

HIS MAJESTY RECEIVES THANKS CABLE FROM EMPEROR OF JAPAN
MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from Emperor Naruhito of Japan in reply to His Majesty's condolences cable on the death of the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. In the cable, Emperor Naruhito expressed his sincere appreciation to His Majesty's heartfelt sentiments, wishing His Majesty good health, happiness and a long life. — **ONA**



HM CONGRATULATES NEW UK PM

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Liz Truss on being elected as the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK). In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to Truss, wishing her success in carrying out her duties. His Majesty also wished the relations between Oman and the UK further development and growth. — **ONA**



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Technical failure in one of the transmission lines hits electricity supply in several parts of Oman

MASSIVE POWER OUTAGE DISRUPTS NORMAL LIFE



4 governorates not hit by power outage

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Four governorates in Oman have been free from the power outage that hit the Muscat on Monday, an official from Majan Electricity Company (MEC) said.

The official, deputised in the Wilayat of Sohar, confirmed to *Times of Oman* that the areas under the jurisdiction of MEC have not been subjected to power outage.

"There are four governorates supervised by the MEC, namely, North Al Batinah Governorate (the wilayats of Khaboura, Sohar, Liwa and Shinas), Al Dhahirah Governorate, Buraimi Governorate and Musandam Governorate," he further added.

Dhofar Governorate was not affected by the power outage.

Work is underway to develop a clear strategy to avoid this type of malfunction in the future

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Several governorates of Oman underwent major power disruption following a technical failure in one of the transmission lines of the network on Monday

afternoon. The Ministry of Education has announced the suspension of studies in public and private schools affected by the power outage on Tuesday.

Officials at the Namaa Group said they have managed to re-

store power supply in most places. "Work is underway to restore full service," he said.

In Muscat governorate, power was restored around 5.30pm.

Following the outage, traffic on the roads were badly affected as signals failed. The officials of the Royal Oman Police (ROP) were deployed to manually direct the traffic.

A sudden power outage also disrupted the flight movement at the Muscat International Airport. Officials said the problem started at around 1:30pm when electricity

supply was snapped in several governorates of Oman.

The power outage led to a major disturbance in the movement of vehicles at traffic lights, malls, government and private institutions, electricity and water stations, homes and shops.

Hassan bin Ali Al-Ajimi, director of commercial readiness at the group, said that work is underway to develop a clear strategy in risk management and investigate its causes to avoid this type of malfunction in the future.

Work at Oman Post branches

and call centres were also disrupted following the power outage.

"We regret to inform you that our operations at Oman Post branches and the call centres are down until the outage is set right. Thank you and appreciate your continuous support and understanding," Oman Post said in a statement.

Around 6:00pm, Oman Airports announced the return of full power to operations at Muscat International Airport, which were affected earlier as a result of power outage in the governorate.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN OMR4mn pact inked for Excellence Centre

1 Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and Al Jisr Foundation on Monday signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) to establish Excellence Centre for Developmental Paediatrics to the tune of OMR4 million. **>A6**

WORLD Liz Truss elected next British prime minister

2 Liz Truss has been elected as the new leader of the Conservative Party and will become Britain's new prime minister. **>A7**

MARKET OIC buys Sembcorp's power plants in India

3 OIC-led group said it has signed a share purchase pact with Sembcorp to acquire 100 percent of Sembcorp Energy India's shares. **>B1**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

MSX outlines top priorities of its strategic plan



MUSCAT: The Investor Roadshow conference kicked off on Monday to promote investment opportunities in Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX).

The two-day conference is attended by more than 300 participants representing financial bodies and organisations, banks and investment companies, as well as managers from different parts of the world, representatives from Oman's capital market sector, investors and financial brokerage companies.

The conference includes several working papers on the features of

MSX Strategic Plan, investing in Oman and available opportunities.

The conference also reviews the main features of Oman Vision 2040 and the exit-plan for Oman Investment Authority (OIA), as well as Oman's capital market sector. The roadshow includes panel discussions for public shareholding companies listed at MSX, and visual presentations of companies expected to be in the exit-plan of the OIA. Those companies include Majis Industrial Services Company, Abraaj Energy Company, OQ Group's gas pipeline network and a real estate fund. — **ONA**

INTERNATIONAL CRICKET COUNCIL

Oman Cricket a role model for associate nations: ICC chairman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The giant strides and development made by Oman Cricket (OC) over the past few years have been taken notice by the cricket world. Be it the infrastructure development at the Oman Cricket Academy grounds in Al Amerat or the performances of the national team, Oman has made an impressive start.

So it was hardly a surprise when Greg Barclay, the independent chair of the International Cricket Council (ICC), gave a thumbs up to Oman Cricket (OC) during his recent visit to the Sultanate.

In a video call interview after concluding his brief visit, Barclay said, "Oman Cricket has made

very good progress in the recent years. It was great to witness the excellent facilities at the Oman Cricket Academy."

Overall progress

"Oman Cricket's overall progress can be a role model for the rest of the associate nation members. I was impressed with the lovely ground and the facilities there in Al Amerat. Oman Cricket is a good example for other countries to emulate."

Barclay, who was elected as the independent chair of the ICC in November 2020, is nearing his two-year tenure and the New Zealander termed his experience as 'satisfying'.

The former chief of New Zea-

land Cricket said, "Credit to Oman for developing such world-class facilities. The teams have also done fairly well and it is encouraging to see Oman Cricket focussing on women's cricket and targeting grassroots development. Oman Cricket Chairman Pankaj Khimji and his team are passionate in the progress of the game and I wish them the very best."

Barclay reiterated ICC's strong intention to have cricket included as one of the disciplines at the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

International Cricket Council has already constituted an Olympic Working Group to have cricket as part of the Olympic Games.

>A8





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Dhuhr.....	12:10pm
Asr.....	3:38pm
Maghrib.....	6:26pm
Isha.....	7:37pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:34am

COMMENTARY

Monday power outage ‘biggest’ since the Gonu cyclone



Saleh Al-Shaibany

THE POWER outage that hit some parts of the Sultanate on Monday was the ‘biggest’ in the last 15 years, experts say. Electrical engineers recalled the last time such wide coverage of power outage happened in June 2007 when the tropical storm Gonu hit the country. “During Gonu, we had a widely covered electricity interruptions because of the storm and did not happen again until today,” Mohammed Al Hinai, a retired engineer in the former ministry of electricity and water, said. “Most parts of Oman were damaged and we had no electricity in many houses and businesses. I think the Monday power outage is the closest since



then,” Al Hinai, added. Gonu caused over \$4 billion damages in Oman, from infrastructure like roads, bridges and private homes as well as commercial premises, that left 35 people dead and hundreds injured. The Monday power interruption, forced universities and Colleges to close early and the outage caused traffic jams. Police personnel were seen manning the traffic intersections as traffic signals were not working due to power outage. They had to manually manage the traffic flow at intersections while at some less busy junctions, motorists were themselves carefully crossing them after taking stock of the incoming vehicles. Many hypermarkets had switched off their air condition-

ers to save power while using bare essentials to mange their customers and transactions. Those having power backup could continue with their business but those without alternative source had to down their shutters. A child wanting to have an ice-cream at a famous fast food outlet in Darsait had to return empty-handed as the machines were not working for want of power. Meanwhile, the hypermarket owners had covered all their goods needing refrigeration under plastic sheet so as to conserve energy and make them cool. The operations at Muscat Airport were also reportedly affected. But engineers acted quickly and it took them only four hours to repair the faults. Authorities said a “technical fault” caused the power outage.

MWASALAT BUSES STRANDED AT RUWI BUS STATION DUE TO POWER FAILURE

Long queues of Mwasalat buses were seen stranded at the Ruwi bus station while trying to gain entry inside as a result of power outage. The bar for the entry of buses could not be lifted due to the power failure, though the people were trying hard to lift it manually. In fact, both the lanes for entry to the bus stop was blocked due to parking of buses.



Home ambulance service launched in 3 governorates



The service is concerned with provision of ambulance medicare for injuries in traffic accidents with the support of civil defence services and health sector

MUSCAT: The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has launched the second phase of domestic/home ambulance service. The service is concerned with provision of ambulance medicare for injuries in traffic accidents with the support of civil defence services and health sector in the governorates of Muscat, North Al Batinah and Al Dakhiliyah. The medical cases and domestic injuries responded to by the ambulance service staff are classified into an emergency and critical nature in the first place during which emergency ambulatory medical care of an advanced medical level is provided to citizens, residents and visitors.

Health institutions
They are then transferred to the closest and most appropriate public health institutions to them

according to the assessment of the medical staff of the general health status of the case during the communication. Among the emergency and critical medical cases that were identified for response: cri The emergency and serious medical cases to be responded to include the serious respiratory system diseases, serious heart diseases, serious injuries and fractures, sudden loss of conscious, overall and partial paralysis, severe bleeding, severe pains, acute nerve system diseases, severe electric shocks, acute toxicity, emergency psychiatric disorders, drowning cases, obstructed childbirth and severe burns. It is worth mentioning that phase one of the service has been implemented in the governorates of Musandam, Al Dhahirah, South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, Al Buraimi and Al Wusta. -ONA

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Power outage puts people to great inconvenience in Muscat

There were long rows of cars at busy intersections and motorists had a difficult time negotiating their way out of the traffic jams

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Long hours of power outage in the Governorate of Muscat on Monday, 5th September, put citizens and residents to great inconvenience, in houses as well as on roads, in the extreme Summer heat.

There were long rows of cars at busy intersections and motorists had a difficult time negotiating their way out of the traffic jams.

Saeed Al Ameri from the Wilayat of Seeb in the Governorate of Muscat, said: "I was on my way to the university. I saw an unprecedented congestion at one of the traffic lights. I thought it was an accident. Cars were honking their horns in every direction.

"I got out of my car to see what the problem was and to my dismay, found that the traffic lights were off. On one of the sidewalks, cops were trying to make way for other cars at a place where two vehicles had collided in the absence of traffic signals."

