

OPAZ SLASHES COMMERCIAL REGISTRATION FEES

Within the context of support given by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) to SMEs, it was approved to reduce commercial registration fees for enterprises operating within the boundaries of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. **>B1**



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SAYYID THEYAZIN TO PATRONISE OMAN SUSTAINABILITY WEEK

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth will patronise the Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) hosted by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on March 14. **>B7**



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Oil analysts are already predicting the crude prices could touch \$150 per barrel in March

OMAN COULD SEE A RECORD BUDGET SURPLUS IN 2022 AS OIL PRICES SURGE

With higher oil prices predicted in 2022, the state income may double to reach OMR20bn

Saleh Al-Shaibany

MUSCAT: The Russian invasion of Ukraine is driving energy prices up and as an oil producer, Oman could well see a record budget surplus this year to give its economy a huge boost to wipe out the predicted 2022 deficit.

With US President Joe Biden calling for sanctions against Russian crude oil exports joined by European countries such as the

UK, Germany and France, oil producers, including the Sultanate, are set to hugely benefit from it.

2022 fiscal budget

In the 2022 fiscal budget, Oman forecast a 1.55 billion rial deficit, a 27 per cent increase from the actual 1.2 billion rial deficit for 2021.

Crude oil prices peaked at \$130 per barrel last week as Russian troops attack Ukraine.

Oil analysts are already pre-

dicting the crude oil prices could touch \$150 per barrel in March and that could signal an economic disaster for oil reliant economies.

But Oman, with an average production of about 970,000 barrels a day, this means that the Sultanate could well post an annual surplus this year for the first time in a decade.

"It is good news for Omani economy with oil prices above \$100 threshold, especially the budget estimated only half of that. The extra revenue will give the economy the push to cover all its expenditures and open up more employment opportunities this year," Hafidh Al-Raqadi, a retired economist at the ministry of Energy and Minerals, said. **>A2**

ON TUESDAY

Winner of Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design to be announced

Times News Service

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said will patronise the closing ceremony of the Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design on Tuesday at the ROHM. Ten projects, submitted by 19 young men and women, have qualified for the final stage. Five of these came from individual participants, while the other five came in the form of team submissions. **>A2**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Students to pay more

1 Foreign students attending Indian schools need to pay more fees. **>A3**

WORLD

Phone call with Putin

2 The French President and the German Chancellor held a joint telephone call with Russian President. **>A7**

SPORTS

Hockey team campaign

3 The national hockey team of Oman starts its campaign in Jakarta. **>A8**

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Dhuhr.....	12:25pm
Asr.....	3:44pm
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Isha.....	7:22pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:18am

WINNERS TO BE ANNOUNCED

Shields to be delivered in the form of non-fungible tokens

<FROM A1 The top three winners will be announced during the ceremony and their creators will be honoured with commemorative shields. For the first time in the Arab World, these shields will be delivered in the form of non-fungible tokens, known around the world as NFTs. "The deadline has ended for the submission of the final designs and 10 projects have qualified," said the organisers. "The award stipulates that the designs be submitted in the form of high-resolution, A1-size technical drawings, alongside a video clip that includes animations about the project, as well as its technical and construction details."

The initial review of the projects was conducted before the jury on 27 and 28 February, during their direct presentations.

Initially, 356 entries, which met all the pre-requisites to participate in the event, were received from youth from across the Sultanate of Oman. The theme of participation for this year is development of a site in the neighbourhood of Al Mina by the Corniche in the Wilayat of Muttrah.

The winning project will be a landmark that embodies 50 years of the renaissance of Oman, while also indicating a promising future for the country, through the achievement of Vision 2040. The proposed design area is around 7,500 sqm of land area between Muttrah fish market and the sea front.

The Bilarab bin Haitham Award



for Architectural Design has been set up to achieve five goals. They include achieving the aspirations of Oman's Vision 2040 to establish environmentally friendly tourism and entertainment areas that provide attractions to the public and contributes to raising the quality of life in the Sultanate of Oman.

Furthermore, the award aims at investing knowledge and skills of Omani youth specialised in the field of architecture and engineering design and empowering their practical and technical capabilities so that they can positively impact and provide added value to society. Through the nature of this award, more investment opportunities for owners of small and medium enterprises will be created by contributing to the operation of the award-winning projects and providing them with appropriate services.

The award will also help in investing in some untapped lands in the Sultanate of Oman and transform them into integrated tourism and entertainment destinations.

Practical, innovative and modern projects under the award will act as ideas for the tourism and investment planning sectors, while providing opportunities for real estate development companies in Oman to partner with the creators of some of the submissions.

The evaluation committee for the award includes five judges with vast experience in the field of architecture, urban planning and design: Fuad Abdullah Moosa Al Kindi, who serves as the chairman of the jury and is president of the Oman Society of Engineers; Dr Alya Abdulsattar Al Hashim, associate professor at Sultan Qaboos University; Sultan Hamdoon Al Harthi, the former head of Muscat Municipality; Hamed Nasser Al Hinai, CEO of Arkan Business and Saif Ali Nasser Al Hinai, chief development officer at Omran.

The commemorative shield aside, the winner of the award receives a cash prize of OMR 20,000, second place gets OMR 15,000 and the entrant who finishes third is given OMR 10,000.



RISE IN PRICES

<FROM A1 More revenues to boost country's financial reserves

Considering that Oman based its 2022 budget at an oil price of \$50 per barrel, the windfalls, if the oil prices stay on the high side for at least another quarter, may well exceed \$100 over the predicted price range of oil based for this year's budget.

Oman also predicted a 2022 revenue of 10.6 billion rials and with higher oil prices so far this year, the state income may double up and to reach 20 billion rials.

It will be a boost for the country's financial reserves, currently estimated at around \$15 billion. The

good news is that the government will also comfortably execute all of its planned major projects this year. But most importantly, there will be plenty of cash to create jobs to employ thousands of graduates waiting for employment. The extra cash will also improve business environment and stimulate investments in the country.

Oman may well see itself ramping up more crude productions, alongside other oil producers, to overcome the shortage of the commodity in the market if Russia's crude exports continue to be

under sanctions.

But hopefully, the benefits of higher oil prices may not offset the hike in food prices expected with the continuing Russia's aggression towards Ukraine and Oman may find a way to counterbalance inflations.

But how much oil producers like Oman stand to benefit from higher oil prices depend on how long Russia's offence on Ukraine lasts. But the international sanctions on Russian crude oil may continue for some months even if Moscow decides to pull back in the near future.



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Foreign students in Indian schools need to pay more fees

The practice is standard among all school systems set up in Oman to educate children from the country's expat communities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Non-Indian students who seek admission to Indian schools in Oman will have to pay more fees than their Indian classmates.

A member of the Board of Directors of Indian Schools in Oman has said that the practice is standard among all school systems set up in the country to educate children from the country's expatriate communities.

"It is true that foreign students who seek admission to Indian schools in Oman will need to pay about 20 percent more than their fellow Indian students," he said.

"As a community school system, we are primarily set up to provide education to the Indian community here in Oman, just as other communities in the country have their own system.

"Our first responsibility is, therefore, towards the students from our community, and guide-



ADDITIONAL CAPACITY: The COVID-19 pandemic led to many Indian families and their students returning to India, leading to vacancies in schools. The opening of new Indian School Bousher has also led to additional classroom capacity.

lines issued by the Ministry of Education enable us to charge more fees from foreign students," he added. "This is a practice followed by all the community schools in the country."

Seats available now

While Indian schools in Oman do not operate exclusively for the Indian community in the country, they were for a long time unable to take foreign students, as there was not enough space to accommodate the Indian students themselves.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to many Indian families and their students returning to India, leading to vacancies in schools. The opening of new Indian School Bousher has also led to additional classroom capacity.

"Earlier, it was difficult for even

Indian students to find admission in our schools because there was no room, which meant they were going to private schools or other community schools," said the board member.

"Because there was no space, we were not able to accept foreign students, unless under exceptional circumstances.

"Now, the strength of each class has decreased by at least 10 students, and we are in a place to accept foreign students," he added.

"We will never turn back any student who comes to us for education, if we can accept them. Only Omani students cannot be admitted as the law states that they need to be educated in their own schools. However, there are a few exceptional circumstances under which we can take them as well."

Admissions for the new academic term that begins in April 2022 are currently being processed. There are currently 21 Indian schools in Oman.

Indian schools in Oman

Seven of them – Indian School Muscat, Indian School Al Ghubra, Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir, Indian School Darsait, Indian School Al Seeb, Indian School Al Maabala and Indian School Bousher – are located in the capital, Muscat.

Two more schools are located in Thumrait and Salalah in Dhofar, while there are also schools in Khasab in the northern Musandam Governorate and for Masirah Island. Indian schools are also present in Saham, Buraimi, Rustaq, Jalan, Ibra, Ibri, Sur, Nizwa, Muladha and Sohar.

TWO AWARDS

Double delight for Salalah Airport



Times News Service

SALALAH: Salalah Airport has won two international awards from Airports Council International (ACI) in appreciation of the experience it provided to passengers in 2021.

Salalah Airport was named best airport in the Middle East for quality of services in the category of airports with less than two million annual passengers.

The second award was for being the best airport in the Middle East for following health procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The winners of various awards from the ACI were announced during a ceremony on Thursday, when the winners from around the world were named publicly.

High levels of professionalism

Praising the staff at Salalah Airport, Salim bin Awad Al Yafei, the executive vice president of the airport, said, "working in an environment similar to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic gave us indications into the abilities of our airport teams, the authorities working in the facility and our strategic partners, when it came to their high levels of professionalism to deal with exceptional circumstances that may sometimes stand in the way of our work environment and necessary responses.

"I would like to praise the efforts of the Salalah Airport family, across all areas of operation, for providing distinguished services

to all airport visitors and travelers, and for providing superior customer experiences despite the circumstances in which we found ourselves," he added. "These circumstances constitute an important turning point in our efforts to enhance services."

Airports Council International (ACI) represents the collective interests of airports around the world to promote excellence in the aviation industry. The organisation works with governments, regional ACI members, experts and international organisations like the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to develop policies, programmes and best practices that advance airport standards globally.

ACI World contributes to the safety, security and sustainability of the global aviation industry by advancing the collective interests of airports and the communities they serve and promoting excellence in airport management and operations. 1,950 airports and 717 members are part of ACI across 185 countries.

"After a second year of the pandemic, this year's Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award winners are especially reflective of customer experience leadership during the most challenging time in our sector's history," ACI World Director General Luis Felipe de Oliveira said. "We are exceedingly proud of their stellar leadership in delivering the very best customer experience," he added.

Trending ON SOCIAL MEDIA



21,603 REACH

Salalah Airport receives two international awards

A story on Salalah Airport reached 21,603 people and had 330 link clicks on Facebook.



2,500 VIEWS

The Maghrib Minute news wrap video in Hindi had 2,500 views and reached 11,300 people on Facebook.



848 VIEWS

The Out & About video with Charm had 848 views and 33 likes on Instagram.



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BREATHTAKING VIEWS OF WADI AL QAHF

WADI AL QAHF is located nearly 50 km (31 miles) from Wilayat Mahdah, Al Buraimi Governorate. Water flows most of the year and is distinguished by its fresh quality. Head north from Muscat towards Sohar. After about two hours, just after Saham and just before Al Qasabiyat, take a right and drive until the road meets the sea.

