-scoring affair.

Powered by a 199-run partnership between Mehran Khan and Vinayak Shukla, they posted an enormous first innings score of 322/8. Mehran finished on a scintillating 100-ball 134. Vinayak accumulated 86 runs himself. For Muscat CT, Samay Shrivatsava, Ganesh Chandrashekar and Munis Ansari registered 3, 2 and 2 scalps respectively.

COMMENTARY

Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings seem to be the dark horses this IPL, believes Nawab of Najafgarh Virendra Sehwa

Anis Sajjan, Vice Chairman, Danube Group

Any number of interactions are less with this legendary cricketer, the Nawab of Najafgarh, Virendra Sehwa. This time I had an opportunity to discuss the ongoing IPL season 15 with him when he visited us at Danube Properties yesterday.

Sharing his views on the ongoing tournament, he noticed that the teams winning the toss are winning the games as well, because probably they're opting to bowl first. He feels that the teams do need to break that thought and strategize how they can win by opting to bat first. We saw Punjab, KKR and DC chasing around 150-200 runs.

He adds that IPL is a huge platform for youngsters to show their talent as we have seen a lot of U-19 players perform well. This includes the likes Ayush Badoni (LSG), Lalit Yadav (DC) and Abhinav Manohar (GT).

The tournament is exciting but the only issue he feels is that the players are scattered amongst 10 teams unlike the previous seasons, making the teams slightly weak on the bowling side.

This gave me a cue for the next question about which is his favorite team from the new 10 teams and why does he support them.

He believes there are 2 dark horses this year, 1st is Punjab Kings and 2nd is Rajasthan Royals, who have a very good batting line up and a decent bowling side and can upset the opposition teams. He, however maintains that his favourite will always be Delhi, because he is from Delhi and, of course, he believes that Rishab Pant is leading the team in a good manner. He adds that if the team decides on the right squad for the playing 11, they stand a chance to grab the cup.

Answering very honestly to my question of which team does he want to win this season, he said, he will be happy with any other team except MI and CSK, since they already have won several times and he wants a new champion team this year.

We have had 7 matches and all of them have gone to the wire and it is so difficult to predict the winner and as rightly mentioned by Viru, the team chasing is the one that's winning the game, except for the one where RR managed to beat

SRH despite batting first.

Going forward I am sure the wickets are going to be tired since all the matches will be played in 4 grounds only. So I asked Sehwa if he feels that the batting team will have a say and he believes that the heat will dictate the terms since it will be summer. As the temperatures will soar, the pitches will become rough, faster and the teams will have to strategize their bowling by giving more opportunities to spinners. He believes that the grounds men will do their job well to ensure the players get a good batting track.

Talking about Virat Kohli, being replaced as the captain, Sehwa said, "India never replaced Kohli because he himself stepped down as T20 captain. T20 and ODI both falling under the white ball format, the board wanted to have one captain for the format. As for test cricket, he stepped down to concentrate on his batting. So it was Kohli's decision to step down from captaincy to focus on the game. I always love watching him play."

Being a true Delhi supporter, Sehwa believes that DC would take the cup this season. Let's wait and watch!

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MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,124.94 points, down by 1.91 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.08 per cent at 4777.8 points. Al Madina Investments, up 6.98 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Qatar Insurance, down 8.45 per cent, was the top loser.

Sohar International provides equity advisory services to Apollo Hospitals

The bank is uniquely positioned in the market, having rightfully earned the trust and confidence of investors, and continues to support projects of national importance that fuel economic development in diverse sectors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Continuing its strategic roadmap to effectively contribute to the national agenda of diversification and generating in-country value, Sohar International has acted as the sole financial adviser to Apollo Hospitals Muscat, on raising its equity capital from investors.

The bank is uniquely positioned in the market, having rightfully

earned the trust and confidence of investors, and continues to support projects of national importance that fuel economic development in diverse sectors. This deal reflects Sohar International's robust network and reaches to market such investment opportunities to existing and potential investors whether locally, regionally, or internationally.

"At Sohar International, our market know-how and analysis gives us an edge to extend support



to ventures that provide sustainable socio-economic benefits to the community enabling people to prosper and grow. To that effect, our well-planned approach ensures that we continue to deliver institutional advisory services

that are drawn from a thorough understanding of the local market and are further complemented with valuable insights that we gain from our international partnerships. We are delighted to be a part of this significant milestone in the

journey of Apollo Hospital Muscat, catering its financial needs for the next phase of the hospital's growth in Oman. The project provides impetus to Oman's emerging healthcare landscape, which has witnessed multi-fold growth and enhancement during the pandemic," commented Ahmed Al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer, Sohar International.

Backed by a team of experts and a strong local and international network of strategic partners, Sohar International is well-versed in handling the complexities of a dynamic market and has been able to successfully play an advisory role to clients whether it on raising equity-based financing and or debt-based financing. With continuous investments in its overall capabilities, the bank has managed to tap the local and international markets providing guided assistance and asset management to both; government agencies and corporates in framing the best capital

structure and raising capital.

"In these unprecedented times where healthcare has evolved as the new defence, Oman has demonstrated its efficiency in healthcare delivery with the way it handled the pandemic and efforts are underway to prepare the healthcare sector to balance between the communicable and non-communicable disease burden. Our strategy to induct a new partner and bolster our balance sheet is a well-conceived strategic initiative. We would like to thank Sohar International for their unmatched acumen, and professionalism in helping us achieve this pivotal milestone. Such initiatives are the need of the hour and this would further propel the expansion needs of Apollo Hospital Muscat. We will soon share our expansion strategy and will continue to add more clinical bandwidth to the private healthcare space of Oman," commented V.T. Saileswaran, MD, Apollo Hospitals Muscat.

