LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN

PDO ORGANISES DIALOGUE ON TOURISM FOR SMEs IN DHOFAR

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) has organised the second edition of a business dialogue titled 'Tourism Opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Dhofar'. >A5

HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREETS PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his best wishes to President Zelensky and the people of Ukraine. - ONA

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BILATERAL RELATIONS

Oman, Turkey hold talks on joint investments in oil, gas and related industries

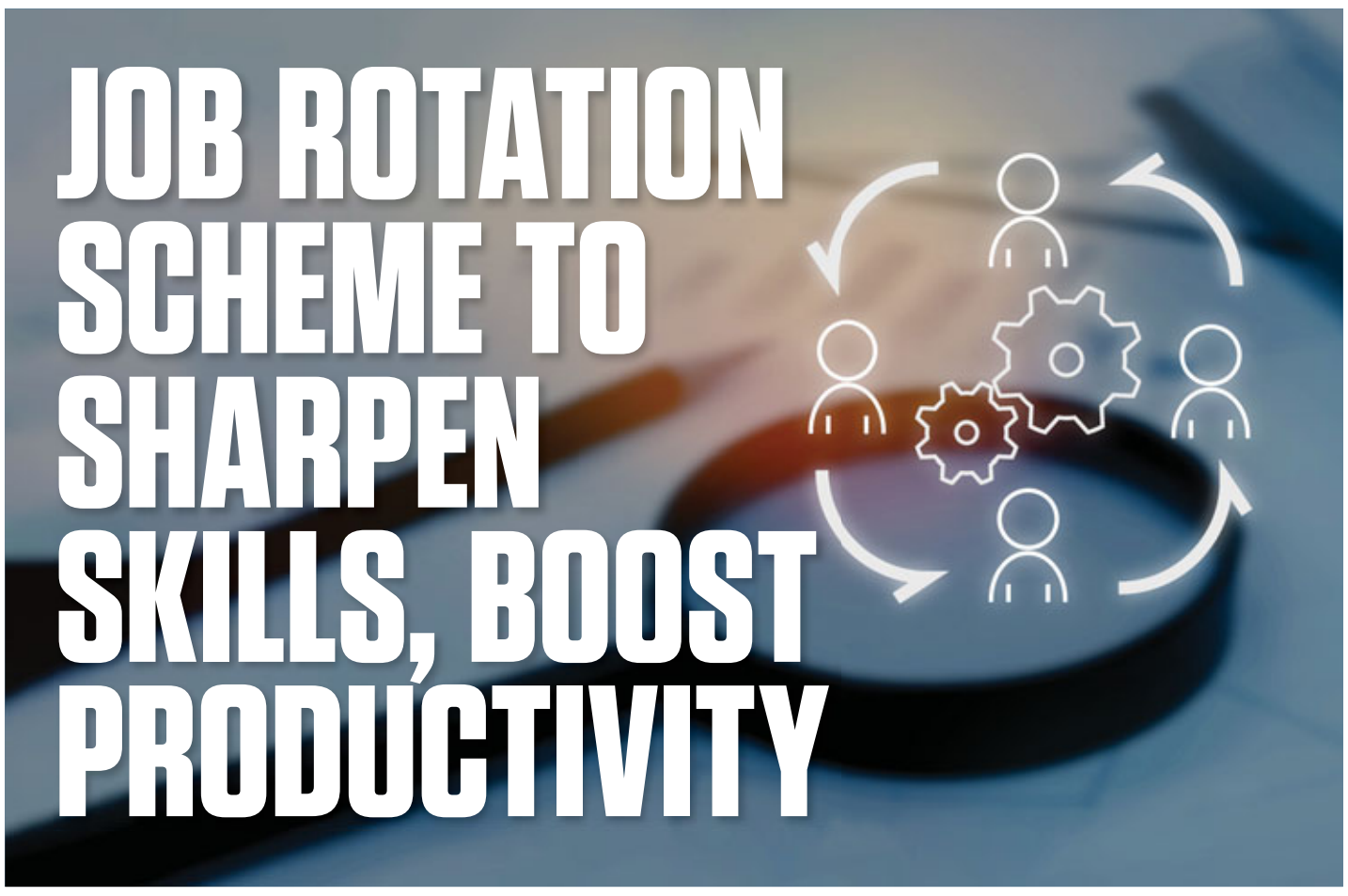
MUSCAT: Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, received on Tuesday Fatih Donmez, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources in the Republic of Turkey, and his accompanying delegation.

Donmez is currently visiting Oman to hold talks about ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides discussed different aspects of cooperation in the field of energy and joint investments, notably in the fields of oil and gas, renewable energy and hydrogen, and related industries.

— ONA

JOB ROTATION SCHEME TO SHARPEN SKILLS, BOOST PRODUCTIVITY



The initiative seeks to help employees in acquiring knowledge and additional competencies

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A job rotation project, initiated by the Ministry of Labour, will help employees improve their skills and diversify their knowledge.

To implement this, the Ministry of Labour organised a meeting of the directors of the Department of Job Rotation Project for all units of the state apparatus.

The meeting aimed to acquaint the participants with the job rotation initiative in all government departments.

Khalsa bint Habib Al Farsi, Director of the department of the job rotation initiative, made a video presentation, which highlighted the mechanisms for transfer and rotation of employees among government units in accordance with the controls and terms of job rotation.

She also pointed out that job rotation is one of the methods of career development aimed at improvement of skills and diversification of experience of employees.

It also aims to prepare the employees to acquire knowledge and additional competencies that qualify the employee develop his/her field of work.

Experts said job rotation system helps the employees to improve their skills and knowledge depending on their respective locations and functions, leading to the improvement in performance and thus helping the society.

Last month, the Ministry of Labour held its first meeting on job rotation policy.

In the meeting, the Ministry of Labour reviewed and assessed the application of job rotation system in government departments.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development.

In that meeting, Shaikh Mohammed bin Al Waleed Al Hinai, head of the central team tasked with the initiative, pointed out that job rotation brings about many benefits to society like upgrading the quality of government services through administrative reforms and improvement in human capital efficiency.

More than 1,500 SMEs apply for jobseeker employment-based training initiatives

MUSCAT: As many as 1,511 applications were submitted by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to benefit from an initiative to employ jobseekers through on-the-job training.

The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), which launched the initiative in favour of both SMEs and jobseekers, approved 627 applications and is studying 884 ones.

ASMED urged interested SMEs to come forward and register for the initiative—the second of its kind—which lends support to the receiving side as follows: 100 percent payment of jobseekers' salaries for a period of one year, with Bachelor's degree holders getting OMR500 a month, holders of university diplomas OMR400 a month and General Education Diploma (GED) holders OMR300 a month.

The initiative seeks to empower young, qualified Omani youths to get on-the-job specialist training and enable them for further employment opportunities.

— ONA

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Pacts inked to serve people with disabilities

1 The Ministry of Social Development on Tuesday signed four agreements with private sector establishments within the framework of their social responsibility initiatives. The agreements will serve people with disabilities. >A2

WORLD

Fauci to step down in December

2 Dr. Anthony Fauci, the face of United States COVID response, announced on Monday that he would step down from his United States government posts in December. >A6

MARKET

Credit extended by banks in Oman rises

3 The total outstanding credit extended by Other Depository Corporations, consisting of conventional and Islamic banks in Oman, rose by 4.1% to reach OMR28.4 billion at the end of June 2022. >B1

INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

Five-day Jabal Al Akhdar Tourism Festival begins

AL JABAL AL AKHDAR: In a first of its kind, a five-day Al Jabal Al Akhdar Tourism Festival kicked off on Tuesday.

The extravaganza is organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in cooperation with the Office of Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, Wali Office at Al Jabal Al Akhdar and 'Oman From Horseback Team'.

The five-day festival began with a mountain parade on horseback, which started from Alila Jabal Akhdar. The cavalcade passed through the Municipality Park and proceeded along mountain passages onwards till camping sites. The 50-km march was conducted in two stages by 17 horse riders from Oman and abroad.

Sheikh Ali Mohammed Al Busaidi, Acting Wali of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, who was the chief guest at the opening ceremony, said that Al Jabal Al Akhdar is the first tourism event of its kind. He expressed his appreciation for efforts exerted to organize the event. He hoped that it would become an annual pageant peculiar to the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar.

Haitham Mohammed Al Ghassani, Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that Al Jabal Al Akhdar Tourism Festival is a link in a series of activities being implemented by the ministry this year. "The series aims at enriching tourist destinations and highlighting domestic content, including key landmarks of tourism attraction in the Sultanate of Oman," said Al Ghassani.

Al Jabal Al Akhdar Tourism Festival comprises a diverse set of entertainment and tourism programmes and activities that appeal to young people and adults. It showcases the unique tourism features of Al Jabal Al Akhdar and the experiences that a visitor to Al Jabal Al Akhdar could enjoy, Al Ghassani noted. He added that the event explores promotional aspects and displays innovative initiatives to motivate domestic tourism and attract different segments of visitors. >A2

OMAN

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PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:14pm
Asr	3:41pm
Maghrib	6:38pm
Isha	7:51pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:28am

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ministry signs four pacts to serve people with disabilities

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development on Tuesday signed four agreements with private sector establishments within the framework of their social responsibility initiatives. The agreements will serve people with disabilities.

First agreement

The first agreement included providing maintenance services for the buildings of Al Aman Rehabilitation Centre of the Directorate General for People with Disabilities Affairs.

Second agreement

The second agreement deals with implementing training programmes in the companies for people with disabilities who are enrolled in the Ministry of Social Development's Centre of Evaluation and Professional Training.

The two agreements were signed by Sheikh Rashid Ahmed Al Shamsi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development, Abdulamalik Abdulkarim Al Balushi, Chief People Officer of Asyad Group and Eng. Abdulaziz Said Al Wahaibi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of National Construction Line Company.

Training programmes

The third and fourth agreements deal with implementing training programmes for people with disabilities who are enrolled in the Centre of Evaluation and Professional Training of the Ministry of Social Development.

Those agreements were signed by Hamoud Mardad Al Shabibi, Director General of People with Disabilities Affairs, Ibrahim Ali Awlad Thani, Head of Human Resources at Al Shanfri Trading and Furniture Company and Abdulnasser Ali Al Kharousi from Al Ginan Al Khadra Nursery. – ONA