Al-Amiri continues: "I presumed that this particular sig-



I was on my way to the university. I saw an unprecedented congestion at one of the traffic lights. I thought it was an accident. Cars were honking from every direction

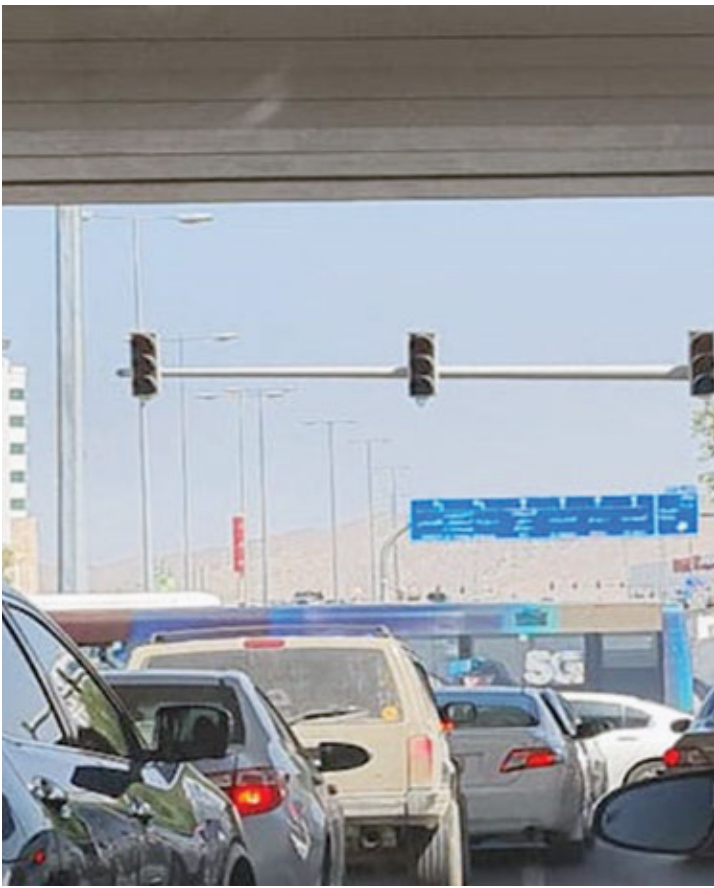
nal was mal-functional. But my presumption was wrong...the outage had affected wider areas in Muscat. It was a difficult situation. All the time the Sun beat cruelly on us."

Nasser Al-Wahaibi from the Wilayat of Muttrah in the Governorate of Muscat said: As usual, I had gone to one of the malls in the Governorate near my house for shopping when power snapped and the entire mall was engulfed in darkness. Suddenly, I heard a scream from the elevator...apparently, because the elevator came to a standstill. Securitymen rushed towards it. The scene was very frightening

with the people screaming and rushing towards the exits and children crying. It was a difficult moment."

Nasra Al Hinai from the Wilayat of Baushar in the Governorate of Muscat said: "I left work around 1:30 in the afternoon. There were traffic jams at all intersections, car collisions at some and policemen present everywhere trying to streamline traffic. I stood for a long time at one of the traffic lights. But, for how long? I was on way to pick up my 7-year-old son from school, all the while thinking about his hapless condition in the midst of darkness all around."

Nasra continues: "I saw one of



the citizens getting out of his car and heading towards traffic lights. The cars moved a little and finally I got out of the melee. In fact, it was because of a young man who helped ease the congestion and let me out of the confusion."

Walid Al-Ghasani from the Wilayat of Seeb in the Governorate of Muscat also spoke about his inconvenience saying, "I had gone to meet a friend in one of the cafes in Ruwi area, and we were chatting when the power snapped. Half an hour passed, and there was still no sign of power returning. The heat became unbearable. We decided to leave the place me for my residence, but I was running out

of fuel and on the way, stopped at a gas station. But the crowd of cars were such, that the wait seemed to be endless."

Al-Ghasani continues: "I watched the station workers declaring the station's closure. In the end, I had to ring up my brother to come and fetch me as my car was running out of fuel."

"I parked my car in one of the station's parking lots, and I went back with my brother to my home only to find that my home too was without electricity. Besides there was the Summer heat. And, my mother who is a diabetic and also suffers from blood pressure was in extreme discomfort."

Trending

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

39,704 REACH

The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has issued a statement on the power outages in Oman.



Power supply restoration work underway: APSR

A story on restoration of power supply across affected areas in Oman reached 39,704 people and had 10,584 link clicks on Facebook.

 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

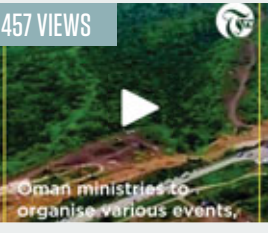
391 VIEWS



The Maghrib Minute news update video in Hindi had 391 views and reached 3,100 people on Facebook.

 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

457 VIEWS



The Morning Minute video on Oman ministries to organise various events, activities in Dhofar Governorate had 457 views



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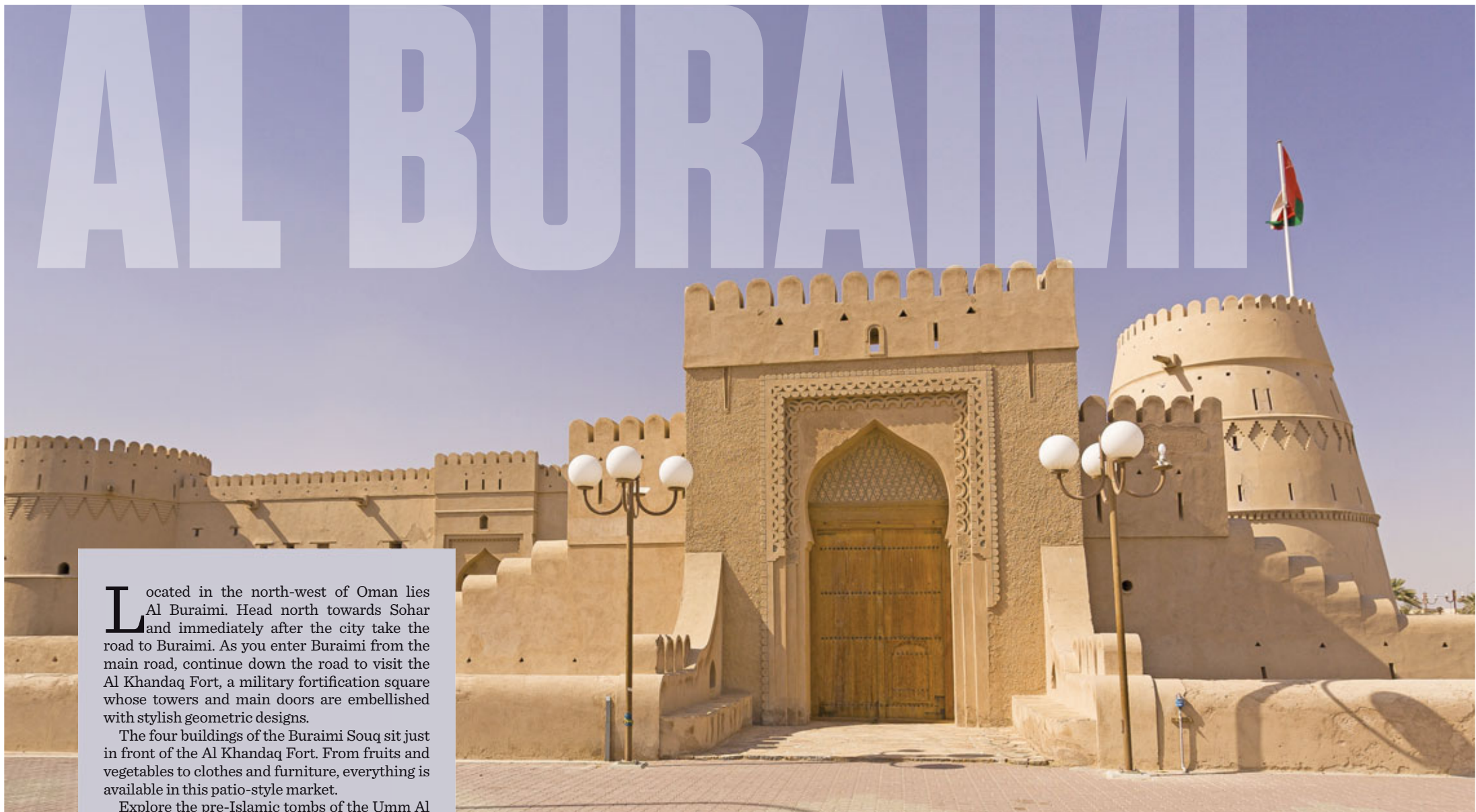


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Located in the north-west of Oman lies Al Buraimi. Head north towards Sohar and immediately after the city take the road to Buraimi. As you enter Buraimi from the main road, continue down the road to visit the Al Khandaq Fort, a military fortification square whose towers and main doors are embellished with stylish geometric designs.

The four buildings of the Buraimi Souq sit just in front of the Al Khandaq Fort. From fruits and vegetables to clothes and furniture, everything is available in this patio-style market.

Explore the pre-Islamic tombs of the Umm Al Nar (The Mother of Fire) civilisation. You can spot the little mountains made of rocks. Climb up the hill to have a closer look at these untouched 5,000-year-old family tombs.

Near Al Hila Fort there is an open souq and villagers from outside of Buraimi gather at the old souq, sitting on the floor, chatting and selling specialties like samak mujafaf (dried fish), giving it a particular charm. Explore the Al Hila Fort. Built in the 16th century, the fort is a labyrinth of rooms and corridors. The panoramic view from the roof, which overlooks the neighbouring city of Al Ain, is a must-see.





marking the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, which falls on 16 September each year. It is the day on which a group of countries signed the Montreal Protocol to determine the procedures to be followed at the global, regional and local levels to gradually eliminate substances that deplete the ozone layer. **-ONA**

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OMR4 million paediatrics centre to be built in Oman

Dina Al Khalili, General Manager of Al Jisr Foundation said that the centre is expected to contribute to early detection, intervention and reduction of disabilities



SQU and Nouf Abdullah Al Hosni from Al Jisr Foundation.

The MoC aims to consolidate the concept of smart partnership between civil institutions and the public sector.

The move also comes in line with SQU's drive to establish a centre for developmental paediatrics to serve the segment of society in need of this service, as well as to achieve SQU's pioneering role in paediatrics and training Omani

medical cadres.

Dina Al Khalili, General Manager of Al Jisr Foundation said that the centre is expected to contribute to early detection, intervention and reduction of disabilities.

Disabilities

In her turn, Dr. Watfa Said Al Ma'amari, Senior Consultant of Child Health at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH) said that the hospital provides diag-

nostic services for 70 percent of children with developmental disorders and disabilities in Oman.

She added that statistics indicate approximately 10% of children have such disorders.

