

**UNDERSECRETARY RECEIVES
NEPAL AMBASSADOR'S
CREDENTIALS COPY**

Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs received on Monday a copy of credentials of Dornath Aryal, Ambassador of Nepal appointed to the Sultanate of Oman. **>A3**



**OMAN'S ROYAL OFFICE MINISTER
RECEIVES SAUDI AMBASSADOR**

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received on Monday Abdullah Saud Al Enezi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Oman. The visit comes within the framework of bolstering fraternal relations between Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. **-ONA**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

**OMAN
Honour for ESO head**

1 HH Sayyida Tania bint Shabib Al Said, President of the ESO, has been felicitated by the Harmony Foundation. **>A3**

**WORLD
Afghan flood deaths**

2 Heavy flooding due to seasonal rains has killed dozens of people in Afghanistan and Pakistan. **>A6**

**MARKET
Fitch Credit Rating**

3 EDO has announced that it has received IDR BB with a Stable Outlook rating from Fitch Rating. **>B1**

PRODUCER PRICE INDEX RISES BY MORE THAN 40% IN OMAN

Oil and gas products took the lead in the upward trend, according to the latest NCSI survey

MUSCAT: The Producer Price Index (PPI) in the Sultanate of Oman registered a rise of 40.7 percent during the second quarter of this year (2022) compared to the corresponding period in 2021.

As per the data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), oil and gas products took the lead in the upward trend, constituting 48.7 percent, while non-oil products registered 7.8 percent rise.

The quarterly survey points out that the hike in prices of oil and gas products results from a 50.3 percent rise in prices of refined oil products and a 48.4 percent rise in crude oil and natural gas.

The growth in prices of non-oil products is attributed to a 9.4 percent rise in prices of the converting industries group and a 1.8 percent rise in the mining, electricity and water group.



Was the increase in the prices of fisheries, fruits, vegetables and oils, textiles grew by 11.7%, beverages by 8.6%, dairy products by 8.5%, bakery, other food products by 3.9% and footwear items by 2.7%

and other food products by 3.9 percent and footwear items by 2.7 percent.

In the Minerals, Machinery and Equipment Group, the prices of products made from iron, steel or aluminium grew by 35.7 percent, vacant compressed cylinder products by 15.4 percent, crude, iron, steel and aluminium by 11.4 percent and water heater products by 10.4 percent, while the prices of power transformers, cables and electrical appliances registered an increase of 6.1 percent. **-ONA**

Al Mouj Muscat's Tayseer offers an easy direct financing option

An exciting gateway to home ownership in Al Mouj Muscat, Tayseer is simple, straightforward, open to everyone and requires no bank approvals. For ready apartments a 20% down payment is all that is needed to move in to the leading lifestyle destination. For the under construction property such as Juman Two, which offers a luxurious lifestyle at the heart of the prestigious Al Mouj Muscat Marina, Tayseer allows investors access to finance directly from Al Mouj Muscat. Through the payment of a 10% deposit, followed by 20% at handover, and settling the remaining 70% over five years. This inspiring scheme is available on a special selection of premium Al Mouj Muscat properties and is available for a limited time.

Why was Tayseer introduced?

Al Mouj Muscat has long held a reputation as an ideal lifestyle destination as people value its vibrant sense of community as well as its beautifully designed properties. Financing, however, is often not straightforward with many investors not able to fulfil the strict lending criterion set out by banks.

It can be the case that buyers or investors cannot secure a loan because of their age and or health insurance requirements. Business owners can also face obstacles because they do not have proof of monthly salary. Plus, those looking to invest can find that if they have an existing loan, a new housing loan will not be approved.

With a clear understanding of the issues faced by buyers, as well as the aspiration of homeowners and investors, Al Mouj designed Tayseer not only to provide a simple way to access finance but also ensured

that the process is straightforward and well-managed.

How does Tayseer work?

Tayseer is a flexible payment plan that simplifies the buying process as it is available directly from Al Mouj Muscat. Buyers or investors need a valid ID, passport and an attested proof of relationship if two joint purchasers plan to buy the property. There are two ways to initiate the payment plan, depending on whether a property is ready to move in to or if it is under construction.

Ready to move in

 20% Down payment and move in today	 80% Over 5 years
 Properties available: Juman One, The Gardens and Marsa Gardens	

Under construction properties

 10% Down payment	 20% Payment at handover	 70% Over 5 years
 Properties available: Juman Two (handover end of 2022)		

For both ready to move in and under construction properties, the Title Deed is issued and transferred to the purchasers' name at the 100% payment completion and the 5% VAT charge on all property purchases is settled.

What do buyers say about Tayseer?

