LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN
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METEOROIDS RECOVERY PROJECT COMPLETED

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism completed the Omani meteoroids recovery project in Nizwa Cultural Centre at the Governorate of A'Dakhiliah. >A5

HM SENDS CONDOLENCES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa on the death of Desmond Tutu, winner of Nobel Peace Prize. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his condolences and sympathy to the president, the bereaved family and the people of South Africa. —ONA

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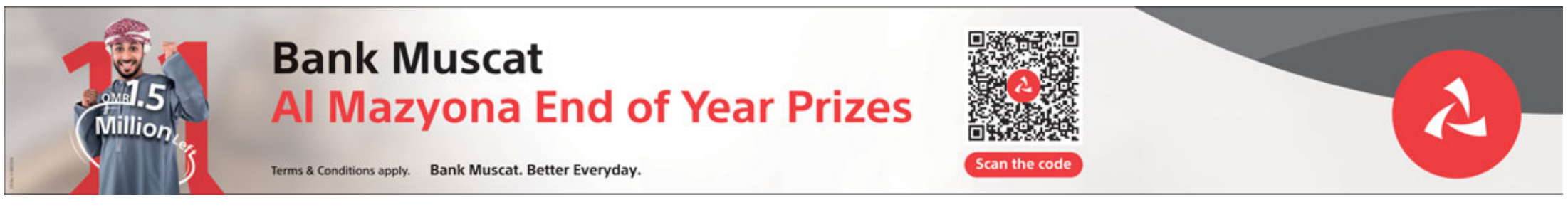


Top health experts have advised continued adherence to precautions against the virus

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Getting vaccinated with booster doses, and self-isolating at home in case of symptoms such as fever, sore throat, and runny nose are just two of the steps people can take to protect themselves and others against the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

As infection rates in Oman increase, the country's top health experts have asked people to continue to adopt the advised precautions against the virus to help bring numbers down.

Omicron infections seen

At a press conference organised by the Supreme Committee, Minister of Health Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Sa'eedi said several Omicron infections had been seen in Oman.

"Compared to other COVID variants, preliminary indications tell us that the severity of Omicron may be less dangerous, yet its fast prevalence will exhaust health institutions if we do not comply as required," he explained.

On Sunday, December 26, Oman reported 69 people testing positive for COVID-19, with one admitted to the hospital.

There are 11 patients admitted to healthcare centres, and two in intensive care. The country also reported its first death from the virus after 49 days of no casualties from the disease.

"A case of the death of an unvaccinated patient was reported over the past two days," said the Minister of Health.

As part of measures adopted to curb the spread of the coronavirus, people who are not vaccinated with two doses will not be allowed to enter their places of work.

Free vaccines for all

Vaccination centres are open in all wilayats of the country, free of charge to both Omanis and expatriates.

"The decisions of the Supreme Committee are based on scientific foundations," explained Al Sa'eedi. "We rely a lot on the awareness of the citizens and residents of our beloved country. Everyone is aware of the seriousness of the virus, and the preventive measures to contain it. "There is no excuse for not taking the vaccination," he added.

"So far, there is no tendency to make the third and booster dose mandatory, but studies have shown that this dose does increase protection against the Omicron variant." >A2

FIFTH TIME IN A ROW

Omanis win top prizes at global photo competition

MUSCAT: For the 5th time in a row, the Sultanate of Oman has won the two world cups of the International Federation of Photographic Arts (FIAP) in its 40th round, within the age-group of 16 years and the age-group of 21 years.

Oman bagged 462 points through the presentation of 20 works submitted by 13 of its photographers. In the age-group of 21 years, Oman bagged 457 points through the entries of 13 photographers who submitted 20 works.

In the age-group of 21 years, Mohammed Sulaiman Al Shuaili won gold medal for his photograph titled "Tafkeer" (Thinking), while Mahir Naseer Al Khusaibi bagged silver medal for his photo titled "Iltwaa" (inflection) and Zamzam Bani Oraba won the bronze for her photo titled "Talashi" (blackout). -ONA

مطارات عُمان
Oman Airports

FLOATING TENDERS

Oman Airports Company announces the following tenders:

Tender REF. NO	TENDER TITLE	DOC's FEE OMR	Last date for DOC's DISTRIBUTION	TENDER SUBMISSION DATE	REMARKS
PC-211202	Retification of Passive Fire Protection, Firefighting and Fire Alarm equipment for Cargo facilities at Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport.	25	6th January 2022	27th January 2022	For Specialized and Authorized Companies by Civil Defense and Ambulance Authority
ITC-211209	Renewal of General Asset Insurance Policies for Oman Airports and BU's for 2022/2023	500	6th January 2022	27th January 2022	

Tenders Collection: Specialized companies may obtain Tender Documents/ Specifications from Procurement Department upon receipt of complete payment of tender fees by Cash Transfer/deposit into below OAMC bank account and submittal of clear scanned copy of deposit Receipt along with a copy of Company Commercial Registration Certificate to Email: **(FinanceTenders@omanairports.com)** provided with company name, tender number & contact person as a mandatory.

OAMC Bank Account Details:
Account Name: Oman Airports Management Co. S.A.O.C.
Account No: 0423010849180012
Name of Bank: BANK MUSCAT
Branch: Corporate Branch, CBD Area, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
SWIFT Code: BMUSOMRX

Required Bond: All participating Companies must provide a bank guarantee, issued by locally registered bank, for the sum of not less than 1% of the Tender value, addressed to the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, valid for 90 days from the date of submission of the Tenders.

Submission: All bids shall be submitted as per mentioned instructions in the tender documents and late bids will not be entertained.

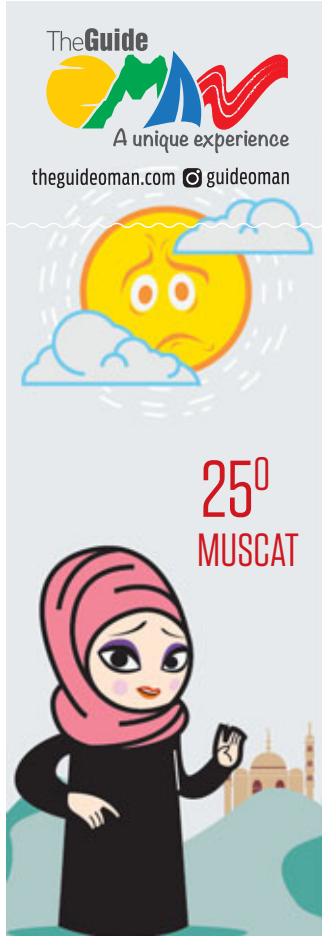
Bidder holding Riyada card of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are exempted from Tender Fees and Submission of Bid Bond.

All Technical Queries shall be sent to:
oamctenders@omanairports.com

The committee is not bound to accept the lowest tender.
Any payment received after last date of documents distribution will not be refunded

Headquarter Address:
Muscat International Airport
South Forecourt Building, First Floor
Oman Airports Management S.A.O.C
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

Note: All Correspondence / Clarification / Enquiries send an e-mail:
oamctenders@omanairports.com



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Action against staff avoiding two jabs

1 Government and private sector employers have been asked to ensure that staff members submit certificate of having taken two doses of approved vaccines or a medical report certifying a health condition that prevents them from taking the vaccine. >A3

WORLD

Child hospitalisations in New York jump

2 A jump in COVID-19 hospitalisations of children in New York has sparked concerns in California amid a surge in Omicron variant infections. The Omicron wave hit New York before California, where cases have been surging in the last week. >A6

MARKET

Tuna fishing fleet for Al Wusta Fishery

3 The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Fisheries Development Oman Company celebrated laying the foundation of the tuna fishing vessels. The vessels aim to catch 20,000 tonnes of different tuna fish annually. >B1

OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr....12:13pm
Asr....3:14pm
Maghrib....5:34pm
Isha....6:50pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).... 5:27am

MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

Shura Council discusses delay in road projects

MUSCAT: The Shura Council on Monday hosted Eng. Said Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, in a session dedicated solely to the topic of Oman's road strategy.

The session saw deliberations about the causes of delay in implementation of road projects beyond the specified periods. The high cost of projects was put to scrutiny by the Council members, who also demanded a review of technical specifications.

Monday's session was the first in a series of topics listed for discussion during the current Shura Council term. It was held in execution of Article 68 of the Shura Council Law promulgated under Royal Decree No. 7/2021 and in accordance with Article 68 of Oman Council Law.

The deliberations of today's session take place as part of the fifth annual sitting of the Shura Councilfor the period 2021-2022 of the Council's 9thTerm (2019-2023) being convened under the auspices of Khalid Hilal Al Ma'awali, Chairman of the Shura Council.

The members asked the minister to compare the actual cost with the real cost of major projects on the strategy, as well as the time accorded to the execution of the projects as against the progress made so far. -ONA

INITIATIVE

Minister praises Dar Al Atta'a for handing over house No.100

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, Dar Al Atta'a Association celebrated the handing over of house No. 100 within its programme "My House is My Haven".

Dar Al Atta'a Association has been operating this programme since 2003. During the past years, Dar Al Atta'a Association has built several houses for families so that they can lead a decent life. Dar Al Atta'a has also carried out maintenance of approximately 956 houses in the past.

Dr. Laila Al Najjar congratulated Dar Al Atta'a Association for the handing over of house No. 100 and for launching this initiative which meets the needs of society and praised the Association for extending help to various sectors and giving an opportunity of decent life to people.

Maryam bint Issa Al Zadjali, Chairperson of Dar Al Atta'a Association said that 'My House is My Haven' is one of the programmes of the Association through which we build houses and carry out maintenance works, as part of our belief that the house is the haven and a source of stable life and peace of mind.

"We have handed over 100 houses and behind each house there is a story of successful and happy-ending, grace be to the Almighty Allah," she added.

MEETING

CBO 2021 FX reserves reach $18bn

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) held its fourth Board of Governors meeting on Monday.

At the outset of the meeting, the Board reviewed a report elaborating on the state of CBO reserves and the performance of its foreign investments.

The Board expressed its profound satisfaction with the state of CBO 2021 FX reserves, which has reached an impressive level of $18 billion.

The Board opined that prominent growth achieved in the FX reserve numbers, has been supported by stable cash flows witnessed throughout the year in view of the rise in oil prices, and recovery of the global economy from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Likewise, the Board observed that the total demand for foreign currency in the local market has remained at reasonably comfortable and satisfactory levels, and has brought the FX reserves of CBO in equation with the value of nine months of country's imports.

The FX reserves position ensures a stable purchasing value for the Omani riyal and conforms to the recommendations of international organisations, the Board noted.

The Board also commended the concluding report on the credit rating of the Sultanate of Oman prepared by Fitch Agency and applauded the efforts made in this regard by the competent authorities.

In the report, Fitch Agency revised its future outlook of Oman to stable, while confirming the credit rating at "BB-" mostly in view of the prudent policies and timely measures taken by the government to improve the fiscal and economic conditions of the Sultanate of Oman.

The Board also examined the progress made with regard to the implementation of the monetary policy enhancement project, in addition to reviewing a report on the financial safety indicators of banks.

The Board urged the banking sector to enhance its contribution to promoting development, supporting and facilitating lending to the private sector in light of stimulating economic indicators and the recovery witnessed by the national economy.

Likewise, the Board reviewed the progress on the implementation of CBO's strategic plan initiatives for the year 2021, and commended the steps taken in this regard.

In addition, the Board also discussed the 2022 budget proposals of CBO, Oman Center for Credit and Financial Information "Mala'a" and Bank Deposit Insurance Scheme (BDIS).

It also reviewed several other topics listed as part of its meeting agenda and took appropriate decisions accordingly. -ONA

COVID-19

Shura panel calls for regular conducting of PCR tests

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Health and Environment Committee of Majlis Al Shura has been following with the local and international developments of COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee stressed in its meeting held on Sunday the necessity for utmost preparedness for handling the cases infected with Omicron variant and the necessity for conducting regular PCR tests and reactivation of institutional quarantine for infected persons, in cooperation with the departments concerned.

The committee urged members of the society to proceed with taking the booster dose (the third) and to observe precautionary measures to control the spread of infection.

The committee also discussed the discrepancy in PCR test prices in the private health institutions and stressed that private health institutions should not increase the prices and that the departments concerned should monitor the prices of PCR test.

The above statements were made during the regular meeting of the committee for the third annual convening (2021-2022) of the ninth term (2019-2023), chaired by Hilal bin Hamad Al Sarmi, Chairman of the Committee in the presence of the committee members.

During the meeting the committee also reviewed the developments on the Draft Law of Food and Drug Safety.