SHARIA-COMPLIANT

Attractive financial offers from Alizz Islamic Bank

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of its efforts to enhance customer experience by introducing Sharia-compliant offers, products and services, Alizz Islamic Bank has announced the launch of several financial offers on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

These finance offers are available to all retail customers from the public sector, semi-governmental or private sector institutions who transfer their salaries to Alizz Islamic Bank or the bank's customers who didn't benefit from any previous finance facilities, with special finance rates on home finance, auto finance and personal finance, including Goods Murabaha & Service Ijarah.

New customers can benefit from the home finance offer with a profit rate of 4.75 per cent only for the purchase of ready properties and under-construction properties, as well as Diminishing Musharaka to purchase lands. The new offer also includes auto finance at a competitive profit rate of 4.95 per cent for terms of up to 5 years or 60 months only, and 5.65 per cent only for terms between 6 to 10 years, i.e. +60 months to 120 months.

Moreover, Alizz Islamic Bank announced that its customers can enjoy the auto finance offer without the need to transfer their salary, which applies to all car finance schemes made based on post-dated cheques, as the eligibility criteria for this finance option include the minimum salary, age, employer's eligibility and debt burden ratio (DBR) as per the bank's policy. This offer applies to auto finance only and is exclusive of the Murabaha finance product for land finance or commercial products.

Mohammed Al Ghassani, Chief Consumer Banking Officer at Alizz Islamic Bank, said, "We give priority to enhancing the customer experience, and it is our tradition since the bank's inception to launch various finance offers that meet needs of all segments of the society during the holy month of Ramadan. We are keen on taking customers' requirements into consideration during the development of the offers, services and products that we launch from time to time. It should be noted that this campaign was preceded by a comprehensive training of our staff in all branches to ensure seamless experiences".

Al Ghassani added, "We conduct surveys periodically, to assess customers' satisfaction with our services and products, and to determine the offers they expect the bank to launch."

SHARIA SUPERVISORY BOARD

Meethaq appoints chairman and deputy chairman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat held its first Sharia Supervisory Board meeting for 2022 at the bank's head office in Seeb recently.

The meeting began with a welcome for the new Sharia Supervisory Board members, who include Sheikh Dr Abdullah bin Mubarak Al Abri, Sheikh Dr Akram Laldin, Sheikh Dr Abdul Aziz Al Qassar, Sheikh Waleed Al Qurri and Sheikh Dr Ahmed Rufai.

The Sharia Board members approved the appointment of Sheikh Dr Abdullah bin Mubarak Al Abri as Chairman and Sheikh Dr Akram Laldin as Deputy Chairman of Meethaq's Sharia Supervisory Board respectively.



In addition, the Sharia Board members also appointed Sheikh Dr Abdullah bin Mubarak Al Abri and Sheikh Waleed Al Qurri to the Executive Sharia Committee of the Board. Other matters discussed by the Meethaq Sharia Supervisory Board included the approving of a framework mechanism for seeking Sharia Super-

Meethaq Islamic Banking provides Sharia-compliant banking services under the supervision of the Sharia Supervisory Board

visory Board reviews and resolutions, as well as the reviewing of a number of proposals for transactions by the bank.

Meethaq thanked Sheikh Dr Abdullah bin Mubarak Al Abri and all the members for their valuable efforts and contributions to developing Islamic Banking in the Sultanate. The bank noted that regular meetings of the board are very important since it provides sound legal opinion for the transactions, agreements and contracts made

across its business activities.

Meethaq Islamic Banking provides Sharia-compliant banking services under the supervision of the Sharia Supervisory Board and in line with the regulations for Islamic banks issued by the Central Bank of Oman. The Sharia Supervisory Board consists of scholars who are well-known for their knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, especially the jurisprudence of transactions and the contemporary economy.

Their responsibilities include reviewing and approving products, services, activities, investments, operations and transactions before their implementation, in addition to auditing them through the internal Sharia audit department to ensure their integrity following the legal aspects specified in the decisions and fatwas of the Board.

With close to 30 per cent market share of the total Islamic banking assets, Meethaq once again demonstrated its leadership in the Sultanate's Islamic Banking sector with its Islamic financing receivables reaching OMR1.4 billion and customer deposits growing close to OMR1.2 billion as of 31 December 2021. Meethaq's Total Asset base stood at about OMR1.63 billion at the end of 2021.

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MSX index ends lower

Al Madina Investments, up 6.98 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Qatar Insurance, down 8.45 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,124.94 points, down by 1.91 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.08 per cent at 477.78 points. Al Madina Investments, up 6.98 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Qatar Insurance, down 8.45 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Al Anwar Investment were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 464 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR5.17 million, with more than 13.40 million shares changing hands. Out of 44 traded securities, 10 advanced, 13 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR113,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR86,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR27,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,594.7 points, down 2.49 per cent. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Anwar Investment, and Al Madina Takaful were up by 6.98 per cent, 3.26 per cent, and 1.08 per cent respectively.

Prices of Oman Qatar Insurance, National Bank Oman, Ominvest, Sohar International, and Ahli Bank were down by 8.45 per cent, 6.83 per cent, 5.29 per cent, 4.35 per cent, and 3.33 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,003.44 points, up 0.06 per cent. Prices of Oman Fisheries, National Aluminium, and Voltamp Energy were up by 3.33 per cent, 3.19 per cent, and 1.63 per cent respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering were down by 2.27 per cent.