The number of Omani children aged below 18, according to the 2020 e-census, reached 1,185,059 constituting 43 percent of total the Omani population, which needs to be taken into consideration, Al Ma'amari affirmed. -ONA



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INAUGURATION

Joint Command and Staff College celebrates 36th batch inauguration

MUSCAT: The Joint Command and Staff College at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies on Monday celebrated the inauguration of the 36th batch of enrolled officers.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of Air Vice Marshal Saleh Yahya Al Maskari, Head of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

The 36th batch includes officers from the Ministry of Defence, the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and other military and security units, as well as participants from



GCC and friendly countries.

The event was attended by Air Commodore Ahmed Mohammed Al Mashikhi, Commandants of the Joint Command and Staff College, Brigadier Abdullah Hamad Al Harthy, Head of Studies and Academic Affairs at the Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies. -ONA

ATTACKS

Ten dead, fifteen hospitalised after stabbings in Canada



OTTAWA: At least 10 persons were killed and 15 injured in stabbing attacks on Sunday across Saskatchewan Province. Saskatchewan Royal Canadian Mountain Police (RCMP) has issued dangerous persons alert as the suspects are still at large.

Melfort RCMP has issued a province-wide dangerous persons alert after multiple people were stabbed in the James Smith Cree Nation and Weldon, Saskatchewan, reported CBC. RCMP said in a press conference at 3:40 CT that they found 10 people deceased in 13 locations, and at least 15 people have been hospitalised.

"There could be more injured," Rhonda Blackmore, commanding officer of the Saskatchewan RCMP, said. "We are currently actively looking for it, dedicating maximum resources to this."

RCMP said they received a report that the two suspects, identified as Damien Sanderson and Myles Sanderson, may have been travelling in the Arcola Avenue area in Regina. Regina Police said the suspects were seen around 11:20 am, reported CBC.

"As the suspects are at large, we have also asked for the alert to be

extended to Manitoba and Alberta," RCMP said in a news release just after noon Sunday.

In an alert issued at 8:20 a.m. CT Sunday, RCMP said two male suspects are believed to be in a black Nissan Rogue with Saskatchewan licence plate 119 MPI. As the suspects may have access to a vehicle, the RCMP have expanded the alert province-wide. Blackmore said at the press conference the location and direction of the suspects' travel is unknown.

"We don't know if they have changed their vehicle," she said.

Police are asking Regina residents to take precautions and consider sheltering in place. RCMP said residents should be careful about allowing others into their homes and not leave a secure location, reported CBC.

A 10 am CT update from the Saskatchewan RCMP said there are multiple victims in multiple locations and it appears victims are being attacked at random.

Weldon is located about 50 kilometres southeast of Prince Albert, and about 25 kilometres southwest of James Smith Cree Nation. -ANI

NEP 2020

NEP 2020 will reorient education policy to global benchmarks, says Indian Minister Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Jitendra Singh said that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reorient India's Education Policy as per global benchmarks.

As per the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, addressing the PHDCCI Education Summit, 2022, Singh said, "NEP is the biggest path-breaking reform in India since independence as the new policy is not only progressive and visionary but is also in keeping with the emerging needs and requirements of 21st century India." He said it gives due priorities to the inherent talent, knowledge, skill and aptitude of the students, rather than focusing only on degrees.

The Union Minister added that it also gives the young scholars and students enough room to decide their options depending upon their aptitude and their personal circumstances from time to time.

Dwelling on the merits of NEP-2020, Singh said, "the provision of multiple entry or exit option is something to be cherished as this academic flexibility will have a positive impact on the students related to the availing of different career opportunities at different times, depending upon their intrinsic learning and inherent aptitude."

The Minister also said that the feasibility or appropriateness of this entry/exit option can be in future contemplated for the teachers as well, giving them career flexibility and upgradation opportunities as is done in some western countries and the USA.

The Minister said the policy advocates a creative and multidisciplinary curriculum that includes



humanities, languages, culture, sports and fitness, health and well-being, arts and crafts, in addition to science and mathematics.

"It reflects the true essence of Swami Vivekananda's Man-making Education, Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education and Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education," he added. He said that today, around 40 million Indians are in higher education, more than the figure for the United States and the European Union combined and the ambitious new education policy seeks to double that number. He said, it is a big goal, but no doubt it is achievable.

Singh also pointed out that the Modi Government has also corrected the past anomalies and explained that the biggest discrepancy in the previous education policy was the nomenclature, the Ministry of Human Resource Development was a misnomer in itself and was supposed to misrepresent other meanings.

He added that now the Central Government has changed the name of the Ministry of Human

Resource Development to the Union Ministry of Education.

"One of the most commendable opportunities that stem from the National Education Policy (NEP) is the chance for universities and colleges to incorporate entrepreneurship into their curriculum. If this is done in a meaningful manner, it has the potential to provide impetus to the nation's economy in a fairly short period of time," he added.

The Minister also pointed out that India has created a massive jump in its global ranking of Global Innovation Index (GII) from 81st in the year 2015 to 46th in 2021 among 130 economies of the world. India ranks 2nd among 34 lower-middle-income economies and 1st among 10 Central and Southern Asian economies in terms of GI.

"The consistent improvement in the GI ranking is owing to the immense knowledge capital, the vibrant start-up ecosystem, and some outstanding work done by the public and private research organisations," the Minister said.

Singh said India has been focusing much on acquiring, developing

and expanding the latest technologies, which can well be understood by the increasing use of drones, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, block-chain and other innovative technologies in all sectors.

He underlined that the new India is keen on making the maximum out of potential-rich areas like science and where scientific institutions are now seen as modern temples.

The Minister added that the NEP was launched to transform India's education system through a multidisciplinary approach. With the National Education Policy completing two years on July 29, 2022, post its rollout, 2,774 Innovative Councils in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 28 states and six union territories (UTs) have been established, as per an internal progress report by the Ministry of Education. As per the report, 2,000 institutions in higher education are set to begin as skill hubs and of this 700 have registered on the common portal of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. -ANI

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WORLD

Liz Truss to be next British prime minister

Truss and Johnson will travel to Scotland on Tuesday to meet Queen Elizabeth II for the official handover of power

LONDON: Liz Truss has been elected as the new leader of the Conservative Party and will become Britain's new prime minister, party officials announced on Monday.

She will take over from Boris Johnson who announced his resignation in July following a slew of scandals and resignations from his government.

Truss, the current Foreign Secretary, was given the mandate to lead the country by the governing party's members after a grueling six-week campaign against former Finance Minister, Rishi Sunak. She and Johnson will travel to Scotland on Tuesday to meet Queen Elizabeth II for the official handover of power.

What will the prime minister need to address first?

Truss promised to "deliver a bold plan to cut taxes and grow the economy."

She faces "the worst in-tray for a new prime minister since Thatcher," The Sunday Times wrote, referencing former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Top of the list will be tackling the United Kingdom's cost-of-living crisis.



"I will deliver on the energy crisis, dealing with people's energy bills, but also dealing with the long term issues we have on energy supply," she said during her acceptance speech.

Thanks to global gas price volatility triggered by the war in Ukraine, the average UK household energy bill is jumping to more than 3,500 pounds (\$4,000; €4,041) a year. The UK faces decades-high inflation and is tipped to enter recession later this year.

She earlier declined to comment on a report that her energy plan could exceed 100 billion pounds, but the lawmaker tipped to be her finance minister, business minister Kwasi Kwarteng, wrote on Monday that the government could afford to borrow more to fund support for households and businesses.

Truss has also signaled during her leadership campaign that she would challenge convention by

scrapping tax increases and cutting other levies.

What foreign policy issues face the UK's new leader?

The new prime minister will also have to steer the UK on the international stage with Russia's war in Ukraine, an increasingly assertive China, and ongoing tensions with the European Union over the aftermath of Brexit toping that agenda. Truss, said she would tear up parts of the Northern Ireland Protocol, a step that could lead to a trade war with the EU.

A bill to unilaterally scrap some customs checks to ease the movement of goods is working its way through the British parliament, and Truss said last month that if picked as prime minister she would seek to deliver that legislation in full.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was amongst the first world leaders to congratulate Truss "on her new task." He said Germany

looked forward to "our cooperation in these challenging times."

Truss set to meet the Queen

On Tuesday, Johnson will deliver a farewell speech at Downing Street. Johnson and Truss will travel to Scotland to meet with Queen Elizabeth II.

He will formally tender his resignation, and the Queen will appoint his successor in a so-called kissing of hands ceremony.

Truss will then fly back to London to deliver a speech outside Downing Street and appoint a cabinet.

"I campaigned as a conservative and I will govern as a conservative. My friends, we need to show that we will deliver over the next two years," she said.

On Wednesday, she will face their first head-to-head Prime Minister's Question Time with the leader of the opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer in Parliament. **dw**



Chileans reject new constitution in referendum

SANTIAGO: Chileans on Sunday rejected a proposal for a new constitution to replace the one adopted during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship.

Although the population voted for changes to Chile's constitution in 2020, the proposed changes had proved unpopular with a large share of voters.

An overwhelming rejection

With almost all of the votes counted, the reject camp led with over 61.9% compared to almost 38.1% of those who voted yes.

The result is a far greater margin of victory than was predicted by opinion polls. These had suggested that voters would reject the constitution by up to 10 percentage points.

Leftist President Gabriel Boric, who supported the new text, accepted the defeat but pledged to press ahead with constitutional changes. He said Chileans had demonstrated "that they want and value democracy, they are counting on it to overcome our differences and to progress."

The constitution was drafted after political and social unrest swept through Chile in 2019.

Some 80% of Chileans voted to draw up a new constitution in late

2020. However, the last poll ahead of the referendum suggested that 47% of voters intend to reject the proposed constitution compared with 38% for yes and 17% undecided.

Speaking after the referendum result, Boric said it remained clear that people wanted urged "all political forces to put Chile ahead of any legitimate differences and agree as soon as possible on the deadlines and parameters for a new constitutional process."

Unlike previous elections, the vote is mandatory for more than 15 million eligible voters.

The dwindling support for the new law could at least partly be blamed on the prominence given to Chile's Indigenous population, which makes up almost 13% of the country's 19 million people. It offers them greater autonomy, particularly on judicial issues.

There are also concerns that it will legalize abortion in a country where half of the population is Roman Catholic. In addition, the document puts the environment on center stage in a country that is the world's top copper producer.