TOURISM FESTIVAL

< FROM A1

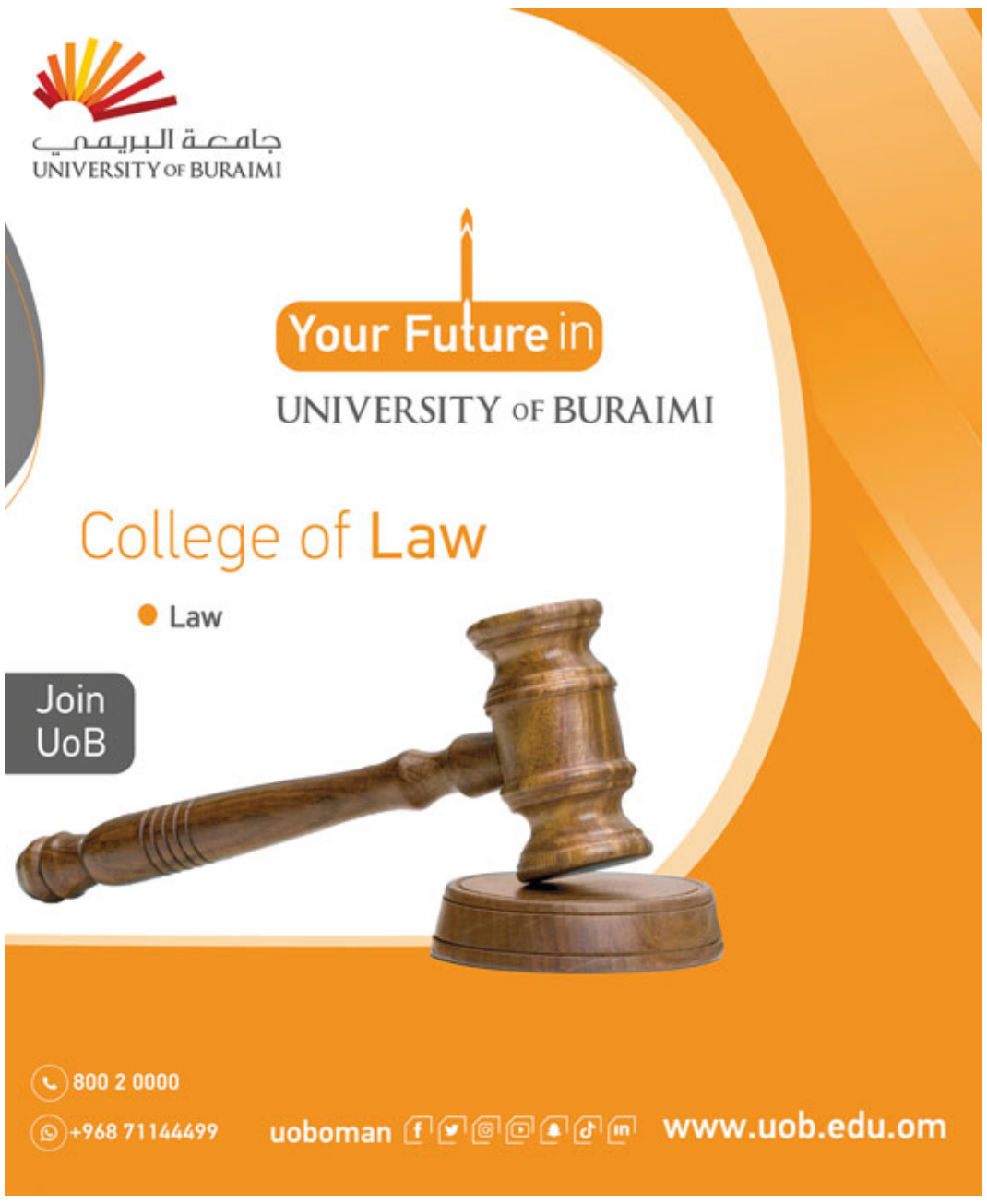
Active participation of both public and private sectors

Activities of special significance in Al Jabal Al Akhdar Tourism Festival include promoting the pomegranate season and its importance to the local community. The festival sees the active participation of both public and private sectors.

Al Jabal Al Akhdar Tourism Festival is undertaken by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism—in cooperation with government and private establishments—as a measure to stimulate tourism development in line with Oman Vision 2040 goals.

These include enhancing social welfare and bringing about balanced economic development in the country's governorates.

The festival site is perched at a height of 3,000 metres above sea level. – ONA



OMAN'S CONTEMPLATION AND CREATIVITY AN INSPIRATION FOR LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Khalid Al Mawali

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An Omani national has drawn inspiration from the sense of contemplation and creativity provided by the wonderful landscapes of his country to take up photography.

Khalid Al Mawali finds that alongside Oman's natural wonders in the form of its diverse terrain and natural beauty, are many historic legacies and traditions that exist even today.

"Opportunities are always present in photography...people's lives always embody the most beautiful pictures," he said. "What excites me when it comes to taking good photos are documenting people's lives."

So fond and passionate is he about the camera that Khalid has become a full-time photographer, and is working on publishing a book featuring his best works, as well as an exhibition to showcase his work to the public.

"Yes, I am thinking of publishing a book in the near future," he said. "Oman is after all beautiful in every sense of the world. Everything here invites you towards contemplation and creativity. Nature, people, and life constitute wonderful memories that deserve to be remembered."

Specialising in photos that show the emotions and history of people's lives and traditions, Khalid also has some advice to share with others who want to take up photography.

"A photographer should be prepared and always ready to take a good picture, because the picture is a special and unique moment that cannot always be repeated."

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

Story on the Producer Price index in Oman

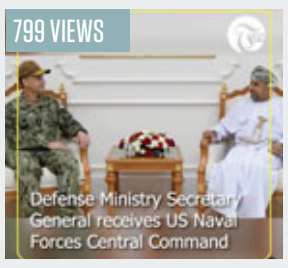
A story on the Producer Price index in Oman reached 24,104 people and had 481 link clicks on Facebook.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

Midday Update video

The Midday Update video had 878 views and reached 2,300 people on Facebook.

MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM



The Morning Minute video

The Morning Minute video on Defence Ministry Secretary General receives US Naval Forces Central Command Chief had 799 views and 41 likes on Instagram.

E-PLATFORMS

Self-learning and e-training initiatives inaugurated

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA) has inaugurated human resources initiatives to achieve various goals, including e-training and self-learning.

The Authority advances such initiatives to reinforce the culture of learning, provide ongoing development at low cost and furnish a training environment that is rich in educational resources, supervised by experts and specialists and mounted on local and international e-platforms.

Training dashboard

The inaugural ceremony included a training dashboard that focuses on converting training data into information, statistics and reports.

Interactive use

The process offers a feature of interactive use, depending on algorithms, and utilises business intelligence to enable decision-making and determine training approaches.

The ceremony also included the induction of a Professional Certificates project that lends support to holders by providing them with updates in their respective areas of specialisation.

Held under the auspices of Sayyid Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, Human Resources Development Undersecretary at the Ministry of Labour, the opening ceremony touched on practices of human development in the governorates of A'Dhahirah, North A'Sharqiyah and North Al Batinah.

— ONA

NIZWA FORT

NIZWA'S MAIN ATTRACTION

NIZWA FORT was recently ranked first in terms of the number of visitors among the castles of the Sultanate. One of the main attractions of the city, Nizwa Fort, an impressive construct under whose shadow the major part of old Nizwa lies. In the olden days, it served as a bastion for noblemen and peasants alike to take shelter from raiders and bandits who attempted to plunder the countryside.

The main building of the fort – built in a near-perfect circle – was famed for its impressive battery of cannons, which had been installed to ward off the enemy, doing so by not just thinning their numbers, but dampening their morale as well. The fort also contained a barracks to house a permanently stationed garrison, as well as an arsenal where weapons were stored, should they be needed.

Today, the fort has been painstakingly restored to its former glory, with those who've overseen its renovation ensuring that none of the history of Nizwa has been lost, while putting up many installations that tell the tale of the fort and the city that grew around it, in the form of videos, pictographs and even artefacts from eras gone by.

According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "Nizwa Fort was built in the middle of the 17th century. The fort, which took 12 years to build, is linked with a castle by means of intricate corridors. Near the fort and castle is the traditional Nizwa market famous for its artefacts."

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PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT OMAN

Dialogue on tourism organised

SALALAH: Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) has organised the second edition of a business dialogue titled 'Tourism Opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in Dhofar'.

The opening session was held under the auspices of Halima Rashid Al Zar'ee, Chairperson of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED).

The session discussed promising sectors available for SMEs in the Governorate of Dhofar, challenges and incentives aimed at empowering SMEs, entrepreneurs and investors. It covered scopes for funding and the extent to which the SMEs are ready to take up ventures.

The session also touched on opportunities that may constitute projects for SMEs in sectors of foodstuff, adventure tourism, ecotourism, health tourism, housing, transport and others. – ONA

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AL BATINAH POWER COMPANY SAOG
P.O. Box 39, P.C 103, Bareeq Al Shatti, Sultanate of Oman,
albatinahpower.com

UNCLAIMED DIVIDENDS

Al Batinah Power Company SAOG hereby informs its respected shareholders that Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC (MCDC) has deposited the unclaimed dividends whose cutoff date was 01 December 2021 with Capital Market Authority (investors' trust funds). The Shareholders who have still not claimed their dividends are requested to approach MCDC, and submit their identity card or passport along with the supportive documents to prove their rights.

- A copy of claim form can be obtained from the below website: **http://www.mcd.gov.om/**
- For more information on the claim procedures, kindly contact the concerned officials at **MCDC at 24822237.**

SULTANATE OF OMAN

TENDER NOTICE

The Tenders committee of Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender: -

Tender no.	Description	Tender documents price (R.O)	Class	Last date for collection of documents	Last date for Submission of documents
476/2022/ MAFWR/HQ-55	Supply of diagnostic materials for the Central Laboratory of Health for 2022	25/-	Specialized	Sunday 11/9/2022	Thursday 29/9/2022

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: **https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om** against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, And the bidders can contact the Esnad technical support team at the number listed below to find out how to request electronic guarantees from local banks.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: **+96824402200 or etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om.**

TENDERS COMMOTTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

AL SUWADI POWER COMPANY SAOG
P.O. Box: 39, P.C. 103, Bareeq Al Shatti,
Sultanate of Oman,
alsuwadipower.com

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Al Suwadi Power Company SAOG hereby informs its respected shareholders that Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC (MCDC) has deposited the unclaimed dividends whose cutoff date was 02 December 2021 with Capital Market Authority (investors' trust funds). The Shareholders who have still not claimed their dividends are requested to approach MCDC, and submit their identity card or passport along with the supportive documents to prove their rights.

- A copy of claim form can be obtained from the below **website: http://www.mcd.gov.om/**
- For more information on the claim procedures, kindly contact the concerned officials at **MCDC at 24822237.**

WORLD

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EXPLOSIVES RECOVERED

Swedish police find bomb at Stockholm festival

STOCKHOLM: Police in Sweden on Monday said they had recovered a bag that contained explosives in central Stockholm.

The explosive device was found in a park that was one of the venues of the annual Stockholm Culture Festival on Sunday night.

"The police assess that the bag, which was found on Sunday, at Kungstradgarden contained an explosive charge," the police said in a statement. The area was cordoned off, and the bomb squad disarmed the device.

"It is only after a full examination at the national forensic center that we will be able to say whether the dangerous object was functional," said Erik Akerlund, local police chief at the Norrmalm police in Stockholm. Police did not say who or what the possible target was. DW

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Anthony Fauci, face of United States COVID-19 response, to step down

After five decades of public service, Fauci became famous across the country as the public face of COVID-19 response

WASHINGTON: Dr. Anthony Fauci announced on Monday that he would step down from his US government posts in December.

After five decades of public service, Fauci became famous across the country as the public face of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While I am moving on from my current positions, I am not retiring," Fauci said in a statement. "I plan to pursue the next phase of my career while I still have so much energy and passion for my field."

STEPPING DOWN: Fauci became a popular and trusted figure among many Americans as the nation faced lockdowns and rising numbers of COVID-19 deaths.

Fauci, 81, called his work for the government "the honor of a lifetime."

Face of the pandemic response

The award-winning doctor is currently the chief medical adviser to US President Joe Biden. He is also the director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health, a position he has held since 1984.

"I've been able to call him at any hour of the day for his advice," Biden said in a statement. "Whether you've met him personally or not, he has touched all Americans' lives with his work. The United States of America is stronger, more resilient, and healthier because of him."

In the first months of the pandemic in 2020, Fauci helped lead scientific efforts to develop and test COVID-19 vaccines in record time and took part in regular televised White House briefings alongside President Donald Trump.

Fauci became a popular and trusted figure among many Americans as the nation faced lockdowns and rising numbers of COVID-19 deaths, even inspiring the sale of cookies and bobblehead dolls featuring his likeness.

He was also vilified by Trump and many of the former president's Republican allies for sticking to the scientific consensus about COVID-19 and refusing to give credence to theories about the pandemic not backed up by evidence.

He also incurred Trump's wrath for continuing to push for lockdowns and a delayed opening of the economy, in order to prevent the spread of the disease before vaccines were widely available.

Before becoming a national figure, Dr. Fauci had a long career dedicated to emerging and reemerging infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Zika and monkeypox. DW

REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

Donald Trump moves to temporarily stop FBI from reviewing seized documents

FLORIDA: Former US President Donald Trump has sought to block the FBI from reviewing the documents it seized from his Mar-a-Lago mansion two weeks ago until a neutral third-party attorney, or special master, can be appointed to oversee the process.

Lawyers for Trump filed the motion on Monday, arguing the documents were "presumptively" covered by executive privilege — a principle that permits presidents to withhold certain communications from public disclosure.

"This matter has captured the attention of the American public," Trump's attorneys wrote.