Services Index was down by 0.35 per cent before closing at 1,611.79 points. Prices of Oman Education & Training, Oman National Engineering, and Al Jazeera Services were up by 3.38 per cent, 1.98 per cent, and 0.73 per cent respectively. Prices of Renaissance Services, OIFC, and Oman Telecom were down by 2.79 per cent, 0.73 per cent, and 0.46 per cent respectively. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,205.25	4,124.94	4,124.94	4,205.20	-80.26	-1.91
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,729.09	6,594.69	6,594.69	6,763.36	-168.67	-2.49
INDUSTRY INDEX	6,011.40	6,000.65	6,003.44	5,999.92	3.52	0.06
SERVICES INDEX	1,617.51	1,611.79	1,611.79	1,617.51	-5.72	-0.35
MSX SHARIAH INDEX	478.28	477.41	477.78	477.41	0.37	0.08
MSX TR INDEX	5,297.28	5,196.12	5,196.12	5,247.69	-51.58	-0.98
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,035.29	6,894.78	6,894.78	6,953.88	-59.10	-0.85
SERVICES TR IDX	1,666.79	1,660.90	1,660.90	1,666.79	-5.90	-0.35
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,238.82	6,227.66	6,230.56	6,226.91	3.65	0.06

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
13,400,306	5,171,149	464	22,091,862,088	10	13	21	44

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 3

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	2,795,692	265,949	117	0.085	0.097	0.093	0.085	0.082	0.003	3.261	0.096	0.096	0.097	0.100	19,000,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	32,882	9,108	8	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.275	0.002	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.100	16,953,584
OM000000418	RAYSUT CEMENT	30,596	5,048	3	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.160	0.165	0.100	33,000,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	170	39	2	0.221	0.221	0.221	0.222	0.222	0.000	0.000	0.221	0.226	0.240	0.100	76,430,254
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,140	486	1	0.426	0.426	0.426	0.436	0.436	0.000	0.000	0.426	0.424	0.458	0.100	95,920,000
OM0000003000	AI MAHA MARKTING	4,611	2,951	3	0.640	0.640	0.640	0.684	0.684	0.000	0.000	0.640	0.640	0.684	0.100	47,196,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	7,506	2,492	11	0.332	0.332	0.332	0.332	0.332	0.000	0.000	0.332	0.332	0.338	0.100	216,113,484
OM0000006920	VISION INSURANCE	300,000	31,500	8	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.095	0.105	0.100	10,500,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	233,192	220,318	10	0.792	0.672	0.792	0.672	0.676	-0.004	-0.457	0.852	0.852	0.868	0.100	254,000,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST & FIN	10,000	1,371	2	0.138	0.138	0.136	0.137	0.138	-0.001	-0.725	0.136	0.132	0.138	0.100	32,468,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	559,720	281,872	27	0.504	0.504	0.502	0.504	0.510	-0.006	-1.176	0.504	0.504	0.560	0.100	1,891,612,060
OM0000003234	RENAISSANCE SER.	181,633	76,099	10	0.420	0.420	0.418	0.418	0.430	-0.012	-2.791	0.418	0.418	0.420	0.100	98,819,380
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	704,964	81,776	7	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.120	-0.004	-3.333	0.116	0.116	0.118	0.100	226,160,266
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	10,000	1,100	1	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.115	-0.005	-4.548	0.110	0.110	0.114	0.100	328,906,852
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	15,890	5,113	5	0.322	0.322	0.318	0.322	0.340	-0.018	-5.294	0.318	0.310	0.318	0.100	215,215,667
Total		15	4,907,986	985,223	215											

Parallel Market

OM0000001962	AL MADINA INV.	5,092	234	1	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.043	0.003	6.977	0.046	0.039	0.046	0.100	3,723,536	
OM0000002580	OMAN EDU TRAINING	44,613	9,547	2	0.214	0.214	0.214	0.214	0.207	0.007	3.382	0.214	0.187	0.213	0.100	14,980,000	
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	228,334	21,294	18	0.091	0.095	0.091	0.093	0.090	0.003	3.333	0.093	0.093	0.094	0.100	11,625,000	
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	1,481,559	144,212	97	0.095	0.100	0.095	0.097	0.094	0.003	3.191	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	3,226,431	
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	8,000	3,399	6	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.101	0.002	1.980	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.100	14,420,000	
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	9,620	1,201	3	0.121	0.125	0.121	0.125	0.123	0.002	1.626	0.125	0.120	0.127	0.100	10,175,344	
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	60,000	5,640	3	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.093	0.001	1.075	0.094	0.093	0.095	0.100	16,450,000	
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	500	80	1	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.144	0.170	0.100	4,900,000	
OM0000001285	MINERAL WATER	111	10	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	7,430,274	
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	720	184	1	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.255	0.230	0.280	0.100	8,271,144	
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	123,967	10,428	8	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.085	0.088	0.100	10,237,500	
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	2,122,000	159,807	57	0.075	0.076	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.076	0.100	15,000,000	
OM0000003385	NAT. PETERGENT	1,000	590	1	0.590	0.590	0.590	0.538	0.538	0.000	0.000	0.590	0.800	0.590	0.100	10,760,000	
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	2,000	168	1	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.081	0.084	0.100	79,223,472	
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	1,000	49	1	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.047	0.049	0.100	32,394,597	
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	51,000	2,499	3	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.047	0.049	0.100	35,005,911	
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	1,181	57	2	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.047	0.050	0.100	70,204,870	
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	21,094	2,468	3	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.114	0.117	0.100	18,195,397	
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	600	58	1	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.090	0.100	0.100	19,400,000	
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	360	29	1	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	37,694,911	
OM0000008710	BARAKA DESALINATION	5,000	740	1	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.000	0.000	0.148	0.145	0.150	0.100	11,177,256	
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	245,970	23,839	12	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.097	-0.001	-1.031	0.096	0.095	0.099	0.100	214,747,491	
OM0000001317	HSBC BANK OMAN	211,000	24,054	4	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.116	-0.002	-1.724	0.114	0.114	0.117	0.100	228,035,658	
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	83,339	9,417	4	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.115	-0.002	-1.739	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.120	0.100	338,587,712
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	11,200	966	4	0.088	0.088	0.086	0.086	0.088	-0.002	-2.273	0.088	0.085	0.088	0.100	17,456,834	
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	9,260	1,766	3	0.191	0.191	0.190	0.191	0.205	-0.014	-6.829	0.190	0.192	0.204	0.100	310,555,754	
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	6,000	1,170	1	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.213	-0.018	-8.451	0.195	0.192	0.195	0.100	19,500,000	
Total		27	4,759,520	423,727	240												

FEDERAL RESERVE

Pace of rate increases depends on how economy responds: Fed's Williams

PRINCETON: The Federal Reserve needs to move monetary policy towards a more neutral stance, but the pace at which it tightens credit will depend on how the economy reacts, New York Fed President John Williams said.