Tayseer is designed for people looking to live or invest in a selection of premium homes available



for sale at Al Mouj. It set out to smooth the buying process and has been a huge success, with over 85 homes having been purchased through Tayseer since it was launched in June 2020. So how have buyers found the process and what attracted them to the scheme? One investor explains how Tayseer helped make home ownership a reality: "I looked at a home in the Juman One and saw that it offers the ideal lifestyle I was looking for because of its location. It is close to shops, a stunning Marina, restaurants, plus it is easy for me to reach my parents' home. I knew I wanted to live here, and this is where Tayseer was so helpful."

"With Tayseer, the process was clear and easy as financing is directly with Al Mouj. The staff welcomed us and truly took the time to go through all the details we required. The process was smooth and easy to pay by just provide cheques. I would certainly recommend Tayseer."

Al Mouj Muscat is renowned for the quality of life it offers, promising residents 'great moments, every day'. The apartments at Juman Two, set at the edge of the award-winning Gold Anchor Al

Mouj Marina: "This is the ideal lifestyle community," confirms another resident, "there is an array of amenities, the community is easy to get around, it is safe and secure, I only wish I could spend more time here but I am a doctor and I work long hours."

A resident of Ghadeer Villas echoes why the direct payment plan helped them achieve their goal of life in an ideal home in the ideal location: "The location is perfect for my family. It is just what we hoped for as our children enjoy open space and they get to play with other kids during events. There is privacy within the community, and we feel it is safe for the children to play outdoors. And we enjoy visiting the marina and taking boat trips. "Tayseer made a difference as it meant no hassle going to a bank and we found it very straightforward. The payments are easy, and the staff are very well versed and willing to help us any way we need."

The overwhelming impression that Tayseer had on investors was made apparent through the addition of Ghadeer Villas to the portfolio. This financing scheme paved way for all Ghadeer Villas to be sold in within 6 months of their



addition to this scheme.

An exceptional investment opportunity

Tayseer has attracted a significant number of local expats and Omani investors as it offers clear and unique advantages. As a direct payment plan, investors, who may own other properties, do not need to apply for a bank home loan. Ease of financing is only the start of the benefits that property ownership at Al Mouj Muscat offers.

With its reputation as the leading lifestyle destination, from envitably positioned homes to a vibrant community and world-class amenities, there is a high demand for rental properties at Al Mouj. Its oceanside location also benefits from connections to all major road networks and its proximity to Oman's International Airport, adding to its appeal for tenants. Beyond the potential to achieve consistent returns, Al Mouj Muscat appeals to many investors because it offers a dedicated leasing team, there to take care of every detail. A single point of contact stays on hand to manage an invest-

ment property, from advertising to finding and selecting tenants and handling all details of their residency. Tayseer is part of a complete package for investors, as residents enjoy a host of retail, leisure and dining experiences and property owners enjoy competitive returns, a seamless service and consistent demand.

How can I benefit from Tayseer?

The scheme is open to anyone who can provide post-dated cheques from a local bank in Oman. This easy method of financing will also provide its investor with residency visas for immediate family members upon completion of payments and transfer of title deed, making it the ideal way to become part of a vibrant community in the heart of Muscat.

The leading lifestyle destination

Oman's first integrated tourism complex, Al Mouj Muscat, offers an array of homes, world-class amenities and oceanside community living attracting 8,000 residents from 85 nationalities. Always seeking to innovate and respond to buyers' expectations, Al Mouj introduced its Tayseer payment plan in 2020, a direct finance scheme that has proven to be a game changer for both buyers and investors.

How do I find out more about Tayseer and properties I can purchase?

Tayseer is the ideal way to make your dreams of ownership at Oman's finest lifestyle destination come true. To find out more, visit [www.almouj.com](#) or call 8007 7776.





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PRAYER TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:15pm
Asr.....	3:42pm
Maghrib.....	6:39pm
Isha.....	7:52pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:28am

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation organises meeting

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Mawarid (Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Center) of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation organised an open meeting (dialogue session) on Manafa'a 2022 Program at Innovation Park Muscat on 17 August.

For this year, Manafa'a 2022 Program, organised by Mawarid and the Environment Authority and sponsored by Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO) as the main sponsor and Vale in Oman as the golden sponsor, is under the theme of climate change and air pollution to support and encourage ideas that would contribute to reducing air pollution and climate change.

The dialogue session included

providing detailed information about Manafa'a Program, which is a platform that provides researchers, interested parties and entrepreneurs in Oman with the opportunity to develop and present their innovative business ideas based on protecting the environment, preserving its natural resources and biodiversity, and helping them to transform these ideas into real commercial projects that are viable and translated into reality as well as encouraging the establishment of start-up companies based on benefiting from applied research in the field of genetic resources and building public awareness about the investment opportunities available from biodiversity.