"What you can see is a certain conservatism in the Chilean electorate that we haven't seen for years," sociologist Marta Lagos told the AFP news agency. **dw**

BLAST CONDEMNED

UN mission condemns explosion outside Russian Embassy in Afghanistan

KABUL: UN mission in Afghanistan on Monday condemned the blast outside the Russian Embassy in Kabul that killed at least 10 people and injured several others.

"Today at around 11 o'clock in the afternoon, a suicide bomber near the Russian embassy in the 7th district of Kabul city, who wanted to detonate himself in the crowd. But before reaching his goal the security forces targeted him, which caused the explosion," said Kabul security department spokesperson Khalid Zadran said in a statement posted on Twitter. He said security forces have cordoned off the area and comprehensive investigations are underway.

Two Russian embassy workers were reportedly among the people who were killed in the blast in Darul Aman, TOLO news reported citing the Russian Foreign ministry.

The UN mission in Afghanistan stressed the need for the Taliban to take steps to ensure the safety and security of the people as well as diplomatic missions

"UNAMA condemns today's explosion outside @RusEmbassyKabul. We express our condolences to the families of those killed and wishes for a speedy recovery to the injured," the United Nations Assistance Mis-

sion in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a tweet.

"In light of recent events, UNAMA stresses the need for the de facto authorities to take steps to ensure the safety and security of the people as well as diplomatic missions," the UN mission added.

This Kabul explosion comes days after at least 20 people were killed in a blast that rocked a mosque in northwestern Afghanistan during Friday prayers.

In recent months, a number of blasts have been reported in the capital city of Kabul, claiming dozens of innocent lives.

This series of blasts comes on the heels of one year of Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Rights groups said the Taliban had broken multiple pledges to respect human and women's rights.

After capturing Kabul in August last year, the Islamic authorities have imposed severe restrictions on women's and girls' rights, suppressed the media, and arbitrarily detained, tortured, and summarily executed critics and perceived opponents, among other abuses.

Rights groups say that the Taliban's human rights abuses have brought widespread condemnation and imperilled international efforts to address the country's dire humanitarian situation. **ANI**

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SPORTS



Nick Kyrgios stuns Daniil Medvedev to enter quarter-finals

The Australian passed the stiff test against the Russian 7-6 (11), 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, playing his aggressive game to triumph

NEW YORK: Nick Kyrgios of Australia stunned defending champion Daniil Medvedev at the US Open on Sunday with a brilliant performance to reach the quarter-finals at Flushing Meadows.

The Australian passed the stiff test against the Russian 7-6 (11), 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, playing his aggressive game to triumph after two hours and 53 minutes. The defending champion overcame an early break drought to push the set to a tie-break, in which he rallied from 3/5 down to earn three



set points. On the third of those set points, at 8/7, Kyrgios hit a sly backhand that just cut the singles line. In the second set, Kyrgios was unable to keep his momentum, though, playing a poor opening service game. Medvedev took full advantage of Kyrgios's bad, the Australian missed a neutral backhand long to allow his opponent to level the clash.

In the fourth set, the Australian earned an early break again and

was determined to hang onto it. Kyrgios broke serve five times in his victory and saved five of the eight break points he faced.

"What a place to do it. Packed house in New York!" ATP.com quoted Kyrgios as saying.

"I want to go all the way. Hopefully, it is possible," said Kyrgios, whose victory was his third against a World No. 1.

"I just thought I played the right way. I returned unbelievable to-

day. Just thought the third and fourth sets were just so free, I was just having a lot of fun, embracing every moment out on Ashe today. Really proud of that," Kyrgios said.

"Obviously I felt like I disrupted his rhythm a little bit, didn't let him kind of get comfy behind the baseline, play his style of tennis. I think that's what you have to do. But I was overall pretty happy with my performance," he said. **ANI**

Coco Gauff beats Zhang Shuai; Caroline moves into quarters

NEW YORK: The No.12-seed Coco Gauff advanced to the US Open quarterfinals on Sunday, after outlasting Zhang Shuai of China in a straight sets victory.

Gauff, only 18, is the youngest American woman to reach the quarters here since 2009. She produced a stunning performance to defeat Shuai 7-5, 7-5 to reach the quarterfinals.

The American teenager was more poised in the difficult moments. Zhang broke her first service game to take a 2-0 lead, and Gauff broke her right back with two resounding forehand winners. It happened again when Zhang took a 5-3 lead in the second set - and Gauff came back to win the last four games.

Gauff will meet No.17 Caroline Garcia in the quarterfinals clash.

Caroline Garcia had another clean match against Alison Riske-Amritraj, striking eight aces and winning all nine of her service games. Caroline Garcia defeated Alison Riske-Amritraj 6-4, 6-1 in straight sets.

"She already have some experience with the final in Roland Garros. She's aggressive but maybe from a little bit farther [behind the baseline] than I am. Big serve, huge serve, very powerful. Moving great. Very athletic," WTA.com



quoted Garcia as saying.

"I never played on Ashe [against] a big American player, so definitely going to be the first time. As a French player, I know that in Roland Garros, the crowd, it can be loud and everything. Obviously, I know it's going to be on the other way around," Garcia said.

"I'm really looking forward to it. It's a great experience. I will get myself ready. I will have my little team behind me. That's the most important, the people you care about who have been supporting you. I'm not going to complain to play Ashe against an American girl in the quarterfinal," she added. **ANI**

ASIA CUP

India eye win to stay alive in competition, Sri Lanka aims for solidifying final spot

DUBAI: India's next Super Four phase clash against Sri Lanka at the ongoing Asia Cup 2022 will be extremely crucial for Men in Blue for their chances of qualifying for the final of the tournament that they have won seven times and are currently defending, while Sri Lanka will be looking forward to solidifying their chances of further progress in the tournament.

India will lock horns against Sri Lanka in their second Super Four stage clash at the ongoing Asia Cup 2022 on Tuesday. India heads into this match with a heavy wound of loss to arch-rival Pakistan in their first Super Four clash. It will be in the mind of Men in Blue to keep their campaign going so that they are not only able to lift the trophy for the eighth time, but also avenge this loss to Pakistan, given that the Men in Green qualify for the final as well.

Sri Lanka on the other hand will be aiming to carry forward the momentum gained after winning against Afghanistan in their first Super Four clash by four wickets. This team has produced some surprising results over the last few months and a win against a world-class Indian team will be on their bucket list as a team.

For producing a winning result, India will have to make sure that openers KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma replicate their explosive batting in the previous match and go longer. Virat Kohli will also be looking forward to playing another solid knock to improve his yearly statistics and regain his



best form. He has been the second highest run-scorer in Asia Cup 2022 so far with 154 runs in three games and two half-centuries.

It is important that the middle order consisting of likes of Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant, Deepak Hooda, and Dinesh Karthik forgets the slip-up against Pakistan and continues playing intent-filled innings that have made them extremely reliable over last few months.

Indian bowling was a mixed bag in Pakistan. While youngsters Arshdeep Singh, Ravi Bishnoi delivered economy and wickets both, senior bowlers like Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Hardik Pandya struggled. A collective superb bowling effort will be extremely important for India's chances at the final.

Sri Lanka on the other side, despite its inconsistencies and lack of star power, is not a side to be underestimated.

Pathum Nissanka and Kusal Mendis are openers of the side and have the capacity to surprise sides with their big hits. They will have to play talented bowlers like Bishnoi, Bhuvneshwar and Arshdeep really well in the powerplay and give their team a positive start.

Other top-order/middle-order batters like Charith Asalanka, Danushka Gunathilaka, Bhanuka Rajapaksa and captain Dasun Shanaka can be dangerous too, capable of making useful contributions in middle overs.

Sri Lankan bowling attack consisting of all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga, Chamika Karunaratne, Maheesh Theekshana, Matheesha Pathirana, Dilshan Madushanka among others is a well-balanced one with the right mix of pace and spin. On their given day, they can snatch the match from their opponents. Here are the squads. **ANI**

CRICKET

No one except Dhoni messaged me after I quit Test captaincy: Kohli

DUBAI: India's star batter Virat Kohli on Sunday revealed that he received little support after stepping down as India Test skipper in January this year and said only former India captain MS Dhoni texted him at the time.

Kohli is India's most successful Test skipper but relinquished the role in January this year after a 2-1 series loss to South Africa, with Rohit Sharma being handed the reins. 33-year-old Kohli was the Test captain since taking over from Dhoni in 2014 and led India in 68 matches for 40 wins and 17 defeats.

"When I left the Test captaincy, MS Dhoni was the only one among all the cricketers I had played with before who texted me. A lot of people have my number but he was the only one who texted me," Kohli said in a post-match press conference at the ongoing Asia Cup.

"It comes from the genuine respect that we have for each other. There is no insecurity from either end in our equation. These things matter," he added.

"I live my life with honesty and these things matter to me. I just want to say this, if I have to tell someone about their game, I reach out individually. Even if I have to reach out to them, I do it personally," said the former India skipper.

Kohli had already stepped down from India T20I captaincy after the ICC Men's T20 World Cup last year, with Sharma taking over as a leader in both white-ball



formats at the time.

A superb fifty by Mohammed Rizwan and a cameo by Mohammad Nawaz powered Pakistan to a five-wicket win in a last-ball thriller Super Four clash against Pakistan at the ongoing Asia Cup 2022 on Sunday. Kohli top scored for India with 60 off 44 balls before being run out in the final over during a dramatic T20I loss to Pakistan in the Super 4 phase of the Asia Cup.

"I've played for 14 years, it doesn't happen by chance," Kohli said about his current form. I've taken some time away, and put things in perspective and that's given me a relaxation that this is not the be-all and end-all of life. I need to enjoy the game, I can't put so much pressure on myself with expectations that I'm unable to express myself. That is not why I started playing the game," he added. With back-to-back half-centuries in the Asia Cup, Kohli has now crossed fifty a record 32 times in T20Is from 102 matches. **ANI**

ASIA CUP

Hope we play like this, says Mohammad Nawaz after win over India

DUBAI: After Pakistan clinched a thrilling match against India in the ongoing Asia Cup, Pakistan batter Mohammad Nawaz hopes that the team will continue to play as they performed in the Super Four stage against their arch-rival.

A superb fifty by Mohammed Rizwan and a cameo by Mohammad Nawaz powered Pakistan to a five-wicket win in a last-ball thriller Super Four clash against Pakistan at the ongoing Asia Cup 2022 on Sunday. It was an exciting day of cricketing action for the fans as they got their money's worth. Rizwan's brilliant 71 off 51 balls proved to be the difference between both sides. Speaking about the boost of confidence the Pakistan team received after they clinched a thrilling win over India, Nawaz said in a post-match press conference, "As a player, it is good for us. The first match we played both were close and neck to neck. I hope we all play like this only."

