LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN

HM GREETS PRESIDENT OF CHINA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China on the occasion of the Chinese New Year. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Jinping. His Majesty also wished the people of China further progress and prosperity and the historic relations between the two countries further development and growth. **-ONA**

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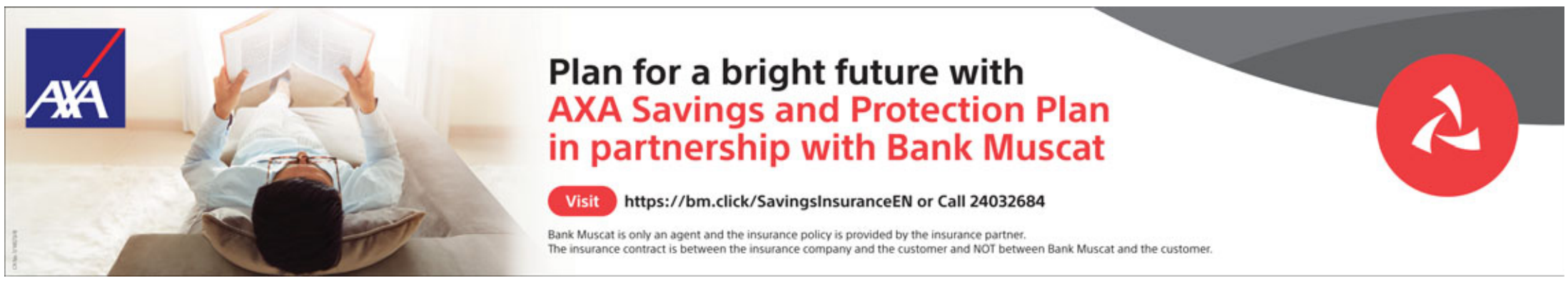


TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Sayyid Theyazin to open Oman Sustainability Week

1 OSW will kick off on 14 March under the patronage of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth. >A2

WORLD

Myanmar people must be 'heard': UN

2 UN Secretary-General says he stands "with the people" of Myanmar, and for a return to an inclusive, democratic society. >A6

MARKET

Finance ministry to hold monthly reviews

3 Workshop clarifies the mechanism used within the initiative of adjusting the financial performance of the State Budget. >B1

PANDEMIC

Oman reports over 33,000 COVID-19 cases in January

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 33,000 new infections have been reported in the Sultanate of Oman in January this year. This makes January the fourth highest in terms of new infections in a month since the beginning of the pandemic in February 2020, a data analyst and social activist said.

Ibrahim Al Maimani, a data analyst, said: "The total number of new infections in January was 33,272 at a daily average of 1,073, while in December, it was 1,068.

The month-wise incidence of new infections in January was the fourth highest ever since the pandemic began in February 2020.

January 2021 recorded the highest incidence with the number of infections standing at 51,321. This was followed by July 2020 with 39,089 new infections and April 2021 with the number of infections standing at 34,886."

Al Maimani pointed out that the number of recoveries in January this year was 14,733 with a daily average of 475, while in December, just 412 recoveries were reported each day. The number of active cases in January was 19,584 dipping the recovery rate to 93 per cent."

"There was a marked increase in the number of inpatients at hospitals. While at the beginning of the January there were just 14 cases, their number shot up to 320 cases at the end of the month." >A5

Interior Minister, Saudi counterpart visit Empty Quarter checkpoint **A2**

THE MOST COMMON CRIMES IN OMAN

BOUNCED CHEQUES - **7,143** | CYBERCRIMES - **2,864** | VIOLATION OF RESIDENCY LAWS - **2,858** | DRUGS - **2,749**
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS - **2,340** | VIOLATION OF THE LABOUR LAW - **2,166** | VIOLATION OF TRAFFIC LAWS - **2,034**
VIOLATION OF THE CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW - **2,002** | THEFT AND EXTORTION OF MONEY - **1,918** | FRAUD - **1,685**

18% RISE IN PUBLIC PROSECUTION CASES IN 2021

Public Prosecution Department, National Centre for Statistics and Information and other authorities are coordinating efforts to figure out the reason for the rise

Despite a rise in number of cases reported in 2021, crime is under control: Attorney General

MUSCAT: The number of cases reported in 2021 stood at 28,201, an increase of 18.3 percent over 2020, the Public Prosecution Department has said.

Speaking at a press conference held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Monday, Attorney General Nasr Khamis Al Sawa'ee said that the Public Prosecution Department is currently coordinating with the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) and other authorities to figure out the cause of the rise in criminal cases in 2021, but he affirmed that "the criminal curve does not constitute a danger in itself".

The press conference reviewed important issues, statistics, judicial discretions and the number of suspects and verdicts in 2021.

Al Sawa'ee added that the Public Prosecution Department applied mitigated procedures when gathering data and conducting interrogations prior to trial.

The procedures undertaken included non-application of pretrial arrest or confiscation of documents, he said, noting that this led to quick clearance of claims. In reply to a question by Oman News Agency about whether rumours spread in social media had any role in the emergence of behaviour trends alien to Omani society, Al Sawa'ee affirmed the correlation between such rumours and negative behaviour. He said that it is the duty of mainstream media to address this issue.

Al Sawa'ee pointed out that, through coordination with the State's Financial and Administrative Audit Institution (SAI), a total of 107 cases of tampering with public funds were reported in 2021. These include 33 cases of mishandling of public funds by a government official to draw personal benefit, 26 cases of misuse of profession, 120 cases of bringing benefit to other parties and 9 cases of failure to perform one's duties deliberately.

Al Sawa'ee said that he looked forward to online investigation and litigation and that the Public Prosecution Department floated a tender for this purpose in 2021.

Common cases include 1,470 cases of insult, 322 cases of violating the sanctity of private life, 270 cases of threatening individuals and 29 cases of blackmail.

Speaking about the indicators of cases in 2021, Dr. Ahmed Al Shukaili, Assistant Attorney General and official spokesman of the Public Prosecution Department said that with 11,719 Muscat Governorate accounted for 41.6 percent of the cases. >A3

INNOVATION

Green method for wastewater treatment in Oman wins environmental award

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An environment-friendly process to treat and recycle wastewater in Oman has won an award from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The process involves a wetland system consisting of locally sourced gravel, sand, and reeds to treat wastewater by natural methods so that it can be repurposed for irrigation.

Built on an area spanning 995 square metres in the premises of the wastewater treatment plant in Quriyat, the system was designed for Omani climatic conditions, using no mechanical parts.

The treatment system was designed by Buthaina Al Wahaibi, Mahad Baawain, Dr Alexandros Stefanakis, Dr Tahereh Jafary, Dr Mortaza Aghbashli, Dr Meisam Tabatabei and Dr Abdullah Al Mamun, for which they were awarded the Annual Research Award for 2021 in the category of Best Published Research Led by a Young Researcher (non-PhD holder) in the Environment and Biological Resources Sector.

Increasing need

Dr Alexandros Stefanakis, who worked on the project, and is employed as an assistant professor at the Technical University of Crete in Greece, explained the increasing need to focus on more and more environmentally sustainable solutions.

"It is only now that we realise the magnitude of the global environmental problems and their impact," said Stefanakis, who is also a Climate Pact Ambassador for the European Commission. "For decades – or even centuries – economic growth followed the so-called linear model of 'take-make-consume-waste', which is based on the continuous extraction of natural resources and the subsequent creation of products, and eventually waste.

Limited resources

"This process resulted in environmental issues we are all aware of, from climate change and global warming, to local water and soil pollution," he added. "However, we know now that natural resources are limited and eventually will be depleted if we continue with this thoughtless extraction, while the international scientific community continues to warn (us) about the irreversible impact of our actions, if we don't respond now. >A2

OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr....12:25pm
Asr....3:35pm
Maghrib....5:58pm
Isha....7:11pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).... 5:30am

Sayyid Theyazin to open Oman Sustainability Week on March 14

The Sultanate is committed to the principles of sustainability and has spearheaded innovative growth plans for the country

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Sustainability Week (OSW), a national-level event dedicated to sustainability, will be hosted under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said who will inaugurate the week on March 14, 2022, at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Acknowledging the need for sustainable development to achieve economic growth, attain social inclusion and protect the country's environment, the Sultanate has been committed to the principles of sustainability and has spearheaded innovative programmes that advocate its quintessential role in the development of the country.

In a press conference organised on January 31, 2022 at Crowne Plaza Qurum, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), CONNECT (Oman Exhibitions Organising Company LLC), in partnership with Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah) and the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) announced the dates for the Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) event to be organised under the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

The press conference highlighted the role of sustainable development and Oman's stance in the matter and also featured distinguished panellists including Abdul-Amir Ajmi Al Ajmi, External Affairs and Value Creation Director at PDO, Dr. Mohab Al Hinai, Head of Centre for Sustainability and Circular Economy, be'ah, Chokri Ben Amor, Committee Chairperson of the Gaia Summit, Muhanad Al Kiyumi, Business Partner - CEO Alternative Energy from OQ, Ghada Al Yousef, Executive Manager of Nama Group and Malak Al-Shaibani, External Relations Country General Manager of Shell Development Oman.

"Sustainable development is not a choice but a prerequisite for development. It is essential that we strike the right balance between economic growth and conservation of our environment," said Al Ajmi.

"In line with the goals laid out in Oman Vision 2040 to achieve a developed, diversified, and sustainable national economy, there has been an immense concentration on the efficient utilisation of technology and optimisation of resources to ensure a sustainable approach to increasing consumption and GDP. Strategic national events like OSW will reinforce sustainable development as a key feature of governance and highlight its critical role in the diversification of the economy. With several projects already underway, Oman has been dedicated to achieving a green economy through green strategies and renewable energy production."

Aligning itself to the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and engaging the national development stakeholders to present Oman as a model for sustainable development,the week-long event will comprise of an exhibition, conference, thought leadership summit, site visits, and awards.

While the Oman Sustainability Week Expo will showcase an exhibition featuring the latest sustainability technologies, solutions, and initiatives from across the world, the International Sustainability Resources and Technology Conference (ISRTC), which is set to be held from 14 to 16 March, will connect local and global stakeholders to foster constructive debate and enhance cross-collaboration.

The C-level thought leadership, Gaia Summit, will be scheduled from 13 to 14 March, and the OSW site visits on the final day of the week will offer attendees an opportunity to visit projects that are at the forefront of building a sustainable environment across the country.

Meanwhile, the OSW Awards, which is slated to be held on 13 March, will honour the vital contributions to sustainability that have helped businesses to set themselves apart from competitors.

OSW foresees the active participation of over 100 companies from more than 20 countries and the attendance of 5,000 individuals, including industry stakeholders, policymakers, sustainability experts, and industry leaders from Oman, the wider GCC, and other parts of the world.

In accordance with the prevalent COVID-19 situation, all protocols will be adhered to during the course of the event including maintaining a 50% capacity, temperature checks,proof of vaccination, and the wearing of face masks.

In line with Oman's National Energy Strategy and to achieve the country's sustainability goals of building a green and circular economy that addresses national needs and moves consistently with the global trends, OSW will further encourage energy independence, generation of revenues from non-traditional natural resources, and innovation in infrastructure to produce affordable and clean energy for the protection of the climate and environment.

Mohammed Al Harthy, Executive Vice President - Strategic Development, be'ah said, "be'ah and sustainability initiatives go hand-in-hand. It is an honour for be'ah to be part of the OSW, which is a platform to learn, share, and educate as Oman takes a bigger and more determined stride towards a sustainable future."

With PDO, be'ah, Nama and OQ acting as Strategy Partners of the event, OSW will reaffirm the Sultanate's position on the global map as a country that prioritises, incorporates and advocates sustainability in all its initiatives.

SUSTAINABLE MODELS

< FROM A1

Green technologies to cut environmental impact

"This is the trigger and the motivation to adopt sustainable principles and practices and move to a different model of economic growth: that of a circular economy, where treated water or solid waste is viewed as a new resource, and where green technologies are developed to minimise environmental impact. And this is why nature-based solutions, such as the one studied in this research project, perfectly achieve this goal."

The water treatment project in Quriyat was done for Haya Water, in collaboration with The Research Council Fund, and Sultan Qaboos University. Seen as a cost-effective solution that has environmental as well as economic benefits, the green wastewater treatment plant is one that can be used on a small, as well as large-scale, and requires minimum operation and maintenance.

Until about two years ago, Stefanakis was employed in Oman, working as an engineer specialising in constructed wetlands, implementing green projects for sustainable waste management in the region. He is currently working on a host of other environmental projects around the world, including eight research studies across Africa, Europe and the US.

He is also overseeing three wetlands projects in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran. In Brazil, one of the largest systems is under construction for sustainable treatment of wastewater from mines. In Lebanon, he is involved in building another full-scale wetland system, while in Egypt, he just completed a project involving the cleanup of a polluted river using natural solutions.

"If we continue to follow unsustainable growth models, the consequences will be devastating," explained Stefanakis. "We can already observe rise in global temperature, increasing frequency and intensity of catastrophic events and extreme weather phenomena, and a decrease in ice cover in the Arctic. All these global issues are also expressed at national and local levels across the world. We can all understand the effects of these phenomena on society, our health and our ecosystems. Of course, we can imagine the major impact this will have on our economies.

"I believe that although many countries are doing a lot, we are not doing all that is necessary," he admitted. "Although there are many suggestions, initiatives and guidelines by international organisations, the adoption rate of these practices is not very satisfying. The climate crisis has now reached a point where we do not have time to waste. There is strong scientific evidence that this decade will be a decisive one in terms of whether we will reach the targets set by the Paris Agreement.

"This means that we should transform and decarbonise our economies much faster than we are doing it right now," he added. "Of course, this is not an easy process. But, the future of our children depends on our actions today."

PLAQUE UNVEILED

Interior Minister, Saudi counterpart visit Empty Quarter checkpoint

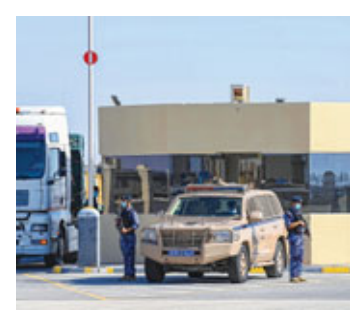
MUSCAT: Sayyid Hamoud Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior and Prince Abdulaziz Saud Al Saud, Minister of Interior Saudi Arabia (KSA) yesterday went on tour of the Empty Quarter border checkpoint, which connects Oman and the KSA.

During their tour, the commemorative plaque was unveiled. The two ministers inspected the work progress and services provided in the checkpoint.

The checkpoint, which was opened on 7 December 2021, is considered a bridge that deepens relations and enhances social communication.

It will also boost shipping and the movement of goods, resulting in the increase of trade exchange between the two countries. Moreover, it will support activities in various economic, tourism and investment sectors.

On the sidelines of the visit, the two ministers reviewed the bilateral relations and exchanged views on cooperation-related areas. They also discussed several matters of common interest to enhance the march of relations between the two countries.



Several officials from both sides were present during the visit, including the Inspector General of Police and Customs, the Minister of Transport, Communication and Information Technology and the ambassadors of the two countries. -ONA

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

Royal Opera House Muscat to present Anastasia from Belarus

CULTURAL HISTORY: Anastasia opens the ballet with a scene depicting her as a young girl falling in love for the first time.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat is delighted to present Anastasia from the acclaimed National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre.

Inspired by the legendary love story of a prince and a princess in times long past, the ballet portrays a snapshot of the cultural history of Belarus.

Masterfully choreographed

Drama, betrayal, masterfully choreographed battles and magnificent court scenes are the backdrop for this story of loyalty and love.

Anastasia opens the ballet with a scene depicting her as a young girl falling in love for the first time with Mikhail, a young man who is on the cusp of adventure.

Prince Simeon

He leaves her bereft and heartbroken. Years later, Anastasia marries Prince Simeon and Mikhail reappears at court after a long time at war and realises his love and loss.

Time passes again and the fighting spills over into the court, Mikhail is embroiled in the attack and the king, Simeon is killed.

Anastasia is taken prisoner by the warlord and given to Mikhail as spoils of war.

He, out of love and pity, gives her freedom. Anastasia raises an army and takes back her country. Mikhail fights on her side finally.

The strong tradition of ballet in Belarus has been evolving progressively since the nineteenth century and is now one of the finest in the world.

Bolshoi Theatre

The Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus is a landmark in the country, as well as on the international landscape. Anastasia premiered in October 2018 and reflects the National Bolshoi Theatre's ongoing commitment to the creation of new works in the classical tradition.

All visits to the opera house are conducted under the guidelines of the Supreme Committee responsible for measures to tackle the development of COVID-19.

Social distancing is maintained throughout the building and the wearing of facemasks is mandatory.

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Expatriates aged over 60 could help sharpen workers' skills in Oman

The Minister specifically pointed out to expats in skilled professions like academics, researchers and consultants in hospitals

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The expertise of the 20,000 or so expatriates aged above 60 and working in Oman can be used to improve the skills of their younger colleagues, the Minister of Labour, Dr Mahad Ba'owain has said.

The minister's comments came following the issue of a circular enabling the renewal of work visas for expatriates above 60 years of age.

"The interpretation of the circular is very simple...the idea here pertains to a company or organisation that has achieved the required Omanisation percentage, and have job openings that are either not reserved solely for Omanis, or for which there is no room for Omanis to be appointed," he said, speaking to Oman TV.

"We do not see why the Ministry of Labour – in such cases – must interfere in renewing an employee's work permit, as long as the company where he is employed feels that he is still producing and doing good work for the company, even if he is above 60," he added. "There is no objection in renewing his work visa, as long his company deems it appropriate to do so."

Ba'owain specifically pointed out to expatriates employed in a number of skilled professions, including academics and research in universities and consultants in hospitals, who do a tremendous amount of valuable work to improve the quality of service provided at their place of work.

"This does not mean that we have taken the decision to deprive eligible Omanis of work – if there is an Omani present who is compatible with the job the expatriate worker is doing, and if he holds the necessary skills, qualification and experience, then it is possible that the expatriate worker can be replaced, if their employer so desires," he added.

The Minister of Labour stressed there were about 400 or 500 Omani nationals who left the public sector last year, because they had reached the age of retirement from government offices, and were offered senior roles by private companies.

"It was impossible for companies to take fresh graduates or new job seekers to fill these roles," he explained. "Once a government employee reaches the age of 60, they are required to retire from government posts, but let us not forget that these people are still capable, and have local experience of more than 20 years.

"We felt it better to allow Omanis to take up these supervisory roles, rather than hire expatriates from overseas," he added. "We could have prevented these retirees from working in the private sector, but to enable and encourage them to work is a far better decision."

Ba'owain explained that the Ministry of Labour needed to stay open to the manner in which employers choose to renew the work permits for non-Omani staff aged 60 and above, given the experience and skills they bring with them.

"There are about 1.5 million expatriate workers in Oman, among whom those above 60 amount to just 20,000 or 25,000, so there is no need for much resentment or excess discussion over their presence at work," said the minister.

The circular permitting expatriate workers aged 60 and above was issued to Nasr Al Hosani, the Undersecretary for Labour at the Ministry of Labour, and stated as follows:

"We would like to inform you that in view of the current state of the private sector and the large number of requests for exceptions to renew licences for expatriate manpower above the age of 60, I ask your Excellency to instruct your staff to cancel the 60-year age cap for workers in the private sector and take appropriate measures."

CRIME

< FROM A1

Biggest rise in Dhofar

Muscat was followed by North Al Batinah Governorate with 4,098 cases or 14.5 percent.

Al Shukaili added that by comparing the total number of cases in 2020 and 2021, it appeared that the greatest percentage of rise in cases occurred in the Governorate of Dhofar (52 percent), followed by South Al Batinah Governorate (34 percent).

He explained that premeditated murder cases went up in 2021 (13 cases) as against nine cases in 2020. Cases involving public funds and money-laundering reported in 2021 rose slightly to 138 in 2021, compared to 132 in 2020, said Al Shukaili, adding that cases of human trafficking reported in 2021 stood at 17, compared to 7 in 2020. He pointed out that the number of felonies reported to the Public Prosecution Department in 2021 rose by 73 to 1,255 cases, or 6.2 percent higher than the figure in 2020, which was 1,182 cases.

The number of cases of misdemeanors reported to the Public Prosecution Department in 2021 went up by 18.5 percent (26,630), compared to 2020, when it was 22,468, Al Shukaili further said.

He added that the number of suspects registered in 2021 stood at 34,873 or 16 percent higher than the figure in 2020, which was (30,069). The number of juveniles in 2021 constituted 2.1 percent of the total number of suspects. Gender-wise, he added that the number of males constituted 89.5 percent of suspects in 2021, compared to 89.8 percent in 2020.

Dr. Ahmed Al Shukaili, Assistant Attorney General and official spokesman of the Public Prosecution Department, said that the total number of verdicts issued in 2021 stood at 10,350 partial verdicts, less by 3.3 percent or 349 verdicts in 2020.

He said that the number of verdicts enforced in 2020 stood at 10,699 partial verdicts. The number of non-enforced verdicts till the end of 2021 stood at 1,420. The percentage of verdicts enforced in 2021 constituted 87.9 percent of the total number of verdicts. Only 12.1 percent of the verdicts on funds collected as "public right" in 2021 are in the process of execution, he said.

He also pointed out the crime of presenting dishonoured cheques (without sufficient funds) top the list of 10 most common crimes in 2021 with 7,143 cases, followed by crimes of information technology and digital transactions (2,864), violation of expatriate residency (2,858), the use of drugs and psychotropic substances (2,749), violation of human liberty and human dignity (2,340), violation of the Labour Law (2,166), violation of the Traffic Law (2,034), violation of the Consumer Protection Law (2,002), theft (1,918) and blackmail (1,685). -ONA

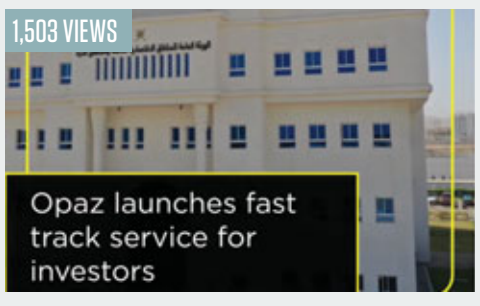
Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

Story on remittance for expats in Oman

A story on remittance for expats in Oman reached 33,098 people and had 2,634 engagements on Facebook.

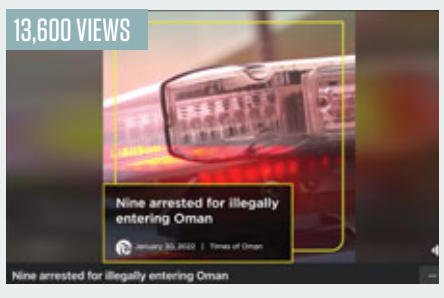
MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM



Morning Minute video on fast track service by OPAZ

The Morning Minute video on fast track service by OPAZ had 1,503 views and 70 likes on Instagram.

MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK



Maghrib Minute video

The Maghrib Minute video had 13,600 views and reached 43,100 people on Facebook.

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OFFICIAL VISIT

Foreign minister conveys HM's greetings to Syrian president

DAMASCUS: President Dr. Bashar Al Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic received Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister who is on an official visit to Damascus.

During the meeting, Sayyid Badr conveyed greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik along with his best wishes of good health and happiness to President Al Assad, and the friendly Syrian people progress.

On his turn, the Syrian President asked Sayyid Badr to convey his sincere greetings and best wishes to His Majesty the Sultan, and the Omani people continuous prosperity and welfare.

The meeting reviewed the relations between the two countries. It also laid emphasis on the joint keenness to develop these relations and back the endeavours to restore regional security and stability.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Faisal Mekdad, Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Sayyid Turki Mahmoud Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Syria and the delegation accompanying the Foreign Minister. -ONA

TALKS

Oman, Syria to boost relations

DAMASCUS: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister held here a session of political talks with Dr. Faisal Mekdad, Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates.

The talks covered the fraternal relations between the two countries and means of promoting cooperation between them in various spheres to enhance joint interests and realise aspirations of the two countries' peoples.

The talks also laid emphasis on the keenness of the two countries' leaderships to enhance and develop these relations in all fields.

The two sides also exchanged views on the latest developments of current issues of common concern.

They also underscored the importance of dialogue and resolving various issues through peaceful political solutions in a manner that serves aspirations of peoples and contributes in prevailing security and stability, as well as realising progress and prosperity in the region.

The talks were attended by Dr. Bashar Al Jaafari, Syrian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Sayyid Turki Mahmoud Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Syria and the delegation accompanying the Foreign Minister. -ONA

OCCI explores trade opportunities with Finnish business delegation

Al Saleh added that practical steps are required to enhance trade relations and to boost trade exchange

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) reviewed investment opportunities with a Finnish business delegation led by Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade.

The meeting also highlighted aspects of enhancing cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries, particularly in the fields of industry, technology and services.

Eng. Ridha Juma Al Saleh, Chairman of OCCI said that the trade exchange between the two countries is below aspirations as it reached $2.398 billion by June 2021. Exports from Oman reached $205.095 million whereas imports reached $2.191 billion.

Al Saleh added that practical steps are required to enhance trade relations and to boost trade exchange.

He hoped that this meeting would contribute in exploring areas of partnership in new fields particularly in the mining, real estate, industry, health sectors and transfer of knowledge.

In his turn, the Finnish minister underscored his country's keenness in developing relations between the two countries in various fields.

Finnish companies

He affirmed the preparedness of Finnish companies in actively contributing to the efforts of economic diversification by setting up partnerships with Oman's private sector. A presentation was given on the investment opportunities available in the Sultanate of Oman, which have been launched by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. Of those, 72 opportunities are in the industrial sector and are ready for investment.

Moreover, B2B meetings were held between businesspeople from Oman and Finland. -ONA

PANDEMIC

< FROM A1

COVID-19 cases

"The number of intensive care cases at the beginning of January was 4, but by the end of the month, the number reached 52 cases, an increase of 48 cases," he added

Similarly, the number of deaths stood at 30 in January, while in December, just 3 deaths were reported.

Invitation to Tender

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C (DISC) invites reputable contractor for carrying out following works in Dhofar Region.

Tender Reference No	Title of the Tender
DISC/W/Tender/2022/002	Operation and Maintenance of Distribution and Transmission Pipelines, Wells, Tanker Filling Stations and Booster Pump Stations of Salalah Region Zone - 1

Tender Fee	**RO. 105.000 Inclusive VAT (5%)** **Note:** Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tender should collect the tender document from DISC's office or send an e-mail to below mention mail id for tender document.
Experience	• Proven track record of minimum eight (8) years of experience as an operation and maintenance service provider for a water utility. • Turnover higher than Omani Rials Eight Hundred Thousand (800,000) R.O. for each of the last five (5) years. • Quality and HSE requirements: The Tenderer shall have the following certified systems or equivalent: Quality Management System: ISO 9001 series. The Tenderer must show previous experience in similar operation and maintenance of water systems of (Distribution and Transmission Pipelines, Wells, Tanker Filling Stations and Buildings) of the DISC in Salalah region for a period of three (3) years.
Pre-qualification	The Tenderer should be a registered business owner with proper commercial registration certificate and Oman chamber of commerce and Industry certificate in Sultanate of Oman.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 15th February 2022
Site Visit	10:00 AM on 16th February 2022
Last date for seeking pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 21st February 2022
Last date for response pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 24th February 2022
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 3rd March 2022
Any Queries Please Contact	**Phone 23232554, purchase@disc.nama.om**

Tenderers are requested to note that the bids accompanied with Tender Bond (1% of the quoted bid price and having 90 days validity) shall only be considered for evaluation.

شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة
Dhofar Integrated Services Company
إحدى شركات مجموعة نماء
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شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة
Dhofar Integrated Services Company
شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة | ص ب ٢٦٠٩ | الرمز البريدي ٢١١ | شارع ٢٣ يوليو خلف مركز صلالة الغربية الصحي | صلالة - محافظة ظفار | الرقم المجاني: ٨٠٠٧٧٧٠٠
P.O. Box: 2609, P.C.: 211, 23rd July Street, behind West Salalah Health Center Salalah, Sultanate of Oman - Toll Free: 80077700
info@disc.nama.om www.disc.nama.om

Invitation to Tender

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C (DISC) invites reputable consultancy for carrying out following works in Dhofar Region.

Tender Reference No	Title of the Tender
DISC/E/Tender/2022/008	Consultancy Support for ISO 55001 Certificate Renewal

Tender Fee	**RO. 105.000 Inclusive VAT (5%)** **Note:** Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tender should collect the tender document from DISC's office or send an e-mail to below mention mail id for tender document.
Experience	• The consultant shall have minimum 5 years' experience in Asset management field. • The auditor shall have an experience of 3 years in the AM auditing. • It is preferred that the consultant should hold accreditation form an international firm like (UKAS) or similar
Pre-qualification	The Consultancy firm should propose experienced consultants who have performed similar Services for at least two Utility companies, preferably in Middle East in line with best international practices and in conformity with relevant standards. Preference shall be given if similar Service performed in Oman. Tenderer's Proposals which do not include such evidence or where evidence is unsatisfactory to the Owner may not be considered.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 15th February 2022
Site Visit	-
Last date for seeking pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 20th February 2022
Last date for response pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 23rd February 2022
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 2nd March 2022
Any Queries Please Contact	**Phone 23232554, purchase@disc.nama.om**

Tenderers are requested to note that the bids accompanied with Tender Bond (1% of the quoted bid price and having 90 days validity) shall only be considered for evaluation.

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Dhofar Integrated Services Company
إحدى شركات مجموعة نماء
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OMAN/WORLD

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OMAN MARKET

Turkish Airlines raises flight frequency to Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Turkish Airlines has increased flight frequencies between Istanbul and Muscat. The carrier has strengthened its commitment to the Oman market by connecting two cities with eight weekly flights.

Flying to more countries than any other carrier, Turkish Airlines has increased the frequency of flights between Muscat and İstanbul from 7 to 8 flights per week as of January 29, 2022, thereby offering more choice and convenience.

This additional flight will improve connectivity between the two cities and over 330 destinations in 128 countries served by Turkish Airlines from its hub at Istanbul Airport. These additional frequencies will provide more connectivity for outbound passengers travelling from Oman and for inbound passengers travelling to Oman.

Flight No	Day of Week	Origin	Departure Time	Arrival Time	Destination
TK775	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday	Muscat	01:20	06:05	Istanbul
TK774	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday	Istanbul	18:30	00:20 +1	Muscat
TK861	Thursday, Sunday	Muscat	08:05	12:50	Istanbul
TK860	Thursday, Sunday	Istanbul	01:15	07:05	Muscat

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EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
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Voice of Myanmar people must be 'heard and amplified': UN

Armed clashes have grown in frequency and intensity throughout the country

CRISES: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has pointed towards the multiple crises that have resulted in human rights violations, and rising poverty.

NEW YORK: As Myanmar nears the first anniversary of the military coup that saw the arrest of national icon Aung San Suu Kyi and her civilian government dissolved, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday that he stands in "solidarity with the people", and for a return to an inclusive, democratic society.

In a statement issued by his Spokesperson, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the multiple crises which have resulted due an intensification of violence, human rights violations, rising poverty and indifference to worsening humanitarian conditions by the military regime.

"The multiple vulnerabilities of all people across Myanmar and its regional implications require an urgent response", the statement said.

Furthermore, humanitarian access to people in need is critically important for the United Nations and partners to continue to deliver on the ground. Armed forces and all stakeholders must respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The people of Myanmar need to see concrete results, the UN said in a statement.

The Burmese military overthrew the democratically elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint on February 1 last year, announcing a state of emergency, and imprisoning democratic leaders, while brutally suppressing street protests against the coup and imposition of martial law.

The statement said that last Friday, UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet reminded that around 12,000 remain arbitrarily detained for voicing their opposition, of which nearly 9,000 remain in custody, and at least 290 have died in detention, many likely tortured.

Armed clashes have grown in frequency and intensity throughout the country, while persecution against ethnic and religious minorities has grown, including against the Rohingya.

Bachelet said it was time for an "urgent, renewed effort" to restore human rights and democracy, and ensure that perpetrators of "systemic human rights violations and abuses are held to account."

According to the UN statement, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy Noeleen Heyzer, has been actively engaging all stakeholders in support of a Myanmar-led process.

"She will continue to mobilize immediate action, including through strengthened cooperation between the UN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to address the desperate needs of the people of Myanmar", said the UN chief's statement.

"This is crucial for creating an enabling environment for inclusive dialogue", added Guterres. -ANI

TROPICAL STORM

32 killed as Tropical Cyclone Ana sweeps across Malawi

LILONGWE: Malawi has recorded at least 32 deaths caused by the Tropical Cyclone Ana which tore across the country on Tuesday, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) said in a statement Sunday.

"As of today, DoDMA has recorded 32 deaths, 147 injuries and 20 missing persons, with 19 in Chikwawa and one in Mwanza," it said, adding that "a total of 187,930 households, approximately 845,685 people, have been affected."

Chikwawa and Nsanje are the country's worst-hit districts, accounting for most of the deaths and damage to houses, property, livestock, and crops caused by floods and strong winds induced by Ana. The country's power supply has also been disrupted.

Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera on Wednesday declared a state of disaster in 15 districts and appealed for humanitarian assistance from the international community.

Following the appeal, several organizations including Concern Worldwide, Malawi Red Cross Society, Partners in Health, Feed the Children, and Gift of the Givers have provided relief assistance for the country, according to DoDMA's Sunday update.

Meanwhile, DoDMA has dispatched over 1,000 metric tonnes of maize, maize flour, beans and salt to support the affected people living in temporary camps. Search and rescue operations are also underway.

Meanwhile, some other southern African countries have also been hit by the cyclone, with landfall in Angoche, Mozambique, and other destructions in Madagascar and Zimbabwe, the South African Weather Service said in a press release.

Nathan Nkomo, director of Zimbabwe's department of civil protection, told the *Sunday Mail* newspaper that the cyclone had left a trail of destruction in 13 districts of four provinces but caused no fatalities.

"The latest update shows that Ana directly affected all Mashonaland provinces and Manicaland ... There are over 282 houses and buildings that were damaged," he was quoted as saying. -ANI

FIERCE WINTER

Snowstorm pounds US east coast

WASHINGTON: A fierce winter storm clobbered much of the eastern United States on Saturday and into the early hours Sunday, dropping more than two feet of snow on some regions while packing powerful winds.

Thousands of flights were canceled and access to roads was curtailed as the blizzard flooded coastlines, prompted transportation chaos and caused power outages in the region that houses nearly 70 million people.

The storm battered parts of 10 states and blanketed a large part of New England with snow. Blizzard warnings on the eastern seaboard spanned from Virginia to Maine.

Major cities like Philadelphia and New York saw plenty of wind and snow but Boston was likely to face the brunt of the blizzard with forecasts that it could see up to 25 inches (64 cm) of snow.

"This is going to be a historic blizzard," Boston City Councilor Ruthzee Louijeune told news agency Reuters.

"It's the power of the wind and the amount of snow that makes this one particularly dangerous."

The National Weather Service (NWS) said the blizzard — the strongest winter storm in years — had intensified into a "bomb cyclone," marked by the explosive power of rapid drops in atmospheric pressure.

Freezing temperatures, flooding

The storm left a bitter cold in its wake, Authorities in Long Island said a woman had been found dead in her car by a snowplow operator.

Cold conditions stretched as far as Florida, where the NWS warned of "scattered to isolated falling iguanas from trees" as dipping temperatures temporarily paralysed the large lizards.

Coastal regions throughout Massachusetts were affected especially hard, including some as the center of the storm hovered just east of the Cape Cod area by Saturday afternoon. By Sunday, more than 100,000 in the state were without power.

Footage on social media showed wind and waves hammering North Weymouth, south of Boston, flooding the streets. Emergencies were declared in several states due to the storm which formed in the Atlantic Ocean off the Carolinas. -DW

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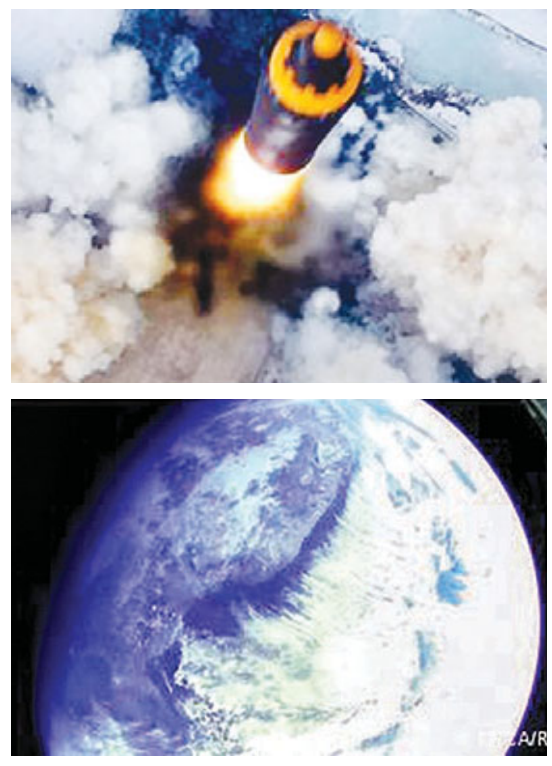
North Korea says Hwasong-12 ballistic missile test successful

North Korea said the missile was launched towards the waters off its east coast



LAUNCHED: KCNA reported that the purpose of the test was to verify the overall accuracy of the missile

PYONGYANG: North Korea confirmed on Monday it had tested a Hwasong-12 "mid-range ballistic missile" on Sunday, according to state news agency KCNA, and released photos purporting to show a successful test launch.

North Korea said the missile was launched toward the waters off its east coast and on a high angle to prevent it from flying over other countries.

KCNA reported that the purpose of the test was to verify the overall accuracy of the missile.

What did South Korean and Japanese authorities say?

The South Korean and Japanese government were the first to report North Korea's test on Sunday.

South Korea's joint chiefs of staff reported that a projectile believed to be a single missile was launched at around 7:52 a.m. local time (2252 UTC) from North Korea's northern Jagang province.

Later on Sunday, the joint chiefs of staff reported that the projectile had been identified as a medium-range missile that had flown 800 kilometres toward the open sea, reaching a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometres.

The Hwasong-12 is a nuclear-capable ground-to-ground missile. It has a maximum range of 4,500 kilometres if fired on a standard trajectory.

The reported flight details make it the most powerful missile North Korea has tested since 2017, when the country launched Hwasong-12 and longer-range missiles.

Japan's defense ministry and prime minister's office said the weapon was possibly a ballistic missile.

Japan's coast guard issued a maritime safety warning, but there were no immediate reports of damage to boats or aircraft.

Seventh weapons test this year

North Korea has intensified weapons testing recently in the face of stalled diplomacy with the United States.

Sunday's weapons test was North Korea's seventh this year.

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea on Thursday.

In a ruling party meeting chaired by Kim Jong Un on January 20, North Korean officials discussed resuming nuclear and long-range missile tests. North Korea has been observing a self-imposed moratorium on these tests since 2017.

North Korea also flight-tested two purported long-range cruise missiles on Tuesday, which it is not barred from testing by United Nations sanctions.

Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, told the AP news agency, "North Korea is launching a frenzy of missiles before the start of the Beijing Olympics, mostly as military modernization efforts."

"It wants to remind Washington and Seoul that trying to topple it would be too costly," he added.

International reactions

The US called on North Korea to refrain from further destabilizing acts, the US Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement.

The statement said the command assessed that the test did not pose an immediate threat to US territory, personnel or allies.

South Korea's national security council condemned the launch as a violation of the resolutions and a challenge to international peace efforts.

Japanese government spokesperson Hirokazu Matsuno said, "The ballistic missile launch and the ones before it are a threat to our country, the region and the international community."

"This series of launches violate UN resolutions and we strongly protest this action by North Korea," Matsuno added. DW

EMBASSY CLOSURE

US to shut down Afghan embassy, strip diplomats of immunity

KABUL: Afghan diplomats in the US have been informed that their embassy in Washington will be closed down and will also be stripped of their diplomatic immunity.

As per the sources familiar with the matter told Al Arabiya that the Afghan consulate missions in Los Angeles and New York would also be shut down, reported Pajhwok Afghan News.

It added the Afghan diplomats in the US had been informed via a memo at the beginning of the week that they would also be stripped of their immunity.

Al Arabiya also quoted a State Department official as saying there had been no change in the status of the Afghan mission or its personnel.

However, an unnamed diplomat told Al Arabiya, "They said there would be a shutdown of the embassy and the consulate missions," reported Pajhwok Afghan News.

Washington's move comes less than six months after the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the fall of Kabul to the Taliban.

The Taliban have not been recognized by much of the international community, including the United States.

Former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani saw his government collapse on August 15 after he fled the country and the Afghan security forces failed to prevent the Taliban from taking over. -ANI

REPORT REJECTED

Taliban reject UN report alleging over 100 Afghan govt officials killed after US exit

KABUL: The Taliban has rejected a UN report alleging more than 100 officials and members of the security forces from the previous government were killed by the Taliban or its affiliates following the US exit from Afghanistan.

This comes after reports emerged that more than 100 members of the Ashraf Ghani government, its security forces and people who worked with international troops have been killed since the Taliban seized power in August last year.

"The MoI (Ministry of Interior) rejected a UN report seen by Reuters alleging that over 100 officials & security force members of the previous govt were killed by the Islamic Emirate or its allies after the US pullout. The Islamic Emirate has killed no one following the general amnesty," the Taliban-led MoI was quoted as saying by TOLONews.

In this damning report, UN chief Antonio Guterres said that most of the deaths were reportedly resulted from extrajudicial killings by the Taliban or its affiliates, despite the general amnesty for those affiliated with the former government.

"Despite announcements of general amnesties for former members of the Government, security forces and those who worked with international military forces, [the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan] UNAMA continued to receive credible allegations of killings, enforced disappearances, and other violations" against former government and coalition members, the report said, as quoted by Al Jazeera.

Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, the UK and the US met in Oslo last Monday to discuss the situation in Afghanistan.

Following the meeting, the Western envoys in a statement raised concern about the importance of respect for human rights and the strong need for an inclusive and representative political system to ensure stability and a peaceful future for Afghanistan.

The Special Representatives urged the Taliban to do more to stop the increase of human rights violations, including arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, media crackdowns, extra-judicial killings, torture and prohibitions on women and girls' education, employment and freedom to travel without a male escort. -ANI

RESIGNED

Hong Kong minister quits over birthday party row

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's Secretary for Home Affairs Caspar Tsui resigned on Monday weeks after he attended a birthday party for a Hong Kong delegate to the Chinese national legislature.

Although the party was not illegal at the time, the city's health chief had warned people to avoid gathering in large groups after an outbreak of the virus.

Who else was there?

The party was held at a tapas restaurant on January 3 for the birthday of Witman Hung, a member of China's huge National People's Congress.

There were more than 200 people present, including top officials from the territory's police force, and immigration and anti-corruption bosses. Some 20 lawmakers also attended.

The guest list of those present came to light after health authorities tracked down an infected person who attended. It became a source of embarrassment for Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, whose government is pursuing a strict "zero-COVID" policy akin to Beijing's.

Photos of the party, leaked to local media, showed revelers singing karaoke and posing for group pictures without masks.

Authorities said Tsui had not used the government's contact tracing app when entering the restaurant, which is currently mandatory.

He also failed to wear a mask, despite rules that specify they should be worn when not eating or drinking.

Who is Caspar Tsui?

The 45-year-old Tsui was a rising star groomed by Hong Kong's largest pro-Beijing party, which has thrived under Hong Kong's new "patriots only" political system imposed by Beijing. The system criminalizes a large part of Hong Kong's traditional pro-democracy opposition.

"I have today tendered my resignation to the Chief Executive and intend to leave the post today," Home Affairs Minister Caspar Tsui said in a statement. "As one of the Principal Officials taking the lead in the anti-epidemic fight, I have not set the best example during the recent outbreak."

Tough restrictions in place

In a press conference, Lam said Tsui's conduct had "brought the Hong Kong government to disrepute, and it has caused a negative perception" to the public.

She criticized other officials for attending, saying they should have known better, but said Tsui had been the worst offender given his position overseeing anti-pandemic measures.

Hong Kong has sought to emulate China by keeping in place a zero-COVID policy that imposes some of the strictest restrictions when flareups occur.

A number of clusters of the omicron and delta variants of the COVID-19 virus have been detected since the party. The outbreaks have seen harsher restrictions imposed — including the shuttering of bars and gyms, and takeout-only service at restaurants. -DW

OMAN CRICKET CLUB (OCC)

Invitation To Attend AGM Meeting of the Oman Cricket Club to Elect New Board of Directors for the period 2022-2025

The Board of Directors of the Oman Cricket Club announces the holding of the AGM meeting with New Board of Directors Elections of the club on Monday, 21/3/2022 at 7:00 pm at Hotel Al Falaj. Members wishing to attend this meeting have to renew membership on or before Sunday at 13/3/2022 at 5:00 pm.

Members can renew their membership online through this link: **https://members.omancricket.org/**

All members wishing to contest the Elections for the Board of Directors must submit their nomination papers within 10 days of the date of this announcement i.e. between 1st-10th Feb 2022, to be submitted at the Oman Cricket Academy at Al Amirat, which meets the conditions specified in article (49) of the Sports Club Statute issued by ministerial decision No. 124/2008.

On the basis of article (18) of the Law on Special Bodies working in the field of sports issued by Decree No. 81/2007, the meeting is valid in the presence of the absolute majority of working members who are entitled to attend (half +1) if this majority is not available until 7:30 pm, the meeting is postponed to another meeting at 8:00 pm on the same day.

The second meeting is valid in the presence of (a quarter) of the working members who have the right to attend to discuss the agenda of the meeting.

Important observations:

- The club's doors are open to receive members two hours before the meeting.
- Each member must bring proof of his or her membership card & ID card to attend the meeting.
- The Club manager will be available at the Club from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, from Sunday to Thursday .
- For further inquiries, please contact the club's manager, **Mr. Iqbal,** on mobile number **99817786.**

Board of Directors

SPORTS

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Oman football team to play against Australia in World Cup qualifier today

MUSCAT: Oman will face Australia in a crucial encounter of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers, on Tuesday, 1 February.

Set to take place at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Boushar, the match will begin at 8pm. However, under the regulations of the Supreme Committee with regards to sporting events, fans will not be allowed to enter the stadium.

Should Oman win their game, they will move closer to third place in the group, leaving them with the possibility of still qualifying for this year's World Cup, which is to be held in Qatar.

The Australians, however, know that a win for them will take the visitors closer to automatic qualification for the event.

"The match is important for both teams," said Oman Coach Branko Ivankovic, at his pre-match presser. "Oman has to win, despite the fact that we have seven players out with COVID. The Australians are strong, but we will do our best to win the game."

Oman player Ahmed Al Khamisi added: "Winning the match is important for us, so that we can bag all three points."

Saudi Arabia top Oman's qualifying group with 19 points, followed by Japan (15) and Australia (14). Oman are on seven, the Chinese have four, and Vietnam are last with no points. -ONA

ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS

Barcelona's bid to sign Aubameyang and sell Dembélé

MADRID: The last day of the winter transfer window arrived in Spain with Barcelona hoping to seal the signing of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and find a buyer for Ousmane Dembélé.

Aubameyang arrived to finalize negotiations with the Catalan club after being stripped of the captaincy at Arsenal for disciplinary reasons.

Aubameyang, Arsenal's highest-paid player, would reportedly be accepting a hefty pay cut to join Barcelona as the club doesn't have a lot of salary cap space.

It has been slowly restructuring its finances after it couldn't keep Lionel Messi at the end of last season. Barcelona recently signed Spain international Ferran Torres only after defender Samuel Umtiti agreed to a salary reduction similar to the cuts other squad players had to take last year.

The arrival of Aubameyang would help Barcelona make up for the loss of Sergio Aguero who had to retire last year because of a heart condition and the possible departure of Dembélé after it couldn't reach agreement for his contract extension.

Two weeks ago, Barcelona told Dembélé he had to find a new team after his agents rejected several offers made to the French player over the last six months. Soccer director Mateu Alemany said the club only wanted "players who are committed to the future of the team."

Dembélé said he would not give in to blackmail and left open the possibility of staying at Barcelona, which reportedly set a 20-million-euro ($22.3-million-euro) fee for the 24-year-old forward, who can leave for free when his contract expires at the end of the season. Spanish media said Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) was negotiating a possible transfer for the player.

Barcelona broke its own record to sign Dembélé from Borussia Dortmund in 2017 with a deal, including add-ons, worth 147 million euros (then $175 million). Many fans questioned the transfer as it used up a good chunk of the 220 million euros (then $262 million) that Barcelona had received from PSG for Neymar just weeks before.

Dembélé was injured for long stretches of his first two seasons and only established himself as a regular starter last term.

He also played sparingly this season because of injuries and coronavirus.

Barcelona said Dembélé was a "no-show" in reporting for its last league match before the international break "because of an upset stomach." Before that, coach Xavi Hernández had not included him for a Copa del Rey game.

Among other possible deals, Valencia is set to reach an agreement for the loan of young Spain international Bryan Gil from Tottenham. League leader Real Madrid and defending champion Atlético Madrid are not expected to make any major moves, the Associated Press (AP) news reported. ONA

AWARD

PR Sreejesh wins World Games Athlete of the Year 2021 title

NEW DELHI: Hockey India on Monday congratulated the Indian men's hockey team goalkeeper PR Sreejesh for winning the World Games Athlete of the Year 2021 Award.

He became just the second Indian athlete after Indian Women's Hockey stalwart Rani to win this prestigious award. This was the ninth edition of the IWGA initiative that recognises and honours an athlete or a team for their outstanding performance in 2021, or for their social commitment or particularly fair behaviour.

A total of 24 athletes from 17 countries were nominated for this award from their respective sports by their international federations. The International Hockey Federation (FIH) had recommended Sreejesh's name for his outstanding efforts in the year 2021.

The winner of this prestigious award was adjudged through the online voting process and Sreejesh accumulated a mammoth 127,647 votes to bag this award. In 2019, Rani became the first from India to win the World Games Athlete of the Year with 199,477 votes.

The Olympics Bronze Medalist, who also became the first male athlete from the country to win this award, thanked his fans and well-wishers around the world for supporting and voting him for this honour.

"I'm very honoured to win this award. First of all, a big thank you to FIH for nominating me for this award, and secondly thanks to all the Indian hockey lovers around the world, who voted for me. By getting nominated I did my part, but the rest was done by the fans and hockey lovers. So, definitely, this award goes to them, and I think they deserve this award more than me. It's a big moment for Indian Hockey as well because everyone in the hockey community, all the hockey federations around the world voted for me, so it's great to see that support from the hockey family," said Sreejesh, who inspired the Indian Men's Hockey Team's historic Bronze Medal win at Tokyo Olympics 2020

The three-time Olympian further said, "Also, I am a person, who doesn't believe in individual awards, especially when you are part of a team. It's not only the team of 33 players, but you have a lot of people involved behind as well, there's coaching staff, there's support staff, there's a great association like Hockey India who is supporting you a lot, there's Sports Authority of India (SAI), who are providing you with all the world-class facilities to train, there's Odisha Government who's unwavering support helps the sport grow and flourish and there's India Olympic Association (IOA) as well, who re taking care of you really well. So, it's a collective effort of a nation to get this kind of recognition."-ANI

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Prathiesh bowls MCCC Yellow to victory, Lakshmi helps Indian School Seeb win

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Prathiesh Hema picked up 4 for 26 to power MCCC Yellow to a 65-run win over Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) in a Junior League 30-over Under-16 clash at OAC 3 ground in Seeb on Saturday.

MCCC posted 177 for 9 on the board with major contributions coming from Sumanasekera (29), Mustaqeem Asif (26) and Prathiesh (24). Rahildaniyal Habibulla and Kriv Rajesh took two wickets each.

OCA failed to mount a challenge, folding up for a disappointing 112 in 22.3 overs due to brilliant bowling by Prathiesh (4 for 26) and Harshil Dinesh (2 for 16). Matoo Aleem topscored for OCA with 35 whereas Aaryan Punja scored 20.

Brief Scores (Junior Division U16): MCCC Yellow 177 for 9 in 30 overs (Sumanasekera Thineth 29 – 1x4, Mustaqeem Asif 26 – 2x4, Prathiesh Hema 24 – 2x4. Rahildaniyal Habibulla 2-33, Kriv Rajesh 2-29) beat OCA 112 all out in 22.3 overs (Matto Aleem 35 – 3x4, Prathiesh Hema 4-26, Harshil Dinesh 2-16) by 65 runs.

ISAS too good for PSM

In another Under-16 encounter, magnificent centuries by Lakshmi Narayana (168 off 100) and Vishwash (106 not out off 65) steered Indian School Al Seeb (ISAS) to a massive 128-run victory against Pakistan School Muscat at Muscat Municipality ground 3 in Amerat on Saturday.

Top knocks

ISAS amassed 321 for 5 in 30 overs thanks to top knocks by the two centurions and then went on to restrict PSM to 193 for 5 for an emphatic victory.

Brief Scores (Junior Division U16): ISAS 321 for 5 in 30 overs (Lakshmi Narayana 168 – 20x4, 1x6, Vishwash 106 not out – 14x4) beat PSM 193 for 5 in 30 overs (Ahsan Hayat 76 – 12x4, Muhammad Asad 58 – 10x4) by 128 runs.

Brief Scores (Junior Division U16): BSC 107 all out in 27.1 overs (Suresh Kiran 40 – 3x4, Noronha Nihal 3-11, Shetty Ayush 3-12, Midhun Gautham 2-12) lost to ISWK B 108 for 3 in 8.2 overs (Nadendla Nitish 47 – 5x4, 1x6, Damni Jinansh 37 – 6x4, Rahman Abdul 2-10) by 7 wickets.

Brief Scores (Junior Division U16): ISWK A 238 for 5 in 30 overs (Krishhang Srivastava 64 – 7x4, Aum Nrupen 57 – 9x4, Saumyabhavin Sampat 38 – 4x4, Khasbage Toyash 2-35) beat MCCC Blue 159 all out in 26.4 overs (Khasbage Toyash 75 – 7x4, Saumyabhavin Sampat 3-31) by 79 runs.

Brief Scores (Junior Division U13): IS Al Seeb 153 for 5 in 20 overs (Sujay 60 – 4x4, Shezin 30 – 3x4) lost to BSC A 154 for 4 in 15.1 overs (Dhuri Nimish 55 – 8x4, Vignesh Karthikeyan 40 – 6x4) by 6 wickets.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by March 2022 reaching $88.48, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by $1.06 from the price of Friday, which was $87.42. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,151.82 points, down by 0.46 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.81 per cent at 501.46 points. National Finance, up 4.55 per cent, was the top gainer while, Construction Material down 11.11 per cent, was the top loser.

Finance ministry to review monthly financial performance of each unit

The workshop, which saw the participation of representatives of government units, aims to clarify the mechanism used within the initiative of adjusting the financial performance of the State Budget

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance held a workshop, via video-conferencing, on adjusting the financial performance of the State Budget.

The event, which saw the participation of representatives of government units, aims to clarify the mechanism used within the initiative of adjusting the financial performance of the State Budget. The mechanism targets ensuring that government units stick to the plan approved to achieve efficiency in executing the State Budget 2022, as well reaching the envisaged economic and social objectives.

The workshop compared the procedures and challenges faced during the past years and ways of enhancing and developing mechanisms of adjusting financial performance for the State Budget 2022.

The Ministry of Finance urged government units to submit a statement monthly to disburse financial liquidity for the approved budget. The ministry will also review the monthly financial performance of each unit and give comments. The ministry reaffirmed the importance of commitment and submitting monthly reports and comments to ensure achieving controls and fundamentals sought by the State Budget during 2022. -ONA

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: The workshop compared the procedures and challenges faced during the past years and ways of enhancing and developing mechanisms of adjusting financial performance for the State Budget 2022. - File picture

ACQUISITION

Arcapita acquires Nationwide Property and Appraisal Services

UNITED STATES: Arcapita Group Holdings (Arcapita), the global alternative investment firm, announced the acquisition of a significant controlling interest in Nationwide Property and Appraisal Services, (Nationwide), the second-largest independent appraisal management company in the United States, which serves mortgage lending institutions across all 50 states.

Nationwide is a market leader with a network of over 15,000 licensed appraisers, with its clients including more than 100 blue-chip lenders and 21 of the top 25 wholesale lenders in the US.

The company has industry-leading appraisal turnaround times and accuracy rates. Having completed and integrated 5 add-on acquisitions over the past few years, the company has grown revenues at a CAGR of 14.3 per cent over the past four years and Nationwide management estimates revenue and an adjusted EBITDA of $144 million and $15 million, respectively, in 2021.

Atif A. Abdulmalik, Arcapita's Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are extremely pleased to have completed the acquisition of Nationwide. This investment is a good fit for our US private equity investment strategy which is focused on acquiring asset-light business services and logistics companies, and also allows us to bring to bear our deep expertise in global real estate. We were attracted by Nationwide's asset-light, highly cash generative business, experienced management team, and a strong base of clients across the country.

> This investment is a good fit for our US private equity investment strategy which is focused on acquiring asset-light business services and logistics companies
>
> **Atif A. Abdulmalik**
> Arcapita's Chief Executive Officer

Close to 50 per cent of Nationwide's customers have maintained their relationship with the company for over 6 years, highlighting the longevity of its customer relationships, and the company benefits from a free cash flow conversion rate of over 99 per cent. Nationwide is a strong fit within our US private equity strategy and also allows us to bring to bear our deep expertise in global real estate."

Neil Carter, Managing Director and Arcapita's Head of US Private Equity, said, "Residential real estate is the US's largest asset class, with sound fundamentals driven by population growth in the primary homebuying demographics, and increasing levels of new home construction. With appraisals being a regulatory requirement for mortgages for new home purchases, refinancing, and foreclosures, the $7.5 billion real estate appraisal services market has cumulatively grown by 32 per cent since 2008. Nationwide is a leader in this sector and is well-positioned to accelerate organic growth, drive efficiency and achieve margin improvements through its tech-enabled platform, and continue to complete accretive acquisitions."

Sri Velamati, Chief Executive Officer of Nationwide, said: "Nationwide is extremely pleased to be partnering with Arcapita, a leading alternative asset manager partner that shares a mutual vision for the future and will support Nationwide in continuing to build on its core strengths of customer service, purposeful acquisitions and technology investment. Nationwide and its partners share the genuine goal of becoming a true leader in the appraisal management services industry that serves the interests of both its lender clients and appraisal vendors through the adoption of best-in-class service models and investment in technology to streamline the appraisal process. This next chapter in Nationwide's story will yield truly industry-altering change for everyone."

Arcapita's management team has completed over $15 billion in US private equity investments over the past 24 years. The firm's US private equity investment strategy has predominantly focused on acquiring asset-light business services and logistics companies which benefit from the trend for large organisations to outsource their non-core activities, such as facilities management, to reduce costs and achieve operational efficiencies.

AGREEMENT

OIFC, Bank Muscat partner for transaction banking platform

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, and Oman Investment & Finance Co Khedmah (OIFC), the leading billing and collection services provider for utilities in Oman, have tied up to enable OIFC to use the bank's transaction banking platform, especially to manage its liquidity needs.

The agreement was signed by Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, and Saud Ahmed Al Siyabi, Chief Operating Officer, OIFC Khedmah. OIFC, which already uses Online Banking and Remote Deposit Capture, will now also use the bank's Liquidity Management Solution of automated 'Sweeps' for managing its various liquidity needs efficiently.

The bank's automated Sweep solution involves the rule-based physical movement of funds between different bank accounts for efficient utilisation of funds. This allows the bank's corporate customers to optimise liquidity available across multiple bank accounts and currencies. Some of the main benefits of the Liquidity Management Solution include: Better visibility of funds position, increased control over the use and allocation of internal resources, increase in operational efficiency by automating cash concentration and better insights through various information reports.

Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "Over the past few years, Bank Muscat has been spearheading the digitalisation trend in the Sultanate, which is helping our corporate customers transact quickly and efficiently while minimising the data-entry related risks in the payment process and improving overall security. We are pleased to strengthen our existing partnership with OIFC and offer our state-of-the-art automated Sweep solution."

Saud Ahmed Al Siyabi, Chief Operating Officer, OIFC Khedmah said: "OIFC Khedmah is the leading company in Oman in the field of billing and collections for four decades, and today has outlets, branches and bill-payment machines located across the country."

'THE JET'

World's first hydrogen-powered flying boat set for launch in Dubai

DUBAI: Swiss based start-up THE JET Zero Emission announced that it has inked an agreement with Zenith Marine Services, a UAE based company; and DWYN to manufacture and operate 'THE JET' – the first clean-energy, hydrogen-powered flying boat.

Featuring an iconic design, the boat's world premiere will be held in Dubai.

The announcement reflects Dubai's leading position as a global hub for future industries. Dubai's robust infrastructure and supportive investment environment has made it an ideal launchpad for innovative companies to reach their global ambitions.

'THE JET' features cutting-edge characteristics and technologies, making it capable of flying in silence over the waters at a cruising speed of 40 knots. The luxurious boat has a capacity of 8/12 passengers. -WAM

MARKET

MSX index ends marginally lower

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,151.82 points, down by 0.46 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.81 per cent at 501.46 points.

National Finance, up 4.55 per cent, was the top gainer while, Construction Material down 11.11 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of National Bank Oman were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 399 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR4.4 million, with more than 25.5 million shares changing hands. Out of 44 traded securities, 10 advanced, 20 declined and 14 remained unchanged.

At the session close, GCC and Arab investors were net buyers for OMR44,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR43,000 followed by foreign investors for OMR1,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 6,553.28 points, down 1.14 per cent. Prices of United Finance, Global Financial Investments, Muscat Finance, and Muscat Insurance were up by 8.48 per cent, 7.46 per cent, 7.02 per cent, and 2.17 per cent respectively. Prices of Ominvest, Bank Dhofar, Ahli Bank, Al Omaniya Financial Services, and Taageer Finance were down by 4.4 per cent, 2.46 per cent, 1.65 per cent, 1.52 per cent, and 1.22 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,798.54 points, up 0.12 per cent. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Al Maha Ceramics, Galfar Engineering, and Raysut Cement were up by 3.85 per cent, 1.4 per cent, 1.37 per cent, and 1.01 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics, and Oman Cement were down by 1.4 per cent, and 0.85 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.14 per cent before closing at 1,602.45 points. Prices of OIFC, and Oman National Engineering were up by 3.23 per cent and 1.72 per cent respectively. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Renaissance Services, and Al Jazeera Services were down by 7.69 per cent, 4.04 per cent, and 0.64 per cent respectively.

The board of directors of Bank Dhofar proposed a cash dividend of RO 0.002 per share subject to CBO approval.— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT SECURITIES MARKET

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,156.18	4,116.00	4,116.00	4,151.82	-35.82	-0.86
FINANCIAL INDEX	6,637.46	6,553.27	6,553.27	6,629.05	-75.78	-1.14
Industry Index	5,811.30	5,798.53	5,798.53	5,791.82	6.71	0.12
Services Index	1,610.58	1,602.45	1,602.45	1,604.65	-2.20	-0.14
MSX Shariah Index	503.51	501.88	501.88	501.47	0.41	0.08
MSX TR INDEX	5,002.99	4,954.63	4,954.63	4,997.75	-43.12	-0.86

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
21,435,135	3,840,102	842	22,271,051,324	10	14	22	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 31

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
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	2,400,537	146,684	94	0.059	0.062	0.059	0.061	0.057	0.004	7.018	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.100	18,735,926
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN.	100,000	15,950	5	0.159	0.160	0.157	0.160	0.155	0.005	3.226	0.157	0.156	0.160	0.100	37,920,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	21,205	9,234	14	0.440	0.440	0.430	0.436	0.430	0.006	1.395	0.430	0.430	0.438	0.100	23,980,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	115,940	23,151	17	0.197	0.200	0.197	0.200	0.198	0.002	1.010	0.200	0.198	0.200	0.100	40,000,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	3,300	417	4	0.127	0.127	0.124	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.124	0.126	0.124	0.100	10,795,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	535,200	45,376	29	0.084	0.086	0.084	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	17,000,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	756,991	293,618	59	0.388	0.390	0.386	0.388	0.388	0.000	0.000	0.386	0.386	0.388	0.100	48,460,408
OM0000003000	Al MAHA MARKTING	56,000	38,752	3	0.692	0.692	0.692	0.692	0.692	0.000	0.000	0.692	0.000	0.692	0.100	47,748,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	766,343	611,918	16	0.800	0.800	0.788	0.800	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.788	0.788	0.792	0.100	600,000,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	532,590	192,807	24	0.362	0.366	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.000	0.000	0.362	0.354	0.362	0.100	235,641,811
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,244,400	650,825	41	0.524	0.526	0.520	0.524	0.526	-0.002	-0.380	0.520	0.518	0.520	0.100	1,873,024,791
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	76,484	23,800	16	0.316	0.316	0.310	0.312	0.314	-0.002	-0.637	0.310	0.308	0.310	0.100	19,095,733
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	64,100	14,935	2	0.233	0.233	0.233	0.233	0.235	-0.002	-0.851	0.233	0.233	0.238	0.100	77,093,341
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	1,550,670	172,336	37	0.112	0.112	0.108	0.111	0.112	-0.001	-0.893	0.108	0.108	0.110	0.100	331,896,914
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	28,300	2,601	6	0.091	0.092	0.091	0.092	0.093	-0.001	-1.075	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.100	8,280,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	627,280	265,553	28	0.430	0.430	0.422	0.424	0.430	-0.006	-1.395	0.422	0.420	0.422	0.100	93,280,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN.S	131,600	17,122	6	0.133	0.133	0.128	0.130	0.132	-0.002	-1.515	0.128	0.126	0.132	0.100	37,951,572
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	1,362,581	162,179	23	0.121	0.121	0.118	0.119	0.121	-0.002	-1.653	0.119	0.119	0.130	0.100	232,009,238
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	502,000	214,880	24	0.428	0.440	0.428	0.428	0.446	-0.018	-4.036	0.440	0.420	0.440	0.100	101,183,480
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	134,000	40,692	16	0.300	0.318	0.300	0.304	0.318	-0.014	-4.403	0.304	0.304	0.308	0.100	203,183,090
Total	20	11,009,521	2,942,830	464												

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
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	605,721	38,766	25	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.059	0.005	8.475	0.064	0.063	0.064	0.100	22,345,242
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	3,899,650	281,731	109	0.069	0.073	0.069	0.072	0.067	0.005	7.463	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.100	14,400,000
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	1,020,000	55,080	2	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.052	0.002	3.846	0.054	0.051	0.054	0.100	6,750,000
OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	1,000	470	1	0.470	0.470	0.470	0.470	0.460	0.010	2.174	0.470	0.450	0.000	1.000	5,181,772
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	580,141	68,283	55	0.118	0.120	0.117	0.118	0.116	0.002	1.724	0.119	0.118	0.119	0.100	15,340,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER.	677,900	49,851	26	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.074	0.073	0.001	1.370	0.073	0.073	0.074	0.100	15,020,997
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	10,000	1,960	1	0.196	0.196	0.196	0.196	0.196	0.000	0.000	0.196	0.196	0.000	0.100	19,600,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	831	134	1	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.000	0.000	0.161	0.155	0.161	0.100	4,830,000
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	100	11	1	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.110	0.113	0.100	3,793,574
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	265,000	50,085	10	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.000	0.000	0.189	0.184	0.189	0.100	307,303,861
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	800	50	1	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.061	0.063	0.100	7,312,500
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK.	300	258	1	0.860	0.860	0.860	0.860	0.860	0.000	0.000	0.860	0.860	0.000	0.100	81,700,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	37,300	4,295	12	0.115	0.117	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.115	0.117	0.100	62,241,502
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	212,696	19,568	15	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.090	0.092	0.100	7,489,053
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,956,476	196,480	46	0.101	0.101	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	223,695,303
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	1,000	72	1	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.072	0.075	0.100	67,774,608
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	62,676	6,002	8	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.100	16,800,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	27,500	1,348	4	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.049	0.050	0.100	35,005,911
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	22,761	1,053	7	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.046	0.047	0.100	67,279,667
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	1,094	95	1	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.087	0.087	0.095	0.100	14,310,637
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	200,000	11,780	13	0.060	0.060	0.058	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.058	0.060	0.100	13,112,160
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	490,268	48,601	13	0.100	0.100	0.099	0.099	0.100	-0.001	-1.000	0.099	0.099	0.103	0.100	198,030,966
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	86,800	7,037	17	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.081	0.083	0.100	20,540,790
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	196,000	23,324	5	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.122	-0.003	-2.459	0.119	0.119	0.000	0.100	356,565,821
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	40,600	1,938	2	0.050	0.050	0.047	0.048	0.052	-0.004	-7.692	0.047	0.047	0.050	0.100	9,582,509
Total	25	10,396,614	868,272	377												

OmanCables
الكابلات العمانية

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

To our valued shareholders,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of my colleagues and the Board of Directors of Oman Cables Industry SAOG (the Company) to its 33rd Annual General Meeting (AGM). The performance of the Company and its subsidiaries (the Group) is below.

Board of Directors

The following are the Board of Directors of the Company:

1. Mr. Fabio Ignazio Romeo
2. Mr. Mohamed Mustafa Al Lawati
3. Mrs. Laura Figini
4. Mrs. Manal Said Al Ghazali
5. Mr. Christian Raskin
6. Mr. Yasser Al Rashdi
7. Mr. Fabrizio Rutschmann

The Board and its committees conducted various meetings and directed the company operations.

Operational Review

The recovery on business environment continues to be visible in 2021 in comparison with 2020 with the support of increasing oil prices. The Company continues to work on cost reduction plans and will take the necessary measures to improve the result facing difficult times because of the cost increase and availability of raw materials.

During the year, with cooperation between the Company and Prysmian, resulted in increased product range and operational cost control at the Company.

Sales

Sales revenues of the Parent Company for 2021 are RO 169,520,043 as compared to RO 134,048,301 in 2020. The sales of the Group were RO 227,419,221 compared to RO 175,370,245 in 2020.

Profitability

The Net Profit of the Parent Company for the year 2021 was RO 4,749,493 as compared to RO 2,166,475 in 2020. The increase in profitability is mainly due to cost control plans, product development and differentiation efforts.

The Net Profit of the Group in 2021 was RO 5,973,028 compared to RO 2,294,384 in 2020.

Subsidiary: Oman Aluminum Processing Industries LLC, Oman

The Company management continued cost reduction actions during 2021 and managed to eliminate transportation constraints by creating business flows in new markets.

OAPIL was able to improve the sales mix with more value-added products which has helped improving the profitability. OAPIL continues to focus on the overhead cost reduction. Therefore, the results for 2021 are better compared to the same period in 2020.

Subsidiary: Associated Cables Private Limited, India (ACPL) (100% subsidiary)

The Company has increased focus on India market and has invested in growing ACPL operations which add capabilities to produce new products and additional capacity. During First Half of 2021, pandemic continued to limit business environment in India and ACPL due to production losses during lockdowns.

In the Second Half of 2021, ACPL was severely impacted from flood in Chiplun and lost capacity during the recovery period. The increase in the prices of raw material affects ACPL profitability. ACPL, supported by a Task Force established by the Parent Company, is applying cost reduction plans and projects to be more competitive in the cable market.

Human Resources

Human Resources play a strategic role in the continuous development of the Group.

As a response to changing market dynamics, the Group is continuously promoting and developing its employee strength performance and talent. Prysmian continued to support in this area by deputing highly experienced professionals to the Company.

HR related programs:

Thymar ثمار Initiative – Omani Youth Development

Thymar initiative was launched in 2018 and this year we are pleased to announce that 20 Omani graduates were enrolled in this initiative which entail one-year training. Two young Omanis have been selected for Prysmian Graduate Trainee Programme of three years, which involves international education and work experience across Prysmian Plants.

Health Safety & Environment

The Group has completed the Covid 19 vaccination program for all employees and has extended the program to the families of the employees.

The Group is continuously focusing and executing various plans aimed at protecting the health and safety of the employees by engaging into extensive testing and sanitization programs under medical support during the current circumstances of Covid19.

The Group is continuously striving to improve safety awareness. All employees have been introduced to the Safety Awareness Program. The lost time injury frequency rate (LTI) continues to be actively monitored for the benefit of the employees and Company.

Covid 19 actions taken by the Company:

- Two doses of vaccination to all employees
- Ongoing facilitating booster vaccine doses to all employees
- Daily sanitization in Plant, Offices, Accommodation and company Transport.
- Face and body temperature detection entrance system.
- Contact tracing and strict implementation of Isolation and back to work policy with a negative PCR
- 50% reduction in canteen and use of disposable items only.
- Facilitated working from home in 2021 with 50% reduction in staff capacity that can work from home.
- Mandatory face mask at work provided by the company.
- Installed hand sanitizers in various area of the company.
- Isolation of suspected and confirmed cases of blue-collar workers in hotel/separate accommodation paid by the company.
- Restrictions on visiting the company and work by third parties.
- Closure of other gathering places like Gym, Play Area & Prayer rooms.
- COVID awareness sessions were organized in accommodation

Corporate Governance

The Company continues to follow high standards in Corporate Governance. The Board has three committees: Audit Committee, Strategic Committee and the Nomination and Remuneration Committee.

The Company has internal systems and manuals to assist the management in the day-to-day operations. These systems and manuals are reviewed and updated and are in line with statutory requirements while meeting the organizations goals that gives transparency to all transactions.

The Company shares the information with all stakeholders and public in general through regular publication of its quarterly and annual results in printed media, on the MSX website and on the Company's website.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The Company believes that giving back to the community is extremely important. As the Company has grown, so has its commitment to the society.

Future Outlook

The Gulf region is gradually recovering mainly due to increasing oil prices. The Group is maintaining the focus on existing markets and is streamlining its operations to continue to deliver value to its stakeholders.

The management continues to focus on the dynamic and competitive market for cables by enlarging the product portfolio with high value-added cables in order to differentiate its offering. The emphasis on operational excellence is an important factor to the success of the Group.

Dividend:

Considering the guidelines issued by the Capital Market Authority, the liquidity requirements for the operational needs and the uninterrupted record of declaration of dividend, the Board proposes distributing a cash dividend to the shareholders.

Taking into account the financial performance of the Group, the Board recommends to distribute dividend equal to 27 baiza per share amounting to RO 2,421,900 of the face value of RO 0.100, to the shareholders registered as on the date of Annual General Meeting.

Directors Remuneration

The Board of Directors recommends to the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting to approve the total Directors' remuneration of RO 200,000 to be paid to the Board of Directors, in recognition and appreciation of their efforts towards their responsibilities and for their continuous inputs, guidance and support to the management.

It may be noted that four non-independent board members, being Prysmian employees, have waived their portion of remuneration for 2021, in response to drop in business results.

Conclusion:

Our special thanks go to all our employees and to the management for their consistent hard work and wholehearted commitment to the Company. We consider our employees fundamental to our success.

We acknowledge with thanks to our local and global customers, business associates, the finance community, local communities and all other stakeholders for their continued support to the Company.

We wish the best for our beloved Oman to further develop under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur in good health and longevity.

Mr. Fabio Romeo
Chairman
Oman Cables Industry (SAOG)

Date: 26 January 2022

STATEMENT OF INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Group 2021 RO	Parent Company 2021 RO	Group 2020 RO	Parent Company 2020 RO
Sales	227,419,221	169,520,043	175,370,245	134,048,301
Cost of sales	(210,569,231)	(157,695,238)	(162,846,635)	(124,050,912)
Gross profit	16,849,990	11,824,805	12,523,610	9,997,389
Other income	582,346	510,892	490,431	465,893
Administrative expenses	(5,528,200)	(4,506,747)	(4,657,737)	(3,730,637)
Selling and distribution expenses	(5,021,751)	(2,827,300)	(3,755,313)	(2,440,813)
Net allowances for credit loss	567,673	567,673	(1,414,220)	(1,414,220)
Operating profit	7,450,058	5,569,323	3,186,771	2,877,612
Finance costs	(467,387)	(145,550)	(526,413)	(335,897)
Finance income	73,704	103,206	55,000	55,000
Profit before income tax	7,056,375	5,526,979	2,715,358	2,596,715
Income tax expense	(1,083,347)	(777,486)	(420,974)	(430,240)
Profit for the year	5,973,028	4,749,493	2,294,384	2,166,475
Basic and diluted earnings per share attributable to ordinary equity holders of the parent company	0.067	0.053	0.026	0.024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31 DECEMBER 2021 (BALANCE SHEET)

	Group 2021 RO	Parent Company 2021 RO	Group 2020 RO	Parent Company 2020 RO
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	25,398,821	16,428,362	27,012,843	17,278,118
Right-of-use assets	3,473,450	2,493,850	3,475,535	2,438,311
Intangible asset	435,758	435,758	490,227	490,227
Investment in subsidiaries	-	6,387,547	-	6,387,547
Financial assets at amortized cost	1,010,294	1,000,000	1,015,162	1,000,000
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	243,771	243,771	254,524	254,524
Deferred tax assets	85,741	-	35,498	-
Total non-current assets	30,647,835	26,989,288	32,283,789	27,848,727
Current assets				
Inventories	26,925,144	22,214,302	15,835,058	11,610,540
Derivative financial instruments	2,829,673	2,829,673	2,971,049	2,971,049
Trade and other receivables	63,263,604	47,810,418	52,909,687	45,426,316
Cash and cash equivalents	18,409,495	18,330,514	31,433,855	31,402,366
Short term deposits	8,850,200	8,850,200	-	-
Total current assets	120,278,116	100,035,107	103,149,649	91,410,271
Total assets	150,925,951	127,024,395	135,433,438	119,258,998
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	8,970,000	8,970,000	8,970,000	8,970,000
Share premium	977,500	977,500	977,500	977,500
Legal reserve	4,445,333	2,990,000	4,445,333	2,990,000
General reserve	15,221,546	14,068,607	14,746,597	13,593,658
Retained earnings	77,772,662	74,854,389	73,440,683	71,745,945
Other reserves	1,569,036	2,405,306	1,981,628	2,524,882
Total equity	108,956,077	104,265,802	104,561,741	100,801,985
Non-current liabilities				
Deferred tax liability	896,672	581,999	961,436	620,519
Leases liability	3,464,572	2,529,525	3,352,508	2,381,821
Employees' end of service benefits	1,421,657	1,258,760	1,397,850	1,262,370
Total non-current liabilities	5,782,901	4,370,284	5,711,794	4,264,710
Current liabilities				
Trade and other payables	28,894,421	17,299,415	19,111,277	13,122,260
Bank borrowings	5,196,942	-	4,621,817	-
Leases liability	261,643	171,643	261,643	171,643
Derivative financial instruments	571,607	-	236,651	-
Taxation	1,262,360	917,251	928,515	898,400
Total current liabilities	36,186,973	18,388,309	25,159,903	14,192,303
Total liabilities	41,969,874	22,758,593	30,871,697	18,457,013
Total equity and liabilities	150,925,951	127,024,395	135,433,438	119,258,998
Net assets per share	1.215	1.162	1.166	1.124

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Group 2021 RO	Parent Company 2021 RO	Group 2020 RO	Parent Company 2020 RO
Profit for the year	5,973,028	4,749,493	2,294,384	2,166,475
Other comprehensive income Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss, net of tax:				
Net movement in hedging reserve, net of tax	(404,293)	(119,576)	1,661,156	1,771,295
Net movement in foreign currency translation reserve, net of tax	(8,299)	-	10,360	-
Other comprehensive income (loss) for the year	(412,592)	(119,576)	1,671,516	1,771,295
Total comprehensive income for the year	5,560,436	4,629,917	3,965,900	3,937,770

P.O. Box: 25, PC: 124, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: +968 24443100 www.omancables.com

LIFESTYLE

Your DNA could unlock doors to better health

Did you know that all human beings are 99.9% identical in their genetic makeup? The remaining 0.1% of your DNA can tell an important story - like why your hair is curly or straight, whether you love or hate the taste of cilantro, and your genetic ancestry and origins.

Most importantly, your DNA can offer clues on whether certain health conditions might run in your family or your personal risk for certain diseases.

Whether driven by curiosity or concern, a growing number of people are using DNA testing to learn about themselves. The National Institutes of Health's All of Us Research Programme offers people a way to participate in research while providing a way to learn about themselves, including what their DNA can tell them about their ancestry, traits and health.

Typical research studies enroll "subjects" who are studied by researchers. All of Us turns research into a two-way street. As a benefit of enrolling and privately sharing health data with researchers, All of Us offers participants an opportunity to access their genetic information and more.

Michael Miller, an All of Us participant ambassador, joined the research programme because he wanted to ensure that African Americans were represented in this groundbreaking research initiative.

"The African American community has long been apprehensive of the research and medical establishment. That means we've been invisible to researchers and there is less information about how well different medical treatments work for us," said Miller.

"My goal is to change the negative perception of research. It starts with me talking to my family, friends, neighbors, church members and co-workers to help ensure African Americans are included in health studies. These studies could help researchers understand health conditions that are more common in African Americans."

The programme is working to sign up one million participants from across the country. Already more than 435,000 have joined and contributed data and samples. By sharing their data, participants like Miller are helping to build one of the largest, most diverse databases of its kind.

What's the goal?

"By studying the unique genetic codes of people, and combining that with other types of data about our health, environment and life circumstances, researchers can look for patterns to better understand what affects people's health," said Stephanie Devaney, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer of All of Us.

"But we don't just take the data people donate without offering something in return. We're designed to give personal health information to participants, so we're sharing what we learn with those who are stepping up to support research that can benefit their family and community."

Thousands of programme participants have already started receiving information about their genetic ancestry and personal traits, based on their DNA. In the next phases of the programme, participants will have the opportunity to receive health-related results, such as their risk for certain diseases, or medications that might impact them differently, if they would like that information.

Participants like Miller take part in the programme in different ways. Over time, there are opportunities to answer surveys on different topics, share their electronic health records and contribute blood, urine or saliva.

The health information that participants share with All of Us goes into a secure database and is made available only to approved researchers.

"Our genes don't predict our future. But our DNA can provide important information to share with our families and health care providers and inform the decisions we make," said Devaney. "Our research programme offers the double benefit of helping individuals learn about themselves and helping researchers improve health overall." - BPT

FEATURE

RICHARD LEAKEY

FOSSIL HUNTER WHO HELPED PROVE HUMANS EVOLVED IN AFRICA, DIES AT 77

PALEOANTHROPOLOGIST RICHARD LEAKEY was the middle son of world-renowned anthropologists Louis and Mary Leakey. He helped uncover evidence to prove humankind evolved in Africa.

The paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey, renowned for uncovering evidence that humanity's ancestors evolved in Africa, died on Sunday at the age of 77 in his native Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta has announced.

Kenyatta said he had "received with deep sorrow the sad news."

Leakey was the middle son of internationally renowned anthropologists Louis and Mary Leakey, arguably history's most famous couple, whose research focused on ancestral hominids.

Who was Richard Leakey?

He was born on December 19, 1944 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The National Geographic Society gave Leakey his first grant at age 23 to dig on the shores of Lake Turkana in northern Kenya. While he lacked formal training, his family provided perhaps the world's greatest school.

Leakey's expeditions in the 1970s altered our understanding of human evolution, especially with the discovery of a 1.9-million-year-old skull of Homo habilis in 1972 and a 1.6-million-year-old skull of Homo erectus in 1975.

When his small Cessna plane crashed in the Rift Valley in 1993, he survived but lost both legs.

After the incident, he told the Financial Times: "There were regular threats to me at the time and I lived with armed guards. But I made the decision not to be a dramatist and say: 'They tried to kill me.' I chose to get on with life."

Leakey was pushed out of the Kenya Wildlife Service a year later and went into opposition politics but did not last long. He was called back to public service in the late 1990s to tackle corruption, but that task proved insurmountable and he quit after two years.

Leakey also served as director of the national museums and in 2015, he returned to Kenya Wildlife Service for three years.

In recent years, Leakey had faced bouts of skin cancer, as well as kidney and liver disease.

How have people reacted to Leakey's death?

In a statement, conservation group WildlifeDirect's CEO Paula Kahumbu, a friend, said Leakey possessed "a natural sense of leadership, old-fashioned but straightforward."

Kahumbu added: "His ability to hold many ideas in the air at once to find common threads was phenomenal. He will be dearly missed." -DW

ROUND-UP

OAB signs agreement with Visa for its new 'Advantage' segment

This is aimed at offering Visa Platinum debit and credit cards to the upper class segment, who are customers with salaries ranging from OMR1,000 – OMR3,499 or deposit of OMR10,000 - OMR34,999

MUSCAT: In line with its continuous endeavours to provide high-quality services to all its customers across various segments, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently signed up with the world's leader in digital payments, Visa, to collaborate for its new 'Advantage' segment.

This is aimed to offering Visa Platinum debit and credit cards to the upper mass segment, which are customers with salaries ranging from OMR1,000 – OMR3,499 or deposit OMR10,000 - OMR34,999. Setting itself apart from competitors, the debit card offers a limited time 1% cashback on all digital and POS transactions for the first time in the Sultanate, alongside hosting attractive rates, exclusive travel benefits and more.

Commenting on the signing and the launch of 'Advantage', Rashad Al Shaikh, Head of the Retail Banking Division at OAB, said, "At OAB, we believe that all the facilities we offer must be inclusive and customised to best meet the needs of our large customer base, especially with regard to their respective earning tiers. Targeted towards customers within the mid-salary range (from OMR 1,000 – OMR 3,499 or deposit OMR 10,000 -34,999), 'Advantage' seeks to provide them with a myriad of opportunities and enrich their overall banking experience with OAB. A unique aspect of the new facility that places it ahead of its competitors is that it is the first debit card in Oman to provide a 1% cashback on all digital and POS transactions, while also opening the door for our customers to step into a world of incredible advantages."

Customers that meet the requirements of the 'Advantage' segment can, benefit from competitive rates for new and buyout loans and receive exclusive returns on savings up to 3% p.a. with Growth Plus account. In addition, they will be eligible for monthly draws on salary transfer, enjoy complimentary airport pick and drop-off services from and to Muscat International Airport, have lounge access to over 35 airports and a dedicated customer service number through OAB's "FilKhidma" call centre. Customers can easily sign-up by visiting any of the bank's branches and filling in the requisite details. Existing customers can also upgrade digitally via the OAB online app.

"At OAB, we are always keen on ensuring that we introduce new and innovative means to enhance our customer's banking experience, which is aligned with one of the key pillars of our transformational strategy. Through the launch of 'Advantage', which is specially crafted to suit our mid-range customer's diverse lifestyles, we can support them by providing them with the best possible services, so that they can focus on the things that matter in life. We are thankful to VISA for their collaboration and look forward to seeing the positive impact the new facility will bring in the long run. This, in turn, will reinforce OAB's position as a customer-centric institution, placing it at the forefront of the banking sector," Rashad added.

From her side, Dr Saeeda Jaffar, Visa's Group Country Manager for GCC, said, "Visa is delighted to partner with OAB to launch their new Visa Platinum card with a unique proposition tailored for their 'Advantage' segment customers. Our cardholders in Oman enjoy the security, convenience and reliability of their Visa cards – and now, with this new Visa Platinum card from OAB, they will also be rewarded every time they pay. This product is a great way to expose more consumers to the benefits of digital commerce and encourage business at our merchant partners in Oman. We look forward to growing our partnership with Oman Arab Bank by developing more innovative digital payment products and enabling the bank to deliver the secure, frictionless and rewarding payment experiences our Visa cardholders in Oman increasingly expect and deserve."

Oman Arab Bank has a rich and proud history as one of the first financial institutions to be established in the Sultanate. Today, the Oman Arab Bank Group operates a nationwide network of 51 conventional branches, 15 Islamic branches, 150 conventional ATMs and 15 Islamic ATMs in high footfall locations across the Sultanate. OAB provides a complete range of financial products and services through its OAB Online App. Customers can now digitally benefit from several other services, directly from the convenience of their mobile phones.

DISTINCTIVE LUXURY

Lincoln range now available with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Owning a Lincoln is now an even more delightful experience with exclusive benefits across the range.

Enthusiasts can now look forward to Service 5 Years / 100,000 km, 1 Year Registration and 3M Window Tint. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Lincoln showroom.) The campaign is valid until 9th March 2022.

Luxury automotive enthusiasts can choose from an exciting range of vehicles in Oman. They include the family-size Lincoln Navigator, Lincoln Nautilus, the Lincoln Aviator and the Lincoln Corsair.