The open meeting, which was broadcast live on Mawarid's official

YouTube channel, was attended by Abdullah bin Ali Al Rawahi, Assistant Director of Mawarid (Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre) of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Dr. Mohammed bin Saif Al Kalbani, Acting Director General of Environmental Affairs at the Environment Authority, and Mr. Ibrahim bin Ahmed Al Ajmi, Advisor at the Civil Aviation Authority. The session was moderated by Dr. Almutasim bin Mohammed Al Mamari.

It is worth noting that the registration door for participation is still open for Manafa'a 2022 Program. Interested applicants can register through Mawarid's official website (www.mawarid.gov.om/manafaa) until 22nd of September 2022.





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DIPLOMATIC AFFAIRS

Undersecretary receives Nepal Ambassador’s credentials copy



MUSCAT: Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs received here on Monday a copy of credentials of Dornath Aryal, Ambassador of Nepal appointed to the Sultanate of Oman. Sheikh Khalifa welcomed the ambassador and wished him success in carrying out his duties. -ONA

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

New panel for audit, control at civil units



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance has formed a joint committee with the State’s Audit Institution (SAI) to enhance the role of internal auditing and monitoring in civil units of the State’s Administrative Apparatus (government departments). The new panel will also activate the Human Resources Development Plan and set up a comprehensive monitoring system.

The joint committee will take steps to refurbish the capabilities of employees of internal audit units by organising training programmes, raise the efficiency of control over public spending and

revenue collection. It will also propose recommendations to grant internal audit departments complete autonomy, so that they could better exercise powers related to functional aspects.

The committee aims to train 900 employees in internal audit units and other civil departments.

The overall objective is to regulate financial control measures, carry out projects in accordance with approved plans and legal procedures and raise Oman’s status in global indices about governance and institutional performance. -ONA

Mother Teresa Memorial Award for ESO President

HH Sayyida Tania bint Shabib Al Said was awarded for her remarkable efforts to protect and conserve Oman’s natural heritage through the phenomenal work of the Environment Society of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Her Highness Sayyida Tania bint Shabib Al Said, President of the Environment Society of Oman, has been felicitated by the Harmony Foundation with the prestigious Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2021 on the theme of Environmental Sustainability.

Her Highness was awarded for her astounding and remarkable efforts to protect and conserve Oman’s natural heritage through the phenomenal environmental work of the Environment Society of Oman. The felicitation ceremony took place in the office of the Environment Society of Oman in Muscat.

Each year, the Harmony Foundation identifies a theme for the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards and the Harmony International Conference that aligns with the needs of the hour affecting humanity worldwide.

In its 17th year, the Harmony



FELICITATED: Her Highness Sayyida Tania bint Shabib Al Said was felicitated with the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2021 on the theme of Environmental Sustainability in Muscat, Oman on August 22, 2022.

Foundation felicitated selfless individuals, organisations, and leaders who work relentlessly in the realm of augmenting environmental sustainability.

Vital for the survival

“A sustainable environment is vital for the survival of humanity and other species on our planet. While humanity marches ahead in all spheres of what it terms “progress”, we forget our responsibility to our own future. After all, we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children,” the foundation said in a press statement.

“We are truly proud of Her Highness and her sheer dedication to addressing the dire issues of Oman’s environment. Her Highness is a true changemaker who founded the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) in 2004 on the pillars of conserving marine life, pro-

tecting land ecology and educating the public about the environment,” the statement added.

It further said: “Her academic expertise in Marine and Freshwater Biology has immensely contributed to the organisation which continues to flourish in Oman with excellent ventures working to protect Oman’s environment and its wildlife

“As a founding member of ESO, Her Highness is also the President of the board of directors of ESO since its establishment. In addition to representing ESO in the media, Her Highness also leads ESO’s advocacy efforts with the government as well as the organisation’s fundraising initiatives, including the annual fundraising ball and other corporate fundraising events.

“Her stupendous environmental endeavours include the ESO’s Say No to Plastic Bags campaign

to reduce the single-use of plastics in Oman, which continues to play a pivotal role in ESO’s Say No to Plastic agenda.

Best wishes

“The Harmony Foundation wishes Her Highness the very best in all of her environmental endeavours, where she and the Environment Society of Oman continue to leave a lasting legacy.

In its 18th edition, Harmony Foundation will be hosting the prestigious Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2022 on the theme of “Compassion for the Refugee Children” in the last quarter of this year to felicitate all those stupendous people, organisations and heads of state who have carried out monumental work for refugee children, said the statement issued by Dr. Abraham Mathai, Founder Chairman of Harmony Foundation.



ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 MOST READ ON FACEBOOK

25,527 REACH



Story on Oman Air’s global sale campaign

A story on Oman Air’s global sale campaign reached 25,527 people and had 1,322 link clicks on Facebook.