Williams, in response to questions at a symposium about whether the Fed needed to hasten its return to a neutral policy rate that neither encourages or discourages spending, noted that in 2019 with rates set near the neutral level "the economic expansion started to slow," and the Fed resorted to rate cuts, Reuters reports.

"We need to get closer to neutral but we need to watch the whole way," Williams said. "There is no question that is the direction we are moving. Exactly how quickly we do that depends on the circumstances."

Williams' remarks suggest a more cautious approach to coming rate increases than has been



pushed by colleagues who feel the Fed should race towards a more neutral stance by using larger than usual half-point rate hikes at upcoming meetings.

The median policymaker estimate of the neutral rate is 2.4 per cent, a level that traders currently feel the central bank will hit by the end of this year. Such a pace would require half-point increases at 2 of the Fed's remaining six meetings this year, with expectations

of a first coming at the Fed's May 3-4 session. The Fed raised interest rates last month by a quarter of a percentage point, the beginning of what policymakers expect to be "ongoing increases" aimed to tame inflation currently running at triple the Fed's 2 per cent target.

At the last Fed meeting the median policymaker projected quarter-point increases only at each meeting, but several since then have said they were prepared to move more aggressively if needed.

The outcome depends on whether inflation eases, Williams said. "We expect inflation to come down but if it does not...we will have to respond. My hope right now is that won't happen," Williams said.

The Fed will also be using a second tool to tighten credit when it starts to reduce the size of its nearly \$9 trillion balance sheet. Williams said that could begin as soon as May.

In prepared remarks to a Princeton University symposium, Williams said high inflation was currently the Fed's "greatest challenge," and is potentially being driven higher by the war in Ukraine, the ongoing pandemic, and continued labour and supply shortages in the United States.

"Uncertainty about the economic outlook remains extraordinarily high, and risks to the inflation outlook are particularly acute," Williams said. However, he said he expected the combination of rate increases and balance sheet reduction to help ease inflation to around 4% this year, and "close to our 2 per cent longer-run goal in 2024" while keeping the economy on track.

"These actions should enable us to manage the proverbial soft landing in a way that maintains a sustained strong economy and labour market," Williams said. — BNA

GERMANY AUTO INDUSTRY

Auto industry hit by lack of raw materials

BERLIN: Germany's automotive sector already had a lot to cope with before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. First, there was the COVID-19 pandemic and a global semiconductor shortage. Later came rising oil, gas and coal prices, which have continued to skyrocket since the war began on February 24. Now a fresh threat looms of supply bottlenecks and price hikes for other key raw materials from Russia and Ukraine.

Volkswagen, Europe's largest carmaker, told DW the issues have been "virulent" and "volatile" for some time and may take some time to play out.

"One should not underestimate the threat of supply shortfalls for important raw materials for car manufacturers and their suppliers," auto industry expert Stefan Bratzel from the Center of Automotive Management (CAM) told DW. "This ultimately leads to rising prices, even longer waiting times for new cars for customers and slows down the ramp-up of electromobility."

Neon gas from Ukraine for semiconductor production Ukraine is one of the most important suppliers of neon, a noble gas needed for semiconductor production, the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA) told DW.

To make matters worse, chips have been in short supply worldwide for almost all industries for some time now.

"These raw materials will be



VOLATILE: Germany's auto industry has been hit by COVID shutdowns, rising prices and now a shortage of raw materials from Ukraine and Russia. — DW

come even more important in the future," says a VDA spokeswoman. Palladium, which is required for catalytic converters in gasoline engines, has been imported from Russia



AN UNFORGETTABLE RAMADAN

This Ramadan, Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort, one of the world's top luxury resorts, welcomes guests to enjoy an intimate setting beneath the glittering sky for Iftar and Suhoor delights with friends, family and colleagues at its three restaurants - Al Maisan (Iftar), Bella Vista (a la carte menu) and Al Qalaa (dinner menu, a la carte).

Ramadan is a month of prayer and contemplation and a perfect time to be together with friends, loved ones and family and share a table.

In the newly opened Al Qalaa Restaurant - The flavours of Arabia - the chefs take inordinate pride in their menus during the Holy Month.

Here guests can enjoy a seamless blend of traditional Arabic hospitality in an opulent setting which includes a luxurious outdoor majlis setting where modern design and traditional taste co-exist in perfect harmony.

Inspired by Khasab Castle in Musandam, Al Qalaa restaurant offers a range of authentic recipes from Oman and from across the Gulf, complete with authentic flavours and immaculate presentation under a constellation of hanging lanterns. Head Chef Khalid Abu Aladas ensures that the ingredients are freshly harvested from the Arabian Sea and local farms and then crafted or grilled to perfection. Diners can experience local flavours, including the signature Omani Hamour Fish Shuwa.

Cooked traditionally for special occasions such as Eid Al Adha, 'Shuwa' is an Omani delicacy that is marinated and slow-cooked for a minimum of 12 hours in a man made underground oven. This tradition has continued over generations and Al Qalaa restaurant honours this tradition by using its own homemade marination and uses the finest ingredients.



The menu also includes the options of hot and cold Mezzeh platters as well as an array of options from the charcoal grill. Guests at the restaurant can additionally indulge in Omani flavoured desserts such as chocolate and pistachio muhalabia and Omani halwa.

The hotel will be serving an astounding assortment of only the best dishes as a tribute to Oman's traditions and cuisine in rotating menus, providing a diverse range of culinary selections that will leave anybody at Al Qalaa eager for more.