"Merely 'adequate' safeguards are not acceptable when the matter at hand involves not only the constitutional rights of [former] President Trump, but also the presumption of executive privilege."

Calls for a list of seized items

In the same court filing, Trump's lawyers also demanded a receipt of all the items the FBI seized at Mar-a-Lago on August 8.

They asked for all seized items, outside the stated scope of the investigation, to be returned.

Trump 'clear front-runner' in 2024 Republican presidential primary

"Politics cannot be allowed to impact the administration of justice," the filing says. "[Former] President Donald J. Trump is the clear front-runner in the 2024 Republican presidential primary and in the 2024 general election, should he decide to run."

The FBI's search warrant listed 11 sets of classified documents that were allegedly on Trump's property, among numerous other items. It did not specify what the documents contained, however one anonymous source previously claimed some of the documents were related to nuclear weapons.

Separately on Monday, a federal magistrate acknowledged that the necessary redactions required to unseal the affidavit that prompted the raid of Trump's mansion could be so extensive that they would render the document "meaningless." DW

MICROBLOGGING SITE

Elon Musk meets his Twitter friend from India in Texas

DALLAS: Elon Musk recently met a 23-year-old Pune man Pranay Pathole, whom the Tesla CEO has been touting as his Twitter friend for a while now.

Pranay who met Musk at the Gigafactory Texas a few days ago shared a glimpse of his meeting with the billionaire tycoon on the microblogging site. Uploading a picture with Musk, Pranay wrote, "It was so great meeting you @elonmusk at the Gigafactory Texas. Never seen such a humble and down-to-earth person. You're an inspiration to the millions."

Musk and Pranay have been friends on social media since 2018. Their friendship reportedly started over Pranay's tweet about Tesla's automatic windscreen wipers.

His tweet was addressed to Musk and interestingly, within a few minutes of his post, Musk responded to Pranay.

"Fixed in next release," Musk had replied. And since then Musk and Pranay have been interacting regularly.

Pranay, who hails from Pune, has a massive following on Twitter. He has over 1 lakh followers on the microblogging site. His pinned tweet about Mars, to which Musk had responded, has received 28K retweets and some 138K likes and counting.

Earlier this month, Pathole asked Elon if he had a chance to read Nick Bostrom's paper "Astronomical Waste" and wrote on the microblogging site: "This essentially states that every second we delay expanding into space, we lose at least one hundred trillion potential human lives that could have lived."

Elon Musk's father says he is not proud of him; advised Elon to take diet pills

Musk's promptly replied to his Indian Twitter pal--"That estimate seems high, but the point is valid."

Pranay is currently working as a software developer for Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). — ANI

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Thai court asked to rule on PM term limits as Bangkok braces for protests

The current prime minister seized power as an army commander in May 2014 after toppling an elected government in a military coup

PETITION: Some 171 members of the House of Representatives backed the petition, which asks the court to rule on an article in the constitution limiting the office of prime ministers to eight years.

BANGKOK: Thailand's Constitutional Court received a petition from opposition lawmakers on a legal term limit for the country's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha this week, triggering fresh political turmoil and street protests in the kingdom.

Some 171 members of the House of Representatives backed the petition, which asks the court to rule on an article in the constitution limiting the office of prime ministers to eight years. The court is yet to announce whether it will take up the case.

If so, it is uncertain what ramifications this would have for the Prime Minister Prayuth. A temporary suspension until a ruling is issued is just one of the possible outcomes.

Street protests calling for the resignation of the prime minister have been ongoing in the past couple of days, with police having placed shipping containers to protect streets around government buildings in anticipation of a possible escalation on Tuesday.

Controversy about onset of Prayuth's term

The court is asked to rule on the date that should be used to determine when Prayuth took office and consequently, how long he can remain in his present position.

The current prime minister seized power as an army commander in May 2014 after toppling an elected government in a military coup. He led a military junta for the first months and was officiated in August of the same year.

His opponents believe this should be the date used to decide on the eight year term limit, which the 68-year-old would then reach on Wednesday, motivating calls for his resignation.

However, his supporters argue that he has been the premier since 2017, when a new constitution was installed or since 2019, after he won a controversial national election. If the court accepted this claim, Prayuth would have the legal framework to remain in office until 2025 or 2027, as long as he gained enough further support during national elections.

The outcome is uncertain, but many analysts think the court will rule in Prayuth's favour.

Increasing disapproval among the public

Critics of Prayuth have been questioning his political legitimacy for the past two years, while polls show that his approval ratings are at an all time low.

The former army commander has remained in power despite major anti-government protests in 2020, a failed national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a plummeting economy and political mishaps, but it is the constitution he helped install that could now cost him his office.

Fuelling the fire, protesters have become jarred by the economic stagnation and grievances inflicted upon their country during Prayuth's time in office.

However, Prayuth and his coalition government have survived four no-confidence votes since the 2019 election, with the most recent one being held last month. DW

SAFE PASSAGE

Lankan rights group asks govt to permit safe return of Gotabaya, his family

COLOMBO: Ahead of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's return to Sri Lanka, a rights group said the government should provide protection to the former president and his family.

Rajapaksa had relinquished power after a series of violent protests amid an unprecedented economic crisis in the country. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) has recommended that the government takes all necessary steps to assess the threat situation and provide the former president with security protection provided under the law, Sri Lanka's Newswire reported.

"The Family of Gotabaya Rajapakse, now living aboard, is entitled to the protection of the law to a safe return to the country," the HRCSL said.

This recommendation comes as Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) last week sought protection for Gotabaya, who is expected to return to the island nation this week.

Gotabaya's brother Mahinda Rajapaksa led-SLPP put forward the demand in a meeting with the incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe and requested the President to ensure Gotabaya Rajapaksa is given safe passage into Sri Lanka, Colombo Gazette reported.

Sri Lanka has been facing its worst economic crisis, which led to massive protests in the country that forced Rajapaksa to flee abroad and also hand in his resignation last month.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa arrived in Thailand last week following his departure from Singapore. He was granted entry into Thailand following a request from the Sri Lankan government.

He left Singapore last Thursday after nearly a month's stay. The former president was issued a 14-day visit pass when he arrived at the Changi Airport in Singapore from the Maldives last month and he was allowed to stay there for two weeks.

Thailand has denied reports that the former Sri Lankan President has sought asylum in the country. The Thailand Foreign Ministry said it received a request from Rajapaksa to visit the country with no intention of seeking political asylum.

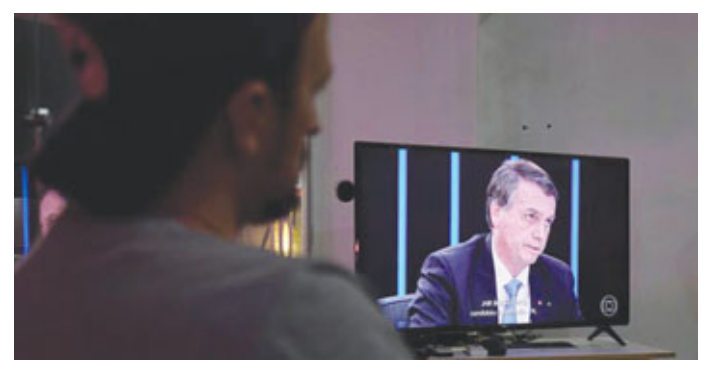
Thailand would be the second Southeast Asian country after the Maldives that Rajapaksa is seeking temporary shelter in after fleeing his island nation last month amid mass protests.

Sri Lankan Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena announced the official resignation of Rajapaksa on July 15.

After the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as President of Sri Lanka on July 21 in Parliament.

He was earlier appointed as interim president of Sri Lanka as Rajapaksa fled abroad after his palace was stormed by angry protesters amid the unprecedented economic crisis. ANI

DEBATE



Bolsonaro, rival Lula trade blows ahead of Brazil's presidential election

BRASILIA: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and his main rival, former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, traded blows on Monday ahead of the upcoming presidential election in October.

Although they didn't debate face-to-face, the two politicians each gave landmark interviews where Bolsonaro's unfounded claims of electoral fraud were a key point of contention.

Bolsonaro continues to sow doubt

During a 40-minute interview on Journal Nacional, an evening news program that has the highest ratings in the country, Bolsonaro once again made claims about electoral fraud in Brazil. He did not provide any evidence.

Bolsonaro, a former army captain, also said he believes the military should have a role in deciding the transparency of the vote.

"The results of the vote will be respected, as long as the election is clean and transparent," he said.

As the president's speech went to air on Monday night, residents in Brazil's largest cities could be heard banging their pots and pans outside their windows, shouting "out with Bolsonaro."

'He's a cheap copy of Trump'

Earlier on Monday, Lula, who has consistently led opinion polls, gave his first press conference to foreign journalists since his presidential campaign officially kicked off earlier this month.

Lula accused Bolsonaro of spreading "fake news" about the electoral system, and slammed the president's supporters for spreading falsehoods about the religious beliefs of both himself and his new wife, Rosangela da Silva. "He's a cheap copy of Trump," Lula said of the far-right Brazilian president.

Lula also pledged to combat deforestation and illegal gold mining in the Amazon if elected. DW

12-YEAR SENTENCE

Prosecutor seeks jail term for former Argentinian president

BUENOS AIRES: A federal prosecutor in Argentina called on Monday for a 12-year prison sentence for Cristina Fernandez, the country's former president and current vice president.

She has been on trial since 2019 for allegedly defrauding the state and involvement in a scheme to divert public funds during her two terms as president between 2007 and 2015. As head of the senate, Fernandez cannot be detained, but in closing arguments, Prosecutor Diego Luciani said she should be sent to jail.

"This is probably the biggest corruption maneuver that has ever been known in the country," Luciani said in arguing for the sentence. He also wants her barred from ever holding public office again. Fernandez had previously denied any wrongdoing and claimed the charges are politically motivated. On Monday, current President Alberto Fernandez, condemned the prosecution, describing the sentencing request as judicial persecution.

"None of the acts attributed to the former president have been proven," a statement from the presidency said.

The prosecution claims Fernandez favored firms owned by businessman Lazaro Baez in the bidding processes for dozens of public works, many of which were overpriced or were not completed.

It is alleged some of the money would have been paid back to her family through companies they owned. DW

COMMUNITY-BASED CONSTRUCTION

UN agency to build 2,300 earthquake-resilient houses in Afghanistan

KABUL: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency announced the start of a more than USD 14 million community-based construction effort to build 2,300 earthquake-resilient houses to help residents in the southeastern Afghanistan region devastated by the deadly June 22 earthquake.

Under the plan, UNHCR is providing materials and supporting building costs for the construction of 2,000 winterized homes in both Giyan and Barmal districts of Paktika Province and 300 homes in Spera District of Khost Province.

"This initiative demonstrates UNHCR's sustained solidarity and support to people affected by the disaster -- in the coming months 2,300 families will have new, resilient, winterized homes," said UNHCR Representative Leonard Zulu during an assessment mission in Barmal, Paktika Province. "UNHCR started distributing emergency shelter two days after the earthquake, and we are now aiming to meet urgent shelter needs to build back better."

Earthmoving equipment contracted by UNHCR has started site clearance in Barmal and trucks are delivering construction materials as snows are expected by mid-November.

"The Khost and Paktika areas have generously hosted thousands of refugees in recent years, some of whom were also affected by the earthquake," Zulu said. "UNHCR's shelter initiative will ensure homes for the most-affected households."

Over recent weeks, UNHCR teams have met with communities to present the project, identify the worst-affected families, and organize community groups to implement the community-based scheme.

In addition to building materials, households participating in the project will receive US$700 for labour. Engineers working with UNHCR's partners will monitor construction so relevant guidance is followed. Each family will be provided with solar panels for lighting and a bukhari space heater for burning wood during winter months, as well as materials to construct an outdoor latrine.

Bahrain's Royal Humanitarian Foundation recently signed a USD 1 million agreement with UNHCR to support the housing scheme.

Additionally, UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme have launched a joint programme to improve access to community services like health centres, schools, and water systems in the three districts.

"UNHCR has included the three districts in its Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) project since refugees as well as returned IDPs reside in the areas. The PARR initiative will ensure sustained support to enhance sustainable returns, reintegration and community resilience," the UN agency said in a statement.