 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

1,900 REACH



Midday Update video

The Midday Update video had 656 views and reached 1,900 people on Facebook.

 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

456 VIEWS



Video on Oman participating in an inter-governmental conference

The Morning Minute video on Oman participating in an intergovernmental conference had 456 views and 43 likes on Instagram.



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ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT ANNOUNCES SEASON 2022 - 2023

An exciting entertainment season has been created to offer shows for everyone.

The Royal Opera House Muscat is launching the new season for 2022 - 2023. We return to a full and generous programme bringing more than fifty events and a grand total of ninety performances and cultural initiatives including six operas, nine Arab concerts, three ballet shows, nine concerts, two jazz stars, four world music celebrations, three spectacular shows, one permanent and two temporary exhibitions, and a rich schedule of educational and outreach events.

ROHM'S production of 'La Traviata' returns

STARRING PLÁCIDO DOMINGO

The 2022 - 2023 season begins in spectacular fashion with ROHM's critically acclaimed production of La Traviata returning to the opera house following the premiere of 2019, with direction from the doyenne of grand opera staging, Marta Domingo. ROHM is delighted to announce the return to the opera house of one of the most honoured patrons and one of the greatest artists of our time, Plácido Domingo. As with the premiere, Domingo will perform the role of Germont on the opening night of the opera and will conduct for the following two evenings. The Domingo production claims a unique feature among others, that of the inclusion of choreography and dancers from the Compañía Antonio Gades, adding a passionate flare to a story already teeming with drama and love. New for 2022 performance, they will welcome two of the greatest opera singers in the world in the roles of Violetta and Alfredo: Nino Machaidze and Vittorio Grigolo. The production will be performed by the Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro Carlo Felice of Genova conducted, in occasion of the first performance, by the acclaimed conductor Giampaolo Bisanti (Sept 22, 23 & 24).

Five further stunning operas including Donizetti, Mozart,

ROSSINI AND HUMPERDINCK

From the opera buffa of Mozart to the continuation of ROHM's collaboration with the Rossini Opera Festival, the season has an appealing range of operas to choose from. Engelbert Humperdinck's full original opera Hansel und Gretel, one of the most performed opera in the world, reaches out to family audiences and it will be performed by the Deutsche Oper Berlin conducted by Donald Runnicles. (Oct 28 & 29). The fourth in the series of farce presented by ROF, La Cambiale di Matrimonio, showcases ROHM hand in hand with the most respected Rossini artists. Excitingly for opera lovers, this production will be the



first performance of the Critical Edition of this opera, with changes based on extensive research of historic archived scores bearing Rossini's notations. The production will be conducted by the young talent Alessandro Bonato (Nov 24 & 26). In January, they will present Donizetti's opera L'Elisir d'Amore, performed by Teatro Lirico di Cagliari conducted by Jordi Bernacer with a stunning all-star cast of Nina Minasyan, René Barbera, and Erwin Schrott. (Jan 5 & 7). The final two operas, in February and May, are a pair of from Mozart, the popular Le Nozze di Figaro, with the historical Giorgio Strehler direction and performed by the Accademia Teatro alla Scala conducted by Sesto Quatrini and Così fan Tutte, for which we welcome Opera Australia, alongside the acclaimed director Sir David McVicar and the conductor Sebastian Lang-Lessing.

An authentic Arabic Music programme strewn with stars

Kadim AlSahir is enduringly, unfailingly popular with audiences for his charismatic and engaging style, with this in mind he is scheduled to appear early in the season (Oct 13, 14 & 15). The Arabic programme is designed to encapsulate the season's core emphasis on tradition, innovation, and talent: the Omani Women's Day concert, featuring a surprise guest artist, an incredibly talented young star from Kuwait, carries on an ROHM tradition (Oct 17) while we celebrate a different perspective with Omani Traditional Music traversing the regions to explore a rich heritage in Omani cultural expression in music (Nov 14). The Royal Opera House Muscat is delighted to resume the series celebrating

Umm Kulthum: an historic series paying homage to a legend whose legacy has brought joy to millions around the world: Kulthumiyat will feature Yosra Manouch and Mai Farouk (Dec 9 & 10). Award winning singer, Hussain Al Jassmi, returns to the opera house for the second time due to popular demand (March 2 & 3). During Ramadan, Sufi and Inshaad is presented in three special concerts offering reflection and celebrating the season. Each concert brings a new group of musicians together, with the final concert starring the esteemed Lufti Bouchnak (March 30, April 6 & 10). The packed Arabic programme is concluded with the last two nights of the season which will be performed by Assi El Hallani with Marwa Nagy, in a joyful concert suitable to round off the season (May 18 & 19).