Each dish on the menus has been meticulously crafted to offer guests a memorable experience while spending quality time with their loved ones. The menu includes an exciting selection of freshly squeezed juices, authentic and diverse

appetisers, main courses and desserts. The menus include a variety of crowd-pleasing hot mezzehs such as warm lamb kebbeh and falafel, alongside a selection of cheeses and dried fruits.

For a sweet afternote, guests can round off the night with best-loved desserts, including the umm ali and chocolate Kunafa (a variant of the classic dish Kunafa).

You can have the option to dine in the most stunning settings reserved for you alone - a canyon-edge platform where Princess Diana took in the panoramic views in 1986. Choosing from connoisseur menus prepared by your personal chef, your meal is served by your butler. Toast romance as the sun sets over the canyon and constellations shine overhead.

For a more private gathering, guests have the option of booking an exclusive Ramadan Majlis for the evening.

Maren Kuehl, General Manager, Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort, said: "We are thrilled to announce that Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort is launching an incredible culinary spread which families, colleagues and friends can enjoy together. The Holy Month is a special time and the hotel team takes great pleasure in creating a peaceful atmosphere for guests to come together and enjoy suhoor before dawn and Iftar before nightfall with an unparalleled dining experience and get into the spirit of the Holy Month."

She also said: "We are very lucky to have Ramadan falling for the first time during a time where we are doing good business on the books, as we have a mix of international and local guests visiting our resort, and we expect to be busy during Ramadan. Every single evening, we will have an oud player for entertainment and will also have an international buffet. Other restaurants will be open throughout the day."

With a holistic Ramadan package, guests can explore the fascinating villages around the resort or drive through magnificent canyons before returning for a well-deserved pampering hammam treatment or enjoy a nourishing facial at the multi award-winning Anantara spa. For the more adventurous visitor, the resort offers the option to push to the limit and scale a cliff edge with a Jabal Activity Wall for that rush of adrenaline.



FEATURE



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The expo has received visitors from every area of the globe from diverse backgrounds



EXPO 2020 DUBAI IMPRESSES THE WORLD

From sports stars and singers to leaders from the world of business and politics, all have spent time at this once-in-a-lifetime Expo

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Over the last six months, Expo 2020 Dubai has opened its iconic portal gates to everyone, receiving visitors from every area of the globe from diverse backgrounds with many stories to tell and experiences to share.

From sports stars and singers, to leaders from the world of business and politics, and those carving the way for changes in environmental behaviour and women's rights, they have all spent time at this once-in-a-lifetime Expo, making their own mark, and learning and enjoying what others had to offer.

Here is what some of them had to say:

Amina J Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General, United Nations, said: "At a time when there is a dark cloud, you have presented a real vision for what we can do to recover better, for how the world can look beyond the UAE – beyond your neighbourhood – into this global community. You've given hope and a sense of dignity to everyone that has participated in this Expo."

Footballing superstar Cristiano Ronaldo said: "I think Dubai do unbelievable work to make all these countries [come] together – 192 different cultures, different mentalities, so it's great ... It's amazing to put all cultures together to learn [from] each other. I think it's fantastic."

Pakistani activist for female education, Malala Yousafzai, said: "When young girls visit the pavilions, they are learning something and can picture themselves in leadership roles. This is the message we send to our future generation: girls and boys can do anything, and gender should not be preventing them from any role they aspire to."

Multi Grammy winning musician Jacob Collier, said: "I love the let-your-imagination-run-wild approach to everything – the architecture, the tech, the design of the place ... the curves and edges, and the global nature of it. As a musician, I've always been ravenous for all the flavours from all the places, so this is an amazing space where you can get a pocket version of each of these. Whenever I poke my head into any environment around here, I'm inspired by something new. It is a world that revolves around tech and imagination, but the human spirit prevails throughout."

Two-time World Champion heavyweight boxer Anthony

Joshua, said: "Boxing is a sport that doesn't discriminate. It's a sport that [welcomes] anyone, because it's one of the sports that is not about your wealth, it's not about your gender. It's not about anything, if you've got the skill, you can make it. So for me, female, male, anyone can do well in boxing. Sport has been used for many, many years to try and unite ... people across the world. So I think sports, especially boxing, can and do play a big role."

Tennis coach Judy Murray said: "You have a huge opportunity at Expo to showcase the women's side of everything, whether that is culture, education, business, research, science, sport... For me, it's all about visibility. If you can see it, you can be it. So much of Expo has highlighted the significant impact that women have made in so many and varied ways in the world, and will continue to make – so long as we are given the chance to do so. That's a big thing for International Women's Day and breaking the bias – it's about shining a spotlight on women's achievements to show girls what's possible."

Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Alicia Keys said: "Expo 2020 knows no borders; it is envisioning a future we all want to create. To me it's about innovation, creating dreams and making realities out of dreams. This is one of the things I love about the UAE. Opportunity is about creating the world you want to live in and creating what you want to experience to bring out the best of yourself. Every time I come here, it's about progression and what can be created. I find that very inspiring. It's one of the fastest-growing creative hubs of the world, and I really resonate with that. All the countries coming together at Expo 2020 have different cultures, but we can occupy the same space with love and respect."

Former Nasa astronaut Captain Scott Kelly, said: "I think it's great to have the Expo here in Dubai. I love this city, and to have all of these other countries from around the world come together and showcase what is great about them, what they're doing and how that's benefiting all of us. I feel completely safe – not only pandemic-wise, but in every way. This is probably one of the safest places I've visited."

Lebanese singer Diana Haddad said: "Expo 2020 Dubai is a vibrant event that relates to everyone, regardless of their nationality or cultural background. This global mega-event is relevant not



only to the UAE but to the whole world. The UAE is a country of peace, love, security and safety. It's the country of happiness. This is the message I want to convey through my music. We need peace now more than ever, and it is amazing that the UAE can attract people from all over the world.

And we've waited a long time for this event, so this is an amazing experience, and the whole world is taking note."