The committee also discussed the mechanism for granting licences for the sale of tobacco and decided inviting officials from the departments concerned for providing further clarifications on the issue.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

< FROM A1

Omicron is milder variant

Adding to this, Dr Saif bin Salim Al Abri, the Director General of Disease Surveillance and Control at the Ministry of Health, said that the Omicron variant could reinfect those who have previously contracted and recovered from the disease.

"Vaccines are mainly designed to curb deaths, so infections of vaccinated people are normal," he said. "Compared to the Alpha variant, Omicron is milder, but it's fast prevalence is dangerous, so we expect an increase in admissions, which may exhaust the health sector." The DG added that people who had been vaccinated, and had tested positive for Omicron had mild symptoms, and were not admitted to hospitals. There are 13 health centres across Oman's 11 governorates that collect specimens from COVID-19 infections. Lab tests do provide indication about the virus, which in turn can be used to work on its genetic strains.

In this context, Bader bin Saif Al Rawahi, the Director of Communicable Diseases at the Ministry of Health, added that the third vaccine dose is especially crucial for people receiving immunosuppressive treatments.

"This is given to people one to three months after they receive their second dose," he said, "However, a booster dose is for everyone over the age of 18, and strengthens their immune system. We expect that we can contain the Omicron variant if the majority receive the third and booster doses.

"In order to reach societal immunity, we need to increase the number of vaccinated people in Oman," he added.

"Four percent of target groups have received the third and booster doses."

FIRST EDITION

Azzan wins Oman Open golf title

MUSCAT: Oman's Golf Team player Azzan Al Rumhy won the title of Oman Open golf championship in its first edition.

The championship was concluded at Ghala Golf Club under the auspices of Dr. Mohammed Hamad Al Rumhy, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

Meanwhile, Hamoud Al Harthy came in the second place, and the third place went to the Pakistani Ryan Ahmed.

As for the female competitions, the British Aliana Rafeeq snatched the first place, while the seven-year-old junior player Youssef Al Rumhi won the junior category, leaving the second place to Jordan's Hashem Abdullah.

-ONA

MEETING

Oman, Saudi border officials meet

MUSCAT: The 15th meeting of top border authorities between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) was held on Monday.

Oman's delegation was headed by Maj. Gen Abdullah Ali Al Harthy, Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs for Operations, while the Saudi side was headed by Maj. Gen Mohammed Abdullah Al Shahri, Chief of the Border Guards. The meeting discussed border-related matters between the two countries. -ONA

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FIGHTING PANDEMIC

Action to be taken against employees failing to produce two-dose vaccination certificate or medical justification

MUSCAT: As part of efforts being undertaken by the government to address the impacts of coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and, based on Covid-19 Supreme Committee's decision requiring the Labour Ministry to devise a uniform mechanism to deal with unvaccinated employees of public sector units, private sector establishments and other legal entities, the Ministry of Labour is bringing the following points to the attention of all units of the State's Administrative Apparatus, other public legal entities and the private sector:

Firstly, to ensure that an employee or worker submits a vaccination certificate stating that he/she has taken two doses of any vaccine approved in the Sultanate of Oman or shows a medical report issued by a health institution confirming that the employee is facing a health condition that prohibits him/her from taking the vaccine.

Secondly, not to allow access to a workplace for any employee or worker who fails to submit a Covid-19 vaccination certificate or present medical report confirming that the employee is facing a health condition that prohibits him/her from taking the vaccine.

Thirdly, in the event that an employee has been denied access to the workplace due to non-submission of a vaccination certificate or a medical report stating the condition that barred him/her from taking the prescribed vaccination, the unit has a right to apply the provisions of a unit's job system pertaining to an employee's non-attendance (at the workplace) that is not justified by an authorized leave of absence.

The Ministry of Labour requests all units of the State's Administrative Apparatus, other legal public bodies and private sector establishments to distribute this circular to their employees and to advise those who have not yet taken the vaccination to come to terms with its requirements, notably to protect their colleagues and families and limit the risks posed by the virus.

FIGHTING PANDEMIC

Planning to have a barbecue this winter? Here's how to stay safe

Times News Service

MUSCAT: People who intend on organising a barbecue in Oman this winter are requested to adhere to the proper safety protocols to ensure no one is harmed during the event.

A list of measures has been put out by the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) to make sure no mishaps occur during barbecues, be they at home or in a public space.

What to do

"Place your grill away from flammable items and places," advised the CDAA, asking people to also keep an eye on children to make sure they do not cause accidents while the grill is on.

"Avoid grilling in closed areas, and use proper liquids to start the fire," added the authority. "Ensure you extinguish the charcoal immediately after you have finished grilling."

CHECKLIST : A list of measures has been put out by the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority to make sure no mishaps occur during barbecues, be they at home or in a public space.

Once done with the grilling, people are requested to make sure they do not empty the contents of the barbecue directly into garbage bins.

Similar precautions are also required when people barbecue while camping outdoors. "Do not make fires inside tents, be they for warming, lighting, or whatever reason," warned the CDAA.

Recommended

"It is recommended to use flashlights. Keep fuel and flammable liquids in their own tanks, away from the sources of heat, and out of the reach of children. Do not smoke within tents, so as to avoid health and fire risks. Do not also throw cigarette butts or matchsticks near grass or trees."

"Choose the right place for a cooking stove...it must be visible," added the authority.

Right place

"Also choose the right place when starting a campfire for any purpose. It must be against the direction of the wind. Keep a suitable fire extinguisher and a set of sand-filled tanks near the camp for use, in case of fire."

Before leaving a camping or barbecue site, people must make sure the place they were in is clean, and the campfire extinguished.

SITUATIONS VACANT

A leading automotive aftermarket business house for Tyres, Lubricants & Batteries is looking for dynamic young Sales candidates for the following positions:

1. Senior Sales Executive - Tyres
Young experienced go-getter, having hands on experience in Tyre Sales. Corporate/Institutional Sales experience will be preferred. Driving License, excellent communication and sales closing skills are a must. Preference for candidates with MBA.

2. Assistant Manager - Industrial Lubricants
Candidates with hands on experience in managing Fleet/ Corporate customers for Industrial Lubricants. Previous experience and deep product knowledge in the relevant field, excellent negotiation, consistent sales closing and presentation skills are essential. Preference for candidates with MBA.

Salary and perks will be the best in the Industry. Candidates with automotive industry experience and a valid Oman Driving License can apply immediately on

recruitoman2021@gmail.com

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

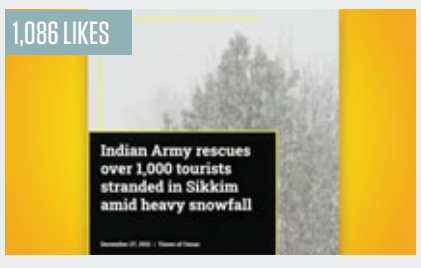
57,785 REACH

Story on Bollywood actor Salman Khan being bitten by a snake

A story on Bollywood actor Salman Khan being bitten by a snake in his home reached 57,785 people and had 4,566 engagements on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

1,086 LIKES



The Morning Minute video

The Morning Minute video on Indian Army rescues over 1,000 tourists had 1,086 views and 61 likes on Instagram.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

5,300 VIEWS

The 8PM show

The 8PM show on how not to add unnecessary pounds in the festive season had 5,300 views and reached 4,800 people on Facebook.

CHANGAN'S SERVICES IN 11 DIFFERENT AUTHORISED SERVICE CENTRES ACROSS OMAN

On the occasion of the 1st anniversary of Changan in Oman, Mr. Vinnie – Vice Director of Changan Middle East and Africa Region, was in town and he spoke to Times of Oman. Here are the excerpts from his interview:

LtoR Daniel Ma, Marketing & Product Manager, Vinnie, Vice Director - Changan Middle East and Africa Region

What makes Changan such a huge success? Could you tell us a little bit about the brand?

Changan Automobile has an enriching history of 159 years (established in 1862), and 62 years of automobile making. 'CHANG' means lasting and 'AN' means safety, therefore, Changan together represents the idea of "Lasting Safety. Changan has been ranked No.1 in R&D capability in China's automotive industry for 5 sessions in the past ten years. It has 3 R&D centres in China's Chongqing, Shanghai and Beijing and 4 overseas facilities in Turin of Italy, Yokohama of Japan, Nottingham of UK and Detroit in Silicon Valley of USA. With world class R&D facilities and a rich heritage, Changan develops products which are advanced, high-tech, innovative and reliable yet available at an affordable price. Changan Auto also is a premium brand and in 2022 we are planning to launch UNI Brand series to GCC markets. It is No. 1 Chinese Brand in GCC in terms of sales and brand value.

What were the key reasons you decided to step into the Oman market?

Oman is a very beautiful country and yet the topography is one of the toughest. It has high hills, deserts, good roads with average speeds being the highest and in summers the temperatures are one of the highest. The requirements of Oman customers are also one of the most diverse. This makes Oman market one of the most challenging. Changan has shown good performance and reliability in GCC and Middle East markets and over the 1 year in the Oman market.

Partnering with Bahwan International Group, we are well positioned for this market. We are very happy that our partner is building the brand and customer satisfaction for Changan brand in Oman.

> The requirements of Oman customers are also one of the most diverse. This makes Oman market one of the most challenging. Changan has shown good performance and reliability in GCC and Middle East markets and over the 1 year in the Oman market.

Changan is known to have the most comprehensive Test Field. Could you tell us a little about that?

Changan has a world class track which has the most complete and comprehensive Test Field in China for testing its models. With an investment of USD 0.29 billion, it has 70 kinds of test routes and it covers 2.2 mil m2 of total area.

It has unique roads for high speed testing, off road testing for 4WD vehicles, brake test lane, noise test track, general comfort road, durability test track, standard gradient road, abnormal sound tests and traction test road.

It is one of the largest of its kind in Asia.

What are the UNI Series models which you planning to launch this year in GCC?

Changan models in Oman have been well accepted based on their high quality and premium products features.'

UNI brand of models are very futuristic vehicles which will be futuristic and fun to drive. This luxury model range "UNI-series" will be having design, styling and features you only see in luxury brands but at an affordable price. Oman topography is such that customers prefer to buy Crossover and SUVs and our range includes many SUV models for different segments.

This range will be expanded very soon with new models already planned for 2022 ... UNI T & UNI K. All Changan products are designed to be "hi-tech and trendy, efficient and clean, safe and smart".

What is Changan Auto's USP?

Firstly, Changan Auto models are very premium, technically advanced, attractive in design with advance safety and yet available at affordable prices. Changan uses Bluecore Powertrain technology based on the principles of power, clean and quiet to provide customers with a product which is highly efficient and energy saving. CS95 is the flagship model of CHANGAN and is a perfect 7-Seater SUV for a large modern family who wants to travel in luxury with business class comfort. It comes with remote start, 360° camera, radar based safety features, dual HD screen, perforated leather seats. CS 85 is a sporty Coupe designed SUV which is very stylish and fashionable with features and interiors of a luxury car brand. It is equipped with an 8 speed gear box, radar based features and remote parking. The mid-size SUV CS75 Plus comes with innovative features. The small SUV CS35 Plus youthful design and performance, as well as the mid-size Sedan EADO Plus refreshing in styling and design provide a good choice to young generation and small family customers. Alsvin is our entry level Sedan which is very economical and safe. UNI Brand series of vehicles will be futuristic luxury models with usage of artificial intelligence, intelligent technology and ultimate interactive experience. Keep watching us to see the future!

Can you brief us about the aftersales support for Changan?

Our local partner Bahwan International group has ensured aftersales service standards to all Changan customers in Oman. Changan customers can now avail services in 11 different authorised service centres across Oman. Spare parts are adequately stored in Oman and we have also regional tie-up if in case of any urgent requirements of non-moving parts.

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Meteoroids recovery project completed

The recovered meteoroids were previously sent to scientific and research institutes for analysis and study purposes

NIZWA: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism completed the Omani meteoroids recovery project in Nizwa Cultural Centre at the Governorate of A'Dakhiliah.

The project worked on compiling an inventory of meteoroids based on scientific and practical requirements to preserve them from environmental effects and to contribute in introducing their classifications and importance.

Eng. Ibrahim Said Al Kharousi, the Ministry's Undersecretary for Heritage said that more than 3,600 Omani meteoroids, weighing more than 1.7 tonnes, were recovered.

The recovered bodies were previously sent to scientific and research institutes for analysis and study purposes.

Geological heritage

He pointed out that the ministry invests this geological heritage by displaying the meteoroids in various exhibitions. -ONA

COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Pact signed to combat money laundering

JOINT COOPERATION: The protocol was signed by Ahmed Salim Al Rujeibi, SAI Deputy Chairman of Audit in the State Administrative Apparatus, and Lt. Col. Abdulrahman Amer Al Kiyumi, CEO of the National Centre for Financial Information. - ONA

MUSCAT: The State Audit Institution (SAI) yesterday signed a cooperation programme with the National Centre for Financial Information to exchange information in the fields of combating money laundering and financing terrorism.