A ballet superstar, a legendary classical ballet and

CAIRO OPERA BALLET

The ballet genre is represented this season by three landmark presentations. The first sees Roberto Bolle, étoile at La Scala and ballet superstar, bringing Roberto Bolle and Friends, a gala ballet gathering the ballets stars of the world together to create new and exciting choreography of the highest standard (Dec 15 & 16). Cairo Opera brings a vibrant and colorful production of two stories, El Leila el Kebira, and Zorba the Greek (Feb 24 & 25). To round off the genre, Opera di Roma Ballet and the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sergey Smbatyan present the world acclaimed classic tale of Giselle, a much-loved ballet presented with choreography paying homage to Carla Fracci, the late director of Opera di Roma.



A star-studded season built around a stunning collection of concerts

No less than nine concerts provide the backbone to this year's season, delivering a range and choice of concerts which are the envy of performance houses around the world. The concert run begins with Homage to 'The Swan of Pesaro' with the Rossini Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nikolas Nägele (Nov 25), followed by the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra, alongside the stunning pianist Nikolai Kuznetsov conducted by Alessandro Cadario (Nov 28), with the year ending with the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra starring Gile Bae on piano, conducted by Jan Latham-Koenig, a grand celebration of the conclusion of 2022 (Dec 31). The second half of the opera house season offers six further concerts exploring opera in Opera Hits with the Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro Lirico di Cagliari conducted by Gaetano Lo Coco (Jan 6); a special concert to be announced later in the season (Jan 13); an incredible ensemble of elite musicians in Costa Rica Virtuoso Guitars (Feb 2 & 3); celebrating Mozart with the incredible famous Baroque orchestra 'I Solisti Veneti' conducted by Giuliano Carella (Feb 17); welcoming the acclaimed artists of the 'Accademia Stauffer' All Stars Orchestra with a beguiling programme of Vivaldi and Piazzolla (May 5); and, the annual tradition of the Pipe Organ Concert, heralding the return of Wayne Marshall as both organist and conductor, with ROSO and 'Boni Pueri', the boys' choir of Czech (May 13).

Two of the best Jazz hands in the world

It is a pleasure to announce the rescheduling of Chris Botti. Botti

is a consummate musician and performer who remains the top of the chart as the best-selling instrumentalist of all time in the US. He blends jazz with classical music demonstrating unbelievable musicality (Nov 10 & 11). He is matched only in jazz stature by the legendary Kenny Garrett who graces the season (Jan 19 & 20).

Travel the world through music

The Royal Opera House Muscat has had global collaboration at the heart of its vision since its inception in 2011. The programme for 2022 - 2023 not only provides an incredible opportunity for audiences to explore the world through music from the opera house but it also enhances national relations between countries. In this season, we travel Japan and France in Military Music: Oman and the World (Nov 3, 4 & 5); Oman, Bulgaria, the Philippines and Brazil in Folk Music Festival (Jan 26 & 27). The 'Global Music Ensemble' explores a world of music without barriers between countries or music traditions (Dec 3). The star in the firmament is the incredible queen of African expressive music, Fatoumata Diawara, a sell-out performer who has taken her sound to all corners of the globe to great acclaim (Feb 9 & 10).

A show of inspiration

Shows which are brought to the opera house are unfailingly popular with ROHM audiences. For the new season ROHM is pleased to announce three distinctive shows each bringing a special dimension to the season. In October, the Compañía Flamenca Antonio Andrade, the Quinteto Cinco and three of tango's most famous dance couples bring us the world premiere of Flamenco meets Tango,

a cultural match with passion and flare (Oct 6 & 7). In an extraordinary production the Kataklo Athletic Dance Company brings us Carousel, a vibrant and sophisticated collection of an acclaimed repertoire of dance and musical theatre. Kataklo is known for productions of dazzling choreography and visual effects (Dec 22, 23 & 24). The final show of the season is Beyond Time, the Taiwanese production company takes us into another dimension, exploring themes of space and the solar system through drumming, acrobatics, and dance (March 17 & 18).

Exhibitions to marvel at

The permanent exhibition, Oman and the World: A Musical Journey, is a wonderful discovery of how the nature of Oman has shaped musical culture. The exhibition puts this in the context of world music, explaining and demonstrating how music has evolved and the powerful impact music has on people and communities. This innovative experience at ROHMA is there for all of Oman and audiences at ROHM to enjoy. To further enhance the season are two temporary exhibitions at ROHMA: Arab Divas, showcasing the lives of four great Arab divas, Umm Kulthum, Fairuz, Warda, and Asmahan. An exhibition of dresses, jewellery, and other personal objects as well as archive footage produced by the Arab World Institute in Paris (Nov 23, 2022 to Jan 5, 2023); and, ROHM Through Omani Eyes, a gallery of photos from Omani photographers and artists who have captured the architectural splendour of ROHM over the last decade (March 22, 2023 to June 15, 2023).