Former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund and President of European Central Bank Christine Lagarde, said: "This is a time when we need not

only signals, but commitment and action by leaders, governments, institutions, businesses, civil society and individuals alike to close the gender inequality gap. The Women's Pavilion is the first standalone World Expo pavilion dedicated to women in recent history. That is the right step."





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ROUND-UP



Kidsity, BP Oman conclude third National Robotics Olympics

The competition targeted school kids from the ages of 11 to 16 to design and programme a robot that would race and compete to win the title of ‘fastest robot’



MUSCAT: In partnership with BP in Oman and collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Kidsity held a closing ceremony marking the conclusion of the third National Robotics Olympics, held under the patronage of Dr Maya Said Al

Azri, Director of Innovation and Scientific Olympics Department, Ministry of Education. This social investment programme managed by BP is continuously benefiting communities with the contribution of Block 61

partners. The competition targeted school kids from the ages of 11 to 16 to design and programme a robot that would race and compete to win the title of ‘fastest robot’. A total of 500 students took part from 200 schools across 11 governorates. 22 teams with 44 students qualified

for the final stage to compete for the first three winning placements, with cash prizes up to OMR750. Shamsa Al-Rawahi, BP Oman Social Investment Manager, commented, “Encouraging innovation and engineering within youth is key to the development of their

learning and skillsets. It also enhances their knowledge base in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) through fun and creative competitions that allow children to achieve their high-potential.” The competition included quali-

fication stages which were held for two weeks, qualifying two teams from each governorate to compete in the final stage of the competition. The matches required the designed and programmed robots to race across a 1.5m racing track for the fastest and most efficient robot. Saif Al Manji, Co-Founder of Kidsity, further added, “These competitions and projects encourage students to think outside the box and invent different solutions for new challenges. One of our goals at Kidsity is to encourage delivering more of these types of projects in Oman to increase the capabilities of the new generation, steering them into the fields of science and innovation.”

STYLISH PROFILE

Enjoy the drive in GAC Motor’s GS3 SUV

MUSCAT: GAC Motor’s GS3 SUV is built to offer exciting driving experiences. From routine tasks to weekend getaways, the GS3 delivers on all fronts encouraging you to make the most of every journey. Pushing you to enjoy every drive is a choice of 113 HP, 1.5L engine with 150 Nm torque and a 135 HP, 1.3L turbo-charged engine with 202 Nm torque. Both are paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission. An available ECO drive mode offers the advantage of better fuel efficiency. The GS3’s stylish profile is complemented by a choice of 16”, 17” and 18” alloy wheels. Adding to its bold design are the sleek daytime running lights (available on 1.3L Turbo AT), front and rear fog lamps, LED taillights and halogen projector headlights with follow-me-home function. These headlights are equipped with alarm feature for headlights on warning. The interior of the GS3 is impressive, spacious and comfortable. Passengers in the GS3 can revel in a cool and comforting environment with automatic air conditioning with air filter and negative ion air purifier. Rear passengers too can stay relaxed with the rear a/c vents and second row centre arm rest with cup holders. It has a rear transverse space of 1500 mm which can comfortably seat



three passengers and is the best in its class. A multi-functional steering wheel gives the driver a good reason to stay focused on the road ahead. The leatherette-trimmed seats increase the convenience aspect besides adding to the style quotient. The driver’s seat and passenger seat is 6-way and 4-way adjustable respectively. The second row seats are 60:40 split offering an option of more space in case the need arises. Giving passengers more reasons to enjoy the most of every

journey is a range of features that include 8-inch TFT colour screen display with Navigation, front row USB port, rear row USB port, 6-speaker music system with AM/FM, MP3/WMA, Bluetooth hands-free phone system, speed based volume adjustment, cruise control and more. In terms of safety, the GS3 is equipped with an impressive list of safety features. They include, dual front airbags, front side airbags (available on 1.3L Turbo AT), Electronic Stability Program

(ESP), Anti-lock Braking system (ABS), Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD), Traction Control System (TCS), Hydraulic Brake Assist (HBA), Hill-start Hold Control (HHC), Hill Descent Control (HDC), impact sensing door unlock, engine immobiliser and more. The Electronic Parking Brake (EPB) with Auto Hold adds to the convenience for the driver. In Oman, GAC Motor vehicles are distributed by New World Autos and backed by Saud Bahwan Group.

MONEY EXCHANGE



Unimoni organises blood donation campaign

MUSCAT: Unimoni Exchange the largest Money Exchange in the Sultanate has organised a blood donation campaign with the help of Blood Bank Bausher. Over 40 donors participated in the drive among them were Unimoni employees and its customers. “It’s a lifesaving act, without any harm to the donor, donating blood not only helps someone in need but also offers health benefits for the donors themselves. This blood donation campaign is aimed to educate people about

safe blood transfusion and will motivate people to donate blood voluntarily,” said Boban MP, CEO of Unimoni Exchange Oman. “We are thankful to our customers who voluntarily came to donate their blood and they appreciated our efforts to serve mankind. Also, we are thankful to Blood Bank Bausher for supporting and encouraging us to run this initiative successfully. We as the Unimoni family will keep on bringing such initiatives to serve the society we live in,” he added.

HOLY MONTH

InterContinental Muscat celebrates Ramadan with exquisite Iftar and Suhour menus

MUSCAT: The iconic InterContinental Muscat, managed by IHG Hotels and owned by Omran, has announced to host an exciting culinary delight to mark the holy month of Ramadan, offering the Muscat community the opportunity to revel in delicious Iftar and Suhour meals. This year, InterContinental Muscat guests will be able to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan at Musandam Restaurant which boasts a mouthwatering dish including an Arabic Iftar buffet with traditional music playing of Oud by the skilled Omani talent. A special Suhour meal with fresh juices will be offered at the newly opened Musandam Restaurant and Mynah’s Edge Restaurant and also a Qaransho party that will be unforgettable for kids. Anna Marie Dowling, Area General Manager, IHG Oman said, “InterContinental Muscat is thrilled to share the joy of Ramadan with our guests through an exquisite culinary dining experience for both



Iftar and Suhour. Our award-winning chefs will offer a variety of authentic and innovative international dishes to make the holy month truly memorable and special.” Musandam Restaurant will be open from sunset till 09:30 pm and the buffet price starts from OMR20 Omani per person, including taxes,

and children from 6 to 12 years old are OMR10, including taxes. Kids under six will be free of charge. In addition, Suhour will be offered at the newly opened Mynah’s Edge restaurant every night during Ramadan from 9 pm to 3 am including a list of Arabic dishes and flavours, accompanied by the melody tunes

of Omani Oud player from 10:30 pm. During the holy month, children are also invited to participate in the traditional Qaransho Night, which is held on the 14th day of the holy month. On this occasion, the hotel offers an evening of games, competitions, and sweets for the children in the hotel lobby.