The protocol was signed at SAI headquarters by Ahmed Salim Al Rujeibi, SAI Deputy Chairman of Audit in the State Administrative Apparatus, and Lt. Col. Abdulrahman Amer Al Kiyumi, CEO of the National Center for Financial Information. This step aims to achieve joint cooperation and governance of information exchange to serve the common interest of SAI and the centre in combating money laundering, corruption and financing terrorism. -ONA

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

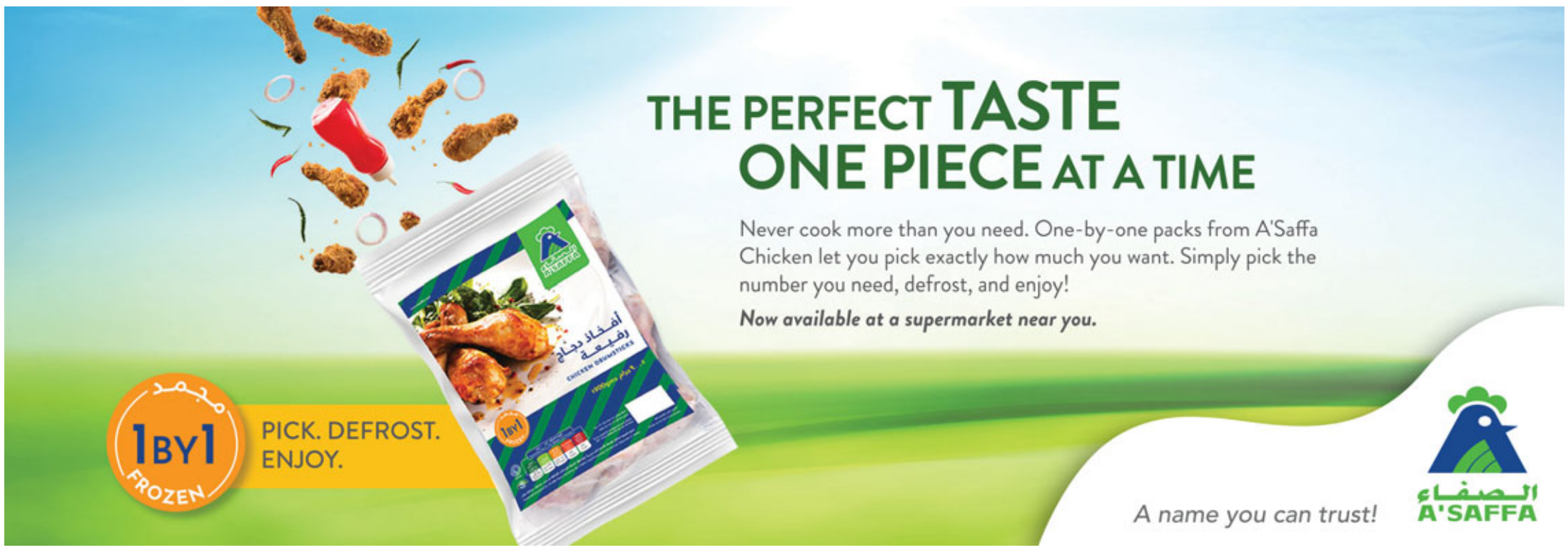
FOR THE DISADVANTAGED: The ceremony was held under the auspices of Her Highness Sayyida Dr. Mona Fahad Al Said, in the presence of Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.- ONA

Ministry marks International Day of Disabled Persons

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development celebrated yesterday the International Day of Disabled Persons 2021, under the theme (Leading and Engaging Disabled Persons Towards an Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable Post-Covid-19 World).

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Her Highness Sayyida Dr. Mona Fahad Al Said, in the presence of Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

During the ceremony, the chief guest honoured 64 distinguished disabled persons, as well as the retirees from the Directorate General for Disabled Persons Affairs and the supporting institutions. -ONA



WORLD

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GREVIOUS ATTACK

Call for probe into attack on Myanmar civilians

NEW YORK: Authorities in Myanmar must investigate a recent deadly attack against civilians in Kayah state, UN humanitarian affairs chief Martin Griffiths said in a statement on Sunday.

Griffiths said he was "horrified" by reports that at least 35 people, including at least one child, were killed in the attack, which occurred on Friday. They reportedly were forced from their vehicles, killed and burned. Two humanitarian workers from the aid organization Save the Children remain missing, he added, having been caught up in the violence. Their private vehicle was attacked and burned.

"I condemn this grievous incident and all attacks against civilians throughout the country, which are prohibited under international humanitarian law," said Griffiths.

He urged the government to immediately launch "a thorough and transparent investigation into the incident so that perpetrators can be swiftly brought to justice."

Griffiths also called on the Myanmar army, as well as armed groups, to take all measures to protect civilians from harm.

"Millions of people in Myanmar remain in dire need of humanitarian support," he said, adding that the UN and its humanitarian partners remain committed to providing help throughout the country.

The UN continues to monitor developments in Myanmar in the wake of the military coup in February.

Earlier this month, the UN human rights office, OHCHR, said it was appalled by the alarming escalation of grave human rights abuses. ANI

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New York sees jump in COVID-19 hospitalisations of children

Half of the children being admitted to hospitals are younger than 5 and ineligible for vaccination

OMICRON VARIANT: Officials described paediatric admissions quadrupling in New York City in recent weeks, reported *Los Angeles Times*.

CALIFORNIA: A jump in COVID-19 hospitalisations of children in New York has sparked concerns in California amid a surge in Omicron variant infections.

Rong-Gong Lin II and Luke Money, writing in Los Angeles Times said that the Omicron wave hit New York before California, where cases have been surging in the last week. According to California health officials, they are monitoring the rise in paediatric hospitalisations.

"Unfortunately NY is seeing an increase in paediatric hospitalisations (primarily amongst the unvaccinated), and they have similar (5- to 11-year-old) vaccination rates," Dr Erica Pan, the California state epidemiologist, wrote on Twitter.

"Please give your children the gift of vaccine protection as soon as possible as our case [numbers] are increasing rapidly."

The increase is concentrated in New York City and the surrounding metro area. Officials described paediatric admissions quadrupling in New York City in recent weeks, reported *Los Angeles Times*.

Half of the children being admitted to hospitals are younger than 5 and ineligible for vaccination. Three-quarters of those ages 12 to 17 who were admitted into hospitals for COVID-19 were not fully vaccinated, and 100 per cent of those ages 5 to 11 who were admitted into hospitals were not fully vaccinated, said Rong and Money.

The warning about paediatric hospital admissions comes as California's public health director and health officer, Dr Tomas Aragon, warned that state modellers are predicting hospital surges for California.

"Why? Omicron is so contagious that it finds unvaccinated/non-immune people who are most vulnerable for hospitalizations and deaths," Aragon wrote.

Aragon urged people to get vaccinated and boosted; to test before risky events, as well as three to five days after them; and to consider skipping or postponing high-risk indoor gatherings. Aragon also suggested improving ventilation and air filtration and improving the fit and quality of masks.

Health experts have increasingly urged people to upgrade their masks from cloth masks alone.

A more protective mask-wearing setup involves a cloth mask over a surgical mask, which improves the fit; an even more improved setup involves wearing those that are higher grade, such as a KF94, KN95 or N95 mask, said Rong and Money.

Dr Anthony Fauci, President Biden's chief medical advisor, recently urged people to not go to the kinds of indoor parties attended by dozens of people whose vaccination status you don't know.

Fauci said it's safer for people to attend smaller-size gatherings with family and friends in homes where everyone is known to be vaccinated and boosted, and even safer if people get rapid tests just before the event, reported *Los Angeles Times*.

Fauci on Sunday told ABC that recent data from Britain show that, in its Omicron wave, a lower percentage of newly infected people are needing hospitalization.

Unvaccinated people "are the most vulnerable ones when you have a virus that is extraordinarily effective in getting to people and infecting them the way Omicron is," Fauci said in the televised interview. Omicron "might still lead to a lot of hospitalizations in the United States."

While unvaccinated people are at the highest risk of contracting the virus and suffering severe illness, the Omicron variant's mutations increase the risk of breakthrough infections among those who are vaccinated.

Still, vaccinated people, especially those who are boosted, are expected to be generally protected from severe illness and death, unless they have a weakened immune system.

New coronavirus cases dramatically increased through Christmas in Los Angeles County. On Tuesday, 3,052 new cases were reported; on Wednesday, 6,509; Thursday, 8,633; Friday, 9,988; Saturday, 11,930; and Sunday, 8,891. Officials warned that coronavirus case counts over the weekend are actually an undercount because of delays in reports over the holiday, reported *Los Angeles Times*.

Southern California's COVID-19 hospitalisations are increasing faster than the San Francisco Bay Area's.

Since December 1, the COVID-19 hospitalisation rate in Southern California has risen by about 41 per cent, from 7.7 hospitalizations for every 100,000 residents to 10.8, reported *Los Angeles Times*. ANI

PANDEMIC

COVID-19 will not be the last pandemic humanity will face, warns UN chief

NEW YORK: United Nations chief Antonio Guterres on Monday warned that the COVID-19 pandemic is not the last of its kind and that people should take measures to prevent such crises in the future.

"COVID-19 will not be the last pandemic humanity will face. As we respond to this health crisis, we need to prepare for the next one. On this International Day of Epidemic Preparedness, let's give this issue the focus, attention and investment it deserves," UN Secretary-General Guterres said in a tweet. The first-ever International Day of Epidemic Preparedness was marked on December 27 last year after the UN and the World Health Organization (WHO) agreed on the need to advocate the need for preparedness for and prevention of epidemics.

During a press briefing last week, the Director-General of the WHO had warned that blanket COVID-19 vaccine booster programmes could prolong the pandemic and increase inequity,

"No country can boost its way out of the pandemic," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, speaking in Geneva during his final press briefing for the year. "And boosters cannot be seen as a ticket to go ahead with planned celebrations, without the need for other precautions," he added.

The WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) has issued interim guidance on booster doses, expressing concern that mass programmes for countries that can afford them, will exacerbate vaccine inequity.

Reflecting on the past year, Tedros reported that more people died from COVID-19 in 2021 than from HIV, malaria and tuberculosis combined, in 2020.

Coronavirus killed 3.5 million people this year, and continues to claim some 50,000 lives each week. ANI

DISEASE COMPOUNDING

Typhoon Rai death toll nears 400 as diseases spread in Philippines

MANILA: The official death toll from Typhoon Rai, which hit parts of the Philippines in mid-December, was raised from 375 to 388 on Monday, with outbreaks of disease compounding the problems faced by affected residents.

The civil defence office in Manila said 60 people were still missing following the storm, one of the most destructive to hit the country in recent years.

Some 482,000 houses were damaged or destroyed by winds or flooding, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. Some 300,000 people are reported to be staying in evacuation centers and another 200,000 have found accommodation with relatives or friends, officials said.

In all, the typhoon is estimated to have caused $410 million (€362 million) worth of damage to homes, infrastructure and agriculture.

The Philippines gets hit by an average of 20 cyclones each year. The most deadly on record was Super Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the country in 2013 and left 7,300 people dead or missing.

What do we know about disease outbreaks?

Amid the devastation, several outbreaks of disease have been reported. Eighty people have taken ill with acute gastroenteritis in the southern province of Dinagat Islands, while 54 people are being treated for diarrhoea in hospital on the neighbouring island of Siargao, said Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire.

She said 16 diarrhoea cases had been reported from the central city of Cebu. The illnesses are believed to have spread through contaminated water, Vergeire said.

What is the coronavirus situation?

Vergeire also said the typhoon had spoiled more than 4,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines and damaged 141 hospitals and clinics, only 30 of which have resumed full operations.

The Philippines was hit by a massive surge in coronavirus infections in September, but the situation had been easing greatly before Typhoon Rai hit on December 16 and 17. DW

SUSPENDED

Somalia President 'suspends' prime minister amid tensions over elections

MOGADISHU: Somalia's President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed has "suspended" the powers of Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, a statement released by the president's office said on Sunday.

"The president decided to suspend prime minister Mohamed Hussein Roble and stop his powers since he was linked with corruption," the statement said, accusing Roble of interfering with an investigation into a land-grabbing case.

The suspension of Roble's powers comes after he and Mohamed entered into a war of words on Sunday, accusing each other of holding up the country's ongoing parliamentary elections.

President Mohamed said the prime minister's powers will remain suspended pending a probe over allegations of corruption and misconduct.