A place to learn and enjoy

The 2022 - 2023 calendar for Education and Outreach includes concerts on stage at the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts. These include Lunch Music Series in the Opera Galleria; Absolute Music Series in the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts; Pre-Performance Talks for major productions; Coffee & Dates with star artists; special school performances and two activity packed family days in Open House, as well as guided tours of both performing houses.

Make the most of your opera house!

The 2022 - 2023 season has been created with a broad audience in mind, with the intention to engage people across generations and inspire creativity with musical excellence. The season has been built to preserve and celebrate traditions from all over the world, showcase and engage with innovations from across the world of musical performance, and to promote and experience the huge talent which is being nurtured and demonstrated by the artists who grace the stage.



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Oman’s Ministry of Defence Secretary General meets US Naval Force Central Command Chief

Vice Admiral Brad Cooper holds meeting with Oman’s Defence Ministry Secretary General, Acting RNO Commander, SAF Chief of Staff and Acting RAFO commander

MUSCAT: Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Za’abi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence received in his office at Al Murtafa’a Garrison on Monday Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, Commander of the United States (US) Naval Forces Central Command.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the relations between the two countries and exchanged views on matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of the United States of America to the Sultanate of Oman and the Military Attaché at the US embassy in Muscat.

Acting RNO Commander
Commodore Tarik Issa Al Raisi, Acting Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received at the Maritime Security Centre (MSC) on Monday Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, Commander of the



United States (US) Naval Forces Central Command.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on several matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Commodore Jasim Mohammed Al Balushi, RNO Director of Operations and Plans, Commodore Adil Hamoud Al Busaidi, Head of the MSC and the military attaché of the US embassy in Muscat.

Further, the guest and his accompanying delegation were briefed on the tactical roles and tasks carried out by the Maritime

Security Centre within its national duties, as it coordinates with relevant authorities in ensuring the safety of the maritime environment. They also toured the centre’s facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies.

SAF Chief of Staff
Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF) received in his office at Al Murtafa’a Garrison on Monday Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, Commander of the United States (US) Naval Forces



Central Command. The two sides exchanged views and discussed several military matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Brigadier Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Mandhari, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Planning, the Ambassador of the United States of America to the Sultanate



of Oman and the military attaché of the US embassy in Muscat.

Acting RAFO commander
Air Commodore Zahran Nasser Ambosaidi, Acting Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) received in his office at Al Murtafa’a Garrison Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, Commander of the United States (US) Naval Forces Central Command.

The two sides discussed several matters of common interest.

The military attaché of the US embassy in Muscat attended the meeting. - **OWA**

ACCOMPLISHMENT

Nizwa University comes up with new treatment for Candida Auris

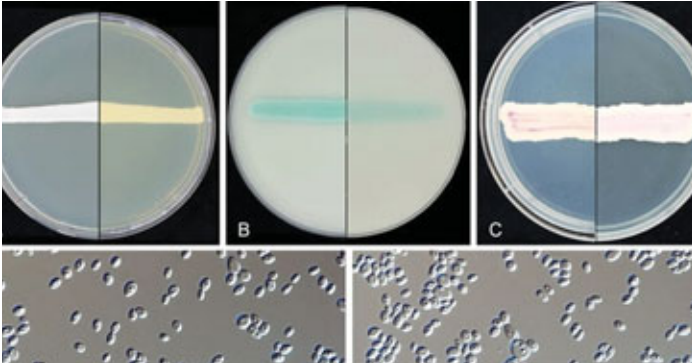
MUSCAT: Represented by the Natural and Medical Sciences Research Centre (NMR), the University of Nizwa has developed a new antifungal formula that proved efficient in eliminating Candida Auris infection, after two years of study.

The accomplishment was made in cooperation with a number of international universities and medical research centres in the United States, Europe and Brazil.

The discovery was lauded by international scientists, who considered it as a breakthrough in tackling the problem of antibiotics that pose a great challenge of concern to the whole world.

Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Al Hatmi, Assistant Professor at the NMR, in-charge of the microbiology laboratory at the Centre, said that the study conducted by the NMR is the first of its kind in addressing Candida Auris with such intensity.

The study is based on assessing the activity of two antibiotic formulas of nikkomyicin Z (nikZ) and diphenyl diselenide (PhSe2) used



against the antibiotic resistant fungus, Dr. Abdullah added.

The study was prompted by an observed rise in rates of Candida Auris infection cases over the past 10 years in many countries, including Oman, said Dr. Abdullah. Besides keenness to tackle the problem here, the NMR’s study was also in response to international calls to address the global issue, he added.