FINANCE COMPANY



National Finance awarded ‘Top Omani Brand’ title

MUSCAT: National Finance was recently awarded the title of “Top Omani Brand” in the ‘Finance’ category at the Alam Al-Iktisad Top Omani Brand Awards ceremony. The event took place in the Majan Ballroom at Al Bustan Palace, Muscat, the guest of honour, His Highness Sayyid Fahr bin Fatik Al Said, presented the award to National Finance – Mohammed Al Busaidi, Head of Operations. This accomplishment exemplifies National Finance’s exceptional performance which is achieved through its range of financing services for customers, corporates, and SMEs along with its keen focus on ensuring

that its services are easily accessible. Over the last three decades, the company has worked unceasingly toward providing fast, easy and flexible solutions that meet the client’s various requirements. “We are delighted with this accomplishment that reflects the company’s successful journey as well as its leading position in the finance industry. Since its inception, National Finance has built a strong reputation as a market leader and has been trusted by thousands of customers across the Sultanate to meet their financing needs while surpassing their expectations,” said Mohammed Al Busaidi.



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GMC celebrates success of AT4 sub-brand in the Middle East

During an adrenaline-filled, all-terrain adventure on the Arabian sands, GMC Middle East celebrated the exceptional success of the GMC AT4 sub-brand in the Middle East, which has redefined the adventure category since its introduction to the market

MUSCAT: GMC Middle East has renewed its commitment to bringing world-class technology and premium vehicles to serve the region's off-roading needs, by placing the present and future side-by-side. During an adrenaline-filled, all-terrain adventure on the Arabian sands, GMC Middle East celebrated the exceptional success of the



GMC AT4 sub-brand in the Middle East, which has redefined the adventure category since its introduction to the market. In light of the remarkable success of the beloved AT4 sub-brand in the Middle East, a market considered its second home, GMC has confirmed that the AT4 line-up will be completed by the first quarter of 2022, with the planned addition of the first-ever Terrain AT4. The 2022 GMC Terrain AT4 was designed to be bolder, sportier and more capable than ever and will offer customers more choices that suit their persona and lifestyle. Anil Sethi, GM Sales and Marketing, said, "GMC's operations in the Middle East started in 1926. Today, almost a century later, we are proud to witness the continu-

ous growth and strength of GMC's legacy in the Middle East market, one that we consider our own and a culture that is embedded in the brand's DNA. "The Middle East remains to date the only export market for GMC outside of North America, and we are committed to continuously bringing our customers the all-terrain companion that they need, from class-leading innovations, distinguished features and of course unrivalled off-roading capabilities. Last year, we saw the launch of the first-ever all-new Yukon AT4, which has witnessed an incredible response." The AT4 sub-brand line-up is engineered to add an extra level of functionality and technology, bolstered by premium everyday com-

forts to create a league of their own and the level of capability will vary across each vehicle, matching the needs of customers in each segment. AT4 is made to be used, both on and off-road. Accumulated with an ambience of rugged luxury, the AT4 range looks the part. Last year, both GMC's loyal and new customers were taken by storm with the introduction of the first-ever GMC Yukon AT4. The full-size SUV offers an additional layer of off-road ability, innovative technology, and bold design to complement its drivers' outdoor lifestyle. Key features of the vehicle include GMC's best-in-class Air Ride Adaptive Suspension, grippy 20-inch Goodyear all-terrain tires, power side steps, exclusive door sill plates with the

AT4 logo and an all-new active response 4WD™ system. In parallel, it is equipped with luxurious infotainment and interior details such as an all-new rear-seat Media System featuring class-leading dual 12.6" diagonal screens with touch-screen and screen-sharing functionality, an AT4-exclusive premium interior with Kalahari accents and brushed aluminium details, a premium AT4-specific carpeted floor mats, ventilated driver and front-passenger seats for extra comfort and a panoramic roof to name a few. As for the GMC Sierra AT4, it redefines capability in the off-road space as the truck delivers a unique formula of authentic off-road capability and innovative technology paired with premium

refinement and a bold appearance. The GMC Sierra AT4 is meticulously crafted with an enigmatic exterior finish, paired with modern detailing to elevate the vehicle into an eye-catching blend of engineering, easily attracting attention from other passengers on the road. As standard, the vehicle includes a 2-inch factory-installed suspension lift, Standard 4WD with a two-speed transfer case, locking rear differential, and Off-road-tuned Rancho monotube shock absorbers to name a few. To honour the regional fans' love of GMC, the brand brought the Sierra AT4 reg-cab exclusively for the region in 2019. Alongside the prominent GMC Sierra and Yukon and the anticipated GMC Terrain, sits the practical GMC Acadia in the AT4 line-up. The Acadia AT4 features a distinctive design, bold exterior styling cues with darkened finishes and exclusive details that create an aggressive attitude, sportier look and a rugged presence built to adventure beyond the pavement. Over the past nine decades, GMC has consistently delivered on its customers' needs, bringing world-class vehicles to market that introduce leading advancements and innovation with no limits. GMC celebrated its legacy in the region with the success of the AT4 line-up and its promise for a sustainable future claiming its territory in the premium, off-roading and class-leading innovator spaces.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