Roble "entered the fray with allegations of corruption and misappropriation of public funds, and an investigation is underway to determine the allegations, the work and powers of the prime minister have been suspended pending an investigation," the president's statement read.

It added that other members of the Council of Ministers would continue their duties in accordance with the laws and regulations of the country.

How has the prime minister responded?

In response, Roble has accused the president of attempting "to take over the office of the prime minister by force (in) a move violating the constitution and the law of the country."

"The prime minister ... is committed to not being deterred by anyone in fulfilling his national duties in order to lead the country to elections that pave the way for peaceful power transfer," said the statement released by Roble's office.

The government spokesperson, Mohamed Ibrahim Moalimuu, also issued a post on Facebook describing the president's action as unconstitutional. He said the prime minister would continue with his duties. DW

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Rain washes out Day 2 of India, South Africa Test series

The start of play was delayed due to continuous rain and day two had to be called off eventually

INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA: Virat Kohli's side had dominated Day 1 of the ongoing first Test against the Proteas at the Super Sport Park with the visitors' score reading 272/3 at stumps.

CENTURION: Day 2 of the ongoing first Test between India and South Africa got abandoned due to persistent rain on Monday at the SuperSport Park, Centurion.

The start of play was delayed due to continuous rain and day two had to be called off eventually without being a ball bowled. "Unfortunately, due to the large volume of rain at Centurion, play has been called off for the day," tweeted BCCI.

Virat Kohli's side had dominated Day 1 of the ongoing first Test against the Proteas here at the SuperSport Park with the visitors' score reading 272/3 at stumps.

KL Rahul (122*) and Ajinkya Rahane (40*) are unbeaten at the crease and India would be hoping for a strong show from the batters on Day 2.

Mayank Agarwal scored 60 runs and shared an opening stand of 117 runs with KL Rahul. Skipper Kohli was also looking good at the crease but he gave away his wicket to Lungi Ngidi after playing a 35-run knock.

"It is truly special, every hundred really takes something out of you and gives you joy. There are so many emotions you go through when you score a hundred. You bat for 6-7 hours, those are the kind of innings that stand out and as players, we really cherish these.

This is what is expected out of me. Once I got off to a good start, I started enjoying my batting and I did not think too far ahead," Rahul told BCCI.TV.

"Preparation has been really good, all the batters that batted on Day 1 were really focused. I just try to stay in the moment when I am out there in the middle. I have surprised myself with how calm I have been, my focus has always been to stay in the moment and react to the ball that is bowled. Really happy that I could finish the day on a good note," said Rahul. ANI

COVID POSITIVE

Andrey Rublev tests COVID-19 positive ahead of ATP Cup and Australian Open

BARCELONA: World number five Andrey Rublev has tested positive for COVID-19, he confirmed on Monday.

The Russian is the fifth player to test positive for the virus after playing at an exhibition event in Abu Dhabi, this month. Earlier, Rafael Nadal and his coach Carlos Moya along with Denis Shapovalov, Olympic tennis champion Belinda Bencic and Tunisian Ons Jabeur have tested positive for COVID-19 following their participation in the exhibition event in UAE.

"I am currently in Barcelona and unfortunately tested positive for COVID-19," he wrote on Twitter. "I am in isolation and following all the protocols under the supervision of doctors."

"As you know, I am fully vaccinated and was preparing for tournaments - ATP Cup and Australian Open. Now I have to recover and I will go to Melbourne only when it will be safe for everyone."

Rublev who is currently in Barcelona is isolated with minimal symptoms. The 24-year-old was slated to play for Russia in the ATP Cup from January 1. Season's first Grand Slam, the Australian Open begins on January 17 in Melbourne. ANI

CRICKRT ROUND-UP

Shoaib, Latif shine in Qurum, Ghubrah victories

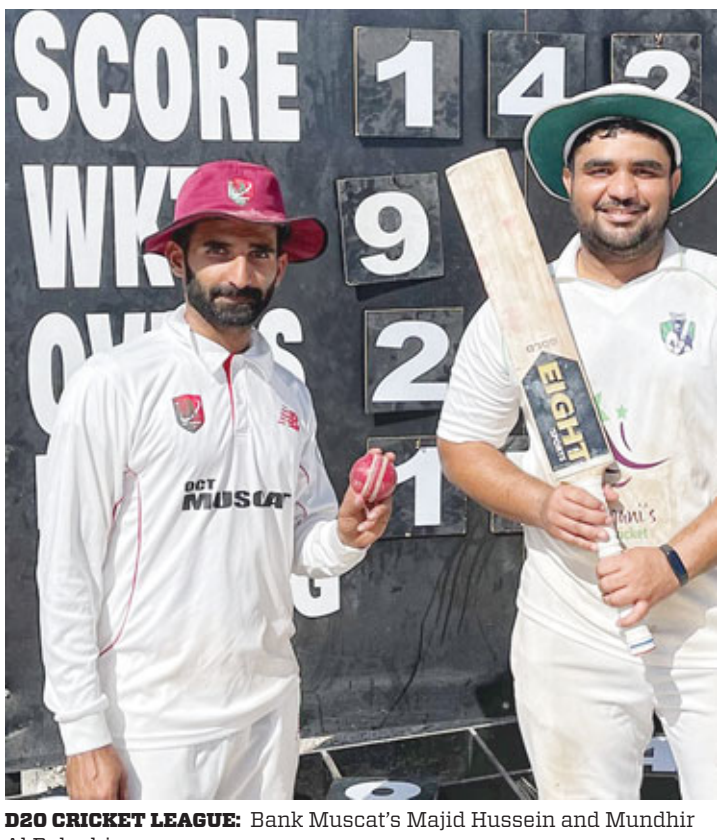
Times News Service

MUSCAT: Qurum Thunders rode on Shoaib Khan's outstanding all-round show to beat Ruwi Rangers by 6 runs in an entertaining six-hitting D20 Cricket League game at OC Turf 1 in Amerat on Sunday.

In a match that saw 18 sixes being hit, Shoaib topscored with a fluent 66 followed by a superb 44 by Hashir Dafedar as Qurum posted 177 on the board. Oman pacer Muhammed Nadeem bowled exceptionally well, taking 4 for 23 whereas Wasim Ali bagged 2 for 30.

Ruwi stayed in the game for much of its spirited chase before running out of wickets and falling short by 14 runs in the final over. Wasim Ali was its main scorer with a solid 46 off 36. Gustav Burger (30 off 26) and Husnain Ali (25 off 9) were the other notable batters. Shoaib was the pick of Qurum bowlers while Munis Ansari and Ganesh Chandrashekhar claimed two wickets each.

Brief Scores (D20): Qurum Thunders 177 for 7 in 20 overs (Shoaib Khan 66 – 5x4, 3x6, Hashir Dafedar 44 – 4x3, 3x6, Muhammed Nadeem 4-23, Wasim Ali 2-30) beat Ruwi Rangers 163 all out in 19.1 overs (Wasim Ali 46 – 2x4, 3x6, Gustav Burger 30 – 3x4, Shoaib Khan 4-36, Munis Ansari 2-25, Ganesh Chandrashekhar 2-27) by 14 runs.



D20 CRICKET LEAGUE: Bank Muscat's Majid Hussein and Mundhir Al Balushi

Latif powers Ghubrah to big win

In the day's first game at the same venue, Imran Latif smashed an unbeaten 83 off only 41 balls to power Ghubrah Giants to an impressive 8-wicket victory against Azaiba XI on Sunday. Solid half centuries by Akmal Shahzad (77 off 52) and Arsalan Bashir (58 off 32) saw Azaiba to a robust 181 for 4 in 20 overs. Aqil Khan and Imran Latif bagged two wickets each.

Undaunted by a big target, Ghubrah raced to the victory in just 17.4 overs, scoring 185 for 2 thanks to brilliant batting by Latif, Abid Ali (53 not out off 37) and Ghazanfar Iqbal (41 off 19). Latif led the six-fest by whacking seven hits over the fence while Ghazanfar slammed five.

Brief Scores (D20): Azaiba XI 181 for 4 in 20 overs (Akmal Shahzad 77 – 4x4, 5x6, Arsalan Bashir 58 – 2x4, 3x6, Aqil Khan 2-18, Imran Latif 2-35) lost to Ghubrah Giants 185 for 2 in 17.4 overs (Imran Latif 83 – 4x4, 7x6, Abid Ali 53 – 4x4, 2x6, Ghazanfar Iqbal 41 – 1x4, 5x6) by 8 wickets.

Mundhir bowls OCT Muscat to victory

Majid Hussein's splendid 47 and Mundhir Al Balushi's excellent 4 for 37 steered OCT Muscat to a 28-run win over OCT Al Hail A in a 30-over B Division League game at Muscat Municipality ground 2 in Amerat on Friday.

Apart from Majid's top knock, Muscat relied on brilliant batting by Rashad Al Balushi (46) and Mohamed Aslam (30) to reach a respectable 171 for 5 in 30 overs. Nadhir Ghulam and Hisham Shafi took two wickets each.

Pushed back by Mudhir's superb spell, OCT Al Hail folded up for 143 in 25.4 overs. Khalid Al Balushi, Arif Al Balushi and Mohamed Aslam claimed two wickets each.

Brief Scores (B Division): OCT Muscat 171 for 5 in 30 overs (Majid Hussein 47 – 2x4, Rashad Al Balushi 46 – 4x4, Mohamed Aslam 30 – 4x4, Nadhir Ghulam 2-31, Hisham Shafi 2-34) beat Oct Al Hail 'A' 143 all out in 25.4 overs (Abdul Jalil 58 – 7x4, 1x6, Mundhir Al Balushi 4-37, Khalid Al Balushi 2-7, Arif Al Balushi 2-24, Mohamed Aslam 2-36) by 28 runs.

Asghar stars in Bank Muscat win

In another B Division match, Asghar Khan's super 60 off 43 and Abbas Al Balushi's magnificent 3 for 18 were the highlights of Bank Muscat's 63-run victory against OCT Seeb at Muscat Municipality ground 1.

Bank Muscat's 236 all out also saw a solid 54 off 42 by Amir Mehmood. Haroon Al Balushi and Osman AB picked up two wickets each.

OCT Seeb failed to reach the target as it was restricted to 173 for 9, Haroon Al Balushi topscoring with 42 off 46. Abbas bowled brilliantly in his five-over spell, taking 3 wickets for only 18 runs. Benny Mathew bagged 2 for 25.

CRICKET

England batting woes continue, all eyes on Root

MELBOURNE: England bowlers displayed a spirited performance to help their side remain in the contest but the batting once again disappointed against Australia on Day 2 of the ongoing third Ashes Test here at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Monday.

At stumps, England's score read 31/4-- trailing by 51 runs. Joe Root (12*) and Ben Stokes (2*) are unbeaten at the crease. Trailing by 82, England batting struggles continued once again as Zak Crawley (5) and Dawid Malan (0) were dismissed by Mitchell Starc. Haseeb Hameed (7) failed to stay at the crease for a long time and he was sent back to the pavilion by Scott Boland.

Nightwatchman Jack Leach (0) was clean bowled by Bowland in the same over and England was left reeling at 22/4. In the end, Root and Stokes ensured that the visitors do not lose any more wickets before stumps on Day 2.

Earlier, resuming the third and final session at 200/6, Australia was given a blow straight away as Cameron Green (17) was sent back to the pavilion by Jack Leach with Australia's lead at 22.

Soon after, Alex Carey (19) was sent back to the pavilion by Ben Stokes and Australia was in danger of being bowled out cheaply. Skipper Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc then put on 34 runs for the ninth wicket, extending Australia's lead past the 50-run mark.

James Anderson then got his fourth wicket of the day as he dismissed Cummins (21), reducing Australia to 253/9 in the 85th over. In the end, England got bowled out for 267 and the lead was 82.

Brief Scores: England 185 and 31/4 (Joe Root 9*, Haseeb Hameed 7; Scott Boland 2-1); Australia 267 all out (Marcus Harris 76, David Warner 38; James Anderson 4-33). ANI

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by February 2022 reaching $73.60, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 6 cents from the price of Thursday, which was $73.54. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,104.90 points, down 0.42 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.04 per cent at 536.12 points. Global Investment Holding, up 1.67 per cent was the top gainer while, United Finance down 6.67 per cent, was the top loser.

Tuna fishing fleet for Al Wusta Fishery Industries Company

The tuna fishing vessels, which are designed as per the highest international standards, will develop Oman's fisheries sector and promote economic diversification

CELEBRATION: The celebration, which was held in the Zamakona Basin in Bilbao, Spain, was attended by Eng. Yaqoob Khalfan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries, Nasser Sulaiman Al Harthy, Chairman of Fisheries Development Oman Company and several officials in the Spanish company. - ONA

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) Company celebrated laying the foundation of the tuna fishing vessels for the Indian Ocean.