"Babar Azam No Doubt is the backbone of our team. I think whenever the opportunity comes to perform well the players should grab it. The skipper and the team management must have taken the decision to send me to bat at No.4. All I was told was that if the left-handed batter got out, then you have to go out for batting. My strategy was to execute my plan while playing basic," said the batter.

Chasing a target of 182, Pakistan got off to a shaky start after skipper Babar Azam (14) was dismissed in the fourth over of the innings by Ravi Bishnoi. **ANI**

ICC CHAIRMAN INTERVIEW

<FROM A1> Working to get cricket included in Los Angeles Olympics

Cricket was played only once at the Olympic Games in 1900 and that too had only the men's competition. Since then it has not been part of the Summer Olympics.

"One of our strategic priorities is to have cricket included at the LA Olympics. The decision will be made by the IOC in consultation with the local organising committee of 2028 Los Angeles Games. We will put our best foot forward to convince them and hope to see cricket being played at the Games.

"We see the Olympics as a part of cricket's long-term future. We have more than a billion fans globally and they are as keen as us to

see cricket at the Olympics.

"Cricket has a strong and passionate fanbase, particularly in South Asia where majority of our fans come from. But we also have lot of cricket fans in the USA. The opportunity for those fans to see their heroes competing for an Olympic medal is exciting.

"We believe cricket would be a great addition to the Olympic Games. We realise it won't be easy to secure our inclusion as there are so many other sports out there wanting to do the same. But we feel now is the time to show what a great partnership cricket and the Olympics could be."

Growth of shorter format

The ICC chairman admitted that the growth of white-ball cricket is putting a lot of pressure on the Future Tours Programme (FTP) calendar. "It is important to find a balance between the white-ball cricket and Test cricket. Due to economic considerations, we find that the shorter format is gaining more and more emphasis.

"Test cricket will be compromised in future given the growth of the shorter format. But we are aware that Test cricket is a legacy we need to safeguard and that's certainly challenge ahead," the Kiwi said.

Barclay said, "As far as the World Test Championship (WTC) goes, it is still not perfect in the current format. Discussions are on to make it even better."

Over the past two years, ICC faced enormous challenges due to the global pandemic but Barclay was satisfied that the game overcame them to a large extent.

"We are growing globally and will continue to do so. We recently sold the media rights to telecast ICC tournaments till 2027 for US\$3 billion. It underlines the interest for the game. We would now like to have more fans engagement on digital platforms ahead.

"The ICC T20 World Cup in 2024, which will be co-hosted by West Indies and USA, will feature 20 teams for the first time. We know that the inclusion of more teams is great for the growth of the game but it comes with a huge responsibility. We want the Associate nations to gear up well to compete with the best. We wouldn't like to see lop-sided matches. To ensure that the Associate nations perform well, they need to invest time, money and effort and ICC will back them strongly."

The Kiwi feels white-ball cricket is the future due to its popularity among fans and broadcasters.

"If you look at strategically the way that cricket is going, there's no doubt that white-ball cricket, short-form cricket, is the way of the future. "That's the game that's sought after by fans, that's where the broadcasters are putting their resource, it's what's driving the money," Barclay said.

Barclay said that he is open to take up the responsibility of becoming the ICC independent chair for another term if the board members entrust him with the role.

"I am ready to shoulder the role for another term if the board members feel that I should carry on," he said.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by November 2022 reaching \$95.43, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 76 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$94.67. - OMA

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



GAS PRICES SOAR

Gas prices in Europe jumped over 30 per cent while the Euro sunk below \$0.99 for the first time since December 2002. The fall comes after Russia announced it would halt gas flows on the Nord Stream I pipeline to Germany.

OIC to acquire Sembcorp's 2.6GW power plants in India for \$1.5bn

The deal progresses Oman Investment Corporation's vision to be a leading asset manager targeting emerging markets with high growth potential, world-class assets and investment opportunities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A consortium led by Oman Investment Corporation (OIC) in partnership with the Ministry of Defence Pension Fund, Oman (MODPF) and an Omani family office (collectively, the Tanweer Consortium) announced that it has, through Tanweer Infrastructure Pte. Ltd. (Tanweer Infrastructure), entered into a share purchase agreement with Sembcorp Utilities Pte. Ltd. (SCU) to acquire 100 per cent of the shares of Sembcorp Energy India Limited (SEIL).

The acquisition of SEIL for consideration of INR117 billion, approximately \$1.5 billion, will result



ACQUISITION: The acquisition of Sembcorp Energy India Limited (SEIL) for consideration of INR117 billion, approximately \$1.5 billion, will result in Tanweer Infrastructure, a company incorporated by the Tanweer Consortium, becoming the sole shareholder of SEIL post-completion. - Supplied picture

in Tanweer Infrastructure, a company incorporated by the Tanweer Consortium, becoming the sole shareholder of SEIL post-completion. Tanweer Infrastructure will settle the final consideration via a deferred payment note provided by SCU.

SEIL is one of the largest independent power producers in India, operating two supercritical coal-fired plants totalling 2.6GW. SCU is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sembcorp Industries (Sembcorp).

The signing was attended by Anwar Ahmed Muqaibal, the Sultan-

ate of Oman Consulate General for the Republic of Singapore.

Acquisition to accelerate the transformation of OIC into international player

This deal progresses OIC's vision to build an international asset management business headquartered in the Sultanate of Oman.

OIC is a leading Omani Private Equity Investment company established in 2005 with a strong track record in establishing, investing in and growing businesses. OIC focuses on investing in energy and

infrastructure projects, real estate, logistics, healthcare as well as asset and project management services.

OIC's partnering with MODPF for this acquisition is in line with its plan to work in partnership with Omani Pension Funds, Government Institutions and private sector investors to invest in profitable, well-managed business opportunities, intending to support the diversification of Oman's economy and achieve the Sultanate's National objectives.

Acquisition of a world-class power generation platform from

a leading international developer and a trusted long-term partner

Sembcorp is a leading energy and urban solutions provider. Sembcorp and OIC have a proven and trusted relationship built over a decade, having jointly developed and operated the \$1 billion Salalah Independent Power and Water Plant in Oman since 2009.

To ensure continuity of the highest standards of reliability, operational efficiency and best practices in the management of SEIL's supercritical plants, Sembcorp will continue to render technical advisory services to SEIL through a technical services agreement. SEIL's existing operations team will continue to be employed under the new ownership of Tanweer Infrastructure. Tanweer Infrastructure will continue with ongoing initiatives at SEIL to reduce greenhouse gas emissions intensity.

Transaction protects stakeholders' interest

SEIL provides critical energy needs to over 2.5 million households. It owns two of the largest and most efficient national grid-connected plants in India and is a trusted and reliable supplier through ongoing contractual relationships with power distribution companies.

The transaction protects the interests of important stakeholders such as SEIL's existing power distribution customers and end users, employees, lenders as well as the wider Indian power system.

Wong Kim Yin, Group President and CEO of Sembcorp Industries said: "The sale of SEIL accelerates the transformation of Sembcorp's portfolio from brown to green

while protecting the interests of all stakeholders. OIC is a trusted and reliable long-term partner, and we are confident SEIL will continue to provide reliable services to its power distribution customers, as well as maintain the stability of relationships with suppliers, communities and employees. The provision of the innovative GHG emissions intensity reduction incentive rate also underscores our commitment to the sustainable energy transition."

Kalat Al Bulooshi, CEO of OIC, on behalf of Tanweer Infrastructure said: "We are glad to acquire this world-class asset, serving essential energy to the community. We are committed to delivering power to our customers on a continuous and efficient basis and to working with our team of committed employees at the plant, our stakeholders such as the power distribution customers and the local community, to achieve their objectives. Availability of power to households and industries is of vital importance in today's world of energy uncertainties."

Furthermore, he added, "This transaction is in line with OIC's vision to become a global investment house pursuing fruitful investment opportunities in promising markets."

The proposed acquisition is subject to the approval of Sembcorp shareholders at an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of Sembcorp, to be convened around November 2022. The proposed acquisition is expected to close six months after the EGM and is subject to the satisfaction of certain conditions precedent.

ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

One-Stop Shop at Sezad to stop all paper-based transactions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has announced that it will stop printing and receiving all paper-based transactions and documents at the One-Stop Shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad).

This environment-friendly initiative aims to combat the use of paper documents in the different zones, overseen by Opaz. As well, it serves the efforts toward digital transformation and accelerating the process of transactions.

This initiative aims to stop printing and receiving land usufruct applications or any other documents or publications provided by the one-stop shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm to investors. It also seeks to enhance Opaz efforts in preserving the environment by minimising the print and use of paper-based transactions.

The environment-friendly initiative enables investors to easily obtain all documents and publications that have been converted into electronic copies by scanning the QR code from the tablets placed at the One-Stop Shop or downloading them from the Opaz website. Getting electronic copies



will minimise the need for printing the documents and allow investors to save the documents digitally on their computers or phones and have easy access at any time. Further, such initiative also contributes to facilitating procedures for investors and accelerating the completion of transactions at the

one-stop shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, in addition to ensuring business continuity.

It is worth mentioning that Opaz accords great attention to improving the standard of services provided to investors, meeting their aspirations, as well as enhancing their experience in digital trans-

formation with Opaz. In this context, Opaz has launched, over the past years, a number of electronic services that have greatly contributed to facilitating investors' access to different services provided online without the need to visit the Opaz office in Muscat or Sezad's building in Duqm.

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

CMA suspends Guarantee Insurance Services



Times News Service

MUSCAT: A decision has been issued to suspend Guarantee Insurance Services Company from practising its licensed activity for four months for violating the Regulation of the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

CMA said in a statement, "The Capital Market Authority has issued a decision suspending Guarantee Insurance Services from carrying out the licensed activity for four months to adjust its situation according to the legal require-

ments for violating Article 22 of the Insurance Brokers Regulation which provides the following:

The insurance broker shall submit to the CMA audited annual balance sheet and financial statements within not more than 90 days from the end of the financial year.

CMA urges all insurance brokers to submit their audited financial statements to follow up on their financial positions to ensure they meet all the legal and technical obligations to provide adequate protection for all the parties dealing with the broker.