In the wake of the 5.9 earthquakes that reportedly killed more than 1,000 people and injured many others, UNHCR distributed 3,592 family tents to provide emergency shelter for more than 25,000 people alongside household supplies and hygiene items for more than 11,200 people, complementing emergency assistance delivered by partner agencies.

Over the past four decades, Afghanistan has been battered by conflicts and natural disasters that have left millions facing famine and starvation.

The latest estimates indicate that some 24 million Afghans, more than half the country's population, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

There are some 3.4 million conflict-displaced persons in Afghanistan, as well as 1.57 million climate-displaced people, making it one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the world. ANI

SPORTS

Manchester United outperform arch-rivals Liverpool with 2-1 win

United had received a lot of criticism after a humiliating 4-0 loss to Brentford last weekend but they responded back in style

MANCHESTER: Manchester United showed the class and intensity they have been known for, with goals from Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford powering the side to a 2-1 win against Liverpool in their Premier League clash at Old Trafford on Monday.

United had received a lot of criticism after a humiliating 4-0 loss to Brentford last weekend but responded back in style by beating Jurgen Klopp's side to earn their first win of the season and their first win over their rivals since March 2018.

This is also Erik Hen Tag's first win as a manager for the club. The club was so different in this match. Sancho gave his side the lead in the 16th minute of the match, he turned his left foot in the box and fired the ball past the goalkeeper Alisson Becker.

Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea on the other hand had no saves to make in the first half as their rival side did not create a lot of chances for themselves.

At half-time, the scoreline read 1-0 in the favour of the hosts.

Manchester United kept their attacking intent going in the second half and a strike from Marcus Rashford doubled their lead.

But a goal from Mohamed Salah threatened to spoil United's party in the 81st time, with the possibility of an equaliser lurking. But United defenders held their nerves and denied their rivals the equaliser to secure their first win of the season.

Following the match, Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag told Sky Sports, "We can talk about tactical but it is all about attitude. There was communication and a fighting spirit. I wanted a different approach and a different attitude and that is what they brought on the pitch. It is only a start. We can play with much more composure and much more danger. Be a team and have a good spirit - and that is what we saw today."

"It is not always about what I said. I said we have to act and not talk a lot and make sure you are a team and battle and be brave and give each other options. Sometimes strikers think they cannot do it because they have to save their energy for offensive actions. Nowadays it is a demand and that is what you saw. It makes me happy Rashford and Sancho scored the goals."

"I am happy with the performance but we have to bring it every game. Do not just bring it against Liverpool. Every Premier League game is difficult, we need to bring it to every game. It starts, once again, with the spirit," he concluded.

On the other hand, Liverpool manager Klopp said, "It is obvious we are in a tricky situation injury-wise, we get through the week with 14-15 senior players available, we have to make sure none of them get injured because there is no real options left any more."

"Even with our situation, but playing a little bit better, if we were a little more convinced about what we do we should have won this game. I know it sounds ridiculous, but that is how I see it. They were really aggressive in the beginning, it was absolutely clear what would happen. Reality shows if we are really ready, and in the beginning, they were more aggressive than us, they hit the post and it was a hectic game."

"Then they scored the goal, and we took over, and played the game we wanted to play, more or less. We were unlucky with situations, especially around set-pieces. I do not know how one ball didn't go in, in a game like this against an opponent like United it would be very helpful if we could score in that moment and go in 1-1 at half-time."

"Conceding the second one does not help, and then we score ours and then it is a hectic game with a lot of interruptions - and not the result we wanted. Maybe they were [sharper], that is not right of course but when we calmed down we were there. We had an extreme number of shots for an away game at United, we should use more of these moments if we do that," he concluded.

With this win, United are now at 14th position in the table with three points and a win in three matches. They will face Southampton next on Saturday. On the other hand, Liverpool is at 16th position with two points and is yet to win a game. They will face Bournemouth on Saturday. ANI

SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED

Legends League Cricket announces schedule for upcoming season

NEW DELHI: Legends League Cricket has announced the complete schedule and fixtures for its upcoming season in September 2022. This season is scheduled to be played in six cities of which five are Kolkata, New Delhi, Cuttack, Lucknow and Jodhpur. The Venue for Play-offs is still to be announced.

Eden Garden, Kolkata will host three matches from 16th to 18th September, including the special match, which is being played between Indian Maharajas and World Giants, to commemorate the 75th Year of Indian Independence. All the grounds will have three matches each apart from Jodhpur and Lucknow, where two matches are planned. Raman Raheja, Co-Founder and CEO, of Legends League Cricket, said,

"The wait is over for our fans and viewers. They can plan for the matches with the announcement of fixtures. We are soon announcing our ticketing partner along with the dates for the availability of tickets online. With the lineup of iconic players from the 10 nations in a new format, I am sure fans will experience powerful performances on the pitch and a great season this year."

He added, "We are not getting any players from Pakistan for the upcoming season. We will soon be adding some more international players to the Draft. And all our Legends would be playing a full season with us and not miss any matches for any other League or commitment"

"For the final match of this season we are looking at Dehradun" he further added.

Ravi Shastri, Commissioner, Legends League Cricket said, "We are coming to mesmerise the cricketing fans at these wonderful cricket grounds. This festival season we will be presenting the cricket carnival with Top Legends competing for the first Legends League Cricket Title." ANI

ASIA CUP QUALIFIER

UAE bounce back with 47-run win over Singapore on day 3 of Asia Cup Qualifier

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The battle to join Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan in the Asia Cup 2022 is currently underway, through a qualifying tournament, the Asia Cup Qualifier 2022. The four teams in the contest are Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.

Day three saw the United Arab Emirates bounce back from their opening defeat, with a convincing 47 run win against Singapore. After losing the toss UAE were asked to bat, scoring a total of 160/8 in their 20 overs, Muhammad Waseem the top scorer with 56 runs. Singapore failed to chase down the target and were bowled out for 113 in 18.3 overs.

Chundangapoyil Puthiyapurayil Rizwan, UAE Captain, said, "I am happy for the boys and the team, this was a much-needed win. On paper we are one of the stronger teams and we needed to show that on the field as well. That is what we did today. The boys were hungry and keen to perform. When they got the opportunity, they grabbed it with both hands."

Amjad Mahboob, Singapore Captain, said, "This was a must win game for us and by restricting UAE to 160, our bowlers did a very good job. I think the bating let us down again, but I believe our coaches are watching closely and they will help us work on this.

"We have a young team, for more than half the team, this is the first time playing a tournament of this nature. It is great exposure for them and when we go back, we will work hard on the areas in which we are lacking.

Player of the Match, Karthik Meiyappan, said, "It is good to be on the winning side and bounce back after yesterday, and this means we are still in with a chance to go through to the Asia Cup, which is what is most important for us. It was good to contribute to the team's win."

OMAN CRICKET

Oman Cricket season 2022-23 registrations are closing soon

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket proudly announced the beginning of its annual multi-layered season with its division leagues starting from October 2022. The team registrations for the Season 2022-23 commenced from 9 August 2022 onwards.

Teams can be registered by browsing on www.omancricket.org > registrations.

Duleep Mendis, Chief Development Officer of Oman Cricket on the commencement of the season registrations said, "We are delighted to begin the preparations for the Array of Marquee Domestic Tournaments for all commencing on October 2022. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Oman Cricket. We gracefully invite all teams willing to play quality cricket to register for the Season 2022-23. We extend our sincere regards to all corporates, institutions and sponsors who form the backbone of all teams participating in the domestic season."

Registrations are open for the Premier Division and Senior Division Leagues until 28 August 2022. The Registrations for Junior Leagues and Women's League is set to open in September 2022.

The final groupings for the Divisional Leagues will be confirmed once the registrations have been closed. The last date for player registrations is 4th September 2022 upon team confirmation. Oman Cricket wishes all teams a very successful and fruitful Season 2022-23.

COVID POSITIVE

Rahul Dravid tests positive for COVID-19

MUMBAI: Indian team head coach Rahul Dravid has tested positive for COVID-19.

He tested positive for the virus in a routine test conducted ahead of the team's departure to the UAE for Asia Cup 2022. "Team India Head Coach Rahul Dravid has tested positive for COVID-19 in a routine test conducted ahead of the team's departure to the UAE for Asia Cup 2022," read a statement from the BCCI.

Dravid is under the supervision of the BCCI Medical team and has mild symptoms. He will join the team once he returns with a negative COVID-19 report.

The rest of the team will assemble in UAE on August 23, 2022.

Asia Cup 2022 will be played in UAE, starting from August 27 through September 11. ANI

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by October 2022 reaching $97.14, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by $2.50 from the price of Monday, which was $94.64. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,601.85 points, down by 0.33 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.27 per cent at 486.71 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 4.6 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Suwadi Power, down 8.7 per cent, was the top loser.

Outstanding credit extended by ODCs in Oman rises by 4%

Total deposits held with ODCs registered a Y-o-Y growth of 5.4 per cent to reach OMR26.3 billion at the end of June 2022

MUSCAT: The total outstanding credit extended by Other Depository Corporations (ODCs), consisting of conventional and Islamic banks in Oman, increased by 4.1 per cent to reach OMR28.4 billion at the end of June 2022.

Credit to the private sector demonstrated a rise of 2.3 per cent Year-over-Year (Y-o-Y) to reach OMR23.8 billion.

Non-financial corporations received the highest shares of the total private sector credit, at approximately 46.0 per cent at the end of June 2022, followed by the household sector at 45.4 per cent. The share of financial corporations was 5 per cent while other sectors received the remaining 3.6 per cent of the total private sector credit at the end of June 2022.

Total deposits held with ODCs registered a Y-o-Y growth of 5.4 per cent to reach OMR26.3 billion at the end of June 2022. Total private sector deposits increased by 1 per cent to OMR17.5 billion.

In terms of the sector-wise composition of private sector deposits, the biggest contribution is from household deposits at 52.1 per cent, followed by non-financial corporations at 30 per cent, financial corporations at 15.2 per cent and other sectors at 2.7 per cent. -ONA

SHORTFALL

India's crude oil production falls 3.76% in July

NEW DELHI: India's crude oil production stood at 2453.19 thousand metric tonnes (TMT) in July 2022, which is 3.76 per cent lower than the production of July 2021 and 5.57 per cent down when compared with the target for the month, according to the official data released.

Cumulative crude oil production during April-July, 2022 was 9912.42 TMT, which is 2.17 per cent lower than the target for the period and 0.50 per cent lower than production during the corresponding period of last year, according to data released by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas. Crude oil production by ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation) in the nomination block during July 2022 was 1636.56 TMT, which is 3.36 per cent lower than the target of the month and 1.70 per cent lower when compared with production of July 2021.

Cumulative crude oil production by ONGC during April-July, 2022 was 6606.19 TMT, which is 1.12 per cent lower than the target for the period but 1.99 per cent higher than the target for the period and production during the corresponding period of last year respectively.

Reasons for shortfall in production include a natural decline in production from Gandhar in Ankleshwar; a measure of high potential wells in Geleki field in Assam; closure of wells due to DAB issues; less contribution from PEC fields in Jorhat and restriction on drilling activities due to socio-political issues in Cauvery. Crude oil production by OIL (Oil India Ltd) in the nomination block during July 2022 was 263.70 TMT, which is 8.11 per cent lower than the target of the month but 4.12 per cent higher when compared with production of July 2021.

Cumulative crude oil production by OIL during April-July 2022 was 1037.55 TMT, which is 4.94 per cent lower than the target for the period but 4.21 per cent higher when compared to production during the corresponding period of last year.

Reasons for shortfall in production are less than the planned contribution from workover wells and loss due to miscreant activities in Main Producing Area (MPA). Crude oil production by Pvt/JVs companies in the PSC/RSC regime during July 2022 was 552.92 TMT, which is 10.45 per cent lower than the target of the reporting month and 12.34 per cent lower than the monthly production of July 2021.