Dr. Abdullah explained that the newly discovered antibiotics, tested at nikZ labs, proved effective (during laboratory experi-

ments) against Candida Auris, hitherto resistant to antibiotics.

The forthcoming few years will see further experiments that will prove whether or not the newly discovered antibiotics could be used in the production of medical drugs of use to human beings.

Dr. Abdullah Al Hatmi was among the scientists who shared experiments in developing this type of antibiotics, and he authored a number of scholarly articles published in Journal of Fungi.

— OWA

AVIATION



Oman Air’s global sale offers up to 20% savings on business and economy class

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, announced the launch of its new global sale campaign offering discounts of up to 20% off on business and economy class fares on selected international destinations.

The global sale is Oman Air’s latest commitment to its loyal customers offering irresistible choices to a wide selection of in-

ternational destinations.

Guests can enjoy savings on a wide range of selected international flights via the airline’s Muscat hub.

The sale will run from 22 to 31 August 2022 and travel will be valid from 15 September 2022 to 31 March 2023 for both one-way and return flights.

To take advantage of this special offer, guests are encouraged to book early to experience the signature Omani hospitality ac-

cessible to guests on every flight.

Bookings can be made through Oman Air’s website (omanair.com), the Oman Air app, Oman Air sales offices, call centre and Oman Air appointed travel agents.

Oman Air is renowned for its exceptional award-winning products and services, both in the air and on the ground.

The airline offers wide-body service, including Boeing 787 Dreamliner and Airbus 330 in addition to single-aisle Boeing 737.

MINISTRY OF HERITAGE

Notice issued to all tourist establishments

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has urged all tourist establishments that are operating in the Sultanate of Oman to register in the tourism establishments directory.

Data and contact numbers
A statement issued online by the Ministry said: “The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is pleased to invite all partners in the tourism sector in the Sultanate of Oman, to register in the tourism establishments directory, which will include data and contact numbers for all tourist establishments operating in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.”

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LOCAL TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences announces refloating the tender shown in the following table:

Tender No.	Tender subject	Establishments eligible to bid	Document's Price	Last date for bid purchase online	Last date for bid submission
22/2022 Re-floated	Providing cleaning services to the buildings of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (the Higher College of Technology in Muscat)	Companies and establishments specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board at the Excellent, First, Second and Third Grades	RO 25/- (Twenty Five Omani Riyals)	03/09/2022 at 14:30 pm	11/09/2022 at 10:00 am

- Tender documents may be purchased online starting from Tuesday 23/08/2022 at 07:30 am through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- All bidding companies must attach with their bids a temporary tender bond in the form of a bank guarantee or a cheque certified by a bank operating in the Sultanate, not less than (1%) of the bid value, addressed to the name of the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, and valid for a period of (90) days from the date of bid submission. Any bid that does not meet the required temporary tender bond shall not be considered. Bid shall be submitted sealed and signed by the authorized person, and uploaded in the electronic tender system of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences with the tender name and number only.
- Preference in awarding will be given to small and medium enterprises registered with the Authority for SME development and whose bid includes the biggest percentage of Omanisation and a biggest purchase percentage of national products.
- The University shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid

Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee
University of Technology and Applied Sciences

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20 dead, over 30 injured in Afghanistan floods

The rains lashed several areas of the eastern Afghan province of Logar, where at least 20 people died and more than 30 others were wounded

KABUL: Seasonal rains caused heavy flooding that killed dozens of people in Afghanistan and parts of neighboring Pakistan, officials said on Sunday.

The rains lashed several areas of the eastern Afghan province of Logar, where at least 20 people died and more than 30 others were wounded.

Thousands of homes were destroyed, officials said, along with canals and about 5,000 acres of agricultural land.

A village elder said the flooding was unprecedented in the history of Khushi. "It destroyed all the people's animals, houses and agricultural land," he said. "People are homeless, they have been forced to take refuge in the mountains."

Footage posted to social media showed bodies of children as well as villages inundated by the waters.

Helicopters used to rescue trapped residents

Officials at the country's National Disaster Management Authority told DPA news agency that they were using helicopters to try to rescue those trapped by the flooding.



FLASH FLOODS: Thousands of homes, along with canals and about 5,000 acres of agricultural land were destroyed, officials said.

Afghan government spokesman Bilal Karimi urged the international community to provide aid.

"We urgently request the international community... to join hands with the Afghans at this critical time and (to) spare no effort to help the victims," Karimi said in a statement.

Foreign aid and disaster relief have been dramatically reduced since the Taliban stormed back to power in August last year, amid concerns that any assistance could be commandeered by the Islamist group.