RENEWAL



bp Oman extends warehousing and material management contract with TruckOman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: bp Oman signed a four-year agreement with TruckOman extending its warehousing and material management contract.

The renewal of the contract reinforces bp's commitment to supporting the sustainable development of Oman's economy through advancing local business growth and overall economic productivity. bp Oman president, Yousuf Al Ojaili, commented: "The partnership over the past five years has been instrumental in growing TruckOman's knowledge and experience by thoroughly being integrated with bp's work process. Encouraging the development of Omani capabilities and supporting the businesses growth and overall economic productivity isn't only aligned with bp's aims but with the country's Vision 2040."

This integration has allowed an accelerated learning curve to support the transformation of TruckOman from a trucking and transportation company, into a full-service logistical company including warehousing and inventory management services.

The contract extension will

also allow the continued delivery of bp's services by adding various supply chain responsibilities such as inventory and stock management to TruckOman - in line with bp's policies.

The chairman of the board of TruckOman group commented: "TruckOman is indeed grateful for having the privilege of providing warehouse management services and for all the support it has received throughout this contract. This has enabled TruckOman to provide seamless and efficient services to the satisfaction of bp."

He also added: "TruckOman is also proud to note that 85 per cent of its staff employed on the contract are Omanis compared to 45 per cent at the start of the contract. The staff continue to receive online and offline training to develop their capabilities. TruckOman is proud of being the only company in Oman that has 305 staff as shareholders, 272 of whom are Omanis."

The contract was signed by Malik Al Hajri, bp's Middle East senior procurement manager and Chris Fidler, TruckOman's Chief Executive Officer, as representatives for both companies.



MARKET



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Gas prices soar as Russian pipeline shutdown hits markets

Gas prices in Europe jumped over 30 per cent while the Euro sunk below \$0.99 for the first time since December 2002

BERLIN: European gas prices shot up in early trading on Monday as markets reeled from Russia's move to halt deliveries on a major pipeline. The European benchmark gas contract soared over 30 per cent at the start of trading. Meanwhile, the Europe-wide STOXX 600 index fell 1.7 per cent in the first hour of trading while Germany's DAX index sank by 3.1 per cent. The latest market upheaval came after Russian gas giant Gazprom said on Friday that the Nord Stream 1 pipeline would remain shut indefinitely. Nord

Stream 1 was previously slated to reopen over the weekend. Gazprom said there were oil leaks in a turbine, and the pipeline would remain closed until it was repaired. The pipeline delivered gas from Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea.

Euro falls to 20-year low against US dollar
The Euro also took a hit on Monday, plunging to a 20-year low compared to the US dollar. At 0535 GMT on Monday, the Euro fell to 0.9884 US dollars, its lowest since December 2002. The sterling hit a new 2.5-year low at \$1.14445. "We can't have any confidence in the outlook for natural gas in Europe, and this is a negative for the euro. It heavily depends on Putin," Osamu Takashima, Citigroup Global Markets' chief foreign exchange strategist told Reuters news agency. The Eurozone's currency has weakened against the dollar since the beginning of 2022, affected by economic uncertainty amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine. On Monday, the yuan fell to a two-year low at 6.9543 per dollar.

Kremlin blames Europe for Nord Stream 1 shutdown
After Western sanctions following the war in Ukraine, the Kremlin has reduced or halted energy supplies to Europe, causing prices to soar. "Problems with gas supply arose because of the sanctions imposed on our country by Western states, including Germany and Britain," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. "There are no other reasons that lead to problems with supplies," he added. Peskov said that if sanctions were lifted, the repair work on the Nord Stream 1 pipeline could be completed easily and gas flows could resume. Germany and other EU member-states have accused Moscow of using gas as a political weapon amid the war in Ukraine. On Friday, EU Council President Charles Michel said Russia's move was "sadly no surprise." "Use of gas as a weapon will not change the resolve of the EU. We will accelerate our path towards energy independence. Our duty is to protect our citizens and support the freedom of Ukraine," he tweeted. -**rw**



EUROPEAN STOCK FUTURES

Shares slip, euro hits 20-year low on energy ills

SYDNEY: European stock futures slid on Monday while the euro took a fresh spill after Russia shut a major gas pipeline to Europe, leading some governments there to announce emergency measures to ease the pain of soaring energy prices. The euro lost 0.5 per cent to a two-decade low of \$0.9900 as markets priced in more risk of a European recession, while EURO STOXX 50 futures shed 3.0 per cent and FTSE futures 1.0 per cent, Reuters reports. Germany announced plans to spend 65 billion euros (\$64.7 billion) on shielding customers and businesses from rising costs, while Finland and Sweden offered liquidity guarantees to keep power companies open. Oil prices jumped along with the whole energy complex as a holiday in US markets made for thin trading conditions. News of more coronavirus lockdowns in China only added to the jittery mood, with blue chips (CSI300) down 0.6 per cent. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan eased 0.6 per cent, and Japan's Nikkei was off a fraction. Wall Street fared a bit better having already dropped late on



Friday, with S&P 500 futures edging up 0.2 per cent and Nasdaq futures 0.1 per cent. The energy crisis is an added complication for the European Central Bank (ECB) as it meets this week to consider how much to raise interest rates.

"Europe is faced with a dire energy outlook, with numerous anecdotes of firms cutting back production," said Tapas Strickland, head of market economics at NAB. "The ECB will undoubtedly decide to hike rates this week," he added. "Markets are close to fully pricing

in a 75bp hike after numerous ECB officials said they were leaning that way, though there is still likely to be a debate around 50 v 75." **Euro, Sterling struggle** Central banks in Canada and Australia are also expected to raise interest rates this week, while Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and several other policymakers will make appearances and are likely to sound hawkish on inflation. While the August US jobs report showed some welcome signs of cooling in the labour market, investors are still leaning toward a hike of 75 basis points from the Fed this month. The two-year US Treasury yield did fall almost 12 basis points on Friday and futures were trading flat on Monday amid general risk aversion. The shift to safety again benefited the US dollar, which hit another two-decade high on a basket of major currencies at 110.090. The dollar was holding at 140.33 yen, just short of Friday's 24-year top of 140.80. Sterling was struggling at \$1.1468, after diving as deep as \$1.1458 and levels last seen in March 2020 at the start of the

pandemic. A break of \$1.1412/13 would take it to depths not seen since 1985. "We now expect the EUR/USD and GBP/USD rates to reach \$0.90 and \$1.05 respectively next year as the economic slowdown and the terms of trade shock hitting the region take their toll," said Jonas Goltermann, a senior economist at Capital Economics. British foreign minister Liz Truss said on Sunday she would set out immediate action in her first week in power to tackle rising energy bills and increase energy supplies if she is, as expected, appointed prime minister on Monday. The strong dollar kept gold flat at \$1,711 an ounce. Oil prices were supported by expectations gas prices would leap in Europe later in the day. "Ultimately, Germany would need to cut natural gas consumption by 15 per cent to keep gas storage facilities from running empty," said analysts at ANZ. "Gas rationing looks very likely, as even at 95 per cent full, storage would only last 2.5 months." Brent climbed \$2.12 to \$95.15, while US crude rose \$1.88 to \$88.75 per barrel. -**rw**

BRIEFS

Saudi Arabia enhances development process in all sectors
RIYADH: Saudi newspapers highlighted in their editorials a number of issues in the local, regional and international arena. Al-Bilad newspaper reported in its editorial that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is continuously working on enhancing the development process of all sectors and services through a slew of initiatives and strategies. Such unremitting and unprecedented initiatives and strategies come in line with the goals of its ambitious vision 2030, the paper said. In this regard, the National Centre for Government Resources Systems (NCGRS) launched its comprehensive strategy (2022-2025), which is based on four main pillars, include raising the efficiency and effectiveness of the government agencies in managing their resources and managing financial and human resource systems and government procurement with flexibility and reliability, the paper added. -**SPA**

32nd Opec and non-Opec Ministerial Meet held via videoconference
RIYADH: The 32nd Opec and non-Opec Ministerial Meeting was held via videoconference on September 5. The Opec and Non-Opec Ministerial Meeting noted the adverse impact of volatility and the decline in liquidity on the current oil market and the need to support the market's stability and its efficient functioning. The meeting noted that higher volatility and increased uncertainties require continuous assessment of market conditions and readiness to make immediate adjustment to production in different forms, if needed, and that Opec+ has the commitment, the flexibility, and the means within the existing mechanisms of the Declaration of Cooperation to deal with these challenges and provide guidance to the market. The meeting decided to reaffirm the decision of the 10th Opec and non-Opec ministerial meeting on 12 April 2020 and further endorsed in subsequent meetings including the 19th Opec and non-Opec EC Ministerial meeting on the 18 July 2021. -**SPA**

FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INVESTORS

Foreign fund inflows in Indian stocks highest after 20 months in August

NEW DELHI: Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) have infused Rs 51,204 crore into the Indian equity segment in the month of August, their highest investments in 20 months, data from the National Securities Depository (NSDL) showed. Meanwhile, FPIs have turned net buyers in Indian equity markets for two consecutive months through August and helped domestic indices to stay buoyant. In July, they were the net buyers with a total purchase of equities worth Rs 4,989 crore, NSDL data showed. September 2021 was the last time when foreign investors were net buyers. So far this month - September, they have already invested Rs 1,963 crore, data from the depository showed. The recent return of foreign investments coupled with global inflation seeming to have plateaued helped Indian equity markets to rally during the past month or so. The recent rise in stock indices helped in recovering the entire losses the investors incurred in 2022. **Retail inflation** India's headline retail inflation fell to 6.71 per cent in July from 7.01 per cent in June, the lowest level in five months. In the meantime, retail inflation in the US too somewhat moderated, which improved buying sentiments amongst investors.



Meanwhile, FPIs have turned net buyers in Indian equity markets for two consecutive months through August

Coming to FPIs investments in India, till early July, they were selling equities in the Indian markets for nine-to-ten months on a trot due to various macroeconomic reasons.

Tightening of monetary policy in advanced economies including rising demand for dollar-denominated commodities, and strength in the US dollar had triggered a consistent outflow of funds from Indian markets. Investors typically prefer stable markets in times of high market uncertainty. Further, consistent depreciation of the rupee as well as depleting Indian foreign exchange reserves too had a bearing on the weak market sentiments. For the record, FPIs have pulled out overall Rs 159,202 crore worth of equities so far in 2022, NSDL data showed. -**ANI**



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NEED TO DISCONNECT FROM WORK? HERE ARE 5 WAYS TO RECHARGE AND AVOID BURNOUT



If you feel like the stress of work is making it difficult to relax and unwind, you are not alone. Earlier this year, the American Psychological Association found that 79% of Americans experienced work-related stress leading to emotional exhaustion and physical fatigue.