Cumulative crude oil production by Pvt/JVs companies during April-July 2022 was 2268.68 TMT. -ANI

WORLD FINANCIAL SYMPOSIUM

Forum to focus on reshaping airline resilience post-COVID

GENEVA: The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced that the 2022 World Financial Symposium (WFS) will focus on reshaping airline resilience. The event will take place from September 19-22 in Doha, Qatar, with Qatar Airways as the host airline.

Following the greatest shock to aviation in history, the industry is emerging rapidly from the pandemic and government-mandated travel restrictions of the past two years. Industry losses are expected to reduce to $9.7 billion this year from nearly $180 billion in red ink in 2020-21. As travel barriers fall in most regions, very strong demand is supporting expectations for recovery to pre-COVID-19 traffic levels by 2024, with profitability a possibility in 2023.

At the same time, airline debt levels have soared as carriers borrowed to stay aloft during the crisis. And finance departments across the industry will face challenges as the industry achieves its 2050 fly net zero commitment.

"Airlines are resilient. Now is the time to build on the hard work and difficult restructurings of the past two years to seize opportunities coming out of the crisis. Finance will play a vital role in supporting the ongoing recovery while creating a sustainable capital structure to support our ambitious environmental agenda," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

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>
> **Willie Walsh**
> IATA's Director General

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker said, "We are honoured to be hosting the first in-person WFS since 2019 during our milestone 25th year of operations. This vital symposium will bring together financial leaders from airlines and our many supply chain partners to discuss and debate the path forward and the challenges to be overcome."

A highlight of the WFS Opening Plenary will be an onstage discussion with Akbar Al Baker and Willie Walsh on the theme of the industry's future.

Sessions will address:

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting & sustainable finance trends

Achieving net zero CO2 by 2050

Financial risk management

The road to airline retailing and customer centricity

Fulfilment and settlement in a world of airline offers and orders

The future of airline payments and payments as a value creator

Understanding and preparing for OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) 2.0

WFS will also feature a review of the industry's economic outlook and resilience from IATA's Chief Economist, Marie Owens Thomsen.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Treasury bills worth OMR10 million issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR10 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 182 days, from August 24, 2022, until February 22, 2023.

The average accepted price reached OMR98.330 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.305 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.34918 per cent and 3.40607 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 3.00 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 3.5 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. -ONA

KOREA CUSTOMS SERVICE DATA

S. Korea posts trade deficit of $10.2bn

SEOUL: South Korea's exports rose nearly 4 per cent year-on-year on August 20, but posted a trade deficit of more than $10 billion as imports also increased by 20 per cent.

It is highly likely to post a trade deficit in August. The monthly trade balance is expected to post a deficit for 5 consecutive months in about 14 years.

According to the Korea Customs Service on 22nd August, Korea's exports during the first 20 days of August were $33.424 billion, up 3.9 per cent year-on-year.

There were 15.5 working days from August 1 to 20, 0.5 days more than last year (15 days). The average daily exports increased by 0.5 per cent.

By item, exports of petroleum products (109.3 per cent), passenger cars (22.0 per cent), ships (15.4 per cent), auto parts (8.9 per cent), and home appliances (15.0 per cent) increased year-on-year.

On the other hand, semiconductors, Korea's main export item, fell 7.5 per cent. If semiconductor exports decrease this month from a year ago, it will be the first time in 2 years and 2 months since June 2020.

FUELLING GROWTH: By item, exports of petroleum products (109.3 per cent), passenger cars (22.0 per cent), ships (15.4 per cent), auto parts (8.9 per cent), and home appliances (15.0 per cent) increased year-on-year. – ANI

Exports of wireless communication devices (-24.6 per cent), computer accessories (-32.8 per cent), precision machines (-1.3 per cent), and steels (-0.5 per cent) also fell.

By country, exports to the U.S. (0.8 per cent), Europe (19.8 per cent), Vietnam (2.2 per cent), and Singapore (115.7 per cent) increased, while exports to China (-11.2%), Japan (-6.3 per cent), and Hong Kong (-45.0 per cent) decreased.

Imports from August 1 to 20 were $43.641 billion, up 22.1 per cent year-on-year.

The growth rate of imports has continued to exceed the growth rate of exports for 14 consecutive months from June last year.

By item, imports of oil (54.1 per cent), semiconductors (24.1 per cent), gas (80.4 per cent), coals (143.4 per cent), and automobiles (44.3 per cent) increased. – ANI

$44 BILLION AGREEMENT

Elon Musk seeks dismissal of Twitter lawsuit

WASHINGTON: As Elon Musk fights a lawsuit from Twitter asking him to complete the takeover, he has called for the dismissal of a shareholder lawsuit against him for cancelling his multibillion-dollar buyout deal and subpoenaing the social media company's former CEO.

The moves come in response to Musk's sudden announcement in July that he would leave just a few months after finalising the $44 billion agreement in April.

According to The Hill, Twitter claims that the company suffered financial losses as a result of Musk's withdrawal.

According to a Securities and Exchange Commission filing, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX called off the buyout due to what he claimed were "false and misleading representations" made by Twitter during the agreement processes and the company's failure to provide information on "the prevalence of fake or spam accounts on Twitter's platform." – ANI

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

A'Saffa Foods, up 4.6 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Suwadi Power, down 8.7 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,601.85 points, down by 0.33 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.27 per cent at 486.71 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 4.6 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Suwadi Power, down 8.7 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Bank Nizwa were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Al Anwar Ceramics was the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 451 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.82 million, with more than 9 million shares changing hands.

Out of 41 traded securities, 8 advanced, 16 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR365,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR339,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR26,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,339.52 points, down 0.3 per cent. Prices of Ahlia Insurance and Al Madina Takaful were up by 2.5 per cent and 1.14 per cent respectively. Prices of Global Financial Investments, Oman United Insurance, Bank Muscat and HSBC Bank Oman were down by 3.08 per cent, 1.36 per cent, 1.3 per cent and 1.27 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,417.01 points, up 0.14 per cent. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Oman Cables Industry and Galfar Engineering were up by 4.6 per cent, 2.86 per cent and 1.21 per cent respectively. Prices of National Mineral Water, Gulf Mushroom Products, Dhofar Cattle Feed, Al Anwar Ceramics and Raysut Cement were down by 7.41 per cent, 3.85 per cent, 3.53 per cent, 2.27 per cent and 1.91 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.84 per cent before closing at 1,653.44 points.

Prices of Barka Desalination, Al Maha Marketing and Oman Education & Training were up by 1.48 per cent, 1.02 per cent and 0.95 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Shell Oman Marketing and Muscat Desalination - Preferential Shares were down by 8.7 per cent, 6.67 per cent, 3.43 per cent and 1.77 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,618.17	4,596.31	4,601.85	4,617.00	-15.15	-0.33
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,361.71	7,331.10	7,339.51	7,361.71	-22.20	-0.30
Industry Index	6,451.20	6,402.78	6,417.00	6,407.73	9.28	0.14
Services Index	1,667.42	1,649.61	1,653.44	1,667.42	-13.98	-0.84
MSX Shariah Index	490.12	486.71	486.71	488.02	-1.31	-0.27
MSX TR INDEX	5,824.58	5,797.01	5,804.00	5,823.10	-19.10	-0.33
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,703.20	7,671.17	7,679.98	7,703.20	-23.23	-0.30
SERVICES TR IDX	1,731.46	1,712.96	1,716.95	1,731.46	-14.52	-0.84
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,695.26	6,645.01	6,659.77	6,650.14	9.63	0.14

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
9,008,559	1,817,207	451	23,239,788,059	8	16	17	41

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 23

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR	20,000	28,650	14	1.440	1.440	1.410	1.440	1.400	0.040	2.857	1.440	1.300	1.440	0.100	129,168,000
OM0000003000	Al MAHA MARKTING	626	498	1	0.796	0.796	0.796	0.796	0.788	0.008	1.015	0.796	0.788	0.796	0.100	54,924,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG	60,000	6,480	6	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.106	0.108	0.100	15,120,000
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN.	49,500	6,346	4	0.128	0.129	0.128	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.127	0.129	0.100	30,573,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	10,000	2,992	2	0.298	0.300	0.298	0.300	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.286	0.310	0.100	99,261,813
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	36,200	18,679	6	0.516	0.516	0.516	0.516	0.516	0.000	0.000	0.516	0.508	0.516	0.100	121,987,560
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	316,000	33,184	7	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.106	0.106	0.000	0.000	0.106	0.100	0.105	0.100	316,946,603
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	29,856	12,482	4	0.420	0.420	0.418	0.418	0.420	-0.002	-0.476	0.418	0.378	0.418	0.100	22,990,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	412,143	250,951	28	0.612	0.612	0.608	0.608	0.616	-0.008	-1.299	0.608	0.608	0.612	0.100	2,281,944,707
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR	101,300	29,377	3	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.294	-0.004	-1.361	0.290	0.280	0.290	0.100	29,000,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	964,892	413,795	57	0.420	0.430	0.420	0.430	0.440	-0.010	-2.273	0.430	0.410	0.440	0.100	94,600,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H	105,000	6,615	6	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.065	-0.002	-3.077	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.100	12,600,000
Total	12	2,105,517	810,048	138												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	363,978	90,078	50	0.246	0.250	0.240	0.250	0.239	0.011	4.603	0.250	0.250	0.252	0.100	30,000,000
OM0000006912	AHLIA INSURANCE	15,000	6,150	1	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.400	0.010	2.500	0.410	0.410	0.000	0.100	41,000,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	27,000	3,699	2	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.135	0.002	1.481	0.137	0.137	0.141	0.100	10,346,514
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	1,029,000	171,599	47	0.165	0.169	0.165	0.167	0.165	0.002	1.212	0.167	0.167	0.167	0.100	33,898,736
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	362,094	31,939	12	0.088	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.088	0.001	1.136	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.100	15,575,000
OM0000002580	OMAN EDU TRAINING	1,386	294	2	0.212	0.213	0.212	0.213	0.211	0.002	0.948	0.213	0.000	0.213	0.100	14,910,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION M.	5,000	410	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.082	0.087	0.100	5,125,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	29,500	1,947	4	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.100	20,271,657
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	299	25	1	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.083	0.085	0.100	10,115,625
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	44,500	3,369	5	0.076	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.076	0.100	15,200,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	40,000	3,680	4	0.090	0.094	0.090	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.088	0.093	0.100	32,819,575
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	2,919,961	289,076	23	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.108	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	345	24	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.068	0.070	0.100	66,820,037
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	164	20	1	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.121	0.100	200,329,200
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	461,770	20,773	14	0.045	0.045	0.044	0.045	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.045	0.044	0.045	0.100	65,817,066
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	7,110	476	3	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.100	31,569,488
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	500,000	77,500	26	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.157	-0.002	-1.274	0.155	0.151	0.157	0.100	310,048,482
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	53,035	5,940	11	0.112	0.115	0.111	0.111	0.113	-0.002	-1.770	0.111	0.107	0.115	0.100	17,266,094
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	2,000	212	1	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.108	-0.002	-1.852	0.106	0.106	0.108	0.100	19,300,310
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	188,461	38,473	24	0.210	0.210	0.203	0.206	0.210	-0.004	-1.905	0.206	0.205	0.209	0.100	41,200,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK	20	18	1	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.932	-0.032	-3.433	0.900	0.900	0.932	0.100	85,500,000
OM0000001301	DHOFAR CATTLE	5,000	410	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.085	-0.003	-3.529	0.082	0.077	0.000	0.100	6,629,700
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM P	21,900	5,489	10	0.255	0.255	0.240	0.250	0.260	-0.010	-3.846	0.251	0.251	0.265	0.100	10,401,318
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	316,002	13,327	31	0.043	0.043	0.042	0.042	0.045	-0.003	-6.667	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.100	28,345,272
OM0000001285	MINERAL WATER	10,000	750	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.081	-0.006	-7.407	0.075	0.000	0.075	0.100	2,025,228
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	268,669	11,410	32	0.045	0.045	0.042	0.042	0.046	-0.004	-8.696	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.100	30,005,066
Total	26	6,672,194	777,089	309												

SHARE MARKET

Asian shares fall on Fed worries after Wall Street sell-off

TOKYO: Asian shares were trading lower Tuesday, echoing a broad sell-off on Wall Street amid speculation about another interest rate raise from the US Federal Reserve.