Here, in the middle of nowhere, sits the ruins of a little abandoned tower surrounded by fishermen boats. Continue heading north. After Sohar before turning onto Route 7 towards Buraimi, after about an hour, take the diversion to Mahdah at the roundabout in Humaydah.

Enjoy the drive between rocky mountains through Wadi Sharm,



a narrow valley with breathtaking views. The narrow, winding road will take you straight to Wadi Al Qahfi in Al Fayy.

Continue up the road until you see the sign Wadi Khamis 1 km. Take the dusty road on your right and park next to the falaj (irrigation system). Swim between the grey stones of the natural pools, and continue up the channel.

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT

Incredible experience for students at ROHM musical performance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In the journey of nurturing young minds and facilitating and promoting various talents, Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir has consistently motivated and inspired their students to participate in various activities conducted in and outside the school.

The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM), Oman's premier venue for musical arts and culture display, in celebration of its tenth anniversary, announced the launch of a new season for 2022 with a return to live performances.

Invitation was extended by ROHM to all students from the capital schools to participate in their art and music event - L'elisir d'amore - The factory of Ideas, one of the most loved of all Gaetano Donizetti's operas.

The ISWK team availed of this marvelous and rare opportunity

and encouraged their students to participate in this musical opera, though a very rare and unique venture for them.

The versatile team of teachers at the ISWK and the ISWKi took up this challenge and trained 58 young stars to perform 4 songs for the Musical Opera - 3 in English and 1 in Arabic.

The performance which took place on the 9th of March 2022 at the ROHM was an exceptional, incredible and an astounding experience for the children from the school.

The amazingly interactive singing by the children and their involvement in preparing the required props for the event, gave them the feeling of being active participants in the play. They remained connected with the main characters of the story, and this gave them a sense of contentment for contributing towards the Musical opera.

Collaborating with the internationally renowned As. Li. Co-production and singing under the direction of the Music Conductor Azzurra Steri, was not only a fascinating and an enthralling occurrence for the children and teachers of the ISWK team but was also a wonderful learning experience with plenty of key takeaways from the Opera viz. "to nurture the courage and the creativity that we all have in us", "to take responsibility for our actions", "to be sincere and kind" and the like, which will assist children to shape their personality and stay at par with the ever-changing demands of the 21st century skills.

The ISWK and ISWKi School Management are indeed thankful to the ROHM for offering this wonderful learning journey for the children of the Indian diaspora to perform with the world-renowned Opera group.







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CIVIL DEFENCE AND AMBULANCE AUTHORITY

National Search and Rescue Team concludes drill in Qatar

DOHA: The National Search and Rescue Team of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority concluded its participation in the joint drill with the International Search and Rescue Group of the State of Qatar.

International search
The drill comprised several aspects related to the work of international search and rescue teams. The drill has continued for thirty six consecutive hours in accordance with the guidelines manual of the International Search and Rescue Advisory



Group, affiliated to the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs. The drill aimed to upgrade the readiness of the National Search and Rescue Team for handling search and rescue incidents under different conditions. The drill was attended by Brigadier Salim Yahya Al Hinaï, Chairman of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority.

— ONA

ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN

Sharp Dagger naval drill ends

MUSSANAH: The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) on Saturday concluded the naval drill ‘Sharp Dagger’ at Al Batinah naval site. The drill was conducted with participation of friendly countries’ navies and assistance of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) jets. The drill began on 6 March 2022.

— ONA

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AGENDA OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF NATIONAL GAS COMPANY SAOG

The Board of Directors of National Gas Company SAOG (the “Company”) are pleased to invite the shareholders for the Company’s Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) to be held at 3 p.m. on Thursday, 24th March 2022, at Hilton Garden Inn, Al Khuwair, Muscat, or through the electronic platform for holding General Meetings, which can be accessed through Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (“MCD”) website (www.mcd.gov.om). In the event, that the quorum for the first AGM is not met, Wednesday, 30th March 2022, at 3 p.m. will be the date of the second AGM, at the aforementioned meeting venue and electronic platform to consider the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the report of the Board of Directors’ on Company’s activity and its financial position for the financial year ended 31st December 2021.
- To consider and approve the report of the Board of Directors’ on corporate governance for the financial year ended 31st December 2021.
- To consider and approve the report of the evaluation of the performance of the Board of Directors for the financial year ended 31st December 2021.
- To consider the statutory auditors’ report and to approve the financial statements and the profit and loss account for the financial year ended 31st December 2021.
- To ratify the sitting fees paid to Directors’ for attending meetings of the Board and sub committees for the previous financial year and to determine the Directors’ sitting fees for the upcoming financial year.
- To consider the transactions carried out with related parties during the financial year ended 31st December 2021
- To consider and approve the related parties transactions that the Company will enter into during the financial year ending 31st December 2022
- To inform the Shareholders of the amounts paid towards corporate social responsibility activities during the year ended 31st December 2021.
- To consider and approve the allocation of RO 10,000 for Corporate Social Responsibility programs during the financial year ending on 31st December 2022.
- To appoint statutory auditors for the financial year ending 31st December 2022 and determine their fees.

Pursuant to the Company’s articles of association and general meeting regulations, through modern technology means issued by the Capital Market Authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following

(a) A juristic person, exclusively, has the right to authorize a natural person to attend the general meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCD.

(b) Voting on any of the items on the agenda begins no more than three days before the date set for the Meeting until the end of the voting process on the day of the meeting, and in the event that the shareholder’s balance is increased or decreased, the voting process will be invalid, and he must re-vote again on the day of the Meeting.

Any questions relating to this Notice should be addressed to Mr. Nasser Al Rahbi (Telephone No. +968 99336130).

Chairman

Auditors

Legal Advisor



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DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I welcome you to the fourteenth Annual General Meeting of Voltamp Energy SAOG and present the Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2021.

REVIEW OF OPERATIONS:
The company had many achievements during the period which would take the company to new heights in future. The company has expanded its footprints in export market where companies products exists in Nine territories in 2021 as compared to eight in 2020. Supply chain disruptions however, continued to impact operations across the group. The operations of the Company include the following subsidiaries:

- Voltamp Transformers Oman SAOG, a 100% subsidiary of Voltamp Energy SAOG. During 2021 increase in raw material prices along with the uncertain availability of major raw materials also impacted the performance in terms of cost. The company had breakthroughs in securing large and prestigious orders in the Oil and Gas sector as well as the renewable energy sector both in Oman and across the GCC. These include special purpose transformers for solar fields.
- Voltamp Power SAOG, a subsidiary of Voltamp Energy successfully manufactured its first 220 kV 500 MVA transformer. The transformer was executed ahead of contractual delivery. During the year, the company also secured order for its 1st 400 kV class transformer. The same is under execution and will be manufactured in 2022. With this milestone, the company will be the first in the GCC to have the capability of producing 220 kv 500 MVA and 400 kV 500 MVA transformers.
- Voltamp Technology LLC, a 100% subsidiary of Voltamp Energy manufactures and sells low and medium voltage switchgears. During the year, the company executed a prestigious order of a large “e house” for a reputed client in Oman. It is first of its kind in Oman.

The summary of the performance of the Company (including subsidiaries) is as follows:

Particulars	2021	2020	% Increase / (decrease)
Revenue	31,524,601	34,380,932	(8.31)
Other Income	279,704	273,369	2.32
Expenditure	(32,538,874)	(35,035,086)	(7.12)
(Loss)/Profit Before Tax	(734,569)	(380,785)	N.A.
Provision for Income Tax	66,762	204,686	(67.38)
(Loss)/Profit After Tax	(667,807)	(176,099)	N.A.
Basic (Loss)/earnings per share	(0.0080)	(0.0044)	N.A.
Net assets per share	0.226	0.240	(5.83)

The company incurred a fair value loss on its “Available for Sale” investment of RO 49,550 during 2021 against a loss of RO 132,133 in 2020. Total comprehensive loss after adjusting for fair value loss in 2021 is RO 717,357 as against RO 308,232 in 2020. During the year company made a provision for identified risks on its receivables which has impacted the result of the company substantially. However, the company has not stopped its efforts to collect these receivables.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE YEAR

- Secured its biggest solar transformer order from outside Oman.
- Successfully manufactured, tested, and supplied 24 pulse transformers for a prestigious Oil & Gas customer.
- Secured LOI for 230 kV range of transformers for export.
- Received the approval of 400 kV transformer from OETC.
- Received its first order of 400 kV 500 MVA transformer order.
- Received the first order and entry into two new African countries. Executing first Intelligent Protection & Control System (IPCS) LV Switchgear with 6300 Amps, 415V, 105KA double front design.
- Executing the first E-House (30 Mtr Long x 7.5 Mtr Width x 5.5 Mtr height) as an EPC contract

EMPLOYEES WELFARE
The health and wellbeing of our workforce is a key priority at Voltamp Energy SAOG. As such, the company provides its employees comprehensive medical insurance coverage. During the year, to minimise the impact of Covid 19 on the health of our employees, the company provided vaccinations to all its employees.

In addition, employees benefit from a Welfare Fund created by the company to support its employees and promote a healthy and collaborative work environment.

The company has harnessed innovation as a part of its culture and encourages its workforce to take part in Process Improvement Initiatives throughout the organisation.

OMANISATION
As part of our national commitment, it is the policy of the company to recruit and train Omanis at all levels across the organisation. The company is committed to foster the local workforce and create a sustainable and effective local human asset base with substantial returns to the company. The company is proud to report Omani leadership in multiple positions. Omanisation levels at the company are 42%.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
The company takes its social responsibility role very seriously. In this regard, the company has contributed to supporting efforts to combat the Corona Covid 19 pandemic as well as supporting relief efforts following the aftermath of (Shaheen). In addition, the company continues its efforts in local value addition through the development of local vendors.

HEALTH SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT
The Company is keen on continuous compliance with its integrated management system which include quality environment and occupational health and safety. The Company has been regularly upgrading its Health and Safety Management Systems to international standards and also monitoring its environment health and safety performance continuously. ISO 45001 on Occupational Health and Safety Management is Implemented in all manufacturing facilities of the company.

Voltamp is committed to Zero Harm at its work place and therefore, Environmental Health & Safety is a top priority in all its operations.

Voltamp strives to maintain a strong, focused safety culture that reinforces and strengthens the operations. Comprehensive safety procedures and training are in place to ensure our people are aware of Voltamp’s commitment to their well-being. This commitment has resulted in an excellent safety track record.

The Company has also implemented energy saving measures to optimise the electricity use in its factories.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE:

Your Company’s Board and Management believe in maintaining a high level of professionalism and integrity in all its operations. The Company stands committed to fully comply with the Code of Corporate Governance. A report on Corporate Governance as well as the Management Discussion and Analysis Report have been included in the Annual Report.

The Board has reviewed the existing system of Rules, Regulations, and internal controls so as to ensure that they properly identify authorities at various levels and to ensure that there is an effective system of checks and balances in place. Furthermore, all systems and procedures are being regularly upgraded and strengthened, which will ensure efficiency and transparency.

DIVIDEND
The Board of Directors recommend 3% dividend for the year ended 31st December 2021.

OUTLOOK:
The global economy has witnessed various fluctuations in the markets for raw materials in addition to the fluctuation of oil prices in global markets which showed a moderate improvement with the end of the second quarter of 2021 and in the beginning of 2022. During the year 2021 the company was able to explore new markets outside Oman with good results.

Further, with successful manufacturing and dispatch of its first 220 kV 500 MVA transformer, Voltamp became the only company in the region to manufacture this range of power transformers. The company also took a big step towards establishing itself in the 400 kV range by obtaining approval of OETC and securing its first order for this product. It has brought the company at par with global multinational companies who were supplying large power transformers in the GCC market till now.

The company has also added special distribution transformers in its product portfolio for use in renewable energy plants. The company is in the process of upgrading its Medium Voltage solution.

The company is committed to progress through continuous improvement in efficiency and productivity in its operations and innovation in its product manufacturing processes.

With these achievements, the company is creating the foundation for further growth in the years to come.

Given the current inflationary environment, the company’s outlook for 2022 remains “cautiously optimistic.”

THANKS AND APPRECIATION:
On behalf of the Board, I would like to convey our extreme thanks and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tank and His Majesty’s Government for the initiatives and incentives undertaken in support of the Omani economy and for providing a secure and safe environment for industries to flourish and prosper.

The Board of Directors wish to register their sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment Promotion, Capital Market Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange Company SAOG, and the Omani Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

I also extend my sincere thanks to all our clients, employees, suppliers, bankers, and other stakeholders for their continued support to the company. Finally, I wish to convey my sincere thanks to our Shareholders for the confidence they have reposed in the Company and in its Board.

Ayemen bin Hamad Al Busaidi
Chairman
Voltamp Energy SAOG

Separate and consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Parent Company		Group	
	For the year ended 31 Dec 2021	For the year ended 31 Dec 2020	For the year ended 31 Dec 2021	For the year ended 31 Dec 2020
	RO	RO	RO	RO
Revenue	5,322,289	6,405,589	31,524,601	34,380,932
Cost of sales	(4,973,995)	(6,311,371)	(27,469,084)	(29,726,027)
Gross profit	348,294	94,218	4,055,517	4,654,905
Other income	151,031	126,229	256,034	269,721
Selling, administrative and general expenses	(779,932)	(868,153)	(4,165,569)	(4,167,473)
Impairment loss on trade receivables	(20,156)	(6,205)	(251,823)	(420,749)
Operating (loss) / profit	(300,763)	(653,911)	(105,841)	336,404
Finance income	62,513	50,220	23,670	3,648
Finance cost	(58,942)	(86,594)	(652,398)	(720,837)
Loss for the year before taxation	(297,192)	(690,285)	(734,569)	(380,785)
Taxation	50,887	120,640	66,762	204,686
Loss for the year after taxation	(246,305)	(569,645)	(667,807)	(176,099)
Net income attributable to :				
Equity holders of the Parents	-	-	(685,020)	(357,023)
Non-controlling interest	-	-	17,213	180,924
Other comprehensive income				
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss				
Investments at FVOCI - net change in fair value	(49,550)	(132,133)	(49,550)	(132,133)
Total comprehensive loss for the year	(295,855)	(701,778)	(717,357)	(308,232)
Basic and diluted loss per share	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.004)

Separate and consolidated statement of financial position As at 31 December 2021

	Parent Company		Group	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
	RO	RO	RO	RO
Assets				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	524,793	569,260	9,493,615	9,712,451
Right-of-use assets	32,281	115,875	1,007,811	868,573
Investment in subsidiaries	7,229,520	7,229,520	-	-
Intangible assets	-	47,771	412,086	528,174
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	792,791	842,341	792,791	842,341
Deferred tax asset	353,327	296,639	785,166	698,250
Total non-current assets	8,932,712	9,101,406	12,491,469	12,649,789
Current assets				
Inventories	1,388,874	1,566,168	11,001,869	9,066,960
Trade and other receivables	2,026,290	2,633,186	24,349,595	19,441,787
Amount due from related parties	6,072,291	6,662,542	-	229,061
Cash and bank balances	210,656	202,505	292,903	295,457
Total current assets	9,698,111	11,064,401	35,644,367	29,033,265
Total assets	18,630,823	20,165,807	48,135,836	41,683,054
Equity and liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	8,140,275	8,140,275	8,140,275	8,140,275
Share premium	3,146,070	3,146,070	3,146,070	3,146,070
Legal reserve	2,334,238	2,334,238	3,031,496	3,022,217
Fair value reserve	(1,974,507)	(1,924,957)	(1,974,507)	(1,924,957)
Retained earnings	3,477,751	4,131,070	6,026,832	7,126,424
Equity attributable to the shareholders of the Parent Company	15,123,827	15,826,696	18,370,166	19,510,029
Non controlling interest	-	-	1,076,050	1,060,558
Total equity	15,123,827	15,826,696	19,446,216	20,570,587
Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	-	-	644,683	1,043,048
Lease liabilities	23,516	95,349	898,810	770,788
Employees' benefit liabilities	134,572	134,928	660,799	657,200
Total non-current liabilities	158,088	230,277	2,204,292	2,471,036
Current liabilities				
Bank borrowings	364,964	1,483,837	14,161,932	10,215,145
Term loans	-	-	228,485	790,985
Lease liabilities	8,324	17,556	135,568	111,061
Trade and other payables	2,403,925	1,836,676	11,797,070	7,360,082
Amount due to related parties	562,860	761,930	157,208	61,641
Income tax payable	8,835	8,835	5,065	102,517
Total current liabilities	3,348,908	4,108,834	26,485,328	18,641,431
Total liabilities	3,506,996	4,339,111	28,689,620	21,112,467
Total equity and liabilities	18,630,823	20,165,807	48,135,836	41,683,054
Net assets per share	0.186	0.194	0.226	0.240





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WORLD



EU leaders reject plea to quickly accept Ukraine into the EU family

The accession process normally takes years or even decades, with the candidate nation required to meet a number of EU-set criteria

PARIS: The heads of all 27 EU states pledged to strengthen their ties with Kyiv and “support Ukraine in pursuing its European path” following a two-day summit in Versailles, France.

In a joint statement, the EU leaders also said that “Ukraine belongs to the European family.”

However, they rejected the plea by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to quickly accept Ukraine into the EU as the war with Russia continues. The accession process



NO EXCEPTIONS: The host of the summit, French President Emmanuel Macron, said the bloc would not make exceptions for Ukraine

normally takes years or even decades, with the candidate nation required to meet a number of EU-set criteria.

The host of the summit, French President Emmanuel Macron, said the bloc would not make exceptions for Ukraine.

“Could we have exceptional measures for a country that is at war without respecting the criteria [for joining the EU]? The answer is no,” he said after the summit finished on Friday.

His comments echoed those made by Dutch Prime Minister

Mark Rutte, who previously said there was “no such thing as a fast-tracking of accession — that doesn’t exist.” German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was also against the idea, pointing instead to the association agreement that the EU made with Kyiv in 2017 as a

way to deepen ties.

“It is very important that we continue to pursue the things we have decided in the past — this is the course we must follow,” Scholz said. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen struck a more positive note, saying Ukrainians were exercising “their right to choose their own destiny” by starting the process to join the EU.

“Today we have opened the pathway towards us for Ukraine,” she said.

EU raises Ukraine military aid to €1 billion

While shying away from fast-tracking Ukraine into the bloc, the EU leaders said they would redouble their military aid, pledging another €500 million (\$550 million) in military assistance to the Kyiv government. These funds come on top of €500 million earmarked last week — the first time the EU has bought weapons for a non-member country under attack.

“Russia’s war of aggression constitutes a tectonic shift in European history,” the leaders said in a statement.

They also pledged to build up the bloc’s defense capabilities in addition to US-led NATO, to reduce the EU’s energy dependency on Russia

and to build up the bloc’s economic base in various areas, including raw materials, food and digital technologies.

Macron: ‘Nothing is taboo’ on sanctions

The EU unveiled yet another wave of punitive measures against Russia and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday.

Macron said nothing was “off the table, nothing is taboo” when it comes to sanctions, and that tougher steps might follow.

If the Russian president “intensifies the bombing, lays siege to Kyiv and intensifies the scenes of war, we know that we will have to take massive sanctions again,” Macron told reporters.

Meanwhile, Scholz said the EU sanctions had already had “dramatic consequences” for the Russian economy, while arguing that stopping Russian oil and gas imports was not tenable for several EU members.

The US, Canada and the UK, all oil producers in their own right, have taken similar steps, and Ukraine had urged the EU to follow suit. Instead, the bloc is pledging to drastically reduce its reliance on Russian imports over the next few years. **bw**

TELEPHONE CALL

Scholz, Macron speak with Putin over Ukraine conflict

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz were holding a joint telephone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday, the Elysee palace said.

It is the second time the pair have been in touch with the Russian leader this week.

The three leaders spoke on Thursday when both Macron and Scholz had “demanded an immediate ceasefire by Russia.”

Since meeting Putin in the Kremlin on February 7, Macron has spoken by phone with the Russian leader on nine separate occasions, his office said.



Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron. The call revolved around pressuring Russia to release the mayor of the city of Melitopol, who Zelenskyy says was kidnapped by Russian forces on Friday.

Russia warns: US sanctions imminent

Russia’s sanctions lists against the United States are ready and will “soon be made public,” Moscow’s

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was reported as saying by state owned news agency TASS.

“The lists are ready, we are working on this. This is, by and large, part of the daily work,” he said.

Meanwhile, the European Union faces soaring energy prices in the wake of sanctions imposed against the Kremlin over its decision to invade Ukraine, Interfax quoted a Russian foreign ministry official as saying on Saturday. **bw**

UKRAINE CONFLICT

Direct conflict between NATO and Russia would be World War III, says Biden

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden stressed that the United States and NATO allies would not fight Russia in Ukraine, describing such a scenario as “World War III”. He added that, however, “we will defend every inch of NATO territory.”

“We’re going to continue to stand together with our allies in Europe and send an unmistakable message. We will defend every single inch of NATO territory with the full might of the united and galvanized NATO,” Biden said after announcing additional sanctions on Russia.

“We will not fight a war against Russia in Ukraine. Direct conflict between NATO and Russia is World War III, something we must strive to prevent,” he added.

When asked whether the use of chemical weapons by Russia would trigger a US military response, Biden said that Moscow will pay a severe price for the use of chemical weapons.

On Thursday, White House spokesperson Jen Psaki said that the United States has no intention of sending troops to Ukraine even if nonconventional weapons are used there.

“We don’t have any intention to do that,” Psaki told a press briefing when asked whether the



United States considers any use of biological or chemical weapons a “red line” for its involvement in the conflict, Sputnik News Agency reported.

Meanwhile, Biden held a telephonic conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and discussed US’ ongoing security, humanitarian, and economic assistance for the Ukrainian people.

“I called @ZelenskyyUa this morning to discuss our ongoing security, humanitarian, and economic assistance for the Ukrainian people. I updated him on the

actions we are taking today in coordination with the G7 and EU to further raise the costs on Russia for its attack on Ukraine,” he said in a Tweet.

More than 2.1 million people have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries, according to the UN Refugee Agency.