Research shows that prioritising wellness-minded activities, such as taking a vacation for yourself or your family or taking up a new fitness or meditation routine, can help avoid burnout. While finding the energy to carve out some “me time” may seem challenging, the effort can make a difference in the long run. In fact, a Hilton survey found that 41% of Americans report experiencing burnout when they go too long without a vacation and agree that relaxation begins as soon as they turn off their “out of office” email response.

Feeling a bit worn down? Here are five ways to disconnect, rejuvenate and recharge. No matter which of these five tips you take, invest in your well-being and don’t let work become your whole life.

1 RETHINK THE 9-TO-5 GRIND

For those who work from home, consider taking a break from your home office to work in a more relaxing environment. Integrate fun into your workday by taking your laptop to a park or setting up a home office on your deck or patio. Or, for those who have days filled with back-to-back in-person connections, consider scheduling a personal break to take a moment to disconnect and recharge.

If flexibility allows you to work from anywhere, try a working vacation. Many hotels have adapted to remote working guests, offering solutions on how to both work and vacation in appealing locations.

2 PLAN REGULAR WEEKEND GETAWAYS

If you cannot work remotely from an exotic locale, consider planning weekend getaways throughout the year, creating a sense of anticipation and excitement in between work projects and responsibilities. Whenever possible, it’s also best to plan them ahead of time because just the act of planning a trip can help to alleviate stress and boost happiness.

You don’t have to travel far to reap the rewards of travel. Whether using a full tank of gas to get to a new destination or simply getting out of your everyday routine by booking a getaway to a neighbouring town, new surroundings will have you breathing a sigh of relief. Some hotels are catering to guests needing a change of pace by providing complimentary bicycles for exploring, packing picnics for you to take to a park or offering cooking classes, wine tastings and cultural programmes so you can learn something new.

3 UNPLUG

Sometimes a weekend just won’t do and you need to disconnect to combat burnout completely. To reduce stress, anger and depression, and improve sleep, consider turning off your phone, unplugging your TV and devices and treating yourself to a digital detox. For a true detox that will juice up your internal batteries, seek out special digital programmes.

4 THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

It’s no secret that mind and body wellness treatments can do wonders. Whether practising yoga or indulging in a massage, the proven stress-reduction of these activities has resulted in companies adding wellness programs to ward off employee burnout.

Create a quiet space at home and practice a form of wellness that soothes and calms, or turn to local outlets like yoga studios and spas. Incorporate wellness into a getaway and double down on the transformative effects by staying at properties with a boundary-free wellness concept.

5 TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF PLANNING

According to the Hilton survey, 85% of people agree that booking an all-inclusive resort is the best way to reduce the stress of planning and more than one-third feel mentally refreshed on vacation when they don’t have to worry about leaving the resort during their stay. So, when all else fails, book that all-inclusive or extended trip. Take less time thinking about it and more time traveling to a new country, trying a new culture’s cuisine or experiencing new, outside-of-the-box wellness activities.

IN PICTURES



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Highlight of Formula 1 Dutch Grand Prix
Racers compete during the Formula 1 Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort Circuit, the Netherlands.
— Xinhua



Rock in Rio 2022
A band performs on stage at the Rock in Rio 2022 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
— Xinhua



MX2 World Junior Motocross World Championship
A racer competes during the MX2 World Junior Motocross World Championship in Afyon, Türkiye.
— Xinhua



Vancouver International Flamenco Festival
A flamenco dancer performs on stage during the Vancouver International Flamenco Festival at Granville Island in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The festival runs from September 3 to September 25.
— Xinhua



24 killed, 115 injured in floods across Pakistan in 24 hours
Flood-affected people are seen in front of damaged buildings after flash flood in northwest Pakistan's Swat district. At least 24 people were killed and 115 others were injured in heavy monsoon rain-triggered flash floods in the last 24 hours in Pakistan, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said.
— Xinhua



7th Eastern Economic Forum kicks off in Russia's Vladivostok
People attend the 7th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok, Russia. The forum kicked off in Russia's far eastern city of Vladivostok.
— Xinhua



21 killed in 6.8-magnitude quake in China's Sichuan
Fallen rocks are seen on a road as forest firefighters head to Luding County in southwest China's Sichuan Province.
— Xinhua



Tamannaah Bhatia at the trailer launch of her upcoming film 'Babli Bouncer'
Actress Tamannaah Bhatia poses for a picture at the trailer launch of her upcoming film 'Babli Bouncer', at Bandra, in Mumbai.
— ANI Photo



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ROUND-UP



BankDhofar meets Al Riadah Priority Banking customers

During the events, BankDhofar presented a brief of the services and products provided to the priority banking customers and then listened to the detailed inputs of their experience with the bank

MUSCAT: In line with its constant endeavour to promote positive communication and retain a sustainable relationship with its customers, BankDhofar organised Al Riadah Meet events, where the bank met Priority Banking customers across the Sultanate. The gatherings were held in the presence of BankDhofar's executive management members.



Elaborating on that, Amjad Iqbal Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar, noted: "At BankDhofar, our customers' satisfaction lays at the core of our operations. Our products, services and financial solutions are well designed to meet their daily need and exceed their expectations, and we believe that getting real-time feedback helps us enhance the overall customer experience. Thus, we organised Al Riadah Meet to support our approach. We were glad to meet our priority banking customers and get their valuable feedback."

"We understand the importance of listening to our customers, connecting with them and accepting their feedback. Al Riadah Meet translates our customer-centric approach, through which we were able to closely understand the needs of our priority banking customers and their expectations. Their feedback was valuable and our team will continue providing the best services and banking experience to them," Hind Abdul Malik Al Sabbag, AGM & Head of Premier Banking at BankDhofar added. Al Riadah Meet was conducted

across the Sultanate, including Al Dhahirah and Al Dakhiliya Governorates, Al Sharqiya and Al Wusta Governorates, Al Batinah South Governorate, and Dhofar Governorate. During the events, BankDhofar presented a brief of the services and products provided to the priority banking customers and then listened to the detailed inputs of their experience with the bank. Al Riadah Priority Banking provides a unique range of banking products and services that are tailored to suit the unique lifestyle of priority customers, ranging

from personalized cheque book, exclusive Al Riadah cards, including: Visa Infinite Debit Card, Visa Signature Debit Card, Visa Infinite Credit Card, and MasterCard Platinum Credit Card. Customers can enjoy exceptional times at restaurants, and shops, as well as procurement protection, extended warranty, access to airport lounges around the world, travel insurance for cardholders and their families, in addition to other exclusive services. BankDhofar has tailor-made financing solutions to meet the needs of its priority banking cus-

tomers with low insurance fees and simple and fast procedures. The Bank also provides deposit accounts at competitive interest rates and low insurance fees. With Rewards Programme, which is an exclusive and comprehensive loyalty program, credit card holders, may enjoy a variety of privileges and benefits. Reward points can be viewed through BankDhofar's flagship Mobile Banking Application. The App enables customers to conduct their banking transactions at their convenience 24/7. The award-winning App offers a wide range of exclusive services including credit card Top-up for secured payment during travel, instant transfer to any bank in the Sultanate, cardless cash, mobile top-up for all telecom providers in the Sultanate, increasing withdrawal limit to OMR 5,000, instant international money transfer service with Western Union, among other services. BankDhofar has dedicated Al Riadah counters in most BankDhofar branches and established specialised Al Riadah centres that provide a private and unique experience in Muscat (Muscat Grand Mall, Mall of Muscat, and Royal Opera House), Batinah - North (Sohar), and Dhofar (Salalah).

BILINGUAL INSTITUTION

Al Najah Private School announces admission for 2022-23 academic year

MUSCAT: Al Najah Private School, the first private school in the Sultanate that offers a comprehensive learning experience, has begun admission for students from Kindergarten to grade 4 for the 2022-23 academic year. As a bilingual institution, Al Najah Private School offers a world-class education in both Arabic and English languages for children of various nationalities. Established in 1978, the Ruwi-based school provides quality education with the strong backing of excellent teachers from various nationalities trusted by thousands of parents for several decades, has upgraded facilities to restore its previous glory. The school, which focuses on developing each student in line with their strength, talent, and inclination, provides state-of-the-art facilities, including indoor playing facilities that are more than just a breakout area. Quality playground facilities engage tiny tots and make school more enjoyable, boosting attention spans and general student satisfaction in the process. Its playground equipment offers the perfect combination of sensory, physical, cognitive-creative, and social stimuli, making it versatile and useful in education as well as play. As a purpose-built school, the



tion in the process. Its playground equipment offers the perfect combination of sensory, physical, cognitive-creative, and social stimuli, making it versatile and useful in education as well as play. As a purpose-built school, the

Al Najah School facilities provide the best classrooms, capping the number of students per classroom, computer room, as well as facilities for extracurricular activities. As part of an initiative to foster the creativity and mental and

physical skills of young minds, the school offers extracurricular activities as well. Established by the late Tawfiq Aziz, one of the prominent icons in the country's education field in the second half of the 20th century—Al Najah Private School has strong backing from highly qualified teaching staff. The school prepares its children for a complex, challenging, and competitive future. As the first private school, Al Najah has touched the lives of generations of children for several decades, many of whom have become successful professionals within the country or renowned figures in Omani society. Before 2020, the premier school that gained experience over the years was offering education for children at various levels starting from Kindergarten to Grade 10. Al Najah School has enjoyed massive success in previous years due to its focus on quality education and has become the springboard to establishing Al Tajhzeer Al Ilmi Private School in Ghubrah to offer education to all levels.

PREMIUM CROSSOVER

Crossover INFINITI QX55 hits right notes combining comfort, technology and style

MUSCAT: Bold, stylish and tech-savvy, the premium INFINITI QX55 is an impressive crossover coupe from every angle. Enjoying a luxury status, INFINITI QX55 hits right notes, combining comfort, innovative technology and trend-setting style in equal measure. From a provocative design perspective, the INFINITI QX55 is the spiritual successor to brand's iconic FX series. The vehicle's striking roofline and unapologetic shape are in tune with equally courageous buyers. A senior spokesperson at INFINITI Oman said, "The soul of the iconic INFINITI FX lives on in the QX55, bringing an eye-catching crossover coupe silhouette together with performance-inspired details to create something truly, unapologetically individual. The INFINITI QX55 has an entirely new shape with more stylish details and a modernised interior." 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 arriv-



al in style. The elegant and flowing lines of the 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 sig-

nature. 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, InTouchTM infotainment system with Apple CarPlay® and Android AutoTM 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-an-

iline 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. 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.