The vessels, owned by Al Wusta Fishery Industries, aim to catch 20,000 tonnes of different tuna fish annually in the first phase. The catch will enable the Sultanate of Oman to get its share of the living aquatic resources in the international waters of the Indian Ocean. In Oman, fisheries, which is one of the vital sources of national income for Oman, is the second source of national income after oil.

The celebration, which was held in the Zamakona Basin in Bilbao, Kingdom of Spain, was attended by Eng. Yaqoob Khalfan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries, Nasser Sulaiman Al Harthy, Chairman of Fisheries Development Oman Company and several officials in the Spanish company.

Strategic plan

Commenting on the ceremony, Eng. Al Busaidi said, "The ministry seeks to develop the fisheries sector, through its strategic plan within Oman's Vision 2040. It also aims to increase the return from increasing fish production and raising its added value through the commercial fishing programme that was launched in 2018. The programme aims to raise the efficiency and sustainability of the sector, protect natural fisheries from depletion, and provide safe supplies of fish products for local consumption. The programme also aims to increase private sector investments and attract foreign investments in fisheries industries. The first phase aims to catch 20,000 tonnes of different tuna fish annually."

On this occasion, Nasser Al Harthy, FDO's Chairman said, "The company aims to develop the fisheries sector in the Sultanate of Oman and increase its contribution to the gross domestic product GDP. FDO is implementing a set of projects that will add value and enhance the performance of its subsidiaries. Moreover, building a tuna fishing fleet will contribute to achieving internal sufficiency in tuna besides providing quantities for export and achieving financial sustainability."

The fleet, which is being built for Al Wusta Fishery Industries, includes 85 metres long and 1,800 cubic metres wide vessels that will be used for catching tuna of various kinds in the Indian Ocean. The tuna fishing vessels, which are designed as per the highest international standards, include fish processing lines of -20 degrees and a processing line for high-quality tuna to deliver the products to international markets.

Fisheries Development Oman Company, owned by the Oman Investment Authority along with the Ministry of Agriculture, continue their efforts to develop the marine fishing system in the Sultanate of Oman. FDO is also endeavouring to develop the fisheries sector, which is one of the main pillars within Oman Vision 2040, by supporting its marine fleet with specialised vessels equipped with the latest systems and equipment. It is expected that these efforts will contribute to increasing commercial fishing activity and establishing projects that enhance economic diversification efforts.

Al Wusta Fishery Industries Company is one of the initiatives of the National Programme for Economic Diversification "Tanfeedh" and one of the outputs of the fisheries laboratories. The establishment of the company comes in line with Oman Vision 2040 which promotes the optimal use of fish resources, creating investment, training and employment opportunities for the national workforce and enhancing the added value of resources local. Al Wusta Fishery Industries Company - in coordination and cooperation with the relevant authorities - also seeks to establish a commercial fishing fleet that can utilise the natural resources in the Omani regional waters and the Indian Ocean, luring investments to the fisheries sector, increase fish production and collect research data. -ONA

SHARE MARKET

Asian stocks mixed in quiet end of year trading

BANGKOK: Asian shares were mixed on Monday at the outset of the last trading week of the year as countries grappled with the spread of the omicron coronavirus variant.

Benchmarks rose in Shanghai and Bangkok on Monday but fell in Tokyo and Seoul. Many global markets are closed for holidays.

Comments by China's central bank, or People's Bank of China, about support for the economy, highlighted differences instance among major economies in balancing the need to support economic recoveries from the pandemic while keeping inflation in check.

The Federal Reserve is among a handful of central banks that have already begun cutting interest rates or otherwise cutting back on the extra support they provided when the pandemic first slammed world economies in early 2020.

"The divergences in global monetary policy are set for a sharper turn heading into the new year, especially after the PBOC's announcement that it will remain 'proactive' in its use of monetary policy tools," Mizuho Bank said in a commentary, according to The Association Press (AP).

"With Omicron cases rising across China, pushing regions into lockdowns and tighter social restrictions, a case for additional growth support is increasingly clearer," it said.

The Shanghai Composite index rose 0.2 per cent to 3,623.58, while Thailand's SET was nearly unchanged.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.2 per cent to 28,722.87 and the Kospi in Seoul declined 0.3 per cent to 3,004.92. India's Sensex slipped 0.3 per cent to 56,935.80.

Markets were closed in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Australia.

That followed a mixed day of quiet trading on Friday when many markets around the world were closed or ending early in observance of Christmas.

Last week, the S&P 500 set another record as fears ebbed about the potential impact of omicron outbreaks. However, much is still uncertain about the variant, which is spreading extremely quickly, leading to a return to pandemic restrictions in some places.-BNA

FALSIFYING RECEIPTS

Mid-sized businesses could be losing $17,000 a year due to fraud: SAP Concur global survey

DUBAI: Mid-sized businesses could be losing $17,000 a year due to fraud, according to an SAP Concur global survey.

"The Hidden Cost of Expense Fraud and Non-Compliance" report takes a closer look at the topic of expense fraud and employees' attitudes towards it, how businesses are tackling the issue, and the digital tools which have the potential to help.

Adjusting expense submissions might encompass a broad spectrum of behaviours: from deliberately falsifying receipts to claiming a "little bit extra" as recompense for a long weekend business trip. The research reveals that employees believe that it's acceptable to knowingly submit a false expense claim of up to $145 on average.

While it's important to understand that most incorrect claims are raised unintentionally, it's also important to understand those factors that make deliberate expense fraud more likely to happen – and these are often related to employee awareness and satisfaction.

According to the survey:

There is a widespread lack of understanding of fraudulent activity and its implications for employees and the business. For example, 49 per cent of employees have rounded up mileage fees, while a further 14 per cent would consider doing it. In addition, 41 per cent have expensed private restaurant bills, and another 16 per cent would consider doing it.

Almost half (48 per cent) of employees think it is perfectly acceptable to over expense or disregard company policies regarding expenses on a yearly basis.

Should all these people act on these attitudes, a company of 250 people that hand in expense reports could potentially be looking at an annual loss of $17,000. Many employees cite fairness as a reason for their tolerant attitude towards cheating: whether that's to get a little extra compensation for the overtime they don't get paid for (19 per cent), for the private money they need to spend on working from home (18 per cent), or for the time spent travelling for business (17 per cent).

TELECOM SECTOR

India prepares to take lead in 6G technology

NEW DELHI: India has constituted a Technology Innovation Group (TIG) to prepare a manufacturing and services ecosystem to capitalise on Sixth Generation or 6G opportunity in the telecom sector.

A 6G Technology Innovation Group (TIG) is constituted by DoT with the objective to co-create and participate in the development of 6G technology ecosystem through increased participation in a capability description, standards development at international standard-setting bodies, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) said on Monday.

"This would be necessary to prepare India's manufacturing and services ecosystem to capitalise on 6G opportunity," it added.

6G TIG comprises members from the government, academia, industry associations and TSDSI (Telecom Standards Development Society of India). -ANI

CONDOLENCES

The CEO, The Management and Staff of

MOOSA ABDUL RAHMAN HASSAN & Co. LLC

express their heartfelt condolences to

KHALID BIN MOHAMED BIN DADULLAH AL RAISI
HUSSAIN BIN MOHAMED BIN DADULLAH AL RAISI
BADRAN BIN AHMED BIN MOHAMMED AL RAISI

AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY
on the sad demise of

AHMED BIN MOHAMED BIN DADULLAH AL RAISI

May God Almighty bless his departed soul with eternal peace and grant enough strength to all family members to bear this irreparable loss.

MOOSA ABDUL RAHMAN HASSAN & Co. LLC

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Global Investment Holding, up 1.67 per cent was the top gainer while, United Finance down 6.67 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,104.90 points, down 0.42 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.04 per cent at 536.12 points.

Global Investment Holding, up 1.67 per cent was the top gainer while, United Finance down 6.67 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank 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 384 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.49 million, with more than 6.64 million shares changing hands.

Out of 43 traded securities, 6 advanced, 16 declined and 21 remained unchanged.

At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR148,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR88,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR58,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,558.47 points, down 0.61 per cent. Global Investment Holding, Al Sharqia Investment and Ominvest were up 1.67 per cent, 1.15 per cent and 0.66 per cent respectively. United Finance, Oman Arab Bank, Muscat Finance, Oman & Emirates Holding and Bank Nizwa were down 6.67 per cent, 3.61 per cent, 3.51 per cent, 1.64 per cent and 1.02 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,053.95 points, down 0.48 per cent.

Services Index was up by 0.01 per cent before closing at 1,612.16 points. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,122.16	4,101.45	4,104.90	4,122.42	-17.52	-0.42
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,592.45	6,551.64	6,558.47	6,598.92	-40.45	-0.61
Industry Index	6,094.91	6,051.43	6,053.96	6,082.86	-28.91	-0.48
Services Index	1,612.17	1,606.97	1,612.17	1,611.99	0.18	0.01
MSX Shariah Index	536.12	534.94	536.12	536.34	-0.22	-0.04
MSX TR INDEX	4,960.42	4,935.50	4,939.66	4,960.74	-21.08	-0.42

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
6,640,810	1,493,791	384	22,133,172,362	6	16	21	43

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	50,000	4,400	2	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.087	0.001	1.149	0.088	0.088	0.095	0.100	7,920,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	27,969	10,509	8	0.374	0.378	0.374	0.376	0.372	0.004	1.075	0.376	0.376	0.378	0.100	244,755,030
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN.	168,159	24,357	17	0.143	0.146	0.143	0.145	0.144	0.001	0.694	0.145	0.139	0.146	0.100	34,365,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	120,595	36,941	8	0.308	0.308	0.306	0.306	0.304	0.002	0.658	0.306	0.306	0.308	0.100	247,178,333
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	18,900	2,438	2	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.126	0.132	0.100	10,965,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	540,500	51,348	11	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.093	0.095	0.100	19,000,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	11,439	3,895	6	0.340	0.344	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.344	0.336	0.342	0.100	20,809,453
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	741,114	366,400	31	0.496	0.496	0.494	0.494	0.496	-0.002	-0.403	0.496	0.496	0.496	0.100	1,765,790,547
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	158,451	77,382	17	0.490	0.490	0.488	0.488	0.490	-0.002	-0.408	0.488	0.488	0.500	0.100	26,840,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	11,434	2,767	3	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.244	-0.002	-0.820	0.242	0.242	0.255	0.100	80,071,196
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	150,485	17,478	10	0.117	0.117	0.115	0.116	0.117	-0.001	-0.855	0.116	0.116	0.118	0.100	226,160,266
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	1,246,022	141,377	31	0.113	0.114	0.113	0.113	0.114	-0.001	-0.877	0.114	0.114	0.115	0.100	337,877,039
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	501,525	201,512	43	0.410	0.420	0.400	0.402	0.406	-0.004	-0.985	0.404	0.404	0.420	0.100	88,440,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	535,633	192,924	43	0.362	0.364	0.360	0.360	0.364	-0.004	-1.099	0.360	0.360	0.362	0.100	44,963,266
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	101,200	25,300	2	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.253	-0.003	-1.186	0.250	0.248	0.250	0.100	50,000,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	127,507	54,085	23	0.424	0.430	0.412	0.424	0.430	-0.006	-1.395	0.426	0.426	0.428	0.100	100,237,840
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	11,500	633	2	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.057	-0.002	-3.509	0.055	0.055	0.057	0.100	16,893,048
Total	18	4,533,667	1,222,056	265												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	11,234	8,313	6	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.740	0.000	0.000	0.740	0.740	0.752	0.100	555,000,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	11,200	1,837	3	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.163	0.001	0.613	0.164	0.000	0.164	0.100	4,920,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	21,700	1,953	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.089	0.091	0.100	11,700,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	100,000	19,500	3	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.000	0.000	0.195	0.194	0.200	0.100	317,059,539
OM0000002028	GULF INT.CHEMI.	16,460	1,580	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.100	2,016,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	126,628	15,997	6	0.126	0.130	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.126	0.130	0.100	377,540,281
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	49,130	3,488	12	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.100	18,004,890
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	134,475	9,817	9	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.073	0.074	0.100	14,818,011
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	2,964	315	5	0.107	0.107	0.105	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.107	0.100	9,117,108
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	2,110	80	1	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.039	0.039	0.000	0.000	0.038	0.038	0.042	0.100	8,619,390
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	112,491	10,634	9	0.094	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.093	0.094	0.100	16,625,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	1,000	49	2	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.047	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.047	0.049	0.100	31,719,709
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	2,200	106	2	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100	35,005,911
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	216,650	10,601	5	0.049	0.050	0.048	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.048	0.049	0.100	71,667,472
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	235	21	1	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.082	0.091	0.100	13,999,536
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	333,000	34,266	7	0.102	0.104	0.102	0.103	0.104	-0.001	-0.962	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.100	206,032,217
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	541,543	52,640	22	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.097	0.098	-0.001	-1.020	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	101,890	6,136	12	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.060	0.067	0.100	7,312,500
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	47,371	7,579	1	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.166	-0.006	-3.614	0.160	0.160	0.166	0.100	267,105,600
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	49,980	6,513	5	0.130	0.134	0.130	0.130	0.137	-0.007	-5.109	0.130	0.130	0.133	0.100	4,364,289
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	5,100	286	2	0.056	0.059	0.056	0.056	0.060	-0.004	-6.667	0.059	0.056	0.059	0.100	19,552,087
Total	21	2,028,127	192,719	113												

STATEMENT

China shortens negative lists for foreign investment for 5th consecutive year

BEIJING: China on Monday unveiled two shortened negative lists for foreign investment, as part of efforts to further open up the economy and promote high-quality economic development.

This marks the fifth consecutive year that the world's second largest economy has revised its national negative list and pilot free trade zone (FTZ) negative list.

The number of items that are off-limits for foreign investors will be cut to 31 in the 2021 version of the national negative list from 33 in the 2020 version, according to a statement jointly released by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Commerce.

The number of items on the pilot FTZ negative list will be reduced to 27 from 30 in the 2020 version. The two new negative lists will take effect on January 1, 2022. -**Xinhua**

INDIAN PRIVATE BANK

RBL Bank slumps 20% on leadership changes

MUMBAI: The share price of RBL Bank slumped 20 per cent hitting the lower circuit limit on Monday after its MD & CEO Vishwavir Ahuja went on "medical leave" and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appointed Yogesh Dayal as an additional director on the bank's board. The RBI has also appointed Rajeev Ahuja (existing Executive Director of RBL Bank) as the interim Managing Director & CEO of RBL Bank. Yogesh Dayal is also a chief general manager at the RBI.

The sudden action from the central bank raises fears about asset quality and the overall health of the bank. This has triggered a host of RBL Bank shares hit their lower circuit in the morning trade. At around 12.40 pm it was trading at Rs.145.95, which is 15.39 per cent lower from its previous session's close. Earlier, the share price of RBL Bank hit a low of Rs.132.35, the lower circuit limit. This is also the 52-week low of the share price of RBL Bank.

After a slump in RBL Bank's share price, the RBI issued a statement saying "there is no need for depositors and other stakeholders to react to the speculative reports. The bank's financial health remains stable." -**ANI**

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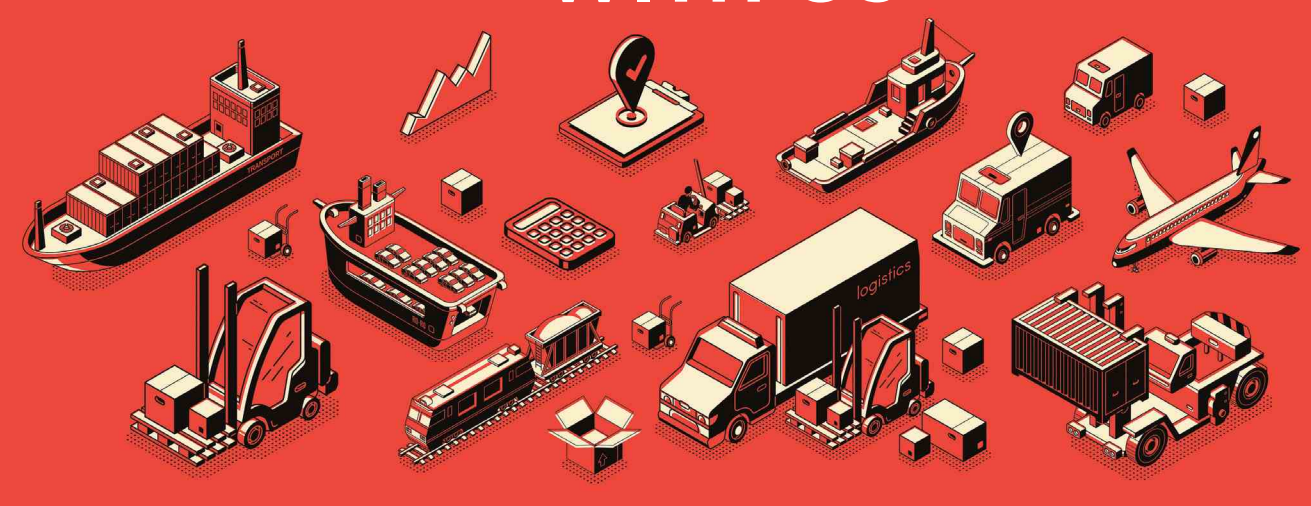

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Email: sifathhasan1995@gmail.com

ENGINEER

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

RETAIL- ADMINISTRATION

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

ENGINEER

BE Electronics & Communication Indian Male looking for a suitable job in Oman. Presently in Oman.
Contact 78644119
E-mail: terancefranklin25@gmail.com

Project Manager - Civil

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

OMANI HSE

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

Senior Accountant

Indian male M. Com with PG in computers, working as Senior Accountant in Oman with over 12 years with advanced knowledge in MS Dynamics, ODDO, Tally Erp/Prime (Tally customising with developer), looking for suitable position.
Contact on +96871551938

MECHANICAL ENGINEER

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

Mechanical Engineer

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

MANAGER

MANAGER (Accounts / Finance / Real Estate /Admin & HR), MBA (Finance), PG Diploma in HRM, Bcom, 20yrs experience in Muscat. Can join immediately. NOC/RELEASE available.
Please contact: 91245950

FINANCE

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

ENGINEER

Indian Male, 42 yrs, B Tech Graduate, 15+ years gulf experience in Civil construction field. In an excellent grade construction and Trading Company with good Knowledge is looking for suitable opening. Valid D/L, NOC Available.
Contact 98032824, peer.ktr@gmail.com

SENIOR MANAGER SUPPLY CHAIN

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

PROCUREMENT

Indian male, 20yrs exp. in supply Chain management, Import Vendor Management. Skilled & forecasted sourcing, Inherent negotiation & documentation skill to benchmark, MIS, Inventory & Credit control, dynamic in office software handling, GCC D/L, N.O.C Available, immediate joining at Sr. Position.
Contact 78599071
Email: sahaiv548@gmail.com

Finance & Accounts

Indian male 32 yrs(age), 6 years of gulf experience in Finance & Accounts. Qualification: MBA. Presently in Oman seeks suitable job.
Contact 92772764
Email: minhajalish@gmailcom

Senior Manager (HR/Administration/Operations)

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

FINANCE

MBA, Mcom, ICWA (inter) 21 years experience in Oman working as Manager in Business / Accounts / Finance / Operations. Looking for Senior positions in Business / Finance and Operations.
CONTACT: 96211885

English Teacher

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

OMANI HR/PRO

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

Finance & Accounts

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

FINANCE & ACCOUNTS MANAGER

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

ENGINEER

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

M.E Chemical Engineer & Safety Professional 3yrs' experience of HSE field in Pakistan and 2 years in Sugar manufacturing plant as process chemist. Currently residing in Muscat, looking for opportunity in HSE field and Manufacturing/Production plant in Oman. Contact 94624491. Email: razaarain151@gmail.com

Safety officer (engineer),5 years experience in GCC, two years in Oil field in Oman, nebosh IGC, valid D.L). Contact 79318246

Electrical Engineer with +10 years of experience in electrical network (MT, LT) and project management. Contact 94446214

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

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

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

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

SALES / PURCHASE

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

CIVIL ENGINEER

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

ENGINEER

Indian, 23, Civil Engineer, fresher with Oman D/L, looking for suitable job. Contact 95257524

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

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

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

Diploma Mechanical Engineer looking for a suitable placement. Experience in automobile sales, parts sales and evauation. Contact 92962449

B.E.Mechanical Engineer, 3yrs experience in India for pipe line. Presently in Oman. Contact 71089758/ Whatsapp +918962292915 Email aadilahmadrits@gmail.com

Mechanical Engineer 4 yrs experience in factories and car maintenance with DL seeks job. Contact 93521100

B.Tech Electrical Engineer, currently residing in oman, experienced based on project management, site supervision/renewable energy sector seeking for suitable placement. # 79376313, (wsp) +91 8943932532, Email: adeebalr@gmail.com

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

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

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

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

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

TOUR/TRAVELS

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

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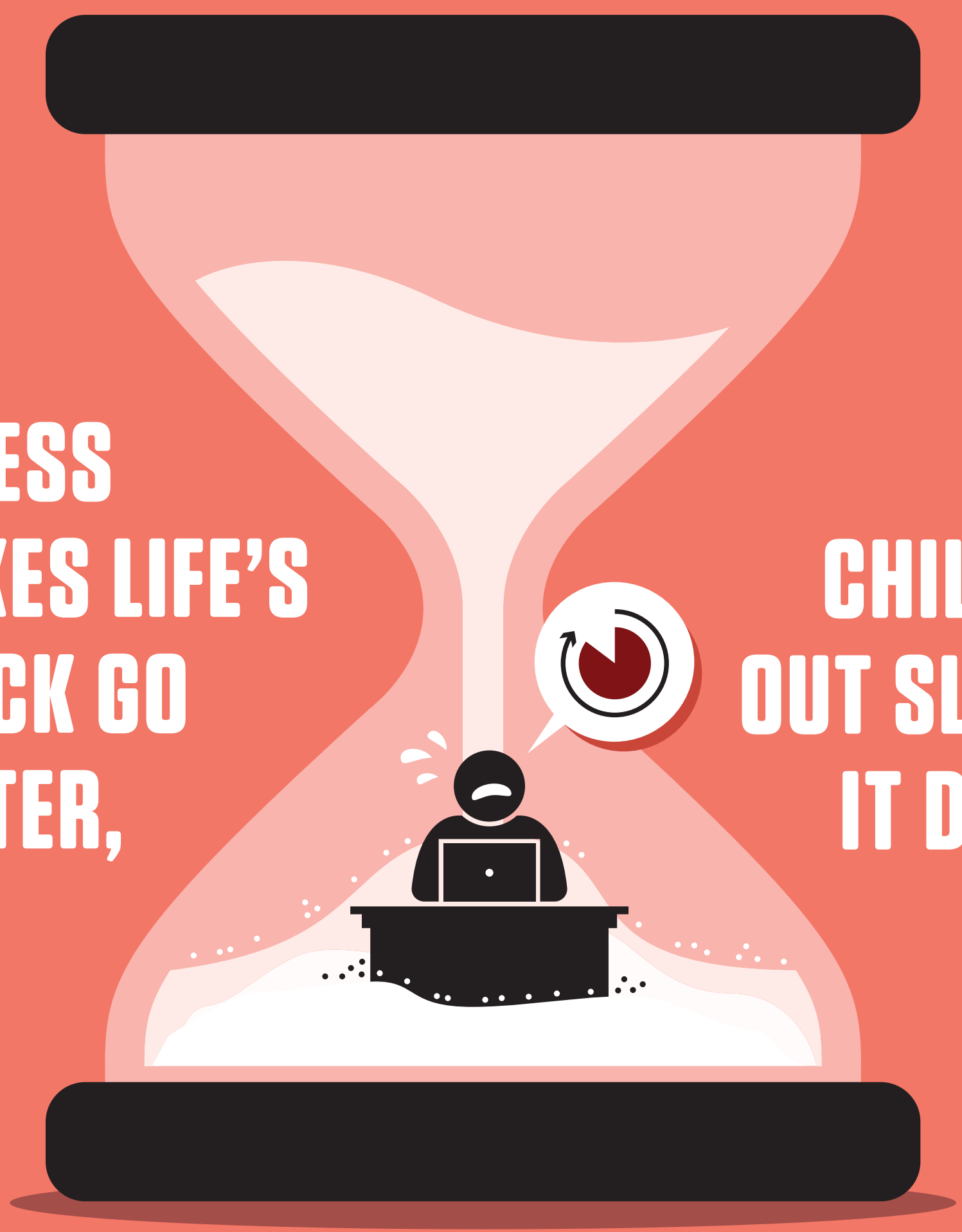
LIFESTYLE

STRESS MAKES LIFE'S CLOCK GO FASTER, CHILLING OUT SLOWS IT DOWN



Scientists from Yale University have developed ways to measure biological age by tracking chemical changes in DNA that occur naturally as people age but occur at different times in different people.

The research has been published in the 'Translational Psychiatry Journal'.

In a new study, Yale researchers used one such clock, appropriately named "GrimAge," to ask two questions: How much does chronic stress accelerated that biological clock? And are there ways to slow it down and extend a healthy lifespan?

According to their findings, stress does indeed make life's clock tick faster — but that individuals can help manage the effects by strengthening their emotion regulation and self-control.

Rajita Sinha, the Foundations Fund Professor of Psychiatry at Yale, a professor of neuroscience and professor at the Yale Child Study Center, and one of the authors of the study, has spent decades studying stress and the myriad and pernicious ways that it erodes our mental and physical health.

Prolonged stress, for instance, increases the risk of heart disease, addiction, mood disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder, said Sinha, who is also director of the Yale Interdisciplinary Stress Center. It can influence metabolism, accelerating obesity-related disorders such as diabetes. Stress also saps our ability to regulate emotions and to think clearly.

A Yale team led by Sinha and Zachary Harvanek, a resident in the Yale Department of Psychiatry, decided to explore whether stress also accelerates ageing in a relatively young and healthy population. Other co-authors included Ke Xu, an associate professor of psychiatry, and Nia Fogelman, an associate research scientist in psychiatry at Yale.

For their study, they enrolled 444 people, ages 19 to 50, who provided blood samples used to evaluate the age-related chemical changes captured by GrimAge as well as other markers of health. The participants also answered questions designed to reveal stress levels and psychological resilience.

Even after accounting for demographic and behavioural factors such as smoking, body mass index, race, and income, the researchers found that those who scored high on measures related to chronic stress exhibited accelerated ageing markers and physiological changes such as increased insulin resistance.

> "It is a cool thing to reinforce in people's minds that we should make an investment in our psychological health

However, stress didn't affect everyone's health to the same degree. Subjects who scored high on two psychological resilience measures — emotion regulation and self-control — were more resilient to the effects of stress on ageing and insulin resistance, respectively.

"These results support the popular notion that stress makes us age faster, but they also suggest a promising way to possibly minimize these adverse consequences of stress through strengthening emotion regulation and self-control," Harvanek said.

In other words, the more psychologically resilient the subject, the higher the likelihood they would live a longer and healthier life, he said.

"We all like to feel like we have some agency over our fate," Sinha said.

"So it is a cool thing to reinforce in people's minds that we should make an investment in our psychological health," she concluded. - ANI

FEATURE

BIRTHDAY SPECIAL

TRACING SALMAN KHAN'S JOURNEY OVER THE YEARS FROM IDEAL HEARTTHROB TO INDIA'S BIGGEST ACTION STAR

NEW DELHI: Bollywood's Bhaijaan Salman Khan, who turned 56 on Monday, is considered among the biggest names of the Indian film industry today, as his charisma is more than enough to pull audiences into cinemas.

A movie is often guaranteed to be a hit when Salman's name is attached to the project because the mass appeal is his USP and he makes the most of it. Such is the following enjoyed by the star that when he flexes his bulging muscles on the silver screen, fans are even ready to let logic take a backseat. The action-induced spectacles, audience-friendly wisecracks, dancey tracks, slick camerawork and above all, superhero-style fireworks have all come to be associated over the years with the Sallu formula. Basically, Salman is all about swag and millions of viewers seem to just love it.

However, it was not the same all along. Before blowing up cars in 'Race 3' or beating up the bad guys in 'Radhe' his onscreen persona was that of Prem, the ideal traditional family-oriented guy. So let's take a look back at his evolution in films over the years.

Today Salman is a God-level action star but in the '90s, this territory was majorly dominated by Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, Ajay Devgn. In fact, all the Khans had started out as loverboys, endearing themselves to the 90s audiences with their breezy earnestness.

Salman made his official debut as a supporting actor in the 1988 film 'Biwi Ho To Aisi'. Then 23, he had played the hero's brother in a female-oriented subject. However, this project was not his official launch pad.

His first leading role in Bollywood was Sooraj R Barjatya's 1989 romantic family drama 'Maine Pyaar Kiya' which went on to become one of the highest-grossing films that year. It was dubbed in English and Spanish which was a rare thing for Bollywood and it was in international markets where it performed pretty well.

Later in 1991, Salman worked in three moderately successful films like 'Patthar Ke Phool', 'Sanam Bewafa', and 'Kurbaan'. Subsequently, he worked with Sanjay Dutt and Madhuri Dixit in 'Saajan', which was a big success. In 1994, he was seen in Rajkumar Santoshi's 'Andaaz Apna Apna' which failed to impress audiences at the time of release; however, over the years has gained cult status.

Cut to 'Pyaar Kiya Toh Darna Kya', and Salman was at his best in 'Oh Oh Jaane Jaana', though he went shirtless to show off a chiselled physique-in-the-making. In the coming years, the bare body avatar would become another of Salman's draws, kind of like a desi Arnold-Stallone mashup.

From the early '90s to the later part of the decade much had changed for Salman. He had worked in one of the biggest Hindi hits, 'Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!', which cemented him as the product of the virtuous Barjatya clan. The Salman of this decade had a shy charm about him and he maintained that note of innocence well throughout before assuming the mantle of 'Bollywood's bad boy,' for which he is currently known.

As the '90s came to an end, things in Hindi cinema got majorly reshuffled. It was a tectonic change and Salman took time to settle in the new landscape of Bollywood. Films like 'Tumko Na Bhool Paayenge', 'Yeh Hai Jalwa', 'Kyon Ki...', 'Lucky: No Time for Love' and 'Marigold' made people think that he wasn't a pro at career management, unlike other Khans who were sharp enough to cash in on their market value during the rise of the multiplex era.

Though hugely popular, even during his worst phase when he was in and out of jail (the hit-and-run and blackbuck poaching case) somehow his films never matched up to his off-screen legend. During this time Salman's biggest game-changer was 'Tere Naam' in 2003, where he played the role of Radhe Mohan, a tortured lover. 'Mujhse Shaadi Karogi' (2004) and 'No Entry' (2005) also made good box office collections, though both these films were multi-starrers.

2009 is the year which is considered to be a turning point in his career because this is when 'Wanted' released, establishing Salman as the out and out action star of the country. Though he had a few films that didn't work like 'Veer' and 'London Dreams' but his position was ultimately cemented at the top with 'Dabangg' in 2010.

The film was a fun romp, it gave Salman fans something to throw money at and just about enough to keep the critics glued. His portrayal of badass supercop Chulbul Pandey topped the charts, officially commencing his lucky streak of blockbuster releases.

The actor soared on with the subsequent 'Dabangg' franchise along with 'Ek Tha Tiger', 'Sultan', 'Race 3' and several others. His machismo and celluloid heroism worked with his mostly male mass audience base. Salman had come a long way from the time when women audiences used to love their Prem.

What also worked extremely well for Salman were the one-liners like 'Dil mein aata hoon samajh mein nahin', 'Ek baar jo maine commitment kar di', 'Mujh par ek ehsaan karna ki mujh par koi ehsaan na karna', amongst a slew of others.

In the past years, Salman has done films like 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan' and 'Tubelight' which can be considered as divergent from his usual filmography, however one thing that can't be foreshadowed is the frenzy he generates amongst his cult-like followers whenever a Salman Khan movie is about to be out.

With films like 'Tiger 3' along with the 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan' sequel already in place, here's wishing many more years of unending success to one of the biggest commercial action stars that the Indian film industry has ever witnessed since its inception. -ANI

ROUND-UP

All-new INFINITI QX55 makes its official Middle East debut in Dubai

The exclusive launch event of the INFINITI QX55 stayed true to the brand's values - Human, Daring, Forward

DUBAI: The all-new INFINITI QX55 SUV made its Middle East launch in Dubai in a one-of-a-kind lifestyle celebration. From a provocative design perspective, the INFINITI QX55 is the spiritual successor to the brand's iconic FX series. Its daring roofline and unapologetic shape are in tune with equally bold buyers.

The exclusive launch event of the INFINITI QX55 stayed true to the brand's values - Human, Daring, Forward – which were both captured and espoused by UK artist, George Rollo in honour of the QX55's debut, with creative Japanese-inspired collectables that visually represent said values. Eclectic beats were spun by acclaimed DJ, SONYA, a cultural provocateur in her own right, nominated as one of the top 100 female DJs in the world, and a top 10 DJ in the Middle East.

A spokesperson for INFINITI Oman said, "The INFINITI QX55 pays homage to the soul of our iconic crossover coupe heritage while propelling us forward, blending beautiful Japanese craftsmanship, seamlessly integrated technology, and confident performance."

He added, "INFINITI has a history of making vehicles that are bold and innovative, and we believe that the QX55 has the potential to create a new generation of brand advocates in the region."

The QX55 inserts INFINITI back into a category it helped to create with a refined design language, and sporty styling. The signature double-arch grille is complemented by a stunning, origami-inspired mesh pattern that delivers visual depth and showcases modern Japanese-inspired artistry. Flanked by standard LED headlights that mimic the human eye, the QX55 announces its arrival in style. The elegant and flowing lines of the all-new model reach from the hood, over the front fenders, across the doors, and over the rear wheels. Twenty-inch wheels are standard on all QX55 models, which fill the wheel arches and assert the SUV's dynamic presence.

The rear of the QX55 accentuates the subtlety of the automaker's design and interpretation of Japanese minimalism by coupling an uncluttered liftgate with handsome, understated technology to deliver a lasting impression. Digital "piano key" taillights combine 45 separate LEDs in a single housing to create an elegant light signature. The INFINITI logo on the tailgate is similarly advanced and houses the power liftgate release, which further frees the rear end from clutter.

Inside, the QX55 features INFINITI's dual-screen, InTouch infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, and multiple USB inputs for charging. The upper 8-inch and lower 7-inch high-resolution screens inform the driver and entertain passengers with an available Bose series audio system providing a concert-like acoustic experience.

Leatherette, leather, or semi-aniline leather appointments for the seats adorn the QX55's spacious interior, and its sliding second-row seats provide flexible cargo capacity or increased legroom, depending on need.

Under the hood of the QX55 is INFINITI's award-winning and innovative Variable Compression Turbo four-cylinder engine that outputs 268 horsepower and delivers enhanced efficiency or on-demand power, based on the driver's needs. That power is shifted through a confident Continuously Variable Transmission with manual shift mode and delivered to INFINITI's Intelligent All-Wheel Drive system, which is standard on all QX55 models. A Drive Mode Selector empowers the driver with programmable settings (Standard, Eco, Sport and Personal) to tailor each drive. The all-new QX55 is packed with a suite of intelligent safety technology, including Predictive Forward Collision Warning, Lane Departure Warning and Prevention System, Forward Emergency Braking with Pedestrian Detection to Blind Spot Warning and Intervention and Backup Collision Intervention.

INFINITI's QX55 will be available in three well-appointed categories: LUXE, ESSENTIAL and SENSORY.

CONTEST

University of Buraimi organises maths competition for schools in Buraimi

MUSCAT: University of Buraimi (UoB) has organised a maths quiz competition among high school students from Al Buraimi governorate about basic mathematics was arranged, in which 12 teams from different schools participated.

A half-hour written quiz test as a preliminary round was given and 4 best teams were selected to compete for two rounds. Two questions from each team were asked in each round and the top three teams were selected to compete for the third/final round. The top two teams from the final round were declared winner and runner-up, respectively. Gifts for all the participants were distributed with special gifts and souvenirs for the winner team and runner-up. Certificate of participation was also given to each group/team

The main objective of this event was to bring students self-confidence and to know the importance of mathematics in their present and higher future studies. Also, participants explored the University campus and experienced student campus life and got a chance to interact with UoB students.

ECONOMICAL

Dependable multi-tasker Nissan NV350 Urvan is right fit for business needs

MUSCAT: Nissan NV350 Urvan is the perfect vehicle to move more people and cargo to more places, more often. Designed to make business sense across a fleet or private use, the Nissan Urvan stands out for its powerful, economical and comfortable features.

In Oman, the popular Nissan Urvan is widely used in the construction business to transport workers. It is also used by mid-sized companies to move employees and by schools to pick and drop students. Nissan Urvan offers good ride comfort on both short and long drives. Owners of Nissan Urvan vouch for the high standards of the world-class aftersales service centres that are available across the Sultanate.

A senior official from Nissan Oman said, "The Nissan Urvan leads its class with fuel economy. The QR25DE petrol engine comes in both: manual and automatic transmission. The Urvan is capable of delivering powerful acceleration in spite of its load."

Being among the most suitable vehicles for business or personal purposes, Nissan NV350 Urvan's affordability and extraordinary mileage undoubtedly have also a lot to do with its status in Oman. Its class-leading durability, reliability and efficiency, whilst providing exceptional driver and passenger comfort have been making it a clear favourite in the segment."

With a reputation for reliability and versatility, Nissan NV350 Urvan caters to all transport needs whether as a passenger vehicle or a cargo carrier. Tailored for an excellent ride, fuel-efficient Nissan NV350 Urvan has been impressing customers in Oman standing out as a reliable multi-tasker.

Nissan NV350 Urvan's combination of low running cost, durability and flexibility have been helping large and small business enterprises deliver on time and budget for generations. The NV350 Urvan range builds on this solid foundation by offering more transmission options, body variants and innovative features. The standard body NV350 Urvan comes in three variants, the panel van in manual transmission and the 13-seater bus comes in both manual and automatic transmission. Nissan NV350 Urvan's low operating cost and powerful fuel-efficient engines is one of its greatest plus points. In view of the demand for quality transport service and delivery in the country's swiftly progressing business environment, the NV350 Urvan represents fully flexible, spacious, functional and reliable features.

Remarkable features

Some of its outstanding new features include large sliding doors that open high and wide to make it easy for passengers to board and exit. The NV350 Urvan has rear air conditioning vents for each seat which provides efficient cooling so that all passengers can ride in comfort. The vehicle's auto door closure allows customers to release the sliding door once it has closed halfway. It is also equipped with stylish slide windows that are designed to be smart and convenient.

Fuel efficient

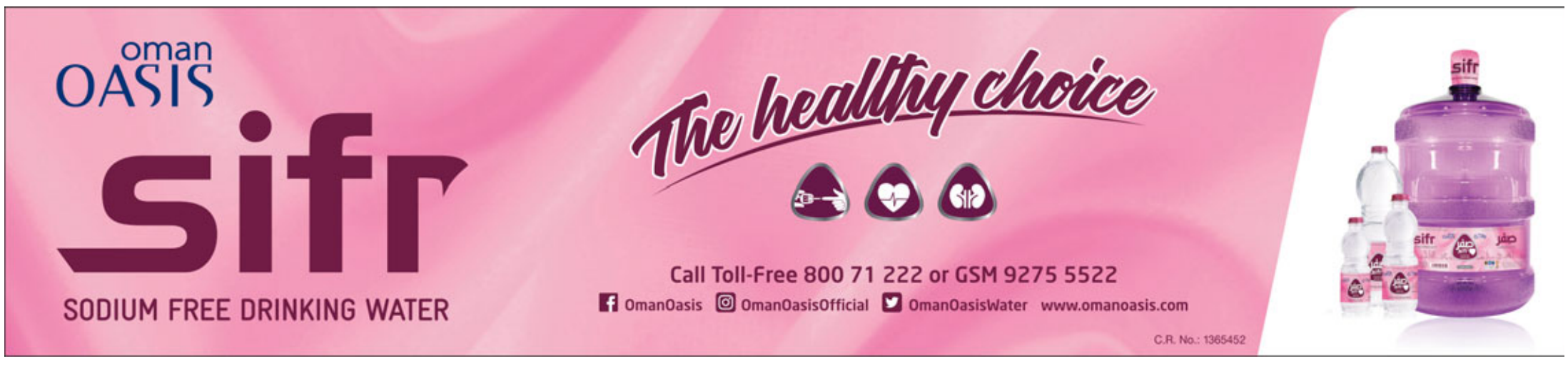
The NV350 Urvan's QR25DE engine takes advantage of the latest technology to achieve fuel economy. Combined with a 5-speed automatic transmission, the engine rotates at a lower speed and makes less noise while driving at high speed. Smooth and responsive acceleration from a start to high-speed driving is also realised with a power of 144HP/5600RPM and a torque of 21.7 Kg-M/4400 RPM.

Abundant load capacity

The NV350 Urvan offers ample load capacity and the interior layout makes maximum use of the larger cargo space for both occupants and cargo. For example, a folding seat is adopted so that a long item can be loaded. Functional interior styling that gives a feeling of spaciousness. Smooth ingress/egress realised by optimised positioning of the hand grips for both driver's and front seats and enlarged distance between the seat and steering wheel. Wider driver's seat sliding range and the adoption of tilt steering help provide a roomy, comfortable cockpit. Easy-to-read and high-precision Fine Vision Meter combines with a Multi-Functional Display, which provides the driver with real-time fuel efficiency information, indication shift timing, as well as odometer and trip meter data.

Urvan stands out with advanced features such as a multi-functional display on the dashboard providing drivers with real-time fuel efficiency information, indicating shift timing as well as odometer and trip meter data. It also comes with a gearbox located on the instrument panel, an extended seat slide range, tilt steering function, all redefined making the cockpit area functional and easy to use. The vehicle also comes with advanced features like a keyless entry system with an alarm button (optional) and a lower centre tray that can hold two - 500ml drink bottles and features a vent from the air conditioner to help keep drinks cool.

The NV350 Urvan significantly improves on previous generations with best-in-class fuel efficiency for all models, thereby leading to lower running costs apart from the enhanced driver and passenger convenience. The NV350 Urvan is also thoughtful in delivering safety to the driver through its standard Driver Airbag offering.



ROUND-UP

Splash's 'Love Celebration' features festive edits for men and women

Choosing comfort over extravagance, the collection breaks away from conventional designs of festive dressing by creating fashion that is authentic to your style and choices

MUSCAT: This festive season, whether you are planning on celebrating with family and friends or doing the countdown to the New Year over a zoom party with colleagues or just staying in to catch up on holiday movies - Splash has the perfect collection for you.

With a generous dose of celebratory flair, Splash's 'Love Celebration' features exclusive festive edits for men and women. Choosing comfort over extravagance, the collection breaks away from conventional designs of festive dressing by creating fashion that is authentic to your style and choices. After all, what are festivities without a little fun?

Luxe velvets, comfy velour, dazzling sequins or sporty leather - you are sure to discover your festive fit right here as you scroll through the gorgeous collection.

Shimmering light

When in doubt, go sequins. There is nothing that says festive like a structured dress that flutters and dances with light. Embellished with intricate beading, this ultra-feminine dress in cream, radiant with sequins, is perfectly paired with a faux fur coat thrown over the shoulders.

If you want a practical twist to the shimmer, you can take the black-sequined jumpsuit for a spin. A truly show-stopping outfit that can transition from day to night with ease, you are sure to not just reflect light but your personality too.

Jewel-toned cheer

Be it velvet, chiffon, Knit or lurex— we have been dreaming festive edits in jewel tones. Regal wine-coloured dress adorned with gold foil print, lush velvet jackets in Olive with gold trimmings and vintage buttons, striking blue and magenta knitwear adding theatric flair – there is no better way to carry the festive cheer than a bright ensemble in jewel tones!

Festive elegance

What if you love something muted, with just a hint of drama? Look no further. Inspired by our lockdown days, we have developed new sensibilities when it comes to comfort and sustainable fashion. Be the centre of attention by layering timeless staples that manage to leave a mark, no matter what occasion you wear them for. Think tailored pieces like leather jackets, tweed sets, comfy sweatshirts and knit tops – festive or sombre these chic pieces have conscious-buying and elegant styling written all over them.

Celebrate comfort

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

GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

ahlibank welcomes new batch for its 'HIMAM' graduate programme

MUSCAT: ahlibank recently welcomed the new batch of HIMAM, the new identity of its graduate development programme.

Through this pivotal programme, the bank aims to develop the leadership and professional skills of Omani youth by offering them intensive courses, on-the-job training and skill refinement to prepare them to succeed in the banking sector.

Mohammed Mohsin Al Mufargi, AGM-Head of Human Resources, ahlibank said, "This two-year program significantly contributes to the development of management and leadership skills of young graduates, which will equip them to join the banking industry. It also enhances each individual's self-confidence, as it introduces them to the most important and critical requirements of working in the market after completing their university studies. On behalf of the Bank, I am pleased to congratulate and welcome our future leaders and wish them all the best and success in their continuing journey."

"ahlibank is keen to support Oman Vision 2040's objectives, which places great importance and focus on youth empowerment by upskilling and providing them with training opportunities to be able to lead the future through innovation and excellence. Our real contribution is reflected in a number of programmes and initiatives geared towards human resources and inspiring them to join the national workforce after completing a certain period of training.

"This includes the HIMAM programme, which has opened doors to unique career opportunities for a number of graduates since its launch in 2015. The trainees have been able to build a successful career in the sector."

HIMAM programme aims to develop the skills of new graduates through hands-on and theoretical training and mentoring programmes, providing a unique opportunity to work with the bank's team. The program focuses on enhancing graduates' banking skills with the support of a group of managers, trainers and specialists.

Under the programme, graduates will be nominated in the first year of on-the-job training in the bank's departments, in accordance with their educational qualifications, skills and job requirements. After completing the second year, the bank honours trainees who have successfully passed the programme and assign them to one of the bank's departments based on their leadership capabilities and in accordance with the job requirements.

In addition, through its ambitious youth-oriented initiatives, ahlibank is keen to attract creatively skilled people. It focuses on equipping them to enrich the national workforce with competencies that are capable to contribute effectively to the competitive banking environment.

ahlibank is at the forefront of enhancing the capabilities and competencies of Oman's youth and its commitment to HIMAM programme ensures the preparation of a generation of young people who will continue to build a brighter and more prosperous future for the Sultanate and support the government's economic development vision.

REWARDING DRIVING DYNAMICS

Experience refined luxury with SUV Lincoln Aviator

MUSCAT: Lincoln Aviator SUV with its sleek design, impressive luxury and rewarding driving dynamics, makes it one of the finest luxury SUVs to own and experience. The Lincoln Aviator is designed to enhance experiences with its thoughtful luxury, keen attention to details, power and technology. Aviator offers the kind of capability premium clients requires in a three-row SUV, with available all-wheel drive.

The standard twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 engine, paired with a 10-speed SelectShift automatic transmission, delivers an impressive 400 horsepower and 562 Nm of torque for effortless acceleration.

Lincoln Drive Modes' five signature settings – Normal, Conserve, Excite, Slippery and Deep Conditions – allow owners to further customise their driving experience, while a 10.1-inch standard configurable LCD instrument cluster confirms their choices with beautiful, easy-to-read dynamic graphics and prompts. Aviator delivers a wealth of intuitive technologies designed to assist the driver while enhancing the overall experience of the journey. Right from the start, the Air Glide Suspension with Dynamic Lower Entry automatically lowers the vehicle to "greet" the driver, adding a new level of sophistication to Lincoln's signature welcome lighting embrace. The convenience of this feature makes loading cargo easier as well.

The Aviator is also equipped with a technology that enables Aviator to "see" most potholes or uneven pavement and immediately make suspension adjustments to keep the ride as smooth as possible. Adaptive Suspension with Road Preview uses an advanced forward camera to constantly scan the road, seamlessly adjusting the suspension as needed. All Lincoln vehicles come standard with a suite of driver-assist features known as Lincoln Co-Pilot360.

Traffic Jam Assist helps guide the vehicle using adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go, lane centring and traffic sign recognition, adjusting speed based on the information obtained. Evasive Steer Assist offers assistance to the driver to help avoid a collision with a slower or stopped vehicle; it provides additional steering support when a collision cannot be avoided by braking alone. Reverse Brake Assist can help stop the vehicle while backing up if Aviator's integrated rear sensors and camera detect an obstacle at the rear.

Active Park Assist 2.0 removes the stress from parking by taking over steering, shifting, braking and acceleration functions with the touch of a button to navigate parallel and perpendicular parking spaces with ease. The boundless allure of flight has long inspired automotive design, and the all-new Lincoln Aviator takes that inspiration to the next level.

In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

4TH OUTLET

Cochin Gold & Diamonds opens its new showroom

MUSCAT: Cochin Gold & Diamonds has opened its fourth outlet at the Oman Avenues Mall on December 24.

The event was attended by Managing Director Jagajith Prabhakaran, Director Hamed Ibrahim Ali Al Wahaibi, Director Ahmed Mubarak Khalfan Al Jabri, and Director Nima Sushi. The showroom was officially inaugurated by Hamed Ibrahim Ali Al Wahaibi.

"As a part of the grand opening, we will provide our customers with special offers such as no making charges, buy 1 get 1 diamond jewellery, 25% off gold making charges, free 1 gram gold coin on OMR200 worth diamond purchase and a free Apple device with diamond purchase above OMR1,000, etc," said Prabhakaran.

GRAND
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NEW YEAR'S EVE
Gala Dinner

Celebrate New Year's Eve at Taybat Terrace with amazing live cooking stations and live qanun musical performance including a DJ. Join us for the New Years countdown and stand a chance to win exciting prizes in the raffle draw.

Live cooking stations
Qanun musical performance & DJ

Room & dining package with Special Room rate inclusive of NYE dinner
Early bird promotion from 12th to 28th December to avail 25% discount

31st December 2021

Taybat Restaurant 7:00 pm - 01: 00 am

OMR 30 net per adult
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