O! Millionaire's green certificate can win participants up to OMR5 million

MUSCAT: Millionaire Investment has launched O! Millionaire to transform lives, plant trees and make Oman a happier place. To meet this goal, we champion credibility, equality, simplicity and human centricity. We put people first, making dreams come true, striving to give back to society and impacting the world with our tree-planting programme. O! Millionaire green certificate will create opportunities for winning and will contribute towards the country's efforts to reduce carbon footprint, Vision 2040 in alignment with the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The exciting part of the initiative is to create winners, change lives, and promote positivity, O! Millionaire will conduct Oman's first nationwide draw. It offers a lucrative opportunity for a nationwide draw that attracts locals, expats and participants from other countries. The customer will purchase a 'green certificate' for OMR2.5. This purchase entitles them to a free entry for a draw which can win them prizes up to OMR5 million. This tree-planting initiative supports Oman's efforts toward climate action and food security. The programme will offset CO2 emissions from transport and industry. Planting food-producing trees and doing bee farming, will establish food security for the future of Oman. Research shows trees could be planted to reduce CO2 emissions, therefore planting new trees is one of the most effective ways to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) and limit global warming. It will combine expertise in sustainable development, clean energy and organic food production to achieve its goal. As part of the initiative, it will mobilise the peo-



ple of Oman to be part of a greener, cleaner, cooler Oman that is both water and food secure. To promote Oman as a natural sanctuary, it will create an Oasis Park- Middle East's largest green park. The park will be created in an area of 18 square kilometres at the start and will host hundreds of thousands of trees and dozens of species. It will use 'air to water' technology which is the process of converting water vapour in the air to water. Airo water system can be powered by a variety of energy sources including solar with varying output capacities. The first phase of the park will reach maturity within seven years of launch. The full planned Oasis Park (1,200 square kilometres) will contribute to CO2 reduction by 1,440,000 tonnes approximately and will see a reduction of the total annual emission by around 2.4 per cent. The park will balance deforestation numbers caused due to urban development and offset CO2 emissions from transport and industry. It will enhance the beauty of urban living spaces and create greener

living spaces. While being a sustainable space for people to connect with nature and their community, it will be a hub for health-conscious visitors, with running and cycling paths, a mechanical gym, and play parks for children. It will have an innovation centre for food security solutions creating job opportunities and providing hope for the future of Oman, a sustainability centre for education and engagement of the public; and an Ideal spot for school and family trips too. A spokesperson for Millionaire Investment said, "Oasis Park is Oman's answer to the global call for a sustainable future. This is the right project at the right time. Following the launch of O! Millionaire, project Oasis Park will take off earnestly. Food security has been at the heart of Oman's agricultural policy for a long time and the country has developed strategic planning to maintain its place as one of the most food-secure nations. In line with Vision 2040 and as part of its efforts to promote food security, Oman has been seeking to

establish land suitable for agriculture development. We aim to contribute to the efforts being made through Oasis Park. The purpose of O! Millionaire is to raise funds for the preservation of Oman's natural environment through an efficient, socially responsible and ethical tree-planting programme. Once the tree planting programme goes live, the Oasis Park will be declared open." Speaking of the weekly draw he said, "O! Millionaire has weekly prizes to motivate the green certificate buyers and owners. There will be a raffle draw held every Thursday at 8 pm where one person can win every week the prize of OMR10,000. The winner is picked by an RNG system that will randomly select one green certificate number. In addition, in O! Millionaire's big draw the draw machine will select seven numbers from 1 to 44. This will have five winning categories: If the participant matches 7 out of the 7 numbers they will win the grand prize of OMR5,000,000, if they match 6 out of the 7 numbers they will win OMR50,000, 5 out of the 7 numbers win them OMR500, 4 out of the 7 numbers, you will win OMR50 and if they match 3 out of the 7 numbers they will win OMR1. For the first two categories, the prize will be split between the winners." O! Millionaire, also aspires to generate thousands of jobs for nationals, contribute to the country's GPA (VAT and profits taxation), raise the Happiness Index of Oman, promote a tree-planting programme, reduce CO2 emissions, support ESG Initiatives, work with local distributors and sales affiliates, and support tourism promoting Oman as a country taking action against global warming.

RECOGNITION



Oman Cables CEO conferred 'Sustainability Leadership in Manufacturing' award

MUSCAT: Oman Cables Industry, Oman's leading manufacturer of industrial cables, made its presence felt significantly at the 10th edition of Oman Forum 2022 where its Chief Executive Officer Cinzia Farisè received the 'Sustainability Leadership in Manufacturing' award. While Sustainability Awards are aimed at honouring exemplary leaders in Oman with extraordinary accomplishments in areas of social, economic and environmental sustainability, the award will further drive Oman Cables' sustainable growth which augurs well with Oman Vision 2040 and the national priorities towards a safe, socially responsible and well-preserved environment, with effective and balanced ecosystems and renewable resources. The award ceremony was presided over by Dr Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Cinzia Farisè, who is also CEO at Prysmian Group MEAT Region, said, "The award is a recognition of our role in preserving

the environment and reducing human impact on biodiversity which has clearly been detrimental to it. It also shows how committed we are in reinforcing our business model to integrate economic, social and environmental responsibility in all aspects of our activities while creating value for the community and the entire ecosystem." "At Oman Cables, which is part of the Prysmian Group, we consider multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion as fundamental pillars of the company and fully support Oman Vision 2040 whose national priorities move towards a safe, socially responsible and well-preserved environment with renewable resources," she added. During the Oman Forum 2022, Oman Cables senior executives had the opportunity to interact with policymakers and industry leaders in the field of sustainable development and engaged in interactive discussions and knowledge sharing through leadership presentations and engrossing panel discussions.





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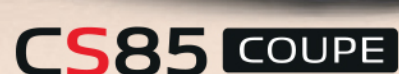


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