LUXURIOUS



Changan CS85 crossover now easy to own at low EMI

MUSCAT: Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE) is offering an EMI starting from OMR 156 for eight years on the 2023 Changan CS85 Coupe a sporty crossover-designed SUV which reflects one's personality. A manufacturer's warranty of 6 years or 250,000km (whichever is earlier) is available on the model. Redefining the definition of smoothness, the CS85 coupe SUV is outfitted with a turbocharged direct injection engine that produces 224 HP and a maximal torque of 360 Nm, parted with 8-speed automatic transmission, while accelerating from zero to 100 km/h in just 7.5 seconds and four driving modes. Changan CS85 Coupe with elegant design and characteristic dexterity is now available at low EMI 156 for 8-year loan tenure through Bank Muscat auto loan division; subject to finance approval from the bank only; terms and conditions apply. Changan CS85 premium coupe SUV, the model stands out from its counterparts through its lustrous appearance, focus on high quality and application of the latest technology with radar features. A spokesperson for Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE) said, "We are pleased to extend special EMI and warranty benefits on 2023 model Changan CS85, the luxurious crossover coupe that combines the dynamic handling of an SUV with the sporty aesthetics of a coupe to give owners the best of both worlds. Style and fashion will be the new constant in your life once you own this sporty coupe. Blue Core Powertrain Technology based on the principles of power, clean and quiet provides highly efficient and energy saving performance." With all the vehicle's key parts originating from the world's leading suppliers, the CS85 Coupe offers top-grade enjoyment from every angle - visual, tactile, auditory and safety -

coming together to create the perfect driving experience. With its wide body and muscular shoulders accentuated by horizontal contours that sweep through the sides, the Changan CS85 makes a sporty style statement. The sleek exterior styling is matched by a luxurious interior or crafted using high-quality materials and supported by hi-tech features. Equipped with innovative driving technologies and radar-based features, the Changan CS85 keeps owners at ease with everything under control when on the road. It has features including 360° HD Camera, blind area monitoring, forward collision warning, adaptive cruise control, and lane departure warning. 19" Alloy Wheels, LED Headlamps with LED DRLs, Auto Headlamps, Follow me Home Function, Matrix Fog Lamps, Roof Rails, Quad Exhaust Pipes in Chrome, Panoramic Sunroof, Electrically Adjustable, Folding ORVMs with Heating and Memory. The overall interior style of Changan's CS85 coupe is dynamic, elegant, and luxurious. The interior decoration of the car applies double real stitching lines. It has sport seats in leather, 8-way and 4-way electrically adjustable driver and co-driver seat, seat heating and ventilation, lumbar support, seat courtesy function, 64 colour ambient lighting, illuminated door sills, parking simulation display, drive select mode (sports, economy, snow) and rear AC vents. Changan CS85 has advanced safety features including ESP (ABS +TCS) + EBD, Hill Hold Assist, Electronic Parking Brake Hill Descent Control, Front, Side & Curtain Airbags, Front & Rear Sensors with Screen & IC Display, Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Departure Warning, 360° HD Camera, Forward Collision Warning, Automatic Emergency Braking, Blind Area Monitoring, Lane Change Assist, Reverse Lateral Warning and TPMS.



ROUND-UP



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Bank Muscat event highlights importance of digitalisation

Bank officials discussed the latest cutting-edge services offered to government institutions and corporates that offer the convenience of banking from anywhere and at any time



MUSCAT: In line with its role in strengthening national development and digitalisation of the economy as part of the ambitious Oman Vision 2040, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, organised an event in Salalah which focused on the importance of digital transformation.

The event was aimed at enhancing the partnership with government institutions and corporates, especially those in Dhofar, by offering a platform to discuss new developments in corporate banking. As the pioneer of many of the latest financial and banking trends in the Sultanate, Bank Muscat is continuously developing new digital services that help enhance security and ease of

banking for its government and corporate customers benefitting them immensely from the digitalisation of various banking services and facilities.

Speaking on the occasion, Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "As a pioneer of Corporate Banking in the country, Bank Muscat has always been a pillar that supports the country's needs across both the government and private sectors."

"We are very happy to meet our valued customers in Dhofar today following our earlier meeting with customers in Sohar. Over the last few years, the bank has been working hard to promote digital banking by constantly adding new fea-

tures and services to strengthen the customer experience as much as possible. Over the last 40 years, we are delighted to have played a key role in facilitating the growth and development of our Government and Corporate partners across different sectors."

She added, "Going ahead, the current shift to digital will only gather more pace and play a key role in enabling our customers to transact securely and conveniently from anywhere and at any time. We are delighted to note that our government, institutional and corporate customers have been wholeheartedly shifting over highly-efficient digital banking over the past two years. Bank Muscat is glad to further popularise the

importance of the ongoing digital transformation by holding more such events so that we can reach out to the maximum number of our Government and Corporate partners as possible."

Eng. Nasser Khalifa Nasser Al Kindi from the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology gave an interesting presentation about the Government's Digital Transformation Programme 2021-2025 during the event. This was followed by a Transaction Banking presentation by Abbas Fayadh Al Lawati on the bank's digital facilities which have been developed for government and corporates across different sectors. A presentation was also made by Sakina Naseeb

Al Shahi from Bank Muscat on safeguarding against fraud.

Wafa Ibrahim Al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager - Transaction & Government Banking, Bank Muscat, thanked the corporate guests at the event and expressed appreciation for their strong confidence in the bank's services and facilities. She pointed out how Bank Muscat has been spearheading a massive digital transformation in the banking and financial services sector in the Sultanate of Oman. The bank provides a complete range of technology-driven digital offerings, which cater to government entities, corporates and SMEs and enable institutions to become future-ready, agile and digitally mature organisations. She concluded

by adding that Bank Muscat would continue to support corporates and government entities to make the best use of digitalisation to transform and supercharge their business environment."

Digitalisation is in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and will further enhance financial inclusion in Oman. The bank's customers are at present benefitting immensely from the latest devices, solutions and technological advances made available to them through the implementation of cutting-edge technology. Bank Muscat has announced a number of plans to keep introducing new digital services and features that further enhance banking convenience and security in the future too.

PROMOTION



Own Lexus RX with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Lexus enthusiasts wishing to own the RX can look forward to exclusive benefits like service 3 years/30,000km (whichever is earlier) and 1 year free registration. (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

Lexus RX is an SUV that has pioneered advanced technology like a unique combination of petrol engine and hybrid electric motor.

It is available in 5 & 7-seater configurations. The Lexus RX embraces Lexus' reputation for engaging performance.

The RX is available with two engine options. The RX 350 is equipped with a 3.5-litre V6 petrol engine, which produces 296 HP and 37.7 Kg.M of torque and is paired to an eight-speed automatic transmission. And the RX 450h hybrid variant is equipped with a

3.5-litre V6 petrol engine and two electric motors and produces a combined system output of 308 hp. The RX Hybrid is available with a hybrid battery warranty of 8 years or 160,000km, whichever is earlier.

To get the best out of every drive, the Lexus RX 450h can be switched to EV drive mode to reduce noise while driving in residential areas and to reduce exhaust gas in indoor parking lots and garages or through a combination of its petrol engine and two electric motors, depending on the vehicle's speed and customer's driving behaviour. The batteries in the hybrid electric drivetrain are automatically charged by either the petrol engine or when braking and decelerating, eliminating the need to plug in a power cord.

A host of advanced technologies ensure the RX 450h drives like any other conventional vehicle, while not requiring special fuel.

Inside the RX a 12.3-inch high-resolution, split-screen Lexus Multimedia System touchscreen positioned closer to the driver, offers control of both audio and climate systems. The touchscreen also includes a rear-view camera to assist the driver in reversing. Furthermore, the Lexus RX's advanced smartphone integration offers access to in-car connected technology applications from Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto, together with a designated phone storage area and USB ports to ensure occupants always remain connected on the go.

As with any Lexus vehicle, safety is a top priority for the new RX.

Drivers can enjoy complete peace of mind thanks to the Lexus Safety System+, an advanced safety technology package that includes Pre-Collision System (PCS), all-speed range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC), Lane Tracing Alert (LTA), and Adaptive High-beam System (AHS).

The vehicle also includes a comprehensive array of safety features designed to protect its occupants, such as SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Panoramic View Monitor (PVM), Blind Spot Monitor (BSM), Parking Support Alert (PKSA), Rear Cross-Traffic Alert (RCTA) and Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), among many others.

APPOINTMENT

Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair appoints new general manager

MUSCAT: Ozge Yilmaz has been named as the new General Manager of Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair. Located at the heart of Al Khuwair in the city of Muscat, the 232-room Hilton property opened in February 2019 and is owned by Muscat National Development and Investment Company (ASAA).

Ozge will lead the team in all aspects of hotel operations, from marketing and hotel administration to guest services and satisfaction. "We are proud to have someone of Ozge's calibre and industry experience leading the team," said Mahmoud Mokhtar, Regional General Manager Focused Service Hotels, Middle East, Hilton.

"I'm delighted to join the Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair family, working with a dynamic and hardworking team that strives every day to bring to life meaningful experiences, upholding the brand's bright-hearted service culture and standards. My ultimate goal is to ensure this hotel remains a top choice for both leisure and business travellers visiting the area by delivering outstanding customer service and amenities," said Ozge.

Ozge has more than 20 years of hospitality experience, much of it spent working across Hilton hotels in Turkey in commercial roles. Before joining Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair, she was working as General Manager



of Hampton by Hilton Istanbul Kayasehir. She is also an active member of the community and volunteered at local organisations in Turkey.

Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair is part of Hilton Honors®, the award-winning guest loyalty program for Hilton's 18 world-class brands.

Hilton Honors members who book directly through preferred Hilton channels have access to instant benefits, including a flexible payment slider that allows members to choose nearly any combination of Points and money to book a stay, an exclusive member discount that can't be found anywhere else, and free standard WiFi. Members also have access to contactless technology exclusively through the industry-leading Hilton Honors mobile app, where Hilton Honors members can check in, choose their room and access their room using a digital key.



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