The floods come as the country faces a hunger crisis, partly caused by the lack of aid and Western sanctions imposed on the Taliban.

Last week, northern Afghanistan was hit by heavy rains that set off flash floods that killed at least 31 people and left dozens missing.

Pakistan sees heaviest rain in decades

In neighboring Pakistan, at least 36 people were killed by flooding triggered by the heaviest monsoon rains in decades, according to the country's natural disaster management authority.

Rescue workers and the military evacuated thousands of people, officials said. The Balochistan and Sindh provinces have been hardest hit by the flooding.

Balochistan, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, received 305% more rain than the annual average, the disaster agency said.

Forecasters say more rain is expected this week.

Since June, 618 people have been killed during the unprecedented monsoon season.

The rains and flooding have damaged more than 69,874

houses, leaving thousands homeless and stranded in remote villages, the agency wrote in its latest report.

Scores die every year

The summer monsoon season in both countries runs from July through September and scores of people die every year in the floods and downpours, especially in rural areas due to poor infrastructure and homes.

Decades of conflict and poor infrastructure have left Afghans increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters, according to the United Nations.

Health officials are concerned about the spread of water-borne diseases like cholera, which is endemic and seasonal in the region as many people don't have access to clean drinking water. **bw**



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Kenya's opposition leader Raila Odinga challenges election results

NAIROBI: Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga has approached the Supreme Court to challenge the results of the country's August 9 presidential polls in which he lost to Deputy President William Ruto.

"Yes we shall," Odinga's lawyer Paul Mwangi said in a text message to Reuters news agency earlier on Monday morning.

Odinga's political alliance also told local broadcaster NTV that an electric copy of his court challenge had been filed with a physical copy expected to be filed later on Monday.

Reuters reported that a source in Kenya's judiciary confirmed that the electronic copy had been submitted. "They filed online and they are on the way bringing a physical copy," the source said.

Results questioned with claims of excess votes

Last week Ruto was declared the winner of the tightly contested poll with 50.49% of the vote, however four out of the seven election commissioners dissented, saying that the tallying of the results had not been transparent. The election officials said the final count added up to 100.01% of submitted



votes and asserted that the excess made a "significant difference."

A second independent tally confirmed Ruto's victory.

While its not immediately clear on what specific grounds Odinga mounting his challenge, the veteran politician has called the outcome "a travesty and blatant disregard of the constitution."

Over the years Odinga has contested elections no less than five times and has blamed vote rigging for previous losses. These losses have come at a cost to the people of Kenya. Disputed polls claimed dozens of lives in 2017, and in the worst recent instance, in 2007, 1,200 people died. **bw**

MILITARY EXERCISE

US, South Korea kick off joint military exercises

SEOUL: The US and South Korea on Monday kicked off annual joint military exercises, summertime drills known as Ulchi Freedom Shield.

The renewed training comes amid a rise in tensions on the Korean Peninsula again following years of failed rapprochement that occurred while former US President Donald Trump was in office.

The live-fire exercises involve thousands of troops and combine land, sea and air forces.

Ulchi Freedom Shield is scheduled to run through September 1.



What is the strategic context of Ulchi Freedom Shield?

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol came to power in May vowing to "normalize" combined exercises and strengthen deterrence against threats from North Korea.

In recent years, the joint US-South Korean maneuvers were scaled back due to the COVID-19 pandemic and before that, the doomed diplomatic efforts to get North Korea to agree to denuclearize.

Trump and previous South Korean President Moon Jae-in held talks with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un and drew down US-South Korean military cooperation in a bid to keep the North engaged.

Pyeongyang has lambasted the exercises as a dress rehearsal for an invasion. Last week, North Korea fired two cruise missiles from the town of Onchon, on the west coast of the peninsula.

North Korea has conducted an

unprecedented number of weapons tests this year. US and South Korean officials have warned that Pyongyang is preparing to conduct what would be its seventh nuclear test.

US and South Korean troops will train jointly on 11 field training programs, including one at the brigade level.

The exercises, which Washington and Seoul describe as defensive, involve aircraft, warships, tanks and potentially tens of thousands of troops. **bw**

ZAPORIZHZHYA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Biden, European leaders discuss Ukraine's nuclear plant fears

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Sunday called the leaders of France, Germany and the United Kingdom and expressed concern about the importance of protecting the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in Ukraine.

The call between the leaders comes as the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has intensified and the fears of a nuclear disaster at Europe's largest nuclear power plant have steadily increased, the Hill reported.

On Sunday's call, Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz discussed the need to avoid military operations near the plant.

According to the Hill, the leaders also underlined the fact that it is a dire need in the current times for the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to visit the site in order to make a determination on the safety of the plant and its operations.

Notably, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also agreed to allow IAEA agents to inspