

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
OMAN LNG SIGN
2 AGREEMENTS**

The Ministry of Health has inked two agreements with Oman LNG for financing two projects, aimed towards boosting medical services in the Sultanate of Oman. **>A4**



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HM SENDS GREETINGS

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Dr. Mohamed Al Menfi, President of the Libyan Presidential Council on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health and happiness to Dr. Al Menfi and his country's people further progress and prosperity. - **ONA**



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Programme priorities include the whole spectrum from early childhood development to innovative financing for children and more

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Three key steps to improve the quality of children and youth development in the Sultanate of Oman are to be implemented by 2025, in collaboration with the UNICEF. The three outcomes include

strengthened evidence-based policies for children; enhanced systems and services for children, and young people; and improved programme effectiveness. These plans have been laid out in Oman's Country Programme Document, drafted by UNICEF Oman, and have been approved by UNICEF's

Executive Board. Programme priorities include early childhood development; aid to children with disabilities; protection of children from violence; innovative financing for children; evidence generation with a focus on child-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators; and youth and adolescents, according to UNICEF Oman. The first outcome of stronger evidence-based policies, based on along with better public finance analysis and data, can be used to devise better social policies for children, adolescents and young people, and to progress towards the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals. A key indicator for this out-

come includes the monitoring of at least 80 per cent of child-related SDG indicators by 2025, with evidence to be collected through surveys or administrative data. Under this outcome, the data on children must also be separated by governorate and gender. The baseline monitoring rate stood at 56 per cent in 2020.

Verifying targets Programme targets will be verified by data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information and the UNICEF SDG data portal. This outcome also includes a single social registry created as part of an integrated social protection system. **>A4**

PRIVATE VISIT

HM the Sultan returns home



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik returned home on Friday after concluding his private visit to the United Kingdom (UK) which lasted for several days.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan met with Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Head of the Commonwealth, in addition to a number of senior UK officials.

His Majesty was accompanied by His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani,

Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister and Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al Hinai, Ambassador of the Sultanate to the UK. His Majesty's visit aimed to upgrade the advanced relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, to serve the two countries' joint interests and achieve aspirations of their peoples. The visit also touched on regional and international topics of common interest.

May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan wherever he might be and grant him continued good health and well-being to achieve further progress for the Omani people. - **ONA**

Doctors use augmented reality to perform crucial spinal surgery

A2

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Inflation up 3.56% in November 2021

1 The inflation rate for consumer price index in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 3.56 per cent during November 2021 compared to the same month in 2020. The inflation rate also increased by 0.12 per cent compared to October 2021, according to the NCSI. **>A3**

WORLD Thousands of flights cancelled globally

2 Commercial airline carriers cancelled operation of more than 4,500 flights across the world over the Christmas weekend, as surging cases of coronavirus owing to the spread of the latest fast spreading Omicron variant put a damper on festivities and travel plans. **>A6**

MARKET Sohar Port signs MoU for new AI Lab

3 Sohar Port and Freezone signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Sohar which will see the development of an artificial intelligence laboratory AI Lab on the campus of the university. **>B1**



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CRICKET

Afridi, Murali among stars coming to Oman

Times New Service

MUSCAT: Shahid Afridi, Muttiah Muralitharan, and Shoaib Akhtar are among three of the many cricket superstars who will be coming to the Sultanate of Oman next month to take part in the first season of a new tournament, Legends League Cricket.

Featuring three teams comprising players drawn from India, Pakistan, and the rest of the world, the event will feature Twenty20 matches between the star-studded sides, with audiences sure to be entertained wherever they are watching. The matches will be played at Al Amerat Ground in Muscat, which recently held games from the recent ICC Twenty20 Cricket World Cup.

From four countries

Team Asia is composed of players from four countries: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. The full squad features eight former Pakistan players: legendary paceman Shoaib Akhtar, explosive batsman Shahid Afridi, all-round-



Shahid Afridi



Muttiah Muralitharan

ers Azhar Mahmood and Misbah Ul Haq, evergreen batsmen Mohammed Yousuf and Younis Khan, pacer Umar Gul, and skilled opener Mohammed Hafeez.

There are also players from Sri Lanka: former captain and classy opener Sanath Jayasuriya and wicketkeeper Romesh Kaluwith-

arana will both feature, as shall Muttiah Muralitharan, considered to be one of the greatest spinners of all time, as well as veterans Chaminda Vaas, Tillekaratne Dilshan, and Upul Tharanga. One Afghan player (Asghar Afghan) is also part of the team, which has been christened the Asia Lions.

With such a strong lineup, cricket fans all over the world are up for a very competitive and entertaining tournament. The team names and players of the other two teams shall be revealed very soon as well

"This is top quality exciting cricket on offer," said former India player and coach Ravi Shastri, who has been appointed commissioner for Legends League Cricket.

"The 'Lions' of Asia from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan coming together in one team will definitely give

the other two teams a run for their money.

Glut of talent

"Let me tell you that you they are absolute champions and a combination of Afridi, Murali, Chaminda, Shoaib Malik are all playing in one team," he added.

With such a strong lineup, cricket fans all over the world are up for a very competitive and entertaining tournament.

The team names and players of the other two teams of India and the rest of the world shall be revealed very soon as well.

"Asia Lions are our team from Asia. We find it a most suited name with the lion-hearted players that feature in the team," added Raman Raheja, CEO, Legends League Cricket. Shoaib Akhtar running in to bowl and Jayasuriya cutting it over square is what fans will now be most eagerly waiting for.

"The Lions are all set to roar their loudest once again on the cricket field, a place they always belong," said Raman Raheja, CEO of Legends League Cricket.

C D A A

Guidelines for using water heaters

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As winter is here, everyone needs warm water but there are some safety procedures that must be followed in order to avoid the hazards of water heaters. People are urged to disconnect the power from the heater when not using it or while taking bath.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) issued safety procedures to avoid the hazards of water heaters. **Regular maintenance** The procedures are as follows: Select high quality water heaters, specifically approved by the authorities concerned. Regular

maintenance of the heater connection and parts is a must to avoid short-circuit. Ensure continuous running water to the heater to avoid malfunction. Disconnect the power from the heater in case of water shortage. Regulate the water temperature not exceeding 60 degree centigrade.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



RARE SURGERY: The operation was performed by a medical team headed by Colonel Doctor Ahmed Al Jahuri, senior consultant and head of the Orthopaedic Department at the Armed Forces Hospital.

Doctors use augmented reality to perform vital spinal surgery

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An Omani medical team from the Armed Forces Hospital in Al Khoud succeeded in performing a spinal stabilisation surgery using augmented reality technology on a 52-year-old citizen. The Ministry of Defence said, “The operation was performed by a medical team headed by Colonel Doctor Ahmed Al Jahuri, senior consultant and head of the Orthopaedic Department at the Armed Forces Hospital, and medical staff from the orthopaedic, anaesthesia, operations, radiology and medical engineering departments.” Speaking about the surgery that employed cutting-edge technology, Dr Al Jahuri said, “The Armed Forces Hospital was able to use state-of-the-art technology in augmented reality as a solution for the development of minimally invasive spine surgeries.” Dr Al Jahuri added, “In this technique, low-dose 3D CT scans are combined with optical imaging with fixed cameras, which results in the creation of a three-dimensional display of augmented reality of the patient’s internal anatomy, and this combined image acts as an exploration device that guides the surgeon in fixing the vertebrae with surgical

screws in place. “This helps us conduct surgery that is precisely defined and reduces the chance of injury to nearby sensitive tissues such as nerves and blood vessels,” he went on to say. “Following this approach leads to increased clinical accuracy as the surgeon can be sure that the surgical instruments are in the right place before the operation and this helps the doctor reduce surgical risks, medical errors, pain, and blood loss, which leads to faster patient recovery and reduces their in the hospital, as well as cuts down on subsequent medical complications and costs.” The technology is expected to have a significant role in enabling surgeons to perform complex operations, especially in the field of spinal curvature. Thanks to the ability to adapt augmented reality to the needs of the surgeon, doctors can focus on what is happening right in front of them. **X-ray vision** The tech also offers surgeons direct x-ray vision into anatomical areas that are not visible to the naked eye, which makes this new technology a mainstay in the future of surgery. Ali bin Hamdan Al Ghafri, the patient who underwent the operation, said, “I was suffering from

spinal pain, and after continuous review at the Armed Forces Hospital and the necessary medical examinations, the results showed friction in some of the vertebrae of the spine, and it was decided to perform a surgery using augmented reality technology.” “I was briefed about the details and stages of this procedure from the doctors concerned with the operation, and what encouraged me to agree to perform the procedure was the presence of an Omani medical team of high reputation and efficiency, as well as what the Armed Forces Hospital possesses in terms of advanced modern devices in the field of spine surgery.” Praising the team who provided him medical care, Al Ghafri also thanked His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik for the attention accorded to the people of Oman. Hanan bint Saif, who oversees the operating theatres at the hospital, said, “Spinal operations are complex procedures that require the surgeon to be careful when dealing with the nerves and vessels connected to the spinal cord.” “Augmented reality technology is one of the latest technologies in spine surgery,” she added. “Globally, many doctors have been able to perform this surgery using this technique.”

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Inflation rises by 3.56% in November

MUSCAT: The inflation rate for consumer price index in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 3.56 per cent during November 2021 compared to the same month in 2020.

The inflation rate also increased by 0.12 per cent compared to October 2021, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The increase in

the price index in November 2021 compared to same month in 2020 is ascribed to the increase in the prices in the main groups, mainly the group of transport by 11.04 per cent; the education group by 5.10 per cent, the personal goods and services by 3.18 per cent, the tobacco group by 2.98 per cent, food and alcohol-free drinks by 2.76 per cent and culture and entertainment group by 2.64 per cent.

The furniture, home appliances and domestic maintenance group rose by 1.44 per cent, housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group rose by 1.24 per cent, the group of restaurants and hotels rose by 0.81 per cent; the garments and footwear group by 0.57 per cent and the health group by 0.06 per cent against a decrease in the prices of telecommunications group by 0.06 per cent.—**ONA**

CONDOLENCES

The Management & Staff members of the
MAGANLAL THACKER & CO.
deeply mourn the sudden and sad demise of



Mr. Gulabsi Ratansi Khimji
on 22nd December 2021

We pray to the Lord Almighty to give his family the strength and fortitude to bear this great loss.

May his soul rest in eternal peace

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HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

The management and staff of
Al Nab'a Holding LLC
extend their deepest condolences
to the bereaved family on the sad demise of



Mr. Gulabsi Ratansi Khimji

May god rest the departed soul
in eternal peace and grant the family members
the courage to bear this irreparable loss.



CONDOLENCES



The Board of Directors, Management &
Staff of
YOUSUF BIN AHMED AL-AAMRI TRAD (LLC)

would like to express their deepest
condolences on the sad demise of

Mr. Gulabsi Ratansi Khimji

May the Almighty rest his soul in
eternal peace and grant courage & solace
to the bereaved family.

Vinal Sampat & Parimal Sampat



PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE

Ministry of Health, Oman LNG sign equipment funding deal

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health has signed two funding agreements with Oman LNG for purchase of advanced medical equipment. The equipment purchased under the agreements are expected to further boost preventive

healthcare in the Sultanate.

The first agreement is for the purchase of cancer detection devices for the Royal Hospital in Muscat, while the second agreement is for supply of Complete Blood Count (CBC) devices for 5 different health centres in the North Sharqiyah Governorate.

The cancer detection devices will allow seamless and early diagnosis, intervention and treatment of cancer; which would ultimately reduce its severity.

In addition, the they will help improve the quality of life for patients and provide a cost-saving, simple and fast alternative to other

expensive detection alternatives.

Similarly, the Complete Blood Count (CBC) devices will facilitate fast and easy detection of different diseases, allowing patients to explore preventive methods early on. These devices will also help to evaluate the overall health of patients with a focus on blood con-

ditions. According to Dr. Fatima Al-Ajmi, Undersecretary of Ministry of Health for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs the agreements exemplify how cooperation between the private and public sectors is essential for public interest.

“Not only are we seeking to raise

awareness on preventive treatment through these agreements, but we are also aiming to encourage people to seek early detection of illnesses and adopt healthier lifestyles,” she said while expressing her “great pleasure to extend our hands to Oman LNG and cooperate to serve the nation.”

CONDOLENCES

The Management Committee and members of the

INDIAN SOCIAL CLUB, OMAN

deeply mourn the sudden and sad demise of



Mr. Gulabsi Ratansi Khimji
on 22nd December 2021

We pray to the Lord Almighty to give his family the strength and fortitude to bear this great loss.

May his soul rest in eternal peace

Indian Social Club Oman

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

< FROM A1 Health, education to get 15% of government expenditure

Increased expenditure is also planned for across health, education, and social welfare.

Health and education spending are expected to each touch 15 per cent of government expenditure by 2025. Health spending stood at 5.4 per cent, and education at 12.9 per cent of expenditure in 2020.

“A child’s development consists of the biological, psychological and emotional factors, from birth to adolescence, and therefore children’s development needs to be understood and approached holistically,” said Dr Nuhaila Al Rawahi, an educational psychologist in Oman.

“This in turn would require the supportive system around the child to also be holistic and the need for an integrated and early intervention approach becomes an integral part of Vision 2040.

“Given the current pandemic, this has become even more important as I see a rise in parents seeking educational psychology involvement due to developmental delays,” she added.

“I view integrated early childhood development as a sustainability element to achieving His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik’s goals for the youth as well as for employing people with disability into the workforce. After all, our youth are children first.”

Improved social services
Outcome number two – enhanced systems for children and youth – makes sure that all young people in Oman, including those with disabilities, benefit from improved social services.

A number of programmes have been earmarked to get this outcome off the ground. Among them are efforts to get 95 per cent of five-year-olds in organised learning, a year prior to their entry into primary school. That figure stood at 79 per cent of boys, and 82.3 per cent of girls in 2018.

Parents and teachers are also encouraged to spend more time with their children between the ages of 18 months and five years, inculcating in them the habit to

learn more. The target is for 90 percent of children to have been engaged in four or more activities by promoting learning and school readiness.

Other key elements to this outcome is the Oman National Framework for Future Skills, which provides accredited programmes and licensed training providers, including those relevant to primary, secondary and tertiary education, and the Multi-sectoral Youth Strategy aligned with the Oman government’s Vision 2040.

Key mark

A key mark of this programme also includes getting more disabled children into learning. As of 2020, only 57 percent of disabled children between the age of five and 17 who were enrolled in education, a number that is planned to go up to 70 per cent by 2025.

The effort to encourage more disabled children to pursue education has been welcomed by Aisha Al Sunaidi, the founder of Rawaq Rehabilitation Centre that provides physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and behaviour modification.

Herself a mother of three children with disabilities, Aisha believes that they too have the right to education and care, just like any other. She said: “Before I began my centre, I had to face many challenges when it came to treating my children in hospitals and rehab centres both inside Oman, as well as overseas.

“I believe that children with disabilities have the right to receive care and attention like any child,” she added. “Rehabilitation and education centres help contribute to developing the skills and abilities of children who suffer from some difficulties, at a location near their place of residence, where they learn to be self-reliant and have a role in their community.”

Other programmes earmarked under the umbrella of enhanced services include the National Strategy and Action Plan for Child Protection; redefining and

repurposing social workforce roles for better delivery of welfare and community programmes; and increasing the proportion of children covered by social protection, by providing child-centred, equitable, integrated, and shock-responsive social protection services.

The third outcome of the plan ensures the rest of the initiatives are communicated to societies and delivered in an effective manner. While 80 percent of core measures towards youth development did meet UNICEF criteria in 2020, the aim is for more than 95 percent of them to meet the required standards by 2025.

Furthermore, this outcome ensures that 100 percent of communication and community engagement platforms/ mechanisms supported by UNICEF meet quality standards across development priorities. “Children must have an important role in the community, and this begins with instilling confidence, values, principles and constructive teachings in them in the classroom,” said Mohammed, a teacher in Oman. “They can then translate that into their homes, with their families, with themselves, and with their community.”

Youth of tomorrow

Naif Al Sinani, another teacher, added: “The children of today are the youth of tomorrow. They are the safety valve of every state. Through them, nations rise and countries rise, and it is they who build the country with their hard work, ideas, and ambitions.”

A number of government organisations will join hands to realise these objectives. These include the Ministries of Finance; Economy; Culture, Sports and Youth; Education; Health; and Social Development, the National Committee for Family Affairs, the Tawazun Initiative, and the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Research, academic, and professional institutes, the private sector, and civil society will also play a role.

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OCCI to establish closed joint stock firms in Oman

The plan is to develop the promising economic sectors in the governorates, said Redha bin Jumah Al Saleh, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) is planning to establish closed joint stock companies in the various governorates of the Sultanate in a bid to develop the promising economic sectors in the governorates, said Redha bin Jumah Al Saleh, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). He said that the OCCI was also

This company would focus on investment in food security and other sectors on which Oman Vision 2040 has focused, he added. There is a study and a primary agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for entering into commercial and investment partnership and a committee would be formed to consider and announce this agreement in due course.

“Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry is also extending due efforts to attract new investments to the Sultanate and is exploring investment opportunities in the various countries, worldwide, through organising visits of business delegations and joint meetings between Omani businessmen and their counterparts in other countries”, he said.

—ONA

COUNCIL OF OMAN

Oman participates in second sitting of Arab Parliament

AMMAN: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Council of Oman, took part in deliberations of the 2nd sitting of the 3rd legislative term of the Arab Parliament

chaired by Dr. Adel Al Asoumi, Speaker of the Arab Parliament.

At the outset of the session, held in the Jordanian Parliament, Dr. Adel Al Asoumi affirmed that the Arab Parliament will always back the Arab issues in all international fora, particularly the Palestinian cause.

—ONA



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Tender Announcement

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2	Ahmed	87359	19	Yaha Suleiman	51455	36	Javed	70499
3	Hani Ahmed	71106	20	Rasaek	74701	37	Abdullah Al Balushi	90801
4	Manikand Raj	19745	21	Nadeem Mohammed	70932	38	Hilal Hamed	36422
5	Mohammed Rumi	33405	22	Al galia Al G afri	51486	39	Manaf Al Noufali	59944
6	Zahra Saeed	89306	23	Saif Mohammed	85907	40	Faisal	28860
7	Soud Al Rowahi	92530	24	Sheikha Nasser	14047	41	Juma Suleiman	47724
8	Ali Khamis	93812	25	MD Shohel	71038	42	suleiman Salim	75227
9	Khalid Nabhan	66604	26	Khalid Al Sawli	73601	43	Said	84401
10	Mosa Yahia	29518	27	Shaima	38439	44	Khalaf Ali	79171
11	Najiyha Salim	06479	28	Rana	53976	45	Abdullah Ali	33440
12	Hamed Mohammed	80652	29	Khalid mohammed	70113	46	Osama Bader	51454
13	Hamed Amar	19403	30	Omaima Yahya	13910	47	Salem Hilal	78400
14	Saif Ali	75310	31	Salim Ali	96837	48	Imdadul Haque	19587
15	Hamed Hamood	47080	32	Aisha Salah	13915	49	Rajib Karmakan	68123
16	Abdul Satar Hasan	70933	33	Ali Sarhan	77072	50	Hider Raisar	29409
17	Omar Ali	87305	34	Mal Allah Ahmed	702212			

Winners of RO 25 worth of Shell V-Power fuel cards (20 Numbers)

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1	Hmood Saeed	781673	8	Praveena Kumar	705280	15	Mohammed Mater	159943
2	Firas Fathi	534363	9	Mohammed Naser	834065	16	Suleiman Al Mahrouqi	201034
3	Sasi Kumar	772336	10	Dana Tahir	985191	17	Gohram	075228
4	Bader Saif	834843	11	Mohammed Ali	803535	18	Moayad Talal	007990
5	Ismaeel	705215	12	Ahmed Hamood	159996	19	Tiayya Al Haq	511056
6	Ali Rahi	933325	13	Al Baraa Yunis	834710	20	Ahmed Mosaibh	834845
7	Saeed Mohammed	933382	14	Ahmed Mohammed	743749			

Winners of RO 10 worth of Shell Select Basket (30 Numbers)

Serial	Winner Name	Coupon Number	Serial	Winner Name	Coupon Number	Serial	Winner Name	Coupon Number
1	Salah Abdullah	42300	11	Amel	42469	21	Rosalita	46941
2	Mohammed Al Balushi	00386	12	Walid Abdul Wahid	677811	22	Jamon P.J	00582
3	Sharifa Abdullah	67870	13	Norin Babos	641983	23	Hamood Saif	42623
4	Charlie Abraham	42317	14	Yousuf Al Balushi	42047	24	Hamed Yahya	42192
5	Dhaneesh	41950	15	Hawra Al Hadabi	52852	25	Mohammed Salah	12288
6	Atika Issa	52812	16	Asia Khalifa	62849	26	Rodrigo Novato	63008
7	Rugaiya Ali	41553	17	Shaima Jawad	46426	27	Meyad Al Alami	47102
8	Khalid	56230	18	Mohana Shafran	64226	28	Islam Abdul Al Rahman	42274
9	Abdullah Said	75927	19	Amel	42425	29	Mahmoud	520853
10	Fatima Al Balushi	51279	20	Mohammed Al Balushi	46672	30	Motasim Salah	52145



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OMICRON VARIANT

Beijing tightens control amid rising COVID cases

BEIJING: Beijing on Friday tightened epidemic prevention and control amid concerns around raging Omicron variant overseas as well as rising cases in China. Beijing's moves came one day after Xi'an, the capital city of Northwest China's Shaanxi Province, known for its Terracotta Warriors, imposed a citywide lockdown following a fresh flare-up that spilled

over into six cities including Beijing, Chinese-state media Global Times reported. Chinese health analysts said the local outbreak in Xi'an, which occurred around 40 days ahead of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, increases the epidemic prevention pressure for China, but with timely and precise measures, experience in quelling local outbreaks and high vac-

cination rate among the Chinese population and participants of the Games, China will ensure a safe international sports event. Xu Hejian, a spokesperson from the Beijing government, said at Friday's media briefing that Beijing had revised its COVID-19 prevention and control measures, calling on residents to spend the upcoming holidays - New Year's

Day and Spring Festival - in Beijing. The new measures apply to cases of locally transmitted infections in Beijing, residents in the district where reported cases are not allowed to leave the capital other than for essential reasons, and residents in the city's townships where reported cases are restricted from leaving Beijing, Xu said. **ANI**

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Thousands of flights cancelled as Omicron dampens Christmas joy

At least 2,401 flights were called off on Christmas eve, the numbers, however, fell on Friday



FLIGHTS CANCELLED: An initial 1,900 flights were scrubbed on Christmas Day globally, with more than 500 cancellations also scheduled for Sunday.

NEW YORK: Commercial airline carriers cancelled over 4,500 flights across the globe over the Christmas weekend, as surging cases of coronavirus owing to the spread of the Omicron variant put a dampener on festivities and travel plans. According to data from flight-tracking platform FlightAware.com, at least 2,401 flights were called off on Christmas Eve, which fell on Friday and is usually a busy day for air travel. An initial 1,900 flights were scrubbed on Christmas Day globally, with more than 500 cancellations also scheduled for Sunday.

US flights impacted the most
Flights within, into and out of the United States constituted more

than a quarter of all the canceled flights over the holiday weekend, figures from FlightAware showed. United Airlines and Delta Airlines scrapped over 300 flights combined on Friday, citing a staff crunch due to rising COVID-19 infections. "The nationwide spike in omi-

cron cases this week has had a direct impact on our flight crews and the people who run our operation," United said in a statement. "As a result, we've unfortunately had to cancel some flights and are notifying impacted customers in advance of them coming to the air-

port," the airline added.

Airline staff falling ill
In the United Kingdom, several industries and travel networks were also facing personnel shortages as sick workers went into self-isolation. German airliner Lufthansa

announced on Friday that it was calling off scores of long-haul transatlantic flights scheduled over the Christmas vacation due to a "massive rise" in sick leave among pilots. Lufthansa said it could not determine whether COVID-19 infec-

tions or quarantines were responsible for the leaves as it was not informed about the sort of illness. Meanwhile, in Australia, airliner Jetstar said many of its employees had to get tested and quarantined because of rising infections, causing last-minute cancellations and delays.

Festivities scaled back
Christmas festivities were marred by COVID-19 for a second consecutive year as churches from Bethlehem and Frankfurt to London and Boston canceled or scaled back services. In Germany, churchgoers saw strict COVID-19 restrictions and caps on attendance. Some had to show proof of vaccination or testing. Frankfurt's cathedral, which has a capacity to seat 1,200 people, allowed only 137 socially distanced spaces, all booked in advance, while singing was allowed only through masks. In the Belgian city of Antwerp, people hung Christmas trees upside down from windows to protest the closing of cultural venues. Meanwhile, in Bethlehem, which hosted thousands of Christian pilgrims from all over the world before the pandemic, the scene was more festive compared to last year. Hundreds of people trickled into the Manger Square as bagpipe-and-drum bands marched through.

-DW

AID TO AFGHANISTAN

UN planning \$8 billion help to rebuild Afghanistan's economy

WASHINGTON: The United Nations (UN) is planning to aid Afghanistan's economy with \$8 billion to rebuild governing systems and social services. Saeed Shah, writing in *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) said that the plan would move beyond a purely humanitarian mission, taking on many government functions at a time when the Taliban regime remains under economic sanctions and lacks diplomatic recognition, according to international officials. "We do not want to become an alternative government of Afghanistan. But is it important to support systems, not lose the gains made in past years," said Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and the humanitarian coordinator for Afghanistan. Alakbarov said that reviving economic activity could instill some confidence in the future and prevent the mass exit of refugees. Afghanistan's neighbours and countries in Europe fear that an economic implosion could push millions of despairing people across their borders. To go beyond saving lives to rebuilding livelihoods, another USD 3.6 billion will be needed next



year, said Alakbarov. This funding would keep schools and hospitals going and their staff paid. The plan would also disburse help to small businesses and farmers. Some 30,000 people are already being paid around USD 5 a day to clean irrigation canals in the western province of Herat. The UN is also handing out USD 230 in cash to some destitute families. The international community is working on how it will channel the USD 1.2 billion that the World Bank was spending a year in Af-

ghanistan, with around USD 280 million of that already redirected to UN agencies, said Shah. International donors have already given more than USD 1 billion since the Taliban takeover to meet emergency needs for the rest of 2021, including providing food supplies to seven million people in November. For 2022, the UN will launch an appeal for USD 4.4 billion, its largest-ever fundraising drive for a country, to cover food, shelter and other basics to keep people alive. That is around the same lev-

el as the economic aid received by Afghanistan in 2020, said Shah. The US Treasury this week lifted some sanctions to allow aid to flow more freely, including to the education sector and for paying Afghan civil servants. A US-proposed UN resolution, which was adopted on Wednesday, provides a carve-out from sanctions for "humanitarian assistance and other activities that support basic human needs," reported WSJ. Afghanistan owes more than USD 100 million to central Asian neighbours and Iran for electricity supply, which could be cut off and leave cities without power this winter, said Shah. The Afghan economy has shrunk by at least 40 per cent since the Taliban took over in mid-August. The US froze some USD 9 billion in Afghan central-bank assets and financial sanctions have paralyzed the country's banking system. Many employers, particularly in the public sector, haven't been paid salaries for months, while prices for basic commodities surged and the national currency, the afghani, lost a quarter of its value versus the dollar, reported WSJ. **ANI**

CORONAVIRUS



UK reports more than 120,000 daily coronavirus cases for the first time

LONDON: Britain has reported another 122,186 coronavirus cases in the latest 24-hour period, exceeding 120,000 daily cases for the first time since the start of the pandemic, according to official figures released on Friday. It brought the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 11,891,292. The country also reported a further 137 coronavirus-related deaths. The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 147,857, with 8,240 COVID-19 patients still in hospital. Another 23,719 Omicron cases have been confirmed in Britain, the biggest daily increase since the COVID-19 variant was detected in the country, taking the total Omicron cases found in the country to 114,625, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said Friday. However, experts said there are likely to be hundreds of thousands of infections per day, with many being missed by the system. The latest figures came as data showed that around one in 20 peo-

ple in London had COVID in the week to Dec. 19, the highest proportion for any English region. The Office for National Statistics said its headline results of a national survey showed the British capital had the country's highest rate of the virus. The result was based on data gathered between Dec. 13 and 19. In England, ONS said an estimated 1,544,600 have had COVID-19 in the past week, with 2.83 percent of the population testing positive. It equates to 1 in 35 people across England having the virus, added ONS. More than 89 percent of people aged 12 and over in Britain have had their first dose of vaccine and around 82 percent have received both doses, according to the latest figures. More than 56 percent have received booster jabs, or the third dose of a coronavirus vaccine. To bring life back to normal, countries such as Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the United States have been racing against time to roll out coronavirus vaccines. **ANI**

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Taliban welcomes UNSC over extending travel ban waiver

KABUL: The Taliban regime in Afghanistan has welcomed the decision by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) extending exemption of travel ban on a number of high-ranking Taliban officials including Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghani Baradar. A spokesperson of IEA Inamullah Samangani, meanwhile, asked the removal of names of Taliban's officials from the black lists of the UN and the US on the Doha agree-

ment, Khamma Press reported. Inamullah Samangani said that the removal should have been done earlier. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has exempted Taliban leaders from the travel ban for a period beginning on December 22, 2021, and ending on March 21, 2022. The list includes prominent leaders of the Islamic Emirate like First Deputy Prime Minister

Abdul Ghani Baradar and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai. The Taliban, which took control of Afghanistan early this year, have not been recognised as Afghanistan's new government by the international community. On Wednesday, UNSC unanimously adopted a resolution clearing the way for aid to reach Afghans in desperate need of basic support, while preventing

funds from falling into the hands of the Taliban. In passing the text, the Council carved out an exemption for humanitarian assistance and other activities that support basic human needs from sanctions imposed under resolutions 2255 (2015) and 1988 (2011), concerning individuals and entities associated with the Taliban in constituting a threat to peace, stability and security. **ANI**



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WORLD



FRENCH GUIANA

James Webb space telescope lifts off successfully

WASHINGTON: James Webb Space Telescope, the largest and most powerful space telescope ever constructed, took off on Saturday from the Kourou spaceport in French Guiana to help researchers understand the origins of the universe and begin to answer key questions about our existence.

"We have LIFTOFF of the @NASAJWST Space Telescope! At 7:20 am ET (12:20 UTC), the beginning of a new, exciting decade of science climbed to the sky. Webb's mission to #UnfoldTheUniverse will change our understanding of space as we know it," NASA tweeted. The USD 10bn project spanning over three decades, a collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Canadian Space Agency, hopes to look further back in time than ever before - to find out more about the creation of the first stars and the beginnings of our Universe.

The truck-sized telescope aims to peer into the cosmos and farther back in time. Astronomers will also use the new telescope to probe black holes at the centers of galaxies, search for the chemical signatures of life on extrasolar planets and, closer to home, study the frozen oceans on moons at the edge of our own solar system.

The telescope will answer questions about the solar system, study exoplanets in new ways and look deeper into the universe than we've ever been able to.

The telescope will travel for about a month until it reaches an orbit about 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometres) away from Earth.

The telescope comes equipped with a segmented mirror that can extend 21 feet and 4 inches (6.5 metres) -- a massive length that will allow the mirror to collect more light from the objects it observes once the telescope is deployed in space.

The more light the mirror can collect, the more details the telescope can observe. Over the course of 29 days, Webb will unfold its mirrors and unfurl a protective sun shield the size of a tennis court. This process involves thousands of parts that must work perfectly in the right sequence.

The concept for the telescope was first imagined as a successor to Hubble at a workshop in 1989, and construction on Webb first began in 2004. Since then, thousands of scientists, technicians and engineers from 14 countries have spent 40 million hours building the telescope. **ANI**



SHIPWRECK

16 killed as migrants' boat capsizes off Greece island

ATHENS: At least 16 people died and several others were rescued when a boat carrying migrants capsized off the island of Paros on Friday, the Greek coast guard said.

Rescuers recovered bodies of 12 men, three women and an infant from the area, the nation's semi-official Athens News Agency reported. Several coast guard vessels and a helicopter searched for survivors overnight.

This is thought to be the third shipwreck this week involving migrants in Greek waters.

Greek outlet Athens News Agency reported that 80 people were believed to have been on what was described as a sailboat.

The circumstances under which it capsized were unclear.



What other shipwrecks were there this week?

Greek authorities said they had rescued 90 people and recovered 11 bodies from another shipwreck, when a sailboat sank off of a small uninhabited island in southern Greece on Thursday.

A boat thought to have been carrying up to 50 migrants sank off the island of Folegandros on Tuesday night. Dozens remain missing.

Greek shipping minister Giannis Plakiotakis said in a statement that trafficking gangs were responsible for the disasters.

The gangs "are indifferent to human life, stacking dozens of people, without lifejackets, in vessels which do not conform to the most basic of safety standards," he said.

The deadly accidents come as smugglers have begun to favor a more dangerous route from Turkey to Italy. This route bypasses the heavily patrolled eastern Aegean islands, which had long been at the forefront of Greece's migration crisis. Smugglers in Turkey fill yachts with migrants and send them toward Italy.

Why are migrants coming to Greece?

Greece is a popular entry point into the European Union for people fleeing conflict and poverty in Asia and Africa.

Arrivals to Greece have decreased over the last two years as the country extended a wall at its border with Turkey and began intercepting migrant boats, a tactic criticized by human rights groups.

"People need safe alternatives to these perilous crossings" the Greek office of the United Nations Refugee Agency, UNCHR, said in a tweet. More than 116,000 asylum-seekers crossed the Mediterranean to reach EU countries this year, according to the UNCHR. **ANI**

HEAVY FLOODS

Death toll from heavy flooding in Malaysia climbs to 41

KUALA LUMPUR: The death toll from heavy seasonal floods in Malaysia has risen to 41, with eight people still missing, the police said on Friday.

It was previously reported that 27 people were killed in the floods. At present, there are 26 men, 13 women and two children killed in the floods. "Of the 41 deaths, 25 were reported in Selangor, 15 in Pahang and one man in Kelantan," Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Acryl Sani Abdullah Sani said, as quoted by The Star newspaper.

The Malaysian Meteorological Department forecasts heavy rains and thunder storms in the coastal states of Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan on Saturday.

Flooding is common in Malaysia during the rainy season, but it turned disastrous after torrential rains hit the country's east on December 17 and continued until December 19. **ANI**

NOTICE



We would like to inform that Mr. Alaaeldin Mohamed Mohamed Ahmed Attia, Egyptian National, holder of passport number (A04182470) and resident card number (61572323) is no longer connected with **Salalah shipping & Marine services Company, LLC**. He is not authorized to represent the company in any matters whatsoever.

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Reputed civil consultants are invited for site visit on 02/01/2022 at 9:00 am to inspect and share their valuable suggestions on repair of school building, maintenance and refurbishment.

Necessary documents will be shared with interested consultants after receiving expression of interest.

Consultants are requested to register their expression of interest by e-mail contactus@indianschoolsalalah.com



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SPORTS

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Cummins, Boland in Australia playing XI

The hosts have made two changes to their lineup as Pat Cummins and Scott Boland have replaced Michael Neser and Jhye Richardson

MELBOURNE: Australia skipper Pat Cummins on Saturday confirmed the playing XI for the upcoming Boxing Day Test, beginning Sunday at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The hosts have made two changes to their lineup as Pat Cummins and Scott Boland have replaced Michael Neser and Jhye Richardson. Joe Root's England are 0-2 down in the series with three matches to play.



"He (Jhye Richardson) was pretty sore. We were umming and ahing - he had a bowl yesterday but we thought seven days off (before the fourth Test in Sydney) will give him enough rest," cricket.com.au quoted Cummins as saying. "He's got a small leg injury which is nothing major but we thought rather than risking a long-term injury, we'd give him a week off," he added.

Talking about Boland, Cummins said: "We earmarked him as a chance for here and the SCG in particular, we think his record is really well suited. His record speaks for itself here in domestic cricket. Home ground, having someone fresh like him who can perform straightaway were the big factors."

"He's really excited obviously - it's a dream for him to wear the Baggy Green, packed MCG on Boxing Day, it doesn't get any better," he added.

Australia playing XI: David Warner, Marcus Harris, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Travis Head, Cameron Green, Alex Carey (wk), Pat Cummins (c), Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Scott Boland. **ANI**

CRICKET ROUND-UP

Sanuth stars in easy win for Ruwi

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sanuth Ibrahim and Khalid Kail helped Ruwi Rangers to an easy 6-wicket win over Azai-ba XI in an Oman Cricket-organised D20 League clash at OC Turf 1 in Amerat on Saturday. Azaiba posted a disappointing 114 for 9 on the board, Arsalan Bashir top-scoring with 42. Sanuth Ibrahim and Wasim Ali bowled well, taking three and two wickets respectively. Ruwi raced to the target in just 14.2 overs, scoring 115 for 4 thanks to a superb 42 by Khalid Kail. Veteran Khalid Rasheed bagged 2 for 20.

Brief Scores (D20): Azaiba XI 114 for 9 in 20 overs (Arsalan Bashir 42 - 3x4, 1x6, Sanuth Ibrahim 3-21, Wasim Ali 2-29) lost to Ruwi Rangers 115 for 4 in 14.2 overs (Khalid Kail 42 - 6x4, 1x6, Khalid Rasheed 2-20) by 6 wickets.

Ghubrah beat Bousher

Earlier on Friday, Ahmed Khan's 3 for 25 was the highlight of Ghubrah Giants' 5-wicket victory against Bousher Busters.

Ajay Lalcheta was the topscorer in Busters' 124 for 6. Khan's spell was the major reason Busters could not post a bigger total on the board.

Giants found the going tough but prevailed in the final over for a nail-biting 5-wicket win. Azmat Ullah (42) and Faizan Abdullah (37) led the chase with useful knocks. Fawad Ali picked up 2 for 30.

Brief Scores (D20): Bousher Busters 124 for 6 in 20 overs (Ajay Lalcheta 45 - 3x4, 1x6, Ahmed Khan 3-25) lost to Ghubrah Giants 125 for 5 in 19.2 overs (Azmat Ullah 42 - 2x4, 2x6, Faizan Abdullah 37 - 4x4, Fawad Ali 2-30) by 5 wickets Shoaib, Ganesh star in Qurum victory

In another D20 encounter at the same venue on Friday, Shoaib Khan's brilliant batting, Ayaan Khan's excellent all-round performance and Ganesh Chandrasekhar's superb spell powered Qurum Thunders to a 40-run win over Amerat Royals.

Shoaib struck a stylish 69 while Ayaan contributed a vital 34 in Qurum's total of 167 for 3.

Ganesh and Ayaan were outstanding with the ball taking four and three wickets respectively as Amerat was dismissed for 127 in 19.2 overs. Pratik Athavale was Royals' main scorer with 57.

Brief Scores (D20): Qurum Thunders 167 for 3 in 20 overs (Shoaib Khan 69 - 7x4, x6, Ayaan Khan 34 - 2x4) beat Amerat Royals 127 all out in 19.2 overs (Pratik Athavale 57 - 5x4, 2x6, Ganesh Chandrasekhar 4-16, Ayaan Khan 3-19) by 40 runs.

Maqsood shines in Darsait win

Zeeshan Maqsood's massive presence in the middle once again proved to be the difference as Darsait Titans defeated Khuwair Warriors in a keenly contested game at OC Turf 1 on Friday.

Maqsood's magnificent spell of 3 for 18 was instrumental in restricting Khuwair to 154 for 8 despite brilliant batting by Sean Novak (44) and Zeeshan Siddiqui (28). Maqsood led the chase with a solid 58, supported by Khurram Khan's fluent 49 as Darsait sealed the victory in 19.2 overs, scoring 155 for 4. Young Muzahir Raza claimed 3 for 23.

Brief Scores (D20): Khuwair Warriors 154 for 8 in 20 overs (Sean Novak 44 - 6x6, Zeeshan Siddiqui 28 - 3x4, 1x6, Zeeshan Maqsood 3-18, Yagnik Ashwin 2-44) lost to Darsait Titans 155 for 4 in 19.2

overs (Zeeshan Maqsood 58 - 5x4, 3x6, Khurram Khan 49 - 2x4, 3x6, Muzahir Raza 3-23) by 6 wickets.

Rauf bats Darsait to victory

Earlier, on Thursday Abdul Rauf smashed 51 to help Bousher Busters to a 6-wicket victory against Darsait Titans.

Titans were bowled out for a paltry 104 due magnificent bowling by Ajay Lalcheta and Sufyan Mahmood who claimed three wickets each. Bousher overhauled the target in 17 overs thanks to brilliant knock of 51 by Abdul Rauf.

Brief Scores (D20): Darsait Titans 104 all out in 19.1 overs (Khurram Khan 21 - 1x4, 2x6, Ajay Lalcheta 3-13, Sufyan Mahmood 3-25, Bilal Muhammad 2-23) lost to Bousher Busters 105 for 4 in 17 overs (Abdul Rauf 51 - 2x4, 5x6, Yagnik Ashwin (2-12) by 6 wickets.

COMMENTARY

Remember the names: Kapil and his Devils

ANIS SAJAN,
Vice Chairman, Danube Group

Watching '83' premier was turning the clock 38 years back when I was eleven years old and had seen the final live on Doordarshan at a neighbour's house and felt immediately connected and had tears in my eyes as felt history was created today right in front of me.

I am not writing the review of the movie but what is shown in '83' is that can never be forgotten. 25th June 1983 was one of those days which brought a revolution of cricket in India and it is one sport which no matter where India plays it's followed with so much of passion by every Indian across the world.

Before the 1983 World cup, India had played two World cups one in 1975 and other in 1979 and India had just managed one that too against East Africa.

No one had given this Indian team a chance to reach the semifinals but this Kapil Dev's Devils managed to achieve the impossible.

It all started when India in the first match against West Indies stunned the two times champions who were invincible and not lost a single game in both the earlier world cups. India's hero in that first match was the late Yashpal Sharma who sadly passed away this year. Yashpal Sharma had scored 89 crucial runs which paved for India's win.

India then beat Zimbabwe in their second game by five wickets but yet no one still believed India would go the distance and when India lost two back to back matches against Australia and West Indies quite easily, it seemed all over till the game against Zimbabwe turned it around.

It was a must win game and India were 9/4 at one stage when Kapil Dev walked in and then were 17/5 and everyone felt India would get bowled out for 100 that's when Kapil Dev took the attack to the opposition and scored one of the finest knock in ODI cricket by making an unbeaten 175 of 138 balls taking India to a match winning 266 which they defended easily.

That innings bought a belief in the Indian dressing room as the captain had led



from the front and India demolished Australia by 118 runs in their last league game to make it to the semifinals. India were playing the host England who were the runners up in the 1979 world cup but India won the semifinals with ease to march into the final against the rampaging West Indies.

What I remember as eleven-year-old was all the league games there was no live telecast but the semifinals and final were shown live on Doordarshan and all eyes of one billion Indian people was on the final. India who were put in to bat on a green pitch at Lord's managed just 183 on the back of Kris Srikkanth's attacking knock of 38 and some support from tail enders.

And when Sir Vivian Richards came on to bat, he hammered 33 of 28 balls, it seemed curtains for team India. Then came the turning point when Viv Richards pulled Madan Lal and Kapil Dev ran from square leg to mid-wicket to pull of an outstanding catch and there was no stopping for Team India as they won the historic final at Lord's against the West Indies by 43 runs.

Once again it was Mohinder Amarnath who was the man of the match like the semifinals for his three wickets for just 12 runs.

I would recommend all the youngsters to see this movie '83' as it will give you goosebumps as when you watch the movie you won't feel you are watching Ranveer Singh and the other stars, you will directly connect with the players as the roles of each player has been played to perfection. In India Cricket and movies are like religion and when it's not fictional but real you would not like to miss it for anything. Just go for it and it will be a complete Paisa and Time Vasool.

FOOTBALL

Conte slams Premier League meeting with managers

LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur FC head coach Antonio Conte slammed the Premier League's meeting with its managers over COVID-19 concerns.

Conte said it felt like that the meeting with managers on Thursday, amid an ongoing surge of cases fuelled by the Omicron variant, was a waste of time.

Asked how he felt the meeting went, Tottenham head coach Conte told reporters on Friday, as per goal.com: "Some coaches tried to speak to ask about solutions but I think everything was decided and

yesterday was a wall."

"For this reason also, I prefer not to go into the discussion or conversation," he added. Pressed on whether he felt it was a waste of time, Conte said: "I think so. Because when you have a wall in front of you, you can ask and speak about what you want, but every decision was taken."

Spurs were hit by COVID outbreak, early this month as the club then confirmed eight players of his first-team squad and five staff members have tested positive for the virus. **ANI**

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FOREX RESERVE DECLINES

India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves declined by \$160 million to \$635.66 billion due to a sharp drop in foreign currency assets, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed on Friday.

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GLOBAL ENERGY FORUM

The Atlantic Council will hold its sixth annual Global Energy Forum on January 15-16, 2022 in Abu Dhabi. The forum will be held as a part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, a global event accelerating the world's sustainable development.



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PROMOTING BILATERAL INVESTMENT

Registration of Omani firm in Hungary to boost trade and investment

MUSCAT: A leading Omani company Global Business Services has initiated process for registration of the company in Hungary.

"Registration of Omani company in Hungary will boost commercial trade and investment promotion between the two countries," said Khams Salim Al Junaibi, company chairman.

The company registration process initiated was signed at the Hungarian Embassy in Oman,

which was witnessed by Dr Tibor Szatmari Ambassador of Hungary, Zsolt Pakozdy, The Commercial & Economic Counsellor Hungarian Embassy in Oman. Sheikh Khalid Abdullah Said Al Hamrasi, Sheikh Khamis Salim Al Junaibi - Chairman of newly formed Hungary and EU business entity - Global Business Services Europe followed by officially signing company formation documents on December 16. GBS EU team

comprises Jamal Salim Al Junaibi - Managing Director, Syed Imtiaz Ali Gilani - Technical & Business Development Director, Sultan Juma Al Sinaidi - International Relationship Director and from the Hungarian side Miklos Ruzics - Managing Director and Andras Kepes - Technical Director.

In the long term to promote trade and commercial cooperation between Pakistan, Oman and Hungary, K.K. Ahsan Wa-

gan was also invited as a special guest to witness the company registration ceremony.

A business delegation comprising prominent businessmen and investors will visit Hungary from January 22, 2022. The main objective of the Omani business delegation is to hold B2B and B2G meetings with the Hungarian side. It is expected that the visit and company formation will promote bilateral investment in both countries.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY



Sohar Port signs MoU with UTAS for development of new AI Lab

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Sohar which will see the development of an AI Lab on campus.

Signed by Dr Saeed bin Hamad Al Rubaie, Vice Chancellor of the University Technology and Applied Sciences and Omar bin Hamood Al Mahrizi, Deputy CEO Sohar Port and CEO of the Freezone, the agreement will see Sohar Port supply the necessary equipment to develop artificial intelligence technology capabilities to benefit the community as well as improve efficiency within the port and freezone. It is expected that the lab will start operations by end of Q1 2022.

Sohar Port has strategically invested in new technologies to capitalise on its beneficial location and abundant resources to maintain its competitive advantage and drive growth in Oman's industrial sectors.

The use of cutting-edge technology throughout the complex will unlock new opportunities for tenants, maximize productivity and assist in the smooth running of the port and freezone as it continues to expand.

During the signing, Al Rubaie said, "This partnership feeds directly into our goals at the university which aim to identify the right private sector partners and bridge our educational output with the technical requirements on the job. The upcoming lab in the Sohar is a testament to our advancement, as we continue to shape the future of education. By integrating AI into our academic curricular, we will be creating a generation with the right skillsets and knowledge that will continuously innovate. Furthermore, we are laying the foundation to develop new disciplines

that will allow us to keep up with the rapid developments we see in technology, machine learning and robotics."

"The MOU with UTAS provides Sohar with an outlet for talented students to develop AI applications and initiatives with a real-world purpose in mind. Ultimately, the adoption of technology will benefit the wider community, industries across the country and have a wide-reaching impact on the lives of people in Oman by creating a culture of innovation that will last long into the future. As we continue to expand, we will need intelligent solutions to increase efficiency and support evolving supply chains" said Omar Al Mahrizi, DCEO of Sohar Port and CEO of the Freezone.

The collaboration between Sohar and UTAS will build national capacities in the field of AI and technology, directly benefiting students as well as faculty, technicians and researchers. This will also bring the education sector together with the manufacturing and industrial sector to nurture a workforce that will contribute to building a knowledge-based society.

Sohar already uses AI in its maintenance and observation routines, becoming the first port in Oman to adopt drone technology as part of the port's monitoring system. Underwater drones equipped with cameras also provide real-time observation and analysis of the infrastructure, security and environmental situation across the port by sending images to the quay where problems can be solved quickly and up-to-the-minute status reports can be compiled. The use of artificial intelligence has proven successful in predicting future maintenance through lifecycle reports and is capable of reaching areas humans cannot while offering a new perspective of the entire complex.

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MARKET

Forum to emphasise on path to net-zero

Global Energy Forum will have a particular emphasis on the path to net-zero and a look-ahead at the challenges and opportunities as the UAE prepares to host COP28

ABU DHABI: The Atlantic Council will hold its sixth annual Global Energy Forum on January 15-16, 2022 in Abu Dhabi.

The forum will be held as a part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, a global event accelerating the world's sustainable development. It will bring together a geographically diverse roster of senior government officials, industry executives, energy ministers, and recognised thought leaders in Abu Dhabi and around the world



GLOBAL EVENT: The forum will be held as part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, a global event accelerating the world's sustainable development. - WAM

to set the energy agenda for the year ahead.

The 2022 Global Energy Forum will build upon the record-breaking engagement of the 2021 Forum - held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic - which harnessed the Atlantic Council's unmatched convening power by using innovative digital tools and platforms to bring together leaders and influencers from around the world - reaching over 1,000 event participants, tens of thousands of online viewers, and hundreds of members of the media. The 2022 Forum will complement the in-person experience in Abu Dhabi with virtual elements

that ensure participation from leaders around the world.

The event will have a particular emphasis on the path to net-zero and a look-ahead at the challenges and opportunities as the UAE prepares to host COP28. The Atlantic Council's Global Energy Centre will also be releasing the second edition of The Global Energy Agenda, a comprehensive set of essays from global energy leaders and a survey of hundreds of energy experts on the state of energy geopolitics.

The forum will be held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Com-

mander of the UAE Armed Forces.

On this occasion, Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, said, "The UAE has been on the forefront of the ongoing energy transition in the region, being the first in MENA region moving towards the net-zero initiative. In order to tackle the energy transition, the UAE has adopted a wide range of energy mix with the right balance between sustainable development and reducing climate change as part of our energy strategy 2050 to ensure net-zero emissions by 2050. Additionally, our energy mix will be enhanced by the improvement of our energy efficiency system in the industrial and mining facilities, as well as ratifying laws and legislation inspiring the production of clean energy. Our vision is for these initiatives to increase the contribution of clean energy in our total energy mix to 50 per cent in 2050."

Frederick Kempe, President and CEO of Atlantic Council, said, "There has never been greater urgency for the world's energy leaders to meet the dire challenge of climate change, and the 2022 Global Energy Forum will provide a critically important platform for policymakers to accelerate the energy transition." - WAM

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FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

India's forex reserves decline by \$160mn to \$635.66bn

MUMBAI: India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves declined by \$160 million to \$635.66 billion due to a sharp drop in foreign currency assets, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed.

The foreign currency assets dipped by \$645 million to \$572.21 billion during the week ended December 17, 2021, as per the RBI's weekly statistical supplement.

The foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound, and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. It is expressed in the US dollar.

The value of gold reserves rose by \$475 million to \$39.18 bil-



lion. Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund increased by \$9 million to \$5.17 billion. There was no change in the special drawing rights. It remained unchanged at \$19.08 billion. This is the third consecutive

week of decline in the country's forex reserves. The forex reserves had dropped by \$77 million during the week ended December 10.

India's forex reserves touched an all-time high of \$642.45 billion in the week ended September 3. -ANI

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HOW TO MAKE SURE CHILDREN ARE GETTING THE RIGHT FOODS

At some point during parenthood, everyone struggles with feeding their children the right foods. Is it green enough? Does it have the right vitamins? Will it support their immune system?

Picking the right foods alone is a hard job, but what do you do when your kids won't even touch the healthy stuff on their plates? Here are six tips from Nutrilite senior research scientist based in the US, Holiday Zanetti, who is a mom with a Ph.D. in nutrition.

1 TRY NEW THINGS
Don't be afraid to try new things and expose your kids to the vast world of nutritious foods. Who knows what your kids might like? Maybe you grew up hating Brussels sprouts and green beans, but there is a chance your little ones might love them.

Holiday said expanding their exposure to diverse foods will only help them find more stuff they like. A good way to introduce new foods is by putting food they have not tried next to foods that are tried and true. Placing the new offering alongside their favourite meal may

make them feel more comfortable trying something for the first time.

2 LEAD BY EXAMPLE
Monkey see, monkey do. Kids learn so much from their parents, including talking, walking, reading, writing and more. Along with all the other traits and habits kids pick up from family members, Holiday said children also mimic loved ones' eating habits.

You don't have to drop your fun and easy family meals like pizza Fridays or donuts for breakfast on Sundays. Just make sure you balance those out on other days with more vegetables and fruits so that your children can get used to nutritious food.

3 PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD
Holiday urges parents to bring imagination into eating to avoid making it boring. She said society has outgrown the "Don't play with your food" mindset and

evolved into an era where using your other senses while you eat is more fun and accepted.

Pretend your heads of broccoli are small trees. Arrange your food into faces. Use your hands to mix and have a food eating contest with your children. These are all fun ways you can get your kids excited about eating healthier foods.

4 DISGUISE FOODS THEY DON'T LIKE
By far the easiest thing you can do as a parent, Holiday said, is sneaking something your child hasn't tried into something they love. There is a good chance that in the heat of the moment, your kids won't even know what they are eating.

For example, cauliflower is rich in nutrients and has a taste that can easily be incorporated into your meals. Examples of fun meals with cauliflower are garlic cauliflower mash (tastes like mashed potatoes) or cauliflower "fried rice."

5 COOK WITH YOUR KIDS
Lastly, introduce your kids to the fun of cooking. They might turn out to be a huge help in the kitchen. Letting them mix the salad, pour the oil or peel the corn are all fun ways to let your kids get hands on with their food.

Incorporating your kids into the process of making their meal will help them connect with their food and make them more inclined to eat it. Plus, cooking skills will benefit them throughout life.

6 NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS
If you are worried about your kids not getting the right vitamins and minerals, consider incorporating supplements specifically formulated for children into their daily routine.

Supplements offer a range of products for kids that make it fun for them to get their daily dose of essential vitamins and minerals, including gummies, fast-melt powders and jelly splats. Kids aren't always going to be easy to feed, so these supplements make it easy for parents to fill any gaps in their child's daily nutrition.

-BPT



ROUND-UP

Renault Duster endorsed for its inherent characteristics of SUV capability

Renault Duster features a powerful engine, an attractive modern design, a comfortable and spacious cabin, in addition to strength, functionality and safety to meet the aspirations of buyers



MUSCAT: Consisting of a powerful engine, an attractive modern design, a comfortable and spacious cabin, Renault Duster truly meets the aspirations of customers who wish to own a sports utility vehicle at competitive prices.

Reflecting Renault's inherent characteristics of strength and SUV capability the Renault Duster's features a powerful engine, an attractive modern design, a comfortable and spacious cabin, in addition to strength, functionality and safety to meet the aspirations of buyers.

Tariq Al Abri from Rustaq who is a long time Renault Duster owner says, "Renault Duster adds more splendour and elegance with its distinctive features. The sports utility vehicle offers a refreshing take on 4WD driving experience, equipped with the same off-road capability and affordability to beat the best in the market."

Calling it an innovative product, Amal Al Zedjali from Muscat says, "I admire the car for its unique exterior styling, distinctly assertive look and fuel efficiency. With its proven strength to handle all challenges, the Renault Duster equipped with multiple outstanding features and technology enhancements continues to set new benchmarks in Oman. Renault Duster 2WD and

4WD's impressive exteriors, elegant interiors and advanced equipment reiterates the maker's commitment to setting new standards in the SUV segment."

Khalil Balushi from Salalah who owns a 1.6 litre 2WD Renault Duster from Musandam likes the car for its superior SUV capabilities and enhanced features. "I am very proud of the owner of this brand which offers excellent mileage. It has demonstrated the strength to handle all challenges. It is equipped with multiple outstanding features and technology enhancements. It is an embodiment of strength, functionality and safety. It offers a refreshing take on driving experience, equipped with the same off-road capability and affordability to beat the best in the market."

Ramesh C from Sohar who owns Renault Duster's 4WD says, "The impressive vehicle is an impressive all-terrain vehicle. I have been a long-time fan of Renault Duster and will vouch for the vehicle performance and mileage. Renault Duster's impressive exteriors, elegant interiors and advanced equipment reiterates the maker's commitment to setting new standards in the SUV segment. I am a very proud owner of this brand."

A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles, said, "The vehicle plays a pivotal role in Renault Oman's product portfolio and has the widest offering in the segment and caters to evolving customer needs. Setting new standards in the SUV segment, the popular Renault Duster continues to be a bestseller in Oman. Its sleek style and innovative design, and its impressive interiors complement the striking exteriors, making it a style statement inside out. Showcasing a host of extraordinary features, the aspirational SUV Renault Duster has won the respect of customers for being a perfect package in terms of looks, performance, strength, functionality, and safety. The brand, which is embodied by top attributes, continues to resonate completely with proud customers in Oman."

Self-assured look

Renault Duster has an individually self-assured look and features a brand-new exterior styling with a more full-bodied look and boosted by a wide chrome-finish grille that extends to the headlights at the car's front corners. With a front skid plate and Renault's signature

C-shaped lighting with LED daytime running lights, Renault Duster further reinforces the SUV's personality as a sturdy, yet smart city vehicle. Renault Duster adds more splendour and elegance with its distinctive features.

Strong adventurer credentials

Step into the all-terrain world of Duster and discover attractive design, enhanced grille and lighting signature. The SUV's exterior has been given a more robust look thanks to the addition of a wide chrome-finish grille which extends to the headlights positioned at the car's front corners. A front skid plate reinforces the Duster's adventurer credentials and ensures that the vehicle never loses its smart looks. Finished with Renault's signature C-shaped lighting with LED daytime running lights the Duster is a modern SUV with a rugged personality.

All-new Duster means a new front end as well as modern and powerful lines. It features robust and all-terrain styling with high ground clearance, chrome grille surround and Hill Descent Control. Every road is open to you from now on. A simple lighting

detail makes all the difference. All-new Duster stands out with its new "C" shape front LED lighting signature. It's a finely crafted lighting signature that is a key part of all new Duster's identity. Comfortable on any terrain, the all-new Duster features roof bars that meet the highest standards in terms of solidity. On excursions with friends, bulky leisure equipment like surfboards or skis can be transported in complete safety.

Numerous storage options

All-new Duster has a brand new, comfortable, ergonomic and high-quality interior. For the driver's well-being on board, the Duster interior has been reinvented with new adjustable seats and a new ergonomic dashboard and central console. The highly modular layout of the seats allows you to arrange the cabin to suit your needs. Carry everything you need for a weekend getaway. The 1/3 -2/3 foldable bench seat and numerous storage options make all kinds of adventures a reality. The ergonomics of the all-new Duster dashboard has been redesigned. It makes life easier with new adjustment systems for the driver's seat and steering wheel.

Great off-road capabilities

All-new Duster offers you a range of smart and generous storage areas. Under the passenger seat, a sliding compartment keeps your essentials within arm's reach. Other storage areas are included in the doors and behind the front seat-backs. The Duster's roominess, affordability and off-road capabilities have long been recognised as the model's strengths and the all-new models continue to carry these desirable attributes.

Adaptability and comfort

Inside, the Duster is equipped with new, high-quality, driving aids and new equipment, making it a genuine journey-ready SUV which offers adaptability and comfort for everyday driving. On stepping inside the cabin, the noticeable difference in quality is instantly recognisable - packed with 'Easy Life' features like Hill Descent Control, Multiview camera and Blind Spot Warning, 4x4 monitor (Feature available in Duster LE only), automatic air conditioning, Remote Engine Start (GCC only), seven-inch touchscreen tablet and Renault smart card with keyless entry system - as well as quality trims and materials

"The Safety Pack" on the SE version is made to keep every Renault Duster passenger safe as it has ABS with Emergency Brake Assist, front passenger airbag (deactivatable), front side airbags and unlocks alarm (visual and audible) on the front passenger seatbelt.

And for an enhanced appearance the Renault Duster offers the "Exterior Look Pack" on the SE version; it has satin chrome door mirrors, satin chrome longitudinal roof rails, front/rear skid plate add-ons with satin chrome appearance paint, side skirt cover with satin chrome appearance paint, extra tinted rear windows, rear quarter glass and rear windshield.

Inside, the PE trim level is clad with Grey Carbon fabric upholstery, with Dark Carbon trim on the steering wheel, gear knob insert and handbrake console.

The central front panel, air vent surrounds and front door handles are in Star Grey tone.

PARTNERSHIP

National University signs MoU with Universiti Teknologi Petronas

MUSCAT: The National University of Science and Technology, Oman and Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Malaysia held a virtual Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing on December 23 using the video conferencing platform.

The meeting was co-chaired by Dr Ali Saud Al Bimani, Vice-chancellor of the National University (NU Oman), and Professor Ts. Dr Mohamed Ibrahim Abdul Mutalib, Vice-chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP). A total of 25 delegates guests from both the institutions virtually attended the signing event.

The MoU signing ceremony emphasised the collaboration between NU Oman and UTP to pursue and strengthen joint research, collaboration and capacity building in teaching and learning, student and staff exchange visits, organising corporate training programs, seminars, conferences and scientific public lectures. Adjunct Lecturer and visiting professor form a part of the initiative on sharing knowledge and expertise.

The MoU was signed by both



the Vice-chancellors and witnessed by the senior executives of both the institutions.

Dr Ali Saud Al Bimani said in his speech that both the institutions will greatly benefit from

this collaboration and this will support NU in activating its role in the Omani Vision of 2040 to enhance the internationalisation of Omani education system and infrastructure.

TECHNOLOGY

Karwa Motors, Bahwan CyberTek implement Microsoft Dynamics

MUSCAT: Marking yet another milestone achievement for the brand, Karwa Motors, Oman's first-ever bus brand and manufacturing facility, in partnership with Bahwan CyberTek, recently completed the successful implementation of the Microsoft Dynamics 365 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

Commenting on the implementation of the new ERP system, Dr Ibrahim Al Balushi, CEO of Karwa Motors said, "We live in an ever-changing world where new processes and technologies are being developed and introduced continuously. Having a robust business management solution at the foundation of our business is vital to maintaining a high level of productivity and a strong growth trajectory throughout our supply chain. Given its proven track record and flexibility, Microsoft Dynamics 365 was a perfect fit.

"With this state-of-the-art ERP solution at our core, we will be able to enhance the end-to-end visibility across our supply chain and strengthen our manufacturing business. Doing so by connecting systems and data to anticipate



change, minimise disruptions, and reduce time to market. Additionally, we will gain planning agility across our manufacturing and distribution processes, which will enhance innovation and further optimise our operations in the future."

Bahwan CyberTek is a global provider of digital transformation solutions and a company that is instrumental in collaborating with the Sultanate of Oman to create employment for Omani citizens. They have trained over 10,000 Omani youth, including 3,000 in the IT and ITES sectors. The com-

pany was tasked with the complete development, setup, and support of the Microsoft Dynamics 365 ERP solution for Karwa Motors. In total, the scope of the activities covered six key aspects of Karwa Motors' operations - the process coverage of Karwa Motors' functional units, solution capabilities and features, process capabilities for manufacturing sector organisations, solution integration, future expansion and future-proofing, and strategic control over technology, usage, deployment, and support services.

Dr Ibrahim Albalushi added, "As one of the foremost industry leaders in digital transformation solutions in Oman, Bahwan CyberTek was the perfect partner to implement the system. Even with some unforeseen modifications and integration requirements, Bahwan CyberTek's support and expertise enabled us to deploy Microsoft Dynamics 365 across our operations in record time. With it in place, we can now build a more resilient future for ourselves by driving innovation, optimising operations, and deepening our customer relationships."

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ROUND-UP



Changan announces attractive 1st anniversary offer for its customers

The special offer which the customers can avail during the period include low EMI free service (from two years/35,000 km to 3 years/55,000 years), free insurance (for first-year Oman and UAE only), free registration (for the first year only), and assured fuel card OMR 50 to OMR 100 depending on the models

MUSCAT: To celebrate the popular brand Changan's first anniversary in Oman, Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE), part of Bahwan International Group, has announced a range of amazing benefits for customers.

The 'first anniversary' celebration offer is available on all models including Changan CS95 (2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp, 6AT); CS85 coupe (2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp, 8AT); CS 75 Plus (2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp,8AT); CS35 Plus(1.4L Turbo Engine, 156 hp, 7DCT), EADO Plus (1.4L Turbo Engine, 156 hp, 7DCT)& EADO Plus(1.6L Engine, 126 hp, CVT) and Alsvin (1.5L Engine, 105 hp) and Hunter Pickup (2.4L Turbo Gasoline engine, 210 hp, 4WD, 6 Speed Manual or Automatic Transmission and 1.9Turbo Diesel Engine, Manual Transmission).

The special offer which the customers can avail during the period include low EMI free service (from two years/35,000 km to 3 years/55,000 years), free insurance (for first-year Oman and UAE only), free registration (for the first year only), and assured fuel card OMR 50 to OMR 100 depending on the models.

The offer is valid from November 30 till January 29, 2022, on all models purchased through Changan showroom for all retail customers only.

A senior official from AGAE said, "This is a very special one; 1st anniversary offer we would like to appreciate our valued customers for their trust in Changan brand. Changan is a Premium Brand with Advanced Technology and Radar-based safety features. We are happy to offer the best value to all our customers."

Free service 2 years or 35,000 km to 3 years/55,000 km (PMS Service)

Customers can avail of Periodic Maintenance Service from two years/35,000 km to three years/55,000 km and include only 10,000 km Service Intervals.

Two years/35,000 km is applicable on Changan Alsvin model variants only.

Three years/55,000 km applicable on EADO Plus, CS35 Plus, CS75 Plus, CS85 Coupe, CS95 and Hunter Pickup only.

Free assured fuel card worth RO 50 to RO 100

Customers can avail of free fuel cards ranging from OMR 50 for the Changan Alsvin model variant to OMR 100 for all other Changan model variants.

Easy Monthly Instalments (EMI) for Six to Eight years for Individual customers only.

Easy monthly instalments are calculated based on a 20% down payment for 6 to 8-year loan ten-



ure for the respective Changan basic model. Subject to credit approvals from banks for retail customers only.

- Changan Alsvin: EMI Starting from OMR 60 for eight years
- Changan EADO Plus: EMI Starting from OMR 81 for eight years
- Changan CS35 plus: EMI Starting from OMR 97 for eight years
- Changan CS75 plus: EMI starting from OMR 135 for eight years
- Changan CS85 coupe: EMI starting from OMR 142 for eight years
- Changan CS95: EMI starting from OMR 160 for eight years
- Changan Hunter: EMI starting from OMR 150 for six years

Changan CS95

Changan's high-performance full-size SUV CS95 is catching the attention of auto enthusiasts in Oman. The seven-seater SUV 4WD which amplifies driving experience with sophisticated luxury and superior comfort has been designed to stir the driving emotions.

With a commanding presence and muscular stance, Changan CS95 is designed to demand attention wherever it goes. With meticulously crafted details complemented by convenient technology, the CS95 ensures refined luxury in every drive for up to seven passengers.

With a range of innovative driving technologies, the CS95 delivers an assured sense of confidence and control to the driver. Its Blue Core Powertrain Technology based on the principles of power, clean and quiet provides owners with a highly efficient and energy-saving performance.

CS95, a flagship model of Changan, is an ideal seven-seater SUV for a large modern family who wants to travel in luxury, with business class comfort in all road conditions with its intelligent 4WD system. Under the hood is a Blue Core 2.0L turbocharged engine mated with a six-speed AT which produces 224 horsepower and a 360 Nm of torque. CS95 is packed with endless features and has numerous advantages over its segment competition.

Changan CS85 Coupe

Changan CS85, the luxurious crossover coupe combines the dynamic handling of an SUV with the sporty aesthetics of a coupe to give owners the best of both worlds. Packed with a 2.0L turbocharged engine that produces 224 horsepower and 360 Nm of torque, an 8 speed AT Changan CS85 Coupe redefines the definition of smoothness. Positioned as a premium coupe SUV, the model stands out from its counterparts by its sleek appearance, focus on the high quality and application of the latest technology in the vehicle's many features.

Changan CS85 Coupe is a sporty coupe designed SUV which reflects one's personality. Style and fashion will be the new constant in your life once you own this sporty coupe. Blue Core Powertrain Technology based on the principles of power, clean and quiet provides highly efficient and energy-saving performance.

With all the vehicles' key components originating from the world's leading suppliers, the CS85 Coupe delivers top-grade enjoyment from every angle - visual, tactile, auditory and safety - coming together to create the perfect driving experience. With its wide body and muscular shoulders accentuated by horizontal contours that sweep through the sides, the CS85 makes a sporty style statement.

Changan CS75 Plus

With its premium design, comfortable automotive interior, and highly intelligent configuration, Changan CS75 Plus offers a host of special features. Changan CS75 Plus is impressing car enthusiasts for its promising quality of innovation, aesthetics, functionality and stability. The compact Crossover is guaranteed to make a mark in the Omani market. The SUV makes driving feel like winning with its stunning design, premium interior and intelligent features. The CS75 Plus is loaded with smart and innovative features that aim to elevate the confidence and sophistication in every drive."

An upgraded version of the

CS75, the 2WD Changan CS75 Plus features a more sloped roofline and more power. Under the hood, it has a 2.0-litre turbocharged 4-cylinder engine, mated to an 8-speed automatic transmission with a power of 224 hp and torque of 360 Nm. With a wheelbase of 2710 mm, and it measures 4700 mm in length, 1865 mm in width and 1710 mm in height.

Standard features in the CS75 Plus include power windows, central locking, cruise control, dual-zone auto A/C, 8 speakers, multifunctional steering wheel, USB+AUX ports, 12-inch screen, Bluetooth, 360 camera, leather ventilated seats, sunroof, fog lamps, parking sensors LED headlamps, panoramic roof, keyless entry and start, and 19-inch wheels. Safety features include dual front, side and curtain airbags, ABS, and hill assist.

Changan CS35 Plus

Changan's CS35 Plus, a sporty new-gen crossover equipped with state-of-the-art technologies is popular for its unparalleled driving experience. Energetic like the youth, it is packed with a 1.4-litre Turbocharged engine that produces 156 hp and 260 nm of torque and fitted with a seven-speed Dual Clutch Transmission (DCT) to always keep you ahead of the segment competition.

CS35 Plus possesses a fashionable appearance, strong power and good entertaining features. Developed by the global research and development team of Changan Automobile, it integrates all comprehensive functions: high-quality performance, comfortable driving experience, large internal space and abundant configurations of entertainment. Vibrant in style and sporty in design, the All-new CS35 Plus gives a robust presence on the outside while the beautifully crafted interiors give the first-class feel inside. Its vibrant and energy-filled design appeals to the youth and is tech-savvy. It is a youthful SUV for a younger generation who are spirited, passionate, social and want to become the influencers of their time.



Changan EADO Plus

The 'beyond your expectation' Changan EADO Plus is a compact yet aggressive family sedan with premium styling, luxurious interior, and plenty of safety features. With intelligent safety features to assist, EADO Plus lets drivers be at peace when on the road. Taking from the inherent design language, EADO Plus ups the ante with a crisply styled exterior that emphasizes a strong sense of sportiness.

With an engine of 1.4 Turbo, the Changan EADO Plus sport edition offers the power of 155 hp, Nm torque and transmission of 7-speed DCT. The model offers a dimension of 4730x1820x1505 mm(LxWxH), a wheelbase of 2700 mm, a fuel tank of 53 litres and an excellent fuel economy of 18.3 km per litre as per GSO.

The exterior of the Changan EADO PLUS 1.4 Turbo features Dual Tone 16" Alloy Wheels, LED Headlamps, Auto Headlamps, LED DRLs, ORVM - Electrically Adjustable with heating, Dual Exhaust Pipes, Electric Sunroof and Window Trims in Chrome. The interior attributes include multi-function steering wheel, soft dashboard, leather seats, rear AC vents, leather steering wheel and multi-mode selection.

Apart from the above, EADO PLUS also available in 1.6L, 126hp with CVT. Safety features include ESC (ABS + EBD + TCS + ESC + HHC), Electronic Parking Brake, Front and Front Side Airbags, Rear Parking Sensors, Rear View Camera and TPMS.

Changan Alsvin: Family sedan

Bearing a streamlined body design, exquisite interior design, and impeccable energy-efficient engine, the Changan Alsvin allows owners to exceed their everyday expectations. The 1.5L 5-speed dual clutch automatic transmission car truly brings unparalleled value to customers and offers an excellent fuel economy of 18.3 km per litre. Changan Alsvin brings features and technology to the customers in the segment that they could previously

only have dreamt of. The additional features offered in the 1.5L DCT are comparable to the highest price of comparable alternate cars in this segment such as moon roof, cruise control, TPMS, start-stop technology and heated side mirrors. Measuring 4390mm x 1725mm x 1490mm, Changan Alsvin's boot capacity is an adequate 390 litres. Styling is contemporary for this entry level four-door segment with sleek and swoopy lines. Alsvin's front end is dominated by a large grille that extends below the bumper line and its interior is modern with a dashboard that features a floating infotainment touch screen that is much in demand now. The Changan Alsvin with a 1.5-litre inline-4 motor engine puts out 105hp and 145Nm of torque.

Changan Hunter

One of the best aspects of the Changan Hunter is its pickup capabilities and usage. Sturdy, spacious and of high quality, it is suitable for various load and road conditions.

Boasting class-leading power and excellent ground clearance it delivers an unmatched level of supremacy and capability. Offering excellent seating comfort, SUV like interiors and manifold features, Changan Hunter ensures a pleasurable and comfortable drive for the passengers.

Changan Hunter's double cabin pick-up comes with a 2.4 turbo gasoline engine producing 210 hp with a 6 speed manual transmission and is available in 2WD and 4WD. The 4WD gasoline is also available in Automatic transmission variants. The 'power to perform' Changan Hunter also comes with a 1.9-litre turbo diesel engine producing 150 hp with a 6-speed manual transmission and is available in 4 WD. This incredible pick-up is built on a large wheelbase of up to 3180 mm, and measures 5330 mm in length, 1930 mm in width and 1835 mm in height.

With a capacity to carry substantial weight, it has a ground clearance of 230 mm and a fuel tank capacity of 80 litres.

ROUND-UP

Benefits on Lexus range ending soon

The campaign is valid up to December 30, 2021

MUSCAT: Lexus is offering luxury automotive enthusiasts a fantastic opportunity to own their favourite Lexus vehicle and benefit from an exclusive offer that will end soon. As part of the campaign, Lexus is offering free service 3 years / 30,000km (Whichever is earlier) and 1 year of free registration. The campaign is valid up to December 30. (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

Customers in Oman, have a wide range of vehicles to choose from with Lexus. The Lexus range includes inspiring SUVs like the NX300 with an advanced turbo-charged 238hp, 2.0-litre engine which combines fuel efficiency with outstanding power output. This generates exhilarating acceleration for sporty driving, together with exceptional fuel economy.

The Lexus UX has a front-wheel drive configuration and is powered by a high-efficiency 2.0 litre, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT).

The five-seat Lexus RX350 is equipped with a 3.5-litre V6 that is mated to an eight speed automatic transmission. The RX is also available in a 3-row 7-seater option. Also available is the Lexus RX450h, a hybrid version featuring a 3.5-litre Atkinson-cycle engine.

The Lexus GX460 is perfect for families who seek no-holds-barred adventure on their days



off, yet also desire an easy-driving, comfortable and versatile luxury SUV for the work week. The Lexus GX460 features a 4.6L engine that provides outstanding power and responsive performance.

The LX570 possesses a 5.7-litre engine that delivers the punch and towing power befitting this vehicle. The 8-Speed automatic transmission with a wide gear range

contributes to achieving excellent start-off and acceleration performance and fuel efficiency during high speed driving.

The Lexus range of sedans includes the IS350. This sleek and stylish powerful sedan is equipped with a 3.5-litre engine that's paired to an 8-speed automatic transmission. The turbocharged IS300 features a 2.0-litre twin-scroll turbo-

charged inline four-cylinder engine with intercooler that generates 241Hp.

Complementing the Lexus ES emotional design, elevated by a new design front grille, is a thrilling drive personality imbued by two powertrain options.

The ES350 is powered by a 3.5-litre 24-valve V6 engine that produces 298 hp and 36.3 kg-m of

torque. While the ES250 is powered by, high-efficiency 2.5-litre 16-valve DOHC engine that produces 204 hp and 24.8 kg-m of torque. The two powertrains on ES350 and ES250 are paired to an eight-speed direct-shift automatic transmission.

The flagship LS which is an inspiring luxury sedan, is available in 3.5-litre V6 Multi Stage Hybrid System producing 354 hp, a 3.5-lit-

er V6 naturally aspirated Atkinson-cycle producing 311 hp and 38.7 Kg.M Torque, and a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 engine producing 415 hp and 61.2 Kg.M of Torque.

In Oman, every Lexus vehicle comes with special benefits and privileges such as Manufacturer's Warranty of 4 years/100,000km (whichever is earlier) and 24 hours on-road assistance from AAA.

THE LUXURY 100 AWARDS

Jeep Grand Cherokee L wins 'Iconic Premium SUV of the Year' award

MUSCAT: The Jeep Grand Cherokee L won 'Iconic Premium SUV of the Year' at the seventh edition of The Luxury 100 Awards 2021, held by Signature magazine at the Al Bustan Ritz Carlton Hotel Muscat.

Considered one of the most prestigious accolades in the region, the award was presented to Hatem Al-Najjar, General Manager of Dhofar Automotive Company, the official distributor of Jeep, Dodge, Chrysler, Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Ram vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman.

Commenting on being the recipient of the award, Hatem El-Naggar, said, "We are extremely delighted to have the all-new Jeep Grand Cherokee L be bestowed with this prestigious award, which is also an honour for us at Dhofar Automotive. The Luxury 100 Awards celebrates brands that have extended exemplary commercial and personal services that are exclusive to their customers, in turn, evoking passion and excellence. By winning this award, we are pleased to reinforce our commitment towards excellence and provide our customers with only the best car models in the automotive sector. Dhofar Automotive always strives to provide the highest quality services to its valued customers to ensure a valued ownership experience."

The 'Top 100 Luxury Brands' Awards is a unique initiative that represents the only list in the Sultanate of Oman and the region for luxury products for this year, which is a list of 100 brands of products and services that embody the spirit of excellence. Signature, the leading luxury lifestyle brand in the Sultanate of Oman,



presents awards to brands that are chosen after a multi-month survey and study. This is conducted by a team comprising of United Media Group editors, elite journalists from around the world and a select group of readers and experts in the world of luxury. The list includes brands that have made their mark during the year across the various sectors they represent.

"The Jeep Grand Cherokee has held a prominent position on the list of the most preferred vehicles

in the Sultanate since its launch, thirty years ago. The incredible Grand Cherokee L model was built based on surveys conducted with Jeep customers all around the world. This way their desires and needs were utilised to ensure that the Jeep Grand Cherokee L was built to deliver legendary Jeep off-road 4WD and on-road capabilities. This is in addition to other advanced technology and safety features, with the design extended to accommodate the third row of

seats to meet the growing needs of Jeep customers who wanted more space and functionality," he added.

The average price for the all-new Jeep Grand Cherokee L ranges between \$40,000 and \$70,000 pre-VAT, with a wide lineup that includes V6/V8 engines and 4 trims including premium versions.

In the Sultanate, Jeep, Dodge, Chrysler, Ram, Fiat and Alfa Romeo models are available in Dhofar Automotive showrooms, with different classes of equipment.

LUCKY WINNERS

Total cash prizes of OMR300,000 with BankDhofar's savings account scheme year-end prize draws

MUSCAT: BankDhofar will conduct Year-End Prize Draws as part of the Savings Account Scheme. Two lucky winners will get the chance to win OMR 100,000 (OMR 50,000 each), in addition to OMR 200,000 for one Al Riadah Priority Banking Customer. Throughout the year, BankDhofar rewarded customers who have maintained the savings habit and provided chances for various segments to win valuable cash prizes.

Commenting on the coming draws, Iman Al Amri, Executive Manager - Retail Products & Segments at BankDhofar said: "This year's savings scheme has seen great success, with more chances and bigger prizes covering all segments. Our main aim of the savings scheme is to instil the saving habits within the community and reward our customers for that with valuable cash prizes. I would like to congratulate all the winners of this scheme, and we look forward to congratulating the lucky winners of the Year-End prizes.

With a total of OMR 2.304 million, the year's scheme rewarded BankDhofar customers who save a minimum of OMR 100 in their accounts in the Monthly Guaranteed Prizes for branches, Monthly Prizes for Children, Monthly Prizes for Youth, and the Monthly Prizes for Amaan Retirement



Throughout the year, BankDhofar rewarded customers who have maintained the savings habit

ees Banking Services' customers. Additionally, the scheme included Omani Women's Day Prizes and National Day Prizes, and the Year-End Grand Prizes.

As for Al Riadah Priority Banking Services' customers, the scheme included Monthly Prizes, Al Riadah Prestige Monthly Prizes and Year-End Grand Prizes.

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Anniversary Celebration

Join us as we celebrate our 1st year in Oman
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2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp 8-speed AT

EMI Starting from OMR
142*
for eight years



CS95

2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp,
6-speed AT, 4WD, 7 Seater

EMI Starting from OMR
160*
for eight years



CS75 PLUS

2.0L Turbo Engine 224 hp, 8-speed AT

EMI Starting from OMR
135*
for eight years



CS35 PLUS

1.4L Turbo Engine, 156 hp, 7-speed DCT

EMI Starting from OMR
97*
for eight years



EADO PLUS

1.6L Engine, 126 hp, CVT
Also available 1.4L Turbo Engine, 155 hp, 7-speed DCT

EMI Starting from OMR
81*
for eight years



ALSVIN

1.5L Engine, 105 hp, 5-speed DCT

EMI Starting from OMR
60*
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HUNTER

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to 3 Years / 55,000 Kms[#]

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ASSURED FUEL CARD

From OMR 50 to OMR 100^{^^}

KNOW MORE

Offer valid from 30th November 2021 to 29th January 2022 on all models purchased through the CHANGAN Showroom Retail Offer. #Whichever is earlier. Periodic Maintenance Service Only. Offer includes only 10,000 Kms service intervals. 2 Years / 35,000 Kms - applicable on Changan Alsvin model only. 3 Years / 55,000 Kms - applicable on Changan EADO PLUS, CS35 PLUS, CS75 PLUS, CS85 Coupe, CS95 and HUNTER Pickup only. @For 1st Year Oman and UAE only. ^For 1st Year only. ^^Through Fuel Card. OMR 50 for Alsvin and OMR 100 for all other models. *Easy Monthly Installments are calculated based on 20% down payment for 8 years loan tenure for base models of Alsvin, EADO PLUS 1.6L, CS35 Plus, CS75 Plus, CS85 Coupe & CS95. Changan Hunter 2WD Gasoline Pickup EMI is calculated for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals from banks. Applicable on vehicles purchased for personal use. Images shown are for illustrative purpose only. Specification may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the Changan Showroom.



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7-Speed AT, 7 Seater

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ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

ON PURCHASE OF 2ND NISSAN VEHICLE IN THE FAMILY^{*@}

[FOR DETAILS CLICK HERE](#)

Offer valid from 10th November 2021 to 9th January 2022 on applicable models purchased for personal use. Offer not available for vehicles purchased for Commercial use, Rent-a-car, Taxi, Government and Driving School. #Periodic Maintenance Service only. Whichever is earlier. Applicable on all models except GTR, 370Z, C-Milan. Offer includes only 10,000 km service intervals. @ 1st year Oman & UAE only. ^ For 1st year only. @ & ^ Applicable on all models except GTR, 370Z, Urvan & C-Milan. Applicable for Private registrations only. For Commercial registrations, additional amount needs to be borne by the customer. *Additional PMS Service for new car, exclusive discount on labor charges, parts & trade-in benefits. Second car purchase should be either in the name of existing Nissan owner or his/her immediate family member (Wife/Husband/Son/Daughter/Brother/Sister) to avail additional benefits under the scheme. Conditions apply. *EMIs mentioned are calculated on the price of the base model variant with 20% down payment and 3.25% rate of interest for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals.

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