As the Western nations continue to work out plans to target Russia’s economy, European Union announced new sanctions against Russia and Belarus targeting Russian leaders, oligarchs, their family members, and the maritime sector. **aw**

INVITATION TO TENDER (RE-TENDER)

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

Tender Reference Number	Title of the Tender
DISC/E/Tender/2021/113	Construction of 33/11kV, 2x10MVA Primary Substation designated as Tawiatair
Tender Fee	RO. 1,575.000 Inclusive VAT (5%) Each Tender. Note: Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tenders should collect the tender documents from DISC’s office or send an e-mail to below mention mail id for tender documents.
Experience	The tenderers should have executed in the last Five (5) years period similar Projects in Sultanate of Oman.
Pre-qualification	Contractors participating in the tendering process shall be at least Grade-A registered electrical contractor with Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP), Sultanate of Oman. Apart from the above, the Contractors participating in the tendering process shall have Competent Electrical Person (CEP) certified by DISC and copy of the valid CEP certificate shall be submitted along with bid without which the bids will not be considered for evaluation. Further, Tenderers will be evaluated as per the HSE qualification criterion specified in the Tender documents.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 27 th March 2022
Site Visit	10:00 AM on 28 th March 2022
Last date for seeking pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 31 st March 2022
Last date for response pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 5 th April 2022
Last date for submission of bids	02:00 PM on 12 th April 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 150 days validity) shall only be considered for evaluation.



شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة

Dhofar Integrated Services Company

شركة ظفار للخدمات المدمجة | ص ب ٢٦٨٩ | الرمز البريدي: ٢٢ | شارع ٢٢، بولوار خلف مركز صلالة العربية الصحي | صلالة - محافظة ظفار | الرقم المكالمة: ٨٠٠٧٧٧٠٠

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NEWEST ADDITION

UK zoo names white rhino ‘Queenie’ after Elizabeth II

LONDON: A British Zoo has named a white rhinoceros calf after Queen Elizabeth II, UK media reported Saturday, as the monarch celebrates 70 years on the throne.

Queenie is the newest addition to the rhino family at Cotswold Wildlife Park & Gardens, a zoo based in the grounds and parkland belonging to a 19th-century manor house, in Oxfordshire, England.

“All the rhinos here are named after very special people and I think everyone agrees that 2022 will always be special because of Queen Elizabeth’s Platinum Jubilee,” park chief Reggie Heyworth said in a statement.

“I thought it might be a bit presumptuous to call our new baby ‘Queenie’, so I have christened her ‘Queenie’ instead. I think it is a perfect name for a young lady Rhino!” he added.

Queenie is the ninth White Rhino calf to be born at the zoo and visitors will be able to view



her in the park’s Rhino House and paddock.

The rhino isn’t the only royal-related birth at the Zoo. A Bactrian camel was named after the Queen’s great-grandson Prince Louis, as they were born on the same day.

White rhinos were on the verge of extinction in the early 1900s, with only around 20 to 50 remaining in their African homeland.

Numbers have recovered

somewhat after being offered protection. Even so, births in captivity remain rare, the wildlife park said.

Only five white rhinos have been born in the UK over the past year, and 12 in European zoos, the park said.

The other four rhino species are either critically endangered or presumed extinct in the wild, according to International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). — **bw**

SPORTS



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ENCOUNTER

Oman begin Asian hockey campaign by beating Iran 10-2

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The national hockey team of Oman began its campaign in the Asian Hockey Federation Cup in Jakarta on a strong note by beating Iran 10-2 in the opening encounter on Saturday.

Earlier, Oman News Agency (ONA) said: "The national hockey team will begin its campaign in the Asian Hockey Federation Cup being hosted by Jakarta, Indonesia, from March 11-20. Our national team is ranked 26th internationally."

Nine teams are participating in the tournament after the withdrawal of the Chinese team, and the Oman team is placed in the



second group, which includes Bangladesh, Iran, Singapore and Indonesia. The first group in-

cludes Thailand, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Oman's team was first to arrive

in Jakarta where it participated in a training camp before the tournament, which included a number of friendly matches with Indonesia in which they emerged victorious. Even against the Thai team, Omani team won 2-0 but against the Kazakh team the match ended in a 3-3 draw.

The national team is one of the favourites to win the championship title, as it is the best ranked at the international level. The first three teams will qualify for the Asian Cup, which is expected to be held next May. The Iranian team had won its first match of the tournament against Singapore 2-1 on Friday and the Kazakh team defeated the Thai team by six goals.

INDIA VS SRI LANKA

Bowlers put India on top against Sri Lanka



BENGALURU: Indians are in a strong position as visitors are tottering at 86/6 at stumps on Day-1 trailing by 166 runs after being bowled out for 252 in the second Test being played here at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Bowlers dominated the day with 16 wickets falling in the entire day.

The Sri Lankan team came out to bat at the start of post Dinner session and just like the Indian team they got off to a terrible start losing Kusal Mendis in the third over of the innings to Jasprit Bumrah caught by Shreyas Iyer in third slip for 2. Bumrah once again struck as he dismissed Lahiru Thirumane for 8 caught by Shreyas Iyer who took his second catch of the match as visitors lost their second wicket for 14. In the next over skipper, Dimuth Karunaratne was cleaned up by Mohammed Shami for 4 to leave visitors tottering at 14 for 3.

Shami once again struck dismissing Dhananjaya de Silva's leg before the wicket for 10 as Sri Lanka lost their fourth wicket for 28. Angelo Mathews along with Charith Asalanka took their team's total to the 50-run mark.

Axar Patel came into the attack and he dismissed Asalanka as half of the Sri Lankan team was back to the pavilion with only 50 runs on the board.

Wicket-keeper batter Niroshan Dickwella walked into bat with Mathews and struck a small partnership. Mathews moved into the

40s but Bumrah struck for the third time dismissing him for 43 caught in the slips by skipper Rohit Sharma to leave Sri Lanka tottering at 85 for 6.

Earlier in the day Rohit Sharma won the toss and opted to bat first in his maiden Day-Night Test as a captain but his team got off to the worst possible start as a local lad and opener Mayank Agarwal was dismissed run out by Praveen Jayawickrama for 4 in the second over of the match with a score of only 10 runs on the board.

Spinner Lasith Embuldeniya was introduced into the attack as early as the eighth over and he got the prized scalp of skipper Rohit Sharma in his second over for 15 as India were reduced to 29/2 within 10 overs. Virat Kohli and Hanuma Vihari then stitched a 47-run partnership but Sri Lankan bowlers kept on persisting and were rewarded with the wicket of Hanuma Vihari for 31. Vihari was dismissed by Praveen Jayawickrama caught behind by Niroshan Dickwella to leave India tottering at 76/3.

Rishabh Pant walked in to bat and started playing aggressive shots but from the other end, India were dealt with another severe blow as Dhananjaya de Silva got the big wicket of Virat Kohli's leg before wicket for 23 to leave India in deep trouble at 86 for 4.

India were 93/4 going into Tea with Pant unbeaten on 16 and Shreyas Iyer not out on 1. -ANI

FOOTBALL

Ballon d'Or football award process tweaked

PARIS: The criteria for claiming Ballon d'Or which is one of the most prestigious prizes in football has been tweaked by France Football for the current year and beyond on Friday.

The Ballon d'Or will now be awarded on the basis of a classic football season which is August to July rather than on yearly stats.

Organisers further confirmed that the FIFA World Cup in Qatar will count for the 2023 award. The jury that selects the winner will be reduced to around 100 journalists rather than the current 170. The women's award will have a jury of 50.

"Also, by proceeding with a slight shift in time, with an abandonment of the calendar rhythm and an alignment of the BO (men and women) on the classic seasonality of football - for the month of August, which coincides with the start of the major



championships and the European preliminary rounds, the following July, which corresponds to the lowering of the curtain for all competitions, national and international, selections included - we end up with a clarification of the performances to be counted and evaluated.

The next edition will therefore take into account the entire 2021-

22 season which will end with the Women's Euro (July 6-31, 2022). The World Cup in Qatar (November 21-December 18, 2022) will, however, include the 2023 Ballon d'Or edition," the statement said.

In another change, former Chelsea forward Didier Drogba is joining the committee that picks nominees. -ANI

2ND TEST

Pat Cummins announces team for second Test

KARACHI: Australia captain Pat Cummins announced the playing XI for the second Test, and also confirmed that leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson will make his long-awaited Test debut against Pakistan on Saturday. Swepson first toured with Australia's Test team five years ago, now he has been included to partner Nathan Lyon on a pitch that is expected to aid spinners. Swepson will replace seamer Josh Hazlewood, who has been left out of the team after playing just one Test into his comeback from his strained Ashes campaign. Speaking on Swepson's inclusion captain Cummins said that the leg-spinner is "pumped" to be part of the playing XI in the second Test against Pakistan and he is absolutely ready. -ANI

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OAB NEW APPOINTMENTS

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently announced the appointment of Omani talent across various senior leadership roles. OAB is committed to attracting local talent to support the Bank's growth strategy and reinforce its position within the banking sector. **>B2**

MARKET
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GOOGLE, META PROBE

The European Commission and UK regulators on Friday each opened an antitrust investigation into a 2018 deal between Google and Facebook owner Meta Platforms that allegedly aimed at establishing their dominance over digital advertising. **>B2**

Opaz slashes registration fees from OMR1,000 to OMR30-40

The decision to cut fees for services provided to projects operating in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm aims to facilitate the business and investment environment and to support SMEs

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has slashed drastically the commercial registration fees for enterprises operating within the boundaries of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad).

This is within the context of the support given by the Opaz to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), it was approved to reduce commercial registration fees for enterprises operating within the boundaries of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad).

The value of the registration fees allocated to SMEs for opening a new company has been amended



to be between OMR30 to OMR40 only, and the fees for opening a branch of a local company has become OMR12 instead of the previous fee of up to OMR1,000.

Dr Said bin Khalifa Al Turashi, In-Charge of Managing Operation of Commercial Registration & Business Services Department of Opaz, explained that the new facilities package approved by the Au-

thority's Board of Directors which include granting SMEs reduced fees and improved incentives, in addition to other fees related to renewing the commercial register and the operation related to managing the business.

The decision on fees for services provided to projects operating in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm aims to facilitate the business and investment environment and to support SMEs, or emerging enterprises operating within the zone.

He added that Opaz continues to provide facilities and incentives for entrepreneurs in SMEs, including a 50 per cent reduction in fees for all services provided by Opaz, in order to create a stimulating investment environment for entrepreneurs and to enhance their opportunities to benefit from the economic growth in the economic and free zones, adding that this incentive will encour-

age entrepreneurs to expand their works, create different projects in line with the requirements of mega projects and the continuous growth in the zone.

It is worth noting that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones has been working since the issuance of Royal Decree No. 105/2020 to promote and support activities of SMEs by providing many facilities and advantages that enable the enterprises to benefit from the facilities provided, whose systems are characterised by speed and efficiency, through the authority's one-stop channels, whose electronic services extend to all special economic zones and free zones.

The most prominent of them was the review and re-engineering of procedures, and this is part of the efforts aimed at diversifying the economic stimulus and providing attractive advantages and incentives for entrepreneurs.