Benchmarks in Asia slid across the region in morning trading, including Japan, China, South Korea and Australia. The latest market slide comes as investors grapple with uncertainty over when the highest inflation in decades will ease significantly, how much the Fed will have to raise interest rates in order to get it under control and how much the rate hikes will slow the economy.

Investors will be looking for insight into these unknowns later this week, when the Federal Reserve holds its annual meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

"The downbeat mood in Wall Street is playing out in the Asia session as well, and although another round of rate cuts to benchmark lending rate in China yesterday may aid to cushion some losses, overall upside could still remain limited amid the shunning of risks," said Yeap Jun Rong, market strategist at IG in Singapore, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

The People's Bank of China cut a lending rate Monday, a week after it cut interest rates.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 1.3 per cent in morning trading to 28,413.04. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slid 0.5 per cent to 7,009.30. South Korea's Kospi dipped nearly 1.0% to 2,438.19. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.7 per cent to 19,520.36, while the Shanghai Composite fell 0.3% to 3,267.19.

"Investors are being cautious as continuous risk-off flows have hit global markets," said Anderson Alves at ActivTrades, noting that rising gas prices were a big risk, especially for Europe.

The S&P 500 had its biggest slide since mid-June, sliding 2.1 per cent, nearly doubling its losses from last week, when it broke a four-week winning streak. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slumped 1.9 per cent and the Nasdaq dropped 2.5 per cent.

Technology companies and retailers had some of the heaviest losses Monday. Smaller company stocks also lost ground, pulling the Russell 2000 index 2.1 per cent lower.

Bond yields gained ground. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which influences rates on home mortgages and other loans, rose to 3.03 per cent from 2.97 per cent late Friday.

The broader market's losses come on the heels of a week-long rally. Investors are trying to figure out where the economy goes from here as stubbornly hot inflation hurts businesses and consumers. Record-high inflation also has investors focusing on central banks and their efforts to fight high prices without further damaging economic growth.

"You've had quite a rally and there's reason to not be sure where we're going from here," said Tom Martin, senior portfolio manager with Globalt Investments. "There's still decent potential for a recession." -**BNA**

ECONOMIC CRISIS

Euro slumps to two-decade low as energy crisis bites

LONDON: The euro hit a fresh two-decade low on Tuesday, dealt a fresh blow by renewed concern that an energy shock will keep inflation elevated and makes a recession in Europe all but certain.

China's yuan weakened to a two-year low, while sterling briefly touched its weakest since March 2020.

Business activity data from Europe was not as bad as feared, pushing the euro off the 20-year low hit early in the session, at $0.99005, Reuters reports.

But by 0820 GMT, the currency was still down 0.15 per cent at $0.9930 and holding below the key $1-level.

"What we're trying to figure out is how much of the move in the euro is driven by thin summer liquidity and how much is driven by flows," said Kenneth Broux, a currency strategist at Société General in London.

"But of course the increase in gas prices yesterday is bad news all around."

Heat waves on the continent have already put a strain on the energy supply and worries are growing that any disruption during the winter months could be devastating for business activity.

"Given the current mood, there's obviously concerns as to whether that's going to be three days or whether it's going to be three years," said Ray Attrill, head of FX strategy at National Australia Bank (NAB).

The pound was dragged to a new 2-1/2-year low of $1.1718, while the Japanese yen edged up to 137.24 per dollar after touching a one-month low of 137.705 earlier in the day.

The risk-sensitive Aussie fell to a one-month low before recovering to around $0.6888.

Elsewhere in Asia, China's yuan fell to an almost two-year low of 6.8666 per dollar.

Against a basket of currencies, in which the euro is the most heavily weighted, the US dollar index pulled back from session highs and was last trading at around 108.93.

Another reason investors have sought shelter in dollars is the growing risk of a hawkish message from the Federal Reserve's Jackson Hole symposium, flagged by several officials last week.

"I think he (Fed chief Jerome Powell) will be hawkish on Friday, it's too soon to declare an inflation victory," said Broux at Société General. -**BNA**

BANKING SOLUTIONS

Saudi Central Bank grants permits to new Fintech firms

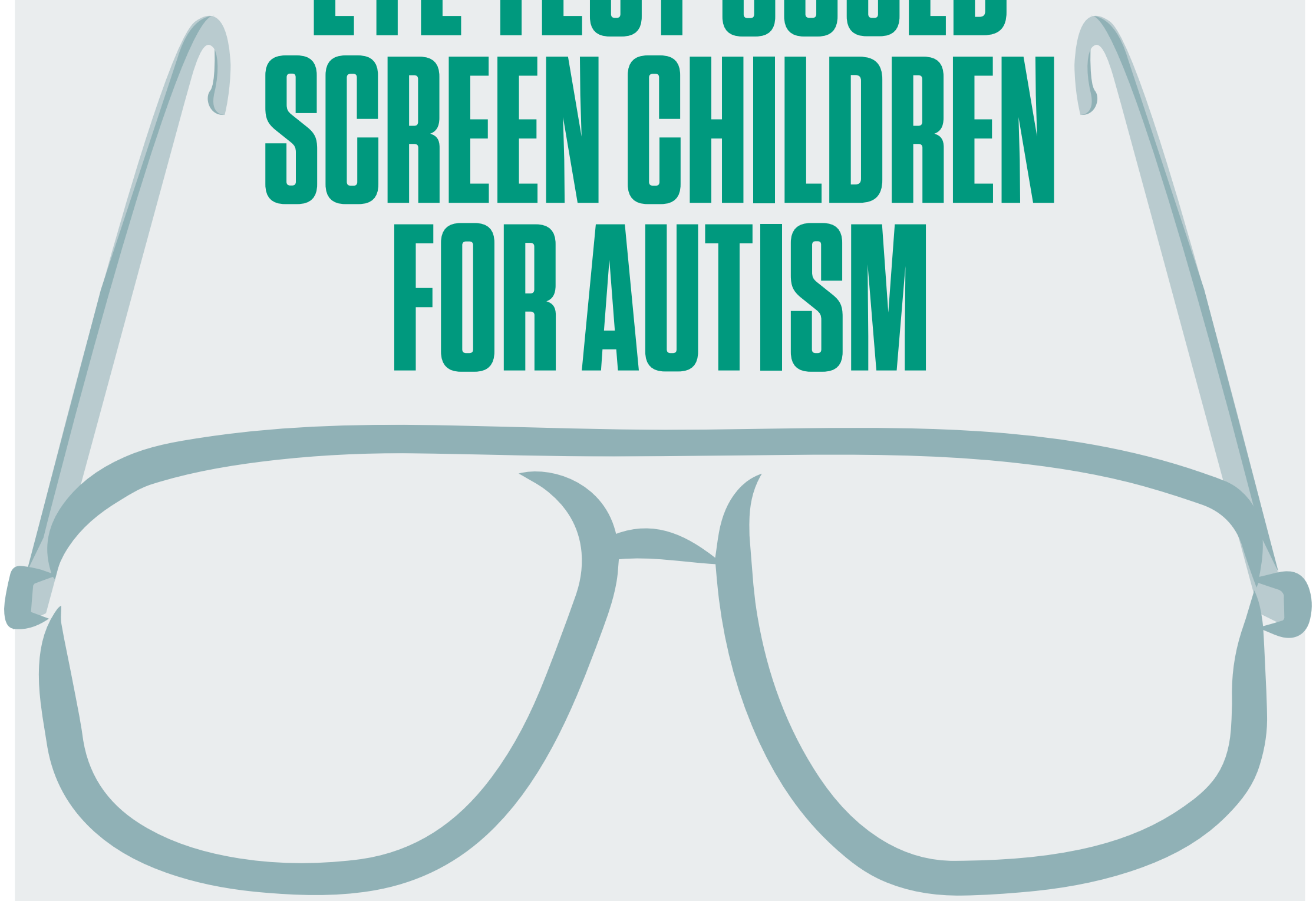
RIYADH: The Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) announced granting permit to a new batch of companies; "Lean Technologies" and "Mod5r" to provide open banking solutions; bringing the total number of permitted Fintech companies operating under its Regulatory Sandbox to 38.

This step completes a series of actions undertaken to conquer a stack of strategic objectives including activating SAMA's sandbox environment role to the realisation of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 goals through the Financial Sector Development Programme (FSDP). The prominent FSDP is an ambitious programme aims at promoting economic growth, savings and investment activities and the financial inclusion.

SAMA is currently working - alongside other participants in the financial sector including banks and Fintech companies - on developing and implementing an integrated high standard network to carry on open banking solutions in the Kingdom with the most innovative and best practices within a predefined timetable. This phase should contribute to inspire other participants within the sector to start planning and develop innovative new financial products. -**SPA**

LIFESTYLE

STUDY FINDS EYE TEST COULD SCREEN CHILDREN FOR AUTISM



According to a study conducted at Washington State University measuring how the pupils of the eyes change in reaction to light, known as the pupillary light reflex, could possibly be used to screen for autism in early infants.

First author Georgina Lynch said the proof-of-concept study builds on earlier work to support the continued development of a portable technology that could provide a quick and easy way to screen children for autism, a disorder that affects communication and social interaction with others. Such a tool would allow health care providers to catch children earlier in their development when interventions are more likely to benefit them.

"We know that when we intervene as early as ages 18 to 24 months it has a long-term impact on their outcomes," said Lynch, an assistant professor in the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine who worked with children with autism while practising as a speech-language pathologist. "Intervening during that critical window could be the difference between a child acquiring verbal speech and staying nonverbal. Yet, after 20 years of trying we still have not changed the average age of diagnosis here in the U.S., which is four years old."

> **Intervening during that critical window could be the difference between a child acquiring verbal speech and staying nonverbal. Yet, after 20 years of trying we still have not changed the average age of diagnosis here in the U.S., which is four years old**

Published in the journal Neurological Sciences, the study tested 36 children aged 6 to 17 who had been previously diagnosed with autism along with a group of 24 typically developing children who served as controls. Children's pupillary light reflexes were tested by trained clinical providers using a handheld monocular pupillometer device, which measures one eye at a time. Analysing the results, the researchers found that children with autism showed significant differences in the time it took for their pupils to constrict in response to light. Their pupils also took longer to return to their original size after the light was removed.

"What we did with this study is we demonstrated the parameters of interest that matter — speed of constriction and return to baseline," Lynch said. "And we demonstrated it with monocular technology because we knew there is no significant difference between eyes in terms of the pupillary response in autism, unlike in head injury or concussion where it's common to see unequal pupil sizes.

An earlier study led by Lynch tested children in a laboratory setting using binocular pupillometry, which uses an expensive, stationary setup that measures both eyes at once. The lower expense and portability associated with monocular technology made it possible to move testing into clinical settings similar to those in which the screening tool Lynch is developing might be used once it is commercially available.

Supported by funding from the Washington Research Foundation, Lynch is now working to expand testing to a group of 300 or more 2- to 4-year-olds across a larger number of clinical sites. Data from that study will be used to validate the earlier findings and will be integrated into the ultimate screening device to provide a benchmark that providers can use to decide whether or not to refer a child for evaluation. Meanwhile, Lynch is preparing to file for Food and Drug Administration premarket approval for the screening device through Appiture Biotechnologies, a spinoff company she cofounded to help move this technology from an academic research setting toward widespread use in pediatric clinics.

Lynch's desire to improve autism screening grew from her experiences watching parents struggle through the cumbersome process of pursuing a formal diagnosis for their child.

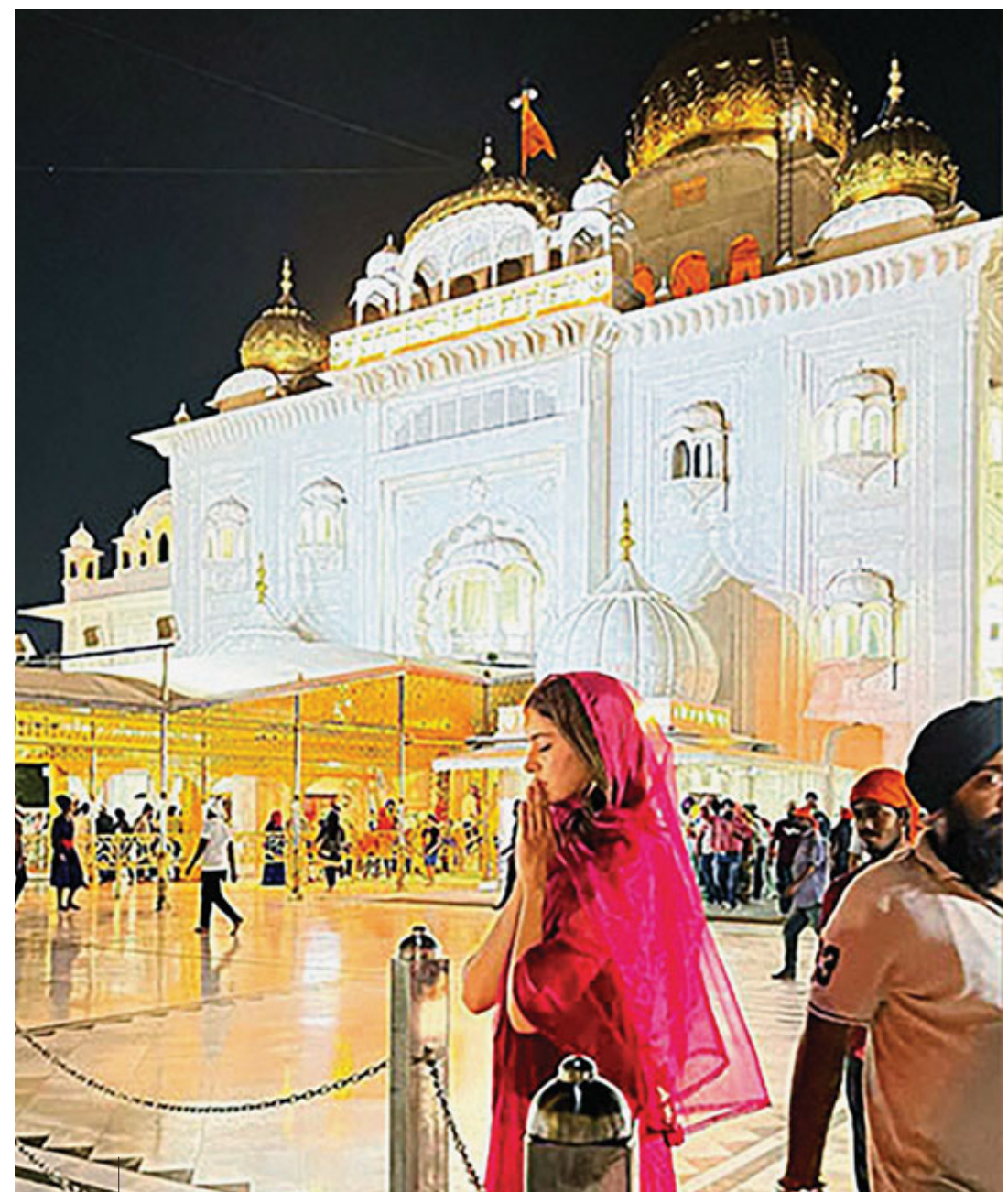
While an estimated one in 44 children in the US are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by age 8, many kids get misdiagnosed or missed altogether due to the subjective nature of the diagnostic process. Having a quick, objective screening method to bolster behavioural screening could help improve the accuracy and speed with which children are diagnosed. Looking at the pupillary light reflex as a potential screening biomarker made sense to Lynch given her own observations and earlier studies that found abnormalities in the pupillary light reflex of children with autism.

"Even as a clinician, I noticed this state in kids with ASD where their pupils were very dilated even in the presence of bright light," Lynch said. "That system is modulated in the brain by cranial nerves rooted in the brainstem, and adjacent cranial nerves affect your ability to acquire speech and language. The pupil light reflex tests the integrity of that system, so it seemed logical to try this very simple, noninvasive measure to determine whether there were differences between typical development and autism." -ANI

IN-PICTURES

CBD project in Egyptian capital boosts local development
Aerial picture shows the Central Business District (CBD) project in Egypt's new administrative capital in east of Cairo, Egypt. The construction of the CBD in Egypt's new administrative capital has injected new vitality into the country's economic and social development. Xinhua

Photo exhibition brings charm of China's province to Bulgaria
A man views a display panel of a photo exhibition entitled 'Beautiful Jiangxi, Showing Her Charm to the World' in Sofia, Bulgaria, on Aug. 22, 2022. Xinhua



Ananya Panday offers prayers at Gurudwara Bangla Sahib
Bollywood actress Ananya Panday offers prayers at Gurudwara Bangla Sahib ahead of the release of her film 'Liger', in New Delhi. ANI Photo

National Flag Day celebrated in St. Petersburg, Russia
People participate in the National Flag Day celebrations in St. Petersburg, Russia. Xinhua

Scenery of night sky near Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Picture shows the night sky above a mountainous area near Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Xinhua

South Korea's currency hits over 13-year low on strong US dollar
The won (right) and US dollar banknotes are pictured in Seoul, South Korea. South Korea's currency hit the lowest in over 13 years on Tuesday on the strong US dollar, leading the foreign exchange authorities to issue a verbal warning. Xinhua

Rafeeq
YOU ORDER
WE DELIVER
Download the app

Multiply your money with ahlibank's daily multiplier account Wafra Plus

The bank introduced Wafra Plus earlier this year, allowing its new and existing customers an unparalleled opportunity to grow their money – on a daily basis - as part of its aim to create unrivalled channels that suit its customer's demands

MUSCAT: Continuing the momentum of its product innovation and expansion process, ahlibank has affirmed the success of its recently launched 'Daily Multiplier Account' - Wafra Plus, with enhanced interest rates and the additional benefit of debit cards for Wafra account holders.

The bank introduced Wafra Plus earlier this year, allowing its new and existing customers an unparalleled opportunity to grow their money – on a daily basis - as part of its aim to create unrivalled channels that suit its customer's demands.

The 'Wafra Plus' Daily Growth Account is a savings account that pays up to 1.75 per cent interest per year on the daily balance in the account. At the end of each day, the benefit is compounded and credited to the client's accounts.

Key benefits for Wafra Plus accountholders include up to 1.75 per cent interest p.a. in competitive benefits, compounded advantages on a daily basis, unlimited transactions on the account, and benefits being credited to the account every day. As per the scheme, ahlibank will offer interest rates ranging from 1.00 per cent (for deposits up to OMR9,999) to 1.75 per cent (for deposits of OMR100,000 and more), depending on the deposit amounts.

"The new account was created as a platform for our customers to secure and grow their savings balances. This is a significant step forward in our continuous progress, and it reflects our dedication to creating and executing products and services that are truly valuable to our customers.

"We believe in communicating with our customers across several platforms to assess their shifting demands and, as a result, tailor our solutions to their lifestyles and financial behaviour," said Muneer Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution.

With Wafra Plus, customers can use 24x7 cash management via digital channels or the branch network; they are not only able to make unlimited transactions but are also able to augment their savings with competitive perks that are compounded and paid on a daily basis. As a result, advantages are available to customers as withdrawals or compounded benefits in their accounts.

"Customers' financial strength will be enhanced not only by the availability of limitless withdrawals but also by the intrinsic savings culture it fosters, as it is designed as a straightforward and easy-to-maintain service. The 'Daily' prefix on the product indicates the bank's desire to instil financial competency in its customers, who will now be able to earn more on a daily basis. We strongly encourage our current and prospective customers to take advantage of this unique opportunity to grow their finances while enjoying the peace and security that comes with it," added Muneer Al Balushi.

ahlibank's experienced team of professionals constantly keep their eyes and ears on the market to understand and assess customer choices and feedback. This helps the bank deep dive into key trends, and the needs of customers, enabling thought through product innovation. The latest 'Daily Multiplier Account' reiterates ahlibank's belief that innovation is the key to progress.

ahlibank offers a wide portfolio of innovative banking products and services to the traditional and Islamic sectors.

HEALTHCARE

India's Jaslok Hospital launches its first coordination centre in Oman

MUMBAI: Jaslok Hospital & Research Centre, a leading hospital in Mumbai, announced the launch of Jaslok Hospital Coordination Centre in Oman.

As part of the launch, a Continuous Medical Education (CME) on Advanced Specialties was held in Muscat. The programme was attended by Sheikh Aziz Al Azizi and Sheikh Malik bin Hilal bin Hamood Al Yahmadi, Majlis Al Shura Members. Dr Shailesh Raina, Director Urologist, Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai and Dr (Prof) Deepu Banerji, Neurosurgeon-Senior Consultant, Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai adorned the event as speakers.

Jaslok Hospital has partnered with Al Miri Coordination Center, Oman & Magnus Medi, India in one of its kind collaborations. This collaboration will aid the people of Oman to receive end-to-end services. These services will include teleconsultations, appointment booking, treatment cost discussions, hotel services and sim card facilities amongst others.

It has been observed that a large number of Omani visit Jaslok Hospital for advanced treatments, and hence the launch of this coordination centre is the need of the hour.

Speaking on the occasion, Jitendra Haryan, CEO of Jaslok Hospital, said, "We are thrilled to be expanding our services and offerings to patients beyond our country. We would like to extend our heartiest gratitude to the government of Oman, which has extended its support in establishing this project. We would also like to thank the doctors in our team, who have come out of their comfort zone to make this successful. We believe this initiative is going to be impactful in the field of healthcare and with the success of this project, we look forward to collaborating with many more countries."

Mihir Vora, Founder & CEO of Magnus Medi said, "We are glad to join hands with Jaslok Hospital to assist all the Omani citizens through our Oman office. Jaslok Hospital is well-known to Omanis and we believe this coordination centre will substantially enhance the service delivery and help provide comfort to the patients. Magnus Medi is thankful to the management team of Jaslok Hospital, Abdul Nabi of Al - Miri and the Government of Oman for their support in the initiative."

The launch event was presided over by dignitaries such as Jitendra Haryan, CEO of Jaslok Hospital, George Alex, COO & CMO, Jaslok Hospital, Mihir Vora, Founder & CEO of Magnus Medi, and CEO of Jaslok Oman; and Abdul Nabi al Balushi, Founder of Al Miri & Country Head for Jaslok Oman.

CAMPAIGN

Yokohama Tyres unveils exciting promotion

MUSCAT: Yokohama Tyres Oman recently unveiled an exciting campaign for customers.

On cash purchase of 4 passenger car tyres, customers will get a free Lulu shopping voucher worth OMR5, instantly. On purchase of 4 Ultra High Performance tyres or Four Wheel Drive tyres, customers will get a free Lulu shopping voucher worth OMR10, instantly. The offer is valid until September 29. (Offer only for DOT 2022 from Saud Bahwan Group tyre retail outlets and authorised dealers.)

Yokohama tyres are engineered to meet the demanding operating conditions in Oman. Yokohama's state-of-the-art technology ensures top-notch safety and reliable performance.

Yokohama tyres have always stood out when it comes to safety and reliability. Every Yokohama tyre is engineered to offer excellent road grip and comfortable smooth drive, in addition to extended tyre life.

The Yokohama Rubber Co. Ltd. is one of the world's leading manufacturers of rubber products, offering an extensive range of tire, rubber and adhesive products. Established in 1917, Yokohama Rubber in its 100th centennial, has expanded its worldwide business scope with a line-up of high-technology products meeting customer needs in the fields of automobiles, civil engineering, construction, marine engineering, aerospace and sporting goods.

In Oman, Saud Bahwan Automotive markets Yokohama Tyres with a nationwide network of 40 branches and over 300 dealers. The company's complete product line includes tyres for high-performance, light truck, passenger car, commercial truck and bus and off-the-road mining and construction applications. The company has a wide network of tyre service centres across Oman, which has state of the art equipment, catering to the tyre service needs of the ever-growing market.

AUTOMOTIVE WEEK

Maserati makes its presence at Monterey Car Week 2022

MONTEREY: Maserati had a prominent presence in Monterey, California, during the prestigious "Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance" weekend.

The event, which began with the North American debut of the MC20 Cielo – the new open-top version of the MC20 super sports car, continued with activities at the exclusive "House of Maserati" at Pebble Beach.

The culmination was the Trident brand displaying its latest addition at the "Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance".

On Friday, the MC20 Cielo was presented at "The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering" by Davide Grasso, Maserati Chief Executive Officer, and Bill Peffer, CEO of Maserati Americas, together with Klaus Busse, Head of Maserati Design. The 630-hp convertible version was the star of the show, with thousands of fans given the opportunity to admire the new car under the California sky. Also on display at The Quail were the new Grecale Trofeo performance? SUV and the MC20 Coupé super sports car,

Nearby, the elegant "House of Maserati" was created to provide a suitably luxurious representation of the Trident brand's style, offering its friends typical Italian 'La Dolce Vita' hospitality along with the option to experience the audio performance of the prestigious sound system from Sonus faber, one of the Modena automaker's partners. The "House of Maserati" was designed to give its guests a unique experience, featuring certain typical aspects of the brand's DNA - comfort, design, elegance and style.

On Sunday, at the main event in the "Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance", the MC20 Cielo was the true star of the show on the Concept Lawn, attracting the attention of all the fans who – for the first time in North America – could see up close a first-of-its-kind car, which can deliver the performance of a true super sports car, together with an immersive driving pleasure the like of which has never been seen before.

ROUND-UP

Rafeeq SHOP NOW rafeeq.om

All-new Nissan Altima built to unlock pure joy of driving

A winner on many levels, the 2.5 litre engine car is unquestionably luxurious, it enjoys superb build quality and comes with many standard features

MUSCAT: Nissan Altima is one of the year's best and most significant cars in its category. A spectacularly designed, feature rich sedan that does everything a high-end luxury car can do, but for much less.

A winner on many levels, the 2.5 litre engine car is unquestionably luxurious, it enjoys superb build quality and comes with many standard features.

The sixth-generation Nissan Altima continues to include attributes that have always been at the car's core — reliability, great resale, powertrains, premium interior design, plenty of space for occupants and luggage (436 litres), plus a fuel economy of 17.6 km/litre.

With an all-new 4-cylinder Direct Injection engine and 188 horsepower, it is not surprising it produces an impressive 17.6 km/litre while running quicker, quieter, and smoother than previous Altima engines. No wonder it is among today's front-running family sedans.

The stand out attribute of the car is the ProPILOT Assist-- offering less stress, more confidence, and an enjoyable driving experience. Using a forward-facing camera, forward-facing radar, sensors and electronic control module, ProPILOT Assist gives a helping hand in plenty of things—like keeping the driver centred in your lane and maintaining a preset distance from the vehicle ahead. Blending Nissan's Intelligent Cruise Control and Steering Assist technologies, ProPILOT brings the vehicle to a full stop, holds in place, and brings you back up to your set speed when traffic starts moving again.

Making you feel confident, excited, and connected, the available dynamic driving technology Nissan Intelligent Mobility truly helps you embrace the pure joy of being behind the wheel.

Advanced safety features

Featuring an extensive list of advanced safety features, the large sedan seats five people and comes with a suite of advanced driver-assistance equipment. While the safety features include front side and curtain airbags, around view monitor with moving object detection, automatic parking brake control and rearview camera. Driving Assistance equipment includes Blind Spot Warning (BSW), Cross Traffic Alert (CTA), Driver Attention Alert (DAA), Forward Emergency Brake (FEB), Forward Collision Warning (FCW), Lane Departure Warning (LDW), Lane Departure Prevention (LDP), High Beam Assist (HBA). Forward Emergency Braking and Intelligent Forward Collision Warning system uses a radar sensor located in the front of the vehicle to detect pedestrians and cars.

Like the designers conceptualised, the Altima interior is inclusive for all occupants, with a sense of barrier-free togetherness. Passengers and the driver feel visually connected in a harmonious space that balances form, function and ease of use.

Many factors contribute to the new Altima making the driver feel self-assured and in control – from the firm hold of the leather seats to the direct response of the engine and transmission, the reduced eye movement of the intuitive metres and controls, the high-quality materials and fit-and-finish, and the Intelligent Driving technologies that are always ready when needed.

The instrument panel features a standard 7-inch Advanced Drive Assist Display in front of the driver and an 8-inch center color display with multi-touch control with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto™ in the centre. With 9 speakers strategically placed throughout the cabin, custom-tuned by Bose engineers, the Bose Premium Audio System provides the richness and detail of a live performance. It also boasts AM/ FM, HD (MEX), 2 USB Ports, AUX, Bluetooth, Voice, WIFI andNFC.

The Nissan Altima has an enormous front grille with a front bumper that includes massive fog lights, a smooth muscular hood, and LED headlights with daytime running lights. The automobile has 19-inch wheels, front vented disk brakes, and rear disk brakes, as well as an electronically adjustable mirror with turning lights and chrome door handles. The tail has rear lights joined by a small chrome piece above the license plate, rear luggage access, a sunroof, and a standard back bumper with visible exhaust. ORVM electric adjustment, electric folding with turn signal, DRL, remote engine starter, heater with front seat position memory, paddle shift lever, power steering with leather paddle shift lever.

The exterior color palette of the new Altima also takes a big step away from ordinary. Along with the whites, silvers and black, two Altima-specific colours - Scarlet Ember and Sunset Drift - are designed to drape the expressive body with a standout sense of richness and energy.

In addition to design, luxury and performance, first-rate dependability, top safety scores and impeccable value—Nissan Altima occupies a top spot for comfort and fuel-thrifty features.

There are plenty of reasons to buy this incredible car -- as for me the roomy cabin and comfy seats, plenty of modern technology, a balanced driving experience, and great fuel efficiency are all plusses of selecting a Nissan Altima.

OPENED IN MALL OF OMAN

Alghanim Industries brings Costa Coffee back to Oman

MUSCAT: Costa Coffee returns to Oman under the new banner of Kuwaiti powerhouse Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region.

The first Costa Coffee Oman store is now officially open in the Mall of Oman, with four more slated to open before the end of the year across the Sultanate of Oman.

"Coffee poses a long-standing culture across the region and the Gulf with special traditions rooted in centuries of rich history. We are thrilled to be bringing back our world-class, hand-crafted coffee to customers in Oman," expressed Phil Broad, Vice President of Food and Beverages at Alghanim Industries.

Bill Murray, British Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, distinguished guests, Costa Coffee executives, and Alghanim Industries representatives all attended the opening of Costa Coffee at the Mall of Oman. With a successful track record in success in creatively localising Costa Coffee across the region, Alghanim Industries' entry and expansion in the Sultanate of Oman comes with a focus on empowering local communities.

"Alghanim Industries is excited to be embarking on a brand-new chapter with the homegrown Omani talent it aims to nurture through Costa Coffee," said Broad. "The shared commitment between our companies comes with a larger focus on the community, and we can't wait to celebrate all the creativity that will materialise from our upcoming partnerships and collaborations with Omani chefs, coffee experts and the many talents Oman is known for."

Having acquired developmental rights for Costa Coffee in Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in 2019, Alghanim Industries has ensured all its operations employ both local produce and local talent. From a localised pipeline of fresh produce and fresh dairy products to communal events championing the youth, Costa Coffee's community-focused approach makes for an exemplary entry for Alghanim Industries in Oman.

NOBLE PRACTICE

Zubair Corp organises blood donation drive

MUSCAT: The Zubair Corporation recently organised a blood donation drive next to the Mitsubishi showroom in coordination with the Department of Blood Banks Service in the Ministry of Health.

The event was attended by Al Zubair Mohammad Al Zubair, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors. The event also hosted Ahmed Hamad Al Kharusi, who donated more than 170 times so far, setting an example in this field.

Commenting on organizing this event, Hilal Omar Al Siyabi, Chief Corporate Services Officer at The Zubair Corporation said, "The Zubair Corporation has always believed in the necessity of aligning the economic and social activities of the business. In this context, we celebrate again by having a blood donation drive for the corporation's employees. It is one of the constant activities that we are keen to have because of its important impact on the health level, and we encourage everyone capable of donating to donate as much as possible."

He added, "I take this opportunity to thank Ahmed Al Kharusi for his participation in this event, as this participation had a positive impact in inspiring the employees to follow his example in the future."

From his side, Ahmed Al Kharusi expressed, "I am pleased to participate with The Zubair Corporation in the blood donation event, which is one of the noble practices that we strive to spread in the Sultanate. As blood donation is directly related to saving the lives of people who need this donation, and it also enhances the stock levels of blood banks in the Sultanate. Therefore, I encourage everyone to make such actions a good habit that accompanies them for life, because of its importance in saving the lives of others."

Blood donation is generally considered one of the activities beneficial to humans, as the World Health Organization confirms its positive role in increasing the activity of the bone marrow to produce new blood cells, and increase the activity of blood circulation, in addition to its role in controlling the iron level in the blood, where the imbalance of this ratio is one of the causes of heart disease and arterial blockage. Studies have also proven that those who donate their blood at least once a year are less likely to develop circulatory diseases and leukaemia.

The Zubair Corporation is one of the leading companies that had a positive role in the development of the local community. For more than five decades, the Corporation has been and continues to be one of the institutions that have a wide presence in the field of serving the Omani society.

The corporation's community initiatives vary at the level of fields and at the level of the geographical area to include the various governorates of the Sultanate and all segments of society.

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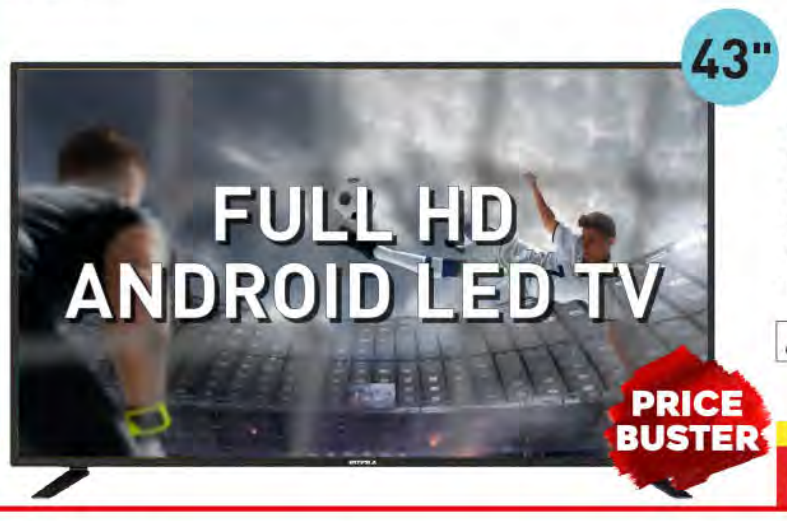

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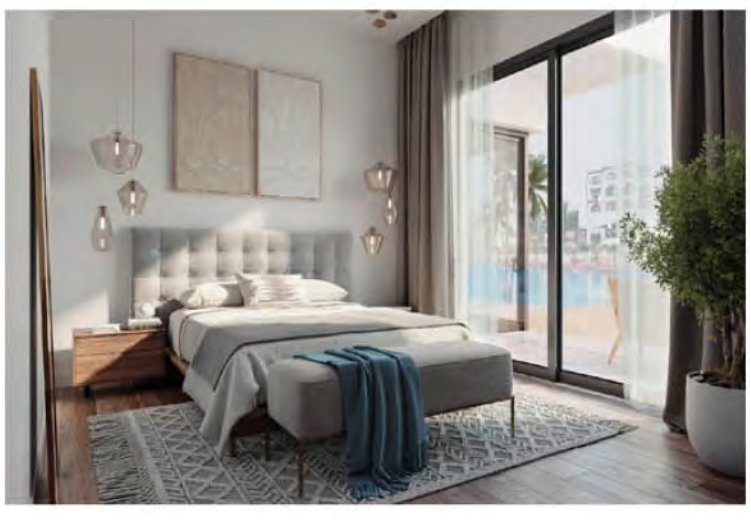

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