The Navigator combines modern luxury with advanced technology – elevating family travel to first class. A twin-turbo V6 engine that can produce 450 horsepower provides smooth power whenever you need it, delivered through a 10-speed transmission. Navigator's lighter, high-strength aluminium-alloy body helps create a more refined ride.

The Aviator is packed with advanced technologies that let the luxury SUV rise to greet you and scan the road ahead to glide through an uneven pavement. Aviator offers the kind of capability premium clients requires in a three-row SUV, with available all-wheel drive. The standard twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 engine, paired with a 10-speed SelectShift automatic transmission, delivers an impressive 400 horsepower and 562 Nm of torque for effortless acceleration.

> Luxury automotive enthusiasts can choose from an exciting range of vehicles in Oman. They include the family-size Lincoln Navigator, Nautilus, Aviator and Corsair

The Corsair embraces elements of both the full-size Lincoln Navigator and three-row Lincoln Aviator while building on these cues with even more flair. Painstakingly sculpted in clay, Corsair features exquisite contouring throughout the body section of the door, offering a deep landscape of curvature and relief with a fast-falling roofline.

Staying true to its Quiet Flight DNA, Corsair is engineered to deliver the effortless drive experience and sensation of gliding over the road. A standard 2.0-litre with a targeted 245 horsepower is mated to a new 8-speed automatic transmission for agile performance. The attractive and luxurious Lincoln Nautilus is bold, stylish and powerful. The Lincoln Nautilus is equipped with a turbocharged engine line-up.

Delivering a luxurious driver environment with SUV flexibility, the Nautilus offers a stunning exterior design. Inside, the cabin is welcoming and keeps all occupants comfortable.

In terms of safety, the Nautilus is equipped with Lincoln Co-Pilot360 and advanced driver-assist features. A 2.7-litre twin-turbo V6 engine boasts an AWD drivetrain with adaptive suspension and all-wheel drive disconnect. It delivers 335 hp and 515 Nm of torque and includes standard Auto Start-stop capability, plus a new eight-speed automatic transmission with SelectShift capability.

Customers wishing to own their dream Lincoln are encouraged to visit their nearest Lincoln showroom. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

ROUND-UP

Bank Nizwa offers instant auto finance

The new liaison will commence with 'Instant Car Finance', making Bank Nizwa the first in the country to offer on-the-spot approval to finance cars

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa, Oman's leading and most trusted Islamic bank, has announced a tie-up with IFIN (Islamic Finance Initiation Network) - the first-of-its-kind Sharia-compliant fintech solution - allowing customers to finance their desired items instantly.

The new liaison will commence with 'Instant Car Finance', making Bank Nizwa the first in the country to offer on-the-spot approval to finance cars. It will allow bank customers to complete their car financing procedures while visiting the showrooms of participating car dealers'. This will eliminate the need to visit the Bank's branches and provide customers with a faster solution to obtaining their auto finance. This is expected to further fuel the auto industry and enhance customers' purchasing power.

Strategised as a '10-minute financing process', the instant approval service will translate as an easy and simple application process and time-saving instant financing. Requests for finance will be submitted through a web-based application, accessed only by the retailers; there will be complete transparency, and customers will be aware of the cost involved before submitting their finance request. Required built-in controls are also in place to ensure that the transactions are completed following Sharia requirements.

This tie-up will link Bank Nizwa with retailers, SMEs, regulators and the corporate sector and will also facilitate technological advancements that complement the digitalization of its existing products and workflows.

Moreover, it will echo the bank's role as an institution of innovative Islamic finance, with a customer-centric approach to business. It will testify to its commitment to support the local economy by securing the interests of businesses with state-of-the-art digital products and services.

Commenting on the new tie-up, Arif Al Zaabi, AGM retail of Bank Nizwa, said, "As the financial partner of choice for the people and enterprises in the country, it is our responsibility to keep our fingers on the pulse of the market and adapt to the changing times.

"With this new initiative, we are providing a much-needed breakthrough for the auto industry and consumers who have car purchases on their wish lists. We have consistently endeavoured to provide innovative digital finance solutions for our customers, and our partnership with IFIN is an extension of our ongoing work in that direction. It is the first of its kind FinTech and our partnership will bring to reality several new services that will help consumers realise their dreams of owning coveted products."

Branded as a 'financing simplified' fintech company, IFIN is the world's first Sharia-compliant, multi-institutional, multi-product, multi-channel Islamic fintech solution. It will perfectly complement Bank Nizwa's robust growth in the Islamic banking sector with instant finance schemes that will further bolster its commitment to improving customers' lives by going the extra mile to create and implement products that exceed their expectations.

MASERATI

Snow and ice can't stop Grecale's energy

MODENA: Testing continues on the Maserati Grecale prototypes, this time in the cold of the Swedish glades where they have delivered their maximum power in extreme conditions and on very low grip surfaces. Not even snow and ice can hinder the Grecale's energy: during the mission the prototypes were tested to fine-tune their start-up and driveability at extreme temperatures, to check the vehicle dynamics on mixed surfaces of tarmac, snow and ice, and to maintain in-car comfort in all weather conditions, varying from a few degrees above zero to as low as -30°C in Lapland.

Tests were also carried out to fine-tune the car's traction, understeer and oversteer in different drive modes and with varying sizes and types of wheels, to specifically characterise each of the driving modes on offer.

Even in extreme conditions, the Grecale extols its exceptional soul on low grip handling tracks, completing high-performance laps on various circuits, from steering pads to more demanding routes featuring corners, slopes, long straights and drops, on snowy or icy surfaces.

Grecale is the everyday exceptional even in freezing temperatures on expanses of snow as far as the eye can see.

SPONSORS

MG Cup 2021-2022 concludes

MUSCAT: In a nail-biting finish to the grand finale of the 2021-2022 MG Cup, Bahla Club scored the penalty goal against Oman Club and lifted the prestigious MG Cup trophy. Last year, Mohsin Haider Darwish and Oman Football Association had signed an agreement, under which MHD ACERE became the exclusive sponsors of the MG Cup.

MG Motor's passion and commitment towards the game is a known global fact and the UK-born brand is supporting football teams locally, regionally as well as internationally. MG Motor is the official global automotive partner of the famous British football club Liverpool FC.

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, the CEO of MHD ACERE – the official distributors of MG Motor in Oman - congratulates all the teams: "This season of MG Cup has been exciting and action-packed. We congratulate all the teams for their exceptional performances. We congratulate Oman Club for their fighting spirit and the winning Bahla Club for their well-deserved victory."

"Football in Oman is a national obsession and we are so pleased to be able to support it by entering into a partnership with OFA. We joined hands with prominent footballer Ali Al Habsi and he came onboard as MG Motor Oman's brand ambassador. As sole representatives of MG Motor in the country, we aspire to support the national sports and the national talents for them to reach great heights in their sporting careers."

MG is a British-born automotive brand established in 1924, known for its historic models, awards and achievements throughout the past 97 years. MG was founded by William Morris and Cecil Kimbers and has one of the oldest car clubs in the automotive industry. Best known for its two-seat open sports cars, MG also produced saloons and coupes. Since its acquisition of MG, SAIC Motor, as a Global Top 500 company, has opened a new chapter for this British icon. MG is at the forefront of the introduction of innovative technologies and new energy vehicles for car buyers. MG Motor showrooms in Oman are located in Wattayah, Azaiba, Al Manuma, Bidaya, Sohar, Nizwa, Salalah, Sur, Ibra and Ibri.

SEASON OF LOVE

Floward launches 'Love Your Way' campaign

MUSCAT: Floward, the go-to online flowers and gifts delivery destination in Mena and UK launched in Valentine's Day campaign entitled "Love Your Way." The campaign aims to encourage people to show and express their love in their unique way – saying that the only wrong way is "no way."

The campaign running for the two weeks leading up to the holiday of love is also coupled with multiple on-ground activations in all the countries the company operates in, new and exclusive arrangements, curated gift bundles, romantic add-ons, and engaging content to further enhance the gifting experience for this important holiday.

Floward expressed that this Valentine's Day, they wanted to give their clients thoughtful and easy solutions to celebrate and connect with their loved ones. Whether they are together or from a distance, Floward is telling people to express their love to their partners, friends, parents or children in their unique way.

Floward's Valentine's Day collection includes a wide variety of gifts and flowers including:

Roses are great, but this year, why not shower your loved one with this stunning arrangement of red tulips? Tulips signify the enduring love between partners.

The only thing better than red roses on Valentine's Day is an exquisite bouquet coupled with a big teddy bear to express your love.

This magnificent arrangement of red carnation paired with a dozen cupcakes is the perfect bundle to express your love in the sweetest way possible.

With a breathtaking arrangement of red tulips, a huge teddy bear and chocolate drops, this carefully curated bundle combine sweetness, cuteness and beauty all in one.

Established in 2017, Floward is a full-fledged e-commerce solution that offers prime fresh-cut flowers sourced from the best growers and farmers around the world and arranged locally by a team of florists and designers. Floward also offers cakes, chocolate and perfumes curated by the region's most exciting designers bundled with its flower arrangements and manage last-mile same-day delivery to ensure the best customer experience.

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EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF KHASAB CASTLE

KHASAB is a lively town in the scenic north with landmarks that include the ruins of Bait Al Qufl, fortified buildings and picturesque Khasab Castle that overlooks the harbour.

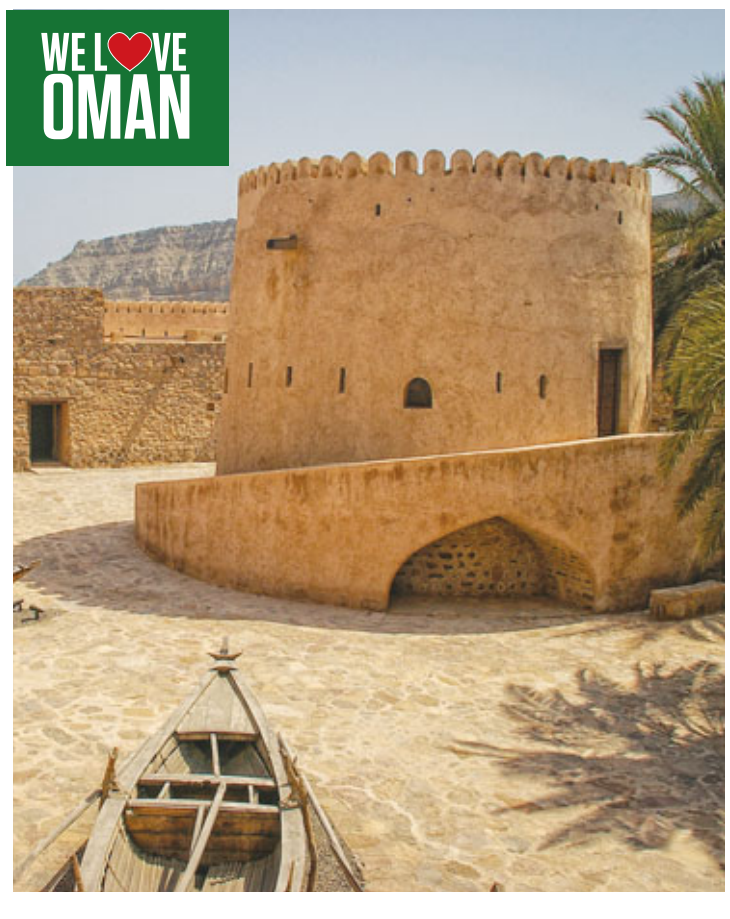
Located in Khasab, Khasab Castle was built to protect the coastal settlement from raiders who sometimes tried to steal goods from ships that passed by there.

Today, it is a popular tourist attraction for those who visit Oman's northern outpost, access to which is provided both by land, sea and air. Ferry services connect Oman's mainland to Musandam, while direct flights are available between Muscat and Khasab.

"Originally built by the Portuguese in the 17th century around a pre-existing circular tower, this well-preserved fort is home to one of the best ethnographic museums in Oman and the Bait Al Qufl, the house of locks, in the courtyard was built by an Omani master craftsman," says Oman's Ministry of Tourism.

"The current form of the castle were built by the Portuguese in the 17th century on top of an ancient fort built in ancient times. The castle was initially renovated in the year 1990 and then again developed to its current state in the year 2007."

That the fort was built there underlines the importance the Strait of Hormuz had, even during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Governorate of Musandam till day ensures that Oman is afforded partial control over the Strait of Hormuz, through which more than 20 per cent of all of the world crude oil supplies pass through every day.

"Khasab Castle was used by the Omanis as a military base to combat the Portuguese and later simultaneously as a residence of the Wali of Khasab and as a city prison," added the Ministry of Tourism. "The current castle features a cylindrical central tower and a square-shaped outer wall.

"The current castle compound features an exhibition on the history of Musandam, a model of a traditional elevated summer house, a model of a date storage vat (Bait Al Qufl), an old documents exhibition, and many rooms displaying jewellery, clothes, weapons, kitchen equipment, wedding decorations, and a Quran learning school," the Ministry said.