10 illegal possessions removed in Special Economic Zone at Duqm



Times News Service

DUQM: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad), in cooperation with the Public Prosecution and the Royal Omani Police carried out a campaign to remove 10 illegal possessions, in different locations within the boundaries of the Zone and the necessary measures were taken accordingly in this regard.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) continues its efforts to investigate and monitor any illegal posses-

sions within the boundaries of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm or its affiliated areas and to take the necessary measures in accordance with the legal procedures applicable in this regard.

Grabbing lands

Opaz calls upon all to avoid misusing or infringing on the public funds or grabbing government lands illegally, which will consequently expose the violator to legal accountability and judicial consequences including removing the possessions.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Decoding IT launches new mobile application for IT Service Management



As a part of its continuous focus on improving the quality of IT support, Decoding IT Solutions has launched its mobile application for IT service management - MyIT.

Specially built for companies with a small or no dedicated IT team, on ITIL-recommended best-practices, MyIT will provide its users all the details of their IT infrastructure, i.e., asset inventory, ticket helpdesk, 24x7 network monitoring and so many other features.

MyIT app is the first-of-its-kind in the Oman IT industry in making your IT infrastructure available anytime, anywhere, right at your fingertips - on your mobile phones. MyIT

app is available for both Android and iOS users.

This app will be exclusively offered to the subscribers of their flagship IT Service management - PowerMyIT. Power MyIT is a comprehensive IT Service Management (ITSM) package that combines a team of experts skilled in different aspects of IT with the essential management tools to improve the availability, performance, and security of IT infrastructure. "We've seen technology evolve at incredible speed in the last two years, driven by the pandemic," said Rohit Saluja, Co-founder and CEO, Decoding IT Solutions.

"To keep pace with this dramatic change, IT service man-

agement also needs to evolve. This app will revolutionise the way ITSM is done in SMEs. With the right team and right tools, PowerMyIT should give SMEs the boost they need in their digital transformation journey," Saluja added.

Decoding IT Solutions has been working in Oman for the last 8 years, as a system integrator and service provider, with the purpose of providing superior quality solutions and support. Apart from IT service management, Decoding IT Solutions is also recognised for providing datacentre enhancement, user management and security solutions to 100+ organisations of different scales and verticals.

GROWTH THROUGH TOURISM

Notice

Tender

Subject

Refurbishment Works for Crowne Plaza Salalah, Dhofar Governate, Sultanate of Oman

OMRAN Group creates sustainable and authentic tourism assets, lifestyle communities and destinations that drive economic growth and contribute to the diversification of the economy. We work in line with the Government's vision of positioning tourism as a major economic driver of the future and encourage the participation of private sector in the development of various tourism projects across the Sultanate.

Thus, OMRAN Group invites qualified and experienced companies for the following tender:

Tender No.	07/2022
Scope of Work	Interior designs and refurbishment work for the rooms located in the Main Tower, Block A, Block B
Experience	Contractors with previous experience of Refurbishment works in 5-star hotels
Grade	International and local companies (Excellent, First Grade)
Tender Document Sale Start Date	Sunday, 13 March 2022
Last date for collect Tender Document	Thursday, 17 March 2022
Tender Closing Date	Not later than 10:00 am on Thursday, 07 April 2022
Tender Fees	RO 300
Vendor Registration	All Bidders are required to complete a vendor registration at https://supplier.omran.om/ prior to making any submissions to OMRAN
Tender Document Collection	Tender Documents can be collected from the Omran Headquarters' Receptionist at the Ground Floor: Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group) OMRAN Group Office at Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) Madinat Al Irfan Building number 303, Way number 3, Complex number 303 Tender documents can only be collected during working hours: Sunday - Thursday 8:30am - 3:00pm.
Tender Submission	All Bidders are required to submit their Tender, compliant with the Tender Documents instructions to the OMRAN Tenders Box at the reception area of OMRAN Office (Madinat Al Irfan) before 10:00 a.m. on the last date for submission addressed to: Chairman of Tender Committee P.O. Box 991, P.C. 130, Al Athaiba, Sultanate of Oman Tel: + 968 24 391 111, Fax: + 968 24 391 112

omran.om

Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group)
Tel: +968 24 39 11 11
info@omran.om
@omrangroupom



MARKET

OAB attracts Omani talent with eight new senior leadership appointments

Oman Arab Bank believes that the cornerstone of its success is driven by a forward-looking policy that attracts talent and fosters their development

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of its strategy to support Omanisation and its continuous efforts to attract local talent, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently announced the appointment of Omani talent across various senior leadership roles. OAB is committed to attracting local talent to support the Bank's growth strategy and reinforce its position within the banking sector.

OAB believes that the cornerstone of its success is driven by a forward-looking policy that attracts talent and fosters their development



tracts talent and fosters their development.

In several positions
This step saw the appointment of several Omani talents in several positions, including Mohamed Al Lawati as Chief Credit Officer,

Hamza Moosa Bager as Chief Audit Executive, Tariq Al Zadjali as Chief Technology Officer, Essam Al Busaidi as Head of the Human Resources Division, Leen Al Atassi as Head of Corporate Communications, Khalid Al Amri as the Head of Branch Banking, Khalid Al Riy-

As a testament to its commitment to attracting, developing and promoting local talent, OAB's Omanisation ratio stands at 96 per cent overall, which is one of the highest in the Industry.

ami as Head of Mid-Market Enterprise and Ali Al Mamari as Legal Advisor – Head of Legal Affairs & Recovery.

In various fields
Mohamed Al Lawati has extensive banking experience with over 25 years in various fields, mainly Corporate Banking, Credit and Risk, with broad knowledge of Islamic Banking.

Hamza Moosa Bager brings over 20 years of experience, holding key positions across several major entities, taking on responsibilities related to internal audit and operations.

Tariq Al Zadjali has more than 24 years of experience in IT, with strong leadership skills and hands-on experience in the fields of IT infrastructure Management, Information Security and Application Management, Practice & Delivery Management, Program/Project Management, and Infrastructure Design.

Essam Al Busaidi is a seasoned HR professional with over 24 years of experience in higher education, commercial airline and oil and gas (upstream and downstream) sectors. He is well-versed in managing all aspects of Human Resources, such as HR Strategy, policy development, talent management, learning and development and performance management.

Leen Al Atassi hosts a career spanning over 16 years across various financial institutions in the Sultanate and has a proven record of introducing innovative strategic communication strategies, change management and internal culture initiatives that have strengthened the brands and contributed towards the growth of organisations

she has previously worked for.

Khalid Al Amri has over 27 years of experience in managerial positions, in accounting, finance, investment, and retail and hosts capabilities in overseeing project management and implementation of retail banking strategies and initiatives.

Extensive experience
Khalid Al Riyami is a highly qualified professional with over 20 years of extensive experience in analysing data to implement sound financial decisions for high-profile multinational corporations and financial institutions. He has proven expertise in credit and business management, driving internal shifts that mitigate risk and maximising profitability.

Ali Al Mamari, hosts over 20 years of administrative and technical specialisation in the field of law. He utilises his practical experience gained during his tenure in the government sector to bring about change and progress in the private sector, in line with current and future advancement.

As a testament to its commitment to attracting, developing and promoting local talent, OAB's Omanisation ratio stands at 96 per cent overall, which is one of the highest in the Industry.

ENERGY RESOURCES

Russian gas edging toward extinction in Europe

VERSAILLES: A few days before Russia invaded Ukraine, German Finance Minister Christian Lindner warned that if harsh Western sanctions were levelled at Russia in the event of a war, the country might retaliate by cutting off the gas it supplies to Europe.

Now, after two weeks of Russia's brutal campaign, it is the European side which wants to turn off the tap first as it seeks to apply maximum pressure on Moscow.

EU leaders met at Versailles on Thursday where they discussed plans to dramatically reduce Europe's use of Russian gas, oil and coal. The European Commission had already signalled that part of the plan is to cut use of Russian gas by two-thirds by the end of 2022, with a longer-term goal of having ended imports of Russian energy by 2030.

A full-scale, immediate boycott has also been mooted, but German opposition has been strong, along with other countries such as Austria and Hungary. On Monday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz justified exempting Russian energy supplies from sanctions, saying in a



statement: "At the moment, Europe's supply of energy...cannot be secured in any other way."

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock even suggested that banning Russian energy in Germany could result "in a situation where nurses and teachers are not coming to work, where we have no electricity for several days" and would plunge EU countries into chaos.

Alternative sources
However, many experts say Germany could handle an embargo on Russian energy products, and at the very least, that the Commission's proposals on a two-thirds

gas reduction by the end of the year is achievable.

"I think it is a realistic plan because it is based on a portfolio of options," Simone Tagliapietra, a senior fellow at economic think tank Bruegel, told DW.

"There are supply options like diversification of gas supply. There are of course also the demand side options, and energy savings play an important role there. And of course there are renewables."

A study this week by the German National Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina, proposed a range of measures to help Germany cut its dependency on Russian gas

over the medium term, but also noted that ending supply immediately would be "manageable."

However, industry representatives say that an instant, full ban on Russian energy supplies would be too damaging domestically to be justifiable.

"An embargo on energy supplies from Russia would have massive negative effects on our economy and on consumers," Kerstin Andree, managing director of the BDEW, Germany's energy sector business association, told DW.

"Every measure must be weighed up to ensure that it does not lead to unacceptable upheavals. As of today, we can only partially replace the import of Russian natural gas."

Replacing Russian gas, as opposed to its oil or coal, is clearly the biggest challenge for Germany.

Around 30% of Germany's oil comes from Russia, according to a study from the Transport & Environment (T&E) think tank. However, alternative sources of oil can be found more quickly and easily than natural gas, of which about

50% of Germany's supply came from Russia in 2021.

Ramping up supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) is commonly cited as the main alternative, and Germany, along with the EU as a whole, has drastically increased LNG imports from the US over the past few months. Germany is also speeding up plans to develop its own LNG terminals.

However, a study by the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK), a business lobby group, says Germany would need deliveries from every LNG tanker in the world to compensate for a complete loss of Russian gas in the absence of any other alternatives or changes.

Beyond the clamor for an instant embargo, experts say the EU is already firmly on the path to ending its dependency on Russian gas.

Bruegel's Tagliapietra points out that in the first two months of 2022, EU gas imports from Russia have already fallen dramatically compared with 2021, mainly due to Russia holding back deliveries with Gazprom in 2021. – **dw**

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Regulators probe into anti-competitive conduct by Google, Meta

BRUSSELS: The European Commission and UK regulators on Friday each opened an antitrust investigation into a 2018 deal between Google and Facebook owner Meta Platforms that allegedly aimed at establishing their dominance over digital advertising.

The US government filed an antitrust lawsuit in October 2020, accusing Google of maintaining 'illegal monopoly' in online search and advertising.

Google internally referred to the agreement as 'Jedi Blue,' a reference to the colour of the Facebook logo, according to the lawsuit filing.

In January 2022, US court documents revealed that top bosses of Google and Facebook were involved in signing off the deal.

What did regulators say?
The European Commission said it was investigating the 'Jedi Blue' agreement to see if it had been used to 'restrict and distort competition in the already concentrated tech market.'

European Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said the aim of the agreement may have been to "target ads technology competing with Google, trying to weaken it and exclude it from displaying ads on publisher's websites & apps."

That means the aim of the agreement, if confirmed, would have been to distort competition by squeezing out rivals.

The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) also launched its own investigation into 'Jedi Blue' and the two authorities would "closely cooperate," the European Commission said.

CMA's Chief Executive Andrea Coscelli added they would "not shy away from scrutinizing the behavior of big tech firms... working closely with global regulators to get the best outcomes possible."

Google on Friday said that allegations made about the agreement were false.

"This is a publicly documented, procompetitive agreement that enables Facebook Audience Network (FAN) to participate in our Open Bidding programme, along with dozens of other companies," the company said in a statement. – **dw**



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EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

ECB to accelerate phaseout of fiscal stimulus amid surging inflation in the eurozone

BRUSSELS: The European Central Bank (ECB) on Thursday said it would begin easing fiscal stimulus in the eurozone sooner than previously expected as higher inflation projections have been brought on by the war in Ukraine.

The ECB said it would begin tapering its purchasing of government debt in April, starting with €40 billion, then working its way down to €20 billion by June.

It expects to conclude its bond-buying program by the third quarter of 2022, it said in a statement on Thursday.

The bank added any bond purchases after the third quarter would be subject to revision if the inflation outlook changes.

"The Russia-Ukraine war will have a material impact on economic activity and inflation through higher energy and commodity prices, the disruption of international commerce and weaker confidence," ECB President Christine Lagarde told a news conference.

Previously, the ECB had said it would begin a gradual tapering of bond and securities purchases by €20 billion every month by the last three months of 2022 and continue tapering as long as needed.

Central banks purchase assets



like government bonds and other securities as a tool to increase the flow of money into the economy to stimulate economic growth. However, more money in the economy risks leading to higher prices of goods and services.

Inflation surges
Lagarde said that the eurozone's consumer price index was now projected to rise over 5% in 2022. In December, the ECB had projected a 3.2% rise in inflation.

The bank also cut its growth outlook for the eurozone, citing the rise in commodities prices that has accelerated given uncertainty over and restrictions on Russian exports of oil and gas amid the conflict.

"The prospects for the economy will depend on the course

of the Russia-Ukraine war and on the impact of economic and financial sanctions and other measures," Lagarde said.

No interest rate hike
However, the ECB did not move up its schedule for a first interest rate increase, saying instead that rates would go up "gradually" and "some time after" the end of bond purchases.

The "time horizon is not what is going to matter most," Lagarde said, adding that a rate hike could come "the week after" or "months later," emphasizing that new economic data would be the deciding factor.

The ECB kept its interest rates historically low, with the key rate for main refinancing operations at zero per cent. – **dw**



LIFESTYLE

Increase in children's screen time poses health risks

The findings of a new study suggest that digital screen time of children has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in potential risks to physical health.

The study was published in the 'Journal of School Health' and led by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU).

Vision experts at ARU have expressed concerns that this could affect children's eyesight and general health, with several conditions linked to an increase in screen time.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented move to remote learning, with many countries closing their schools. Students were left to rely on digital devices to continue with their education.

The review paper examined research studies carried out worldwide during the pandemic, and the findings show a consistent picture of increased digital screen time for children and adolescents.

In Canada, 89 per cent of parents admitted their children were exceeding the two-hour daily guidelines set by the country's health authorities. In Germany, screen time had increased by approximately an hour a day. In Chile, a study found screen time among toddlers and pre-school children had almost doubled to more than three hours per day, while in Tunisia researchers reported an increase of 111 per cent in total screen time for children aged 5-12.

Among the risks to eye health associated with the use of digital devices are eye strain, unstable binocular vision (using both eyes adequately to create a single visual image), uncorrected refractive error and dry eyes.

The review also reported that children and adolescents often use several devices at once, for example to browse social media on their phone while

watching content on another device. Switching between devices increases the strain on the eye by 22 per cent, as this entails switching distances between different devices, forcing the eyes to adjust.

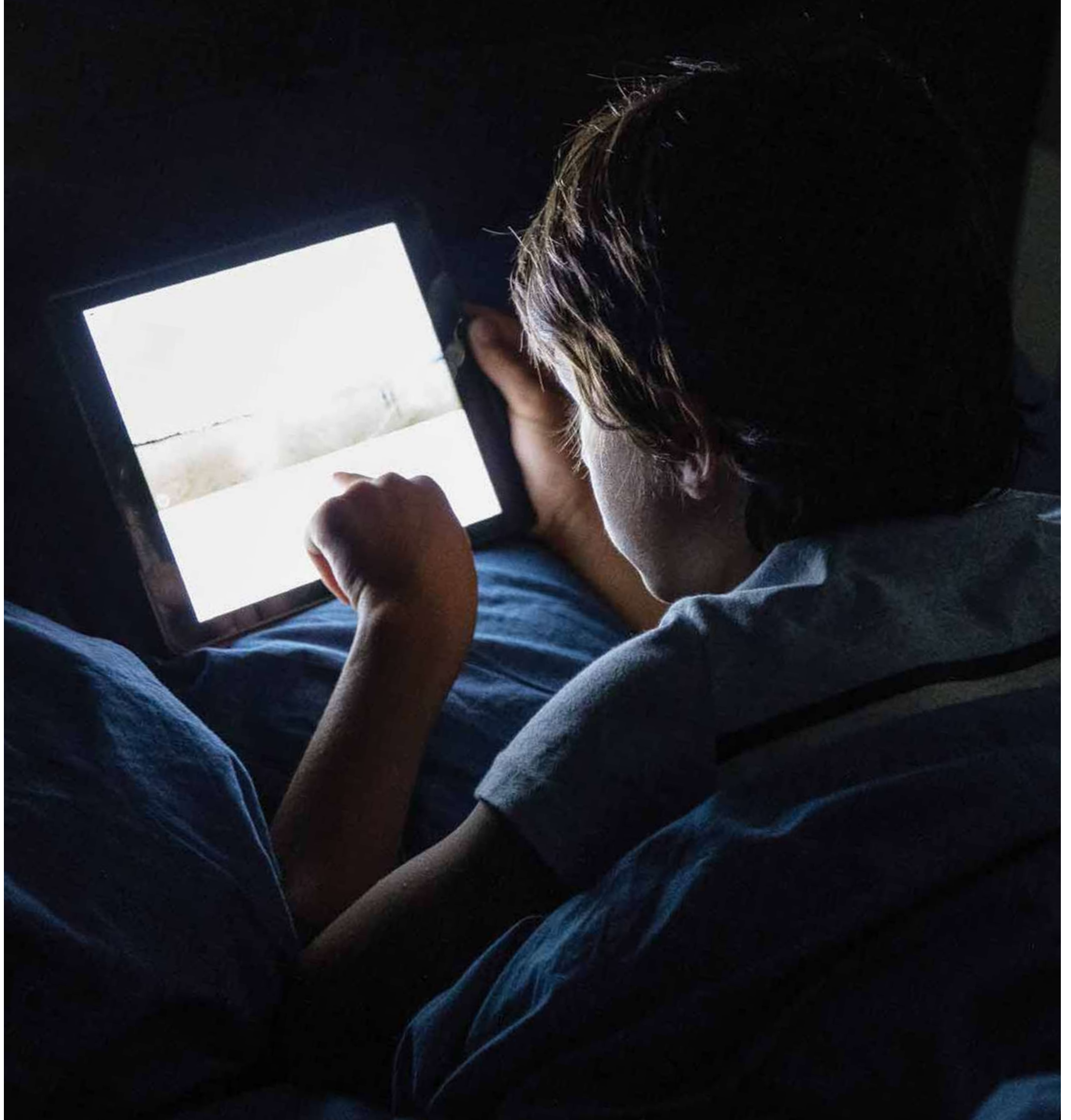
Increased screen time can also lead to neck and shoulder strain, increases the amount of time spent sedentary, and is also associated with overeating, potentially resulting in health issues such as obesity.

Lead author Professor Shahina Pardhan, Director of the Vision and Eye Research Unit at ARU, said: "It is really important to be aware of the potential risks to children's short and long-term eye and general health. It is essential that devices are used appropriately and that activities away from digital devices are encouraged, such as playing outdoors."

She continued, "Schools can make sure time spent on digital devices is maximised for learning and less digital time is encouraged for other activities. Governments should work with schools to help shape home-based learning guidelines that encourage creative learning away from devices, including promoting other types of activities and frequent screen breaks."

Co-author Dr Robin Driscoll said: "We have been very fortunate that children have been able to use technology to fill in for the absence of in person teaching during the pandemic. However, we must be aware of the risks to their physical health as a result of this increased screen time."

He added, "Through increasing awareness of the risks associated with high levels of digital screen use and sharing strategies to reduce the negative effects, teachers and parents should be encouraged to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents in the pandemic and beyond." - ANI



ROUND-UP

Lulu inaugurates ‘Ramadan Souq’, announces Shop and Win Promotion with OMR100,000 worth cash prizes



The formal inauguration of ‘Ramadan Souq’ was done by H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Humaid Al Ghabshi, Wali of Al Amerat, on Thursday, in a grand event at the Lulu Hypermarket in the Nujum Mall, Al Amerat. Yahya Al Ghadani, Assistant Director General, Al Amerat Municipality and senior officials of Lulu Group attended the event

MUSCAT: Ramadan is fast approaching, and people everywhere are making preparations to welcome the blessed month. Lulu has also rounded up a list of essentials, activities and offers to ring in the season of blessings and to help its customers prepare for a happy and blissful Ramadan. The retail giant has also launched “Ramadan Souq” as part of its Ramadan preparations.

The formal inauguration of “Ramadan Souq” was done by H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Humaid Al Ghabshi, Wali of Al Amerat, on Thursday, in a grand event at the Lulu Hypermarket in the Nujum Mall, Al Amerat. Yahya Al Ghadani, Assistant Director General, Al Amerat Municipality and senior officials of Lulu Group attended the event.

“Ramadan Souq”, at Lulu is a traditional Omani style market, which will have special offerings from dates, honey and other grocery items to household and decoration products, home appliances and furnishings with a wide range of essentials needed for Ramadan are available at the Souq.

This year, Lulu has organised

a Shop & Win promotion, alongside other multiple offers and discounts, to give away cash prizes worth OMR100,000 to its customers. This first-of-its-kind promotion, which will run from March 10 to May 7, 2022, will give 281 customers the opportunity to win amazing cash prizes. There will be a Grand Prize of OMR10,000 in cash, as well as Weekly Cash Prizes of OMR5000, OMR750, OMR500, OMR200, and OMR100, with multiple winners each week.

In addition to “Ramadan Souq”, Lulu has special offers and discounts on a wide array of products, including Groceries, Frozen Foods, Fresh food, Hot food & Bakery, Cleaning & Accessories, Home Furnishings & Decor, Garments as well as Household and Home Appliances – both in-store and online, for shoppers to take their pick. Special Ramadan kits containing groceries, such as rice, milk powder, sugar, oil and other essentials, will also be available at less than the regular market price. Ramadan is also a time of giving and sharing, for which there are discounts on perfumes, watches, sweet boxes, and assorted gift baskets that serve as easy gifting op-

tions for customers keen on making their loved ones feel special.

All Lulu stores will be stocked up with everything that shoppers need under one roof, making it the most affordable one-stop destination for customers. The hypermarket chain also offers a user-friendly online shopping experience where customers can purchase all their Ramadan essentials right from home.

Speaking about the promotion, Ananth A V, Director of LuLu Hypermarkets Oman & India, stated “Ramadan is a very special time for our customers, and we are glad to offer them special deals on a wide range of products during the holy month. We are making all necessary arrangements to ensure that our customers have a convenient and safe shopping experience. We have also introduced a dedicated Ramadan section “Ramadan Souq” to offer customers everything that they need for Ramadan. We have stocked up on all essential food/grocery products and ensured that the prices of these are not affected. We wish all our shoppers a blessed Ramadan.”

Shabeer K.A., Regional Director – Oman, said “This year’s Ramadan promotion is quite different as we have launched a first-of-its-kind Shop & Win promotion to appreciate and thank our customers for their continued support, and as a promise to serve them better in future. The intention behind organising such a promotion is to reward more customers who shop at Lulu. I am sure the enthusiasm and excitement will continue to build up during the two months of the promotional period,” he added.

Lulu stores are designed and tailored to offer customers a complete shopping experience. The deals and promotions rolled out every season are in line with the group’s commitment to constantly devise new strategies to cater to the everyday needs of its customers worldwide.



ROUND-UP

Meethaq’s Neswa account offers exclusive benefits

Meethaq has also invited women in Oman to discover the advantages of using its Neswa account, a special women’s account that is designed for both everyday needs and personalised services.

MUSCAT: Every year, International Women’s Day is celebrated on March 8 to spread the message of gender equality and to highlight the achievements made by women around the world. On this occasion, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, in line with its vision ‘To serve you better, everyday’ and commitment to part-



nership in encouraging a savings culture in Oman, has greeted all women in the Sultanate for their extraordinary achievements over the last 5 decades. To celebrate the occasion, Meethaq has also invited women in Oman to discover the advantages of using its Neswa account, a special women’s account that is designed for both everyday needs and personalised services. Speaking on the occasion, Sami Arfah, Assistant General Manager – Meethaq Personal Banking, said: “Meethaq is particularly proud of the role that Omani women play in various sectors. By achieving their full potential, Omani women are contributing

greatly to the economic progress and development of the Sultanate. With women being one of its important customer segments and in line with its customer-centric vision, Meethaq offers unique products and services aimed at enriching the lives of women from different sectors. Today, the need for specific banking products and services for women is more than ever, and Neswa addresses this need by offering a personal and comfortable banking environment for women.” **Wide range of features** Neswa account holders have access to a wide range of features, which include a Visa Debit

Card with an ATM withdrawal limit of OMR800, access to the largest network of ATMs and CDMs across Oman, complimentary Takaful life cover up to OMR10,000, coverage up to OMR1,000 for loss of wallet or handbag resulting in misuse of cards and coverage up to OMR100 for loss of ID cards and keys. Account holders can also receive attractive indicative profit rates on their average monthly balance and are eligible for up to 50 per cent discount on the first year’s rental charge for safe deposit lockers. All Omani and resident women above the age of 18 are eligible to open a Neswa savings account with a minimum balance amount of OMR300 or a minimum salary transfer of OMR500. As the pioneer of Islamic banking in the Sultanate, Meethaq has adopted industry best practices in Islamic banking and finance to provide a robust model that benefits its customers. Every Meethaq product goes through Shari’a compliance certification by the Shari’a Supervisory Board and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman. Please go to <https://www.meethaq.om/en/depositproducts/Pages/details.aspx#neswa> or call 24656666 for more details about the Neswa Savings Account.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

National Finance launches WhatsApp service with real time automated messaging

MUSCAT: Oman’s leading finance company, National Finance, recently introduced an automated WhatsApp service to cater to its clients’ various requirements. The enhanced service comes in line with the company’s vision toward adopting digital transformation and improving customer experience. To avail the service, customers need to add the WhatsApp number to their contact list. Once added to the contact database, the customer can chat and get an immediate response. The service will be available 24*7, it will allow customers to send inquiries and request details on certain services. The inquiries will be answered automatically in a timely manner. Speaking on this enhanced service feature, Mr. Tariq Al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer of National Finance said: “WhatsApp platform is considered one of the fastest-growing and most popular network channels among all segments due to its speed, ease and security. While the company has remained steadfast in its mission to boost the interaction with clients and surpass their expectations, it



also seeks to keep up with the latest developments in the market by harnessing technology in its operations in order to deliver fast, easy and flexible solutions.” National Finance completes 35 years, has managed to build its reputation as the market leader trusted by thousands of customers across the Sultanate. National Finance offers a wide range of products targeting individual customers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through its 20 branches across the Sultanate. Recognising its efforts, the company won many accolades recently such as the ‘Best SME Finance Solution 2021’ award by Capital Finance International (CFI.co) and the ‘Most Innovative Retail Finance – Automobile – Oman 2021’ Award by International Finance Awards. The company also won The ‘Best Non-Banking Financial Corporation’ at the Oman Banking & Finance Awards 2021.

NETWORKING EVENT

Oman Design and Build Week to take place at OCEC

MUSCAT: The most definitive networking and sourcing event for the building, construction and real estate industry in Oman, Oman Design and Build Week (ODBW), incorporating Oman Real Estate Exhibition, is set to be inaugurated at 9:00 a.m. on 14 March, 2022 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC), Muscat, with the event open to the public from 10:00am.

Three-day event Organised under the patronage of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning Oman and supported by the Oman Real Estate Association and Muscat Municipality, the three-day event will run until 16 March, 2022, with exhibits in Halls 3, 4 and 5, at OCEC. ODBW will witness over 250 exhibitors and will showcase the latest products, advanced services and emerging solutions from the building, construction, and real estate industry. Techno will assume its role as the Platinum Sponsor of the event, whereas Wujha will be the OREX Lead Sponsor, Sakan will be the OREX Registration Sponsor and Al Mouj will be OREX Strategic Sponsor. ODBW will provide exhibitors and visitors an excellent platform to network with industry peers, target suppliers and distributors and gain insights into the market. The event will also see in attendance a number of architects, consultants, engineers, contractors, distributors, procurement managers and decisions makers, therefore, providing an opportunity to manufacturers to showcase their unique building materials and solutions. Commenting on the event, Ashley Roberts, General Manager, CONNECT said, “In line with Oman’s Vision 2040 to diversify the economy, the local market is gearing up for transformational

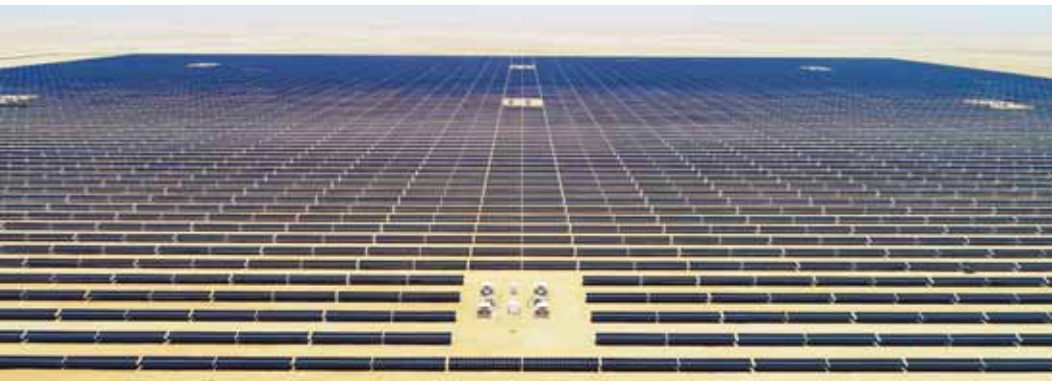


A key highlight of ODBW will be the OREX Conference in Hall 3 which will be held under the patronage of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. The engaging conference will facilitate meaningful discussions between industry leaders as they share insights on prospective opportunities, challenges, and growth avenues in the real estate sector of Oman and the MENA region.

changes. The slated mega-projects will revolutionize the real estate landscape while contributing to the growth of the construction sector as well. As such, this is the

ideal time for companies and individuals in the related sectors to assess market potential, conduct extensive research and evaluation of prevalent competition, identify new agents and distributors and consider lucrative project partnerships. ODBW will serve as a platform for such industry enthusiasts to come together to better understand the current market, present their offerings to prospective clients and focus on accelerating business growth.” A key highlight of ODBW will be the OREX Conference in Hall 3 which will be held under the patronage of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. The engaging conference will facilitate meaningful discussions between industry leaders as they share insights on prospective opportunities, challenges, and growth avenues in the real estate sector of Oman and the MENA region. The knowledge forum will enable the region’s key real estate developers, property consultants, brokers, agents, financial, legal, and other service providers to learn from industry experts and inculcate strategies to accelerate business and attain optimum levels of efficiency, productivity and performance in diverse projects areas while upholding industry best practices. In addition to the conference, ODBW will also feature a 3-day CPD-credited PMI-certified workshop in Hall 5 which will provide the needed technical knowledge to help in career advancement. With the economy bouncing back to normalcy after the effects of the pandemic, ODBW will enable exhibitors to focus on their marketing initiatives, showcase their solutions and boost confidence amongst consumers. It will also provide visitors with necessary insights into key developments in the sector. To know more, visit www.oman-designandbuildweek.com

PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT



Petroleum Development Oman to host Oman Sustainability Week

MUSCAT: Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) is to be the main host of Oman Sustainability Week (OSW), hosted by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, underlining its strong commitment to being a champion of sustainable development. The Company will showcase a number of its initiatives highlighting the importance of sustainability in achieving economic and social development, as well as preserving the environment and its resources. The event will be hosted under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, who will inaugurate the week on March 14 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. PDO Managing Director Steve Phimister, said the company is determined to strike the right balance between meeting the oil and gas demands of the country while mitigating its impact on the environment and supporting the communities in which it operates. He added: “At PDO, we have a symbiotic relationship between our operations and the environment. We don’t just incorporate and comply with evolving ESG norms, we try to find innovative ways to enhance our processes to do better for the environment. “As the main hosts of the Oman Sustainability Week, we seek to lead by example. While we have integrated sustainability in every aspect of our business, it also



becomes our inherent duty and moral obligation to continue to raise public awareness about sustainable practices and why it is critical to adopt these measures.” The week will provide a platform for the company to showcase its collaboration with different government bodies and private companies to boost sustainability initiatives in Oman while acting as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth. Phimister said: “Hosting OSW is a significant milestone in our journey as we align ourselves to the Sultanate’s Energy Vision. We have been at the forefront of spearheading sustainability initiatives in the Sultanate, encouraging energy independence and paving the way for a sustainable, green economy for future generations. While we remain committed to meeting national energy needs, we have also developed a detailed Decarbonisation Road-

map that will enable us to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 with a step-change by 2030.” PDO has unveiled a new five-year Environmental Strategy and Action Plan that is geared to achieving its overall corporate objectives of sustainable growth, operational excellence and meeting its sustainability commitments in line with the Oman Vision 2040. PDO was also the first national oil company in the Gulf to become a member of the United Nations Global Compact in 2015, the largest voluntary corporate social responsibility initiative in the world aimed at fulfilling fundamental responsibilities related to human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. And, as part of combatting climate change, it has pioneered landmark solar energy schemes at Amin and Amal in the South and at its Muscat headquarters, is a founder member of the National Hydrogen Alliance and is working to open its first wind energy farm in 2024. Last year, it committed to spending more than US\$10 million on 83 social investment projects aligned to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as water and energy management, education and science, youth and female empowerment and community welfare. Phimister said: “Adopting ethical business practices is now a prerequisite for any company to succeed.”

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ROUND-UP

Youth Sada, bp Oman conclude the second cycle of ‘Habbah’ programme

The main goal of this programme was to analyse the challenges faced by the SMEs and enhance their skills in many fields such as administration, financial, marketing, and legal fields

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman, Youth Sada held a closing ceremony marking the conclusion of the second cycle of the ‘Habbah’ programme, under the patronage of HE Mohsin Hamad Al Maskari, Wali of Ibri. The programme aimed at developing the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Ad’ Dhahirah region by targeting young Omanis interested in entrepreneurship. The main goal of this programme was to analyse the challenges faced by the SMEs and

enhance their skills in many fields such as administration, financial, marketing, and legal fields.

Shamsa Al-Rawahi, bp Oman Social Investment Manager, commented: “This programme reflected our vision at bp Oman; to support our young Omani entrepreneurs and equip SMEs with the essential skills required for business sustainability and growth. Through this programme we were able to benefit 16 businesses with in Ad’ Dhahirah region and over



700 participants from different regions of Oman who attended the public training sessions.”

Qais Al Maqrashi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Youth Sada, further added: “The ‘Habbah’ programme, worked on overcoming the difficulties faced, related to knowledge and skills required for business sustainability and expansion in our local markets; one of the Oman Vision 2040 pri-



ority. Additionally, through the open to public training courses in cooperation with specialists, we aimed to promote entrepreneurship and its related topics among interested youth.”

The programme included open-to-public activities and specialised training courses for the SMEs, whereby the specialised training courses focused on business model development, human resources

management, financial management, project marketing, business growth planning and contract and bid management.

The open to public activities included various training courses on topics such as essential skills for entrepreneurs, digital trading, business models development, future technical projects in the Omani economy, corporate branding, digital marketing and other topics

related to entrepreneurship.

It is worth noting that during the ceremony, Youth Sada announced the launch of its programme cycle for the year 2022, which consists of four main programmes: Youth Sada Centre programme, Reading Family programme, fourth edition of the Ad’ Dhahirah Leadership Forum programme and lastly the third cycle of the ‘Habbah’ programme.

FAVOURITE SUV

Renault Koleos 2022 allows owners to take their journey with confidence

MUSCAT: Renault’s first SUV the Koleos remains a favourite among customers and those looking for something different, which speaks volumes about the innovativeness that the car was built on.

Well-defined edges make the overall profile of the 2022 Koleos appear solid and athletic and is one of the most prominent features in this new version. A great combination of power and refinement, the Koleos makes its presence felt with large shoulders and muscular side panels that are further enhanced by a robust frontend; broad, smart-looking tires; and a distinctly large wheelbase.

A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, said, “The 2022 car is engineered to demand attention and make heads turn. Offering off-road capability with its all-wheel drive transmission, Renault Koleos stands out with its assertive exterior design and enhanced interior comfort. With its athletic profile, robust front end, roomy seats, taut lines underscored with chrome, Renault Koleos allows owners to take their journey with confidence. Featuring a powerful and efficient new engine and more on-board technologies Renault Koleos fully embodies the values of the top of the Renault line-up.”

The all-mode 4x4-i transmission results in a car that promises owners all the power and comfort they would require on the road. The engine can be switched between two- and four-wheel driving giving drivers the liberty and flexibility to choose their own experience.

The car is engineered to mirror the comfort of being home, with spacious leg space, ventilated memory seats, a breathable cabin. With a choice of colours for the seats, owners can choose what defines them the best – for a roomier feeling, one can opt for lighter shades, while darker ones can be picked for more assertive looks. The 2022 Koleos also comes with all-new black titanium trims that replace its predecessor’s wooden trims.

The car’s ambient lighting, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto connectivity, R-LINK 2 all make for a memorable drive each time. The



2022 Renault Koleos is certainly a notch above when it comes to contemporary SUVs that set out to offer a bit of everything to cater to all customers, no matter their drives.

The 2022 Renault Koleos also comes with additional features, such as rich acoustics with the BOSE audio system, lighting options, multimedia, navigation, Bluetooth and driving assistance systems in addition to easy park assist.

Renault Koleos has been capturing everyone’s attention in Oman with its charismatic, features rich and packed with safety attributes. If you are looking for a spacious SUV with elegant styling and unparalleled four-wheel drive technology, Renault Koleos is the car to buy.

Sabeel Al Mashari from Muscat says, “Renault Koleos stands out with its assertive exterior design and enhanced interior comfort. The wide-ranging suite of driver-assistance systems and infotainment options it offers make it a top brand.”

Afrah Al-Kharusi from Nizwa is fascinated with the brand’s easy trunk access and hand-free function. She says, “With a sensor located under the bumper, all you need is a simple gesture with your foot to open the boot with ease. It is very practical when your hands are full when returning from office or shopping. I also like its 8.7” touch-

screen navigation with R-Link2 system & Bose sound, 5 colour ambient lighting.”

Sameer Zedjali from Rusayl likes Renault Koleos for its strong and high-end design, comfort and outstanding performance. He says, “Koleos extends a variety of features that are among the most capable in the market. I particularly like its blind spot warning with flank protection warning, auto park assists and remote start engine with timer option.”

The model’s spacious cabin inspired Taamir Al Hinai from Muscat into buying a Renault Koleos. “Renault Koleos has a 2,705 mm wheelbase – for a total vehicle length of 4,673mm – counts amongst the longest in the class and allows Koleos to boast record-breaking interior space to position itself as a D-segment SUV,” Taamir says.

Sohail Al Jabri, who loves to go on adventure drives, loves Renault Koleos All mode 4x4-i technology. “One can get off the beaten track with Renault Koleos any time. It’s all mode 4x4-i technology, swap between 2WD mode, Auto mode and 4x4 (lock) mode is really impressive. It offers an ideal balance of torque between the front and rear wheels for perfect grip in all circumstances,” he adds.

With its athletic profile, robust front end, roomy seats, taut lines underscored with chrome, Re-

nault Koleos allows owners to take their journey with confidence.

Renault Koleos particularly amazes car enthusiasts who value distinctive design, advanced technology, high reliability and superior performance. Koleos exudes elegance with its strong lines and signature Renault design cues. The carefully sculpted bonnet on the Koleos flows seamlessly from the stylish, chrome-highlighted grille to the sweeping taillight design.

The model features powerful, efficient engines, safety attributes and on-board technologies. The SUV is marked for its fuel efficiency and infotainment options too.

Renault Koleos LE model has LED fog lamps with chrome borders, new 19-inch Kavea alloy wheels and resplendent new front grill. The Renault Koleos SE has been augmented with Sand Grey leather seats, tilt adjustment front headrests, one touch easy folding rear seats with two step reclining and power seats, electric power seats for driver and passenger, 18-inch Argonaute two tone alloy wheels, auto folding rear view mirrors with door lock, auto-dimming rear view mirror. It also supports Apple car play and android auto.

At the rear, Renault’s trademark style is again prominently on display. The wide, horizontal tail lights amplify the impression of width (1,843mm) and draw the eye

to the Renault logo on the tailgate. Chrome inserts set into the lower part of the rear bumper take the shape of twin exhaust tail pipes, a detail that is complementary with Koleos’ overall exterior design.

On-board technologies

Featuring a powerful and efficient new engine and more on-board technologies, Renault Koleos fully embodies the values of the top of the Renault line-up. Its high-performance attributes, assertive design and sophisticated interior, makes it one of the most popular vehicles ever. Its elegant appearance, muscular shoulders and stylish bodywork fully meets its customers’ expectations and requirements. The spacious SUV known for its elegant design and unparalleled four-wheel drive technology has been completely structured to offer powerful styling, unique features and full SUV capability.

Robust SUV

The Koleos’ interior subtly blends robust SUV cues with the expression of quality expected of a large family saloon thanks to the use of attractive, scratch-resistant materials such as satin-finish chrome for the steering wheel, gear lever and air vent inserts. The centre console is covered by a protective film that is hardy and pleasing to the touch. The cushion-backed materials selected for the dashboard and door panels also contribute to the cabin’s restful ambience, while leather upholstery and leather-trimmed armrests feature contrasting top stitching.

All mode 4x4-i transmission

The all mode 4x4-i transmission available on Koleos features technology has been proved on millions of alliance vehicles worldwide. This all-wheel drive system permanently monitors grip levels to guarantee optimal traction in any condition. Very easy to use, a control switch situated to the left of the steering wheel enables the driver to select one of the three modes: 2WD, 4WD AUTO or 4WD LOCK. The combination of high ground clearance (210mm) and approach and departure angles of respectively 19 and 26 degrees ensures go-anywhere ability. The

stylish body colours and wheel designs selected for Koleos ensure an elegance. It is available in seven metallic body colours.

Targets excellence

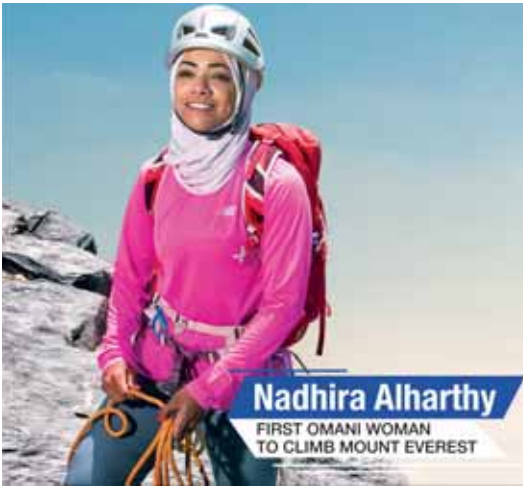
Koleos benefits from Renault’s vast experience in the realm of safety and targets excellence in the independent NCAP tests. The following features are standard equipment: Two adaptive front airbags that inflate according to the type of impact and the occupant’s position in the car, two lateral thorax/shoulder airbags for the front occupants, two curtain airbags, anti-whiplash front and rear head rests, anti-submarining front seats, rear Isofix anchorage for child seats. All the seat belts are equipped with pretensioners and load limiters.

At the same time, the use of very high elastic limit steel for the engine frame and of high-strength steel for the passenger safety cell was specified to protect the cabin in the case of a major impact. When it comes to active safety, Koleos provides the latest-generation Electronic Stability Control (ESC), traction control, braking assist, electronic brake force distribution, and hill start assist as standard equipment. The Koleos comes with a large array of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), all of which can be controlled via the R-LINK 2 tablet. To alert: Blind Spot Warning (BSW), Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS). To assist: rear view camera, front, rear and side parking sensors and hands-free parking assist system (Easy Park Assist).

SBA commitment

SBA is largely committed to supporting Renault Oman’s growth in the Sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. With a national network of 9 showrooms, 16 service centres & 23 spare parts outlets, SBA has further built upon its legacy of trust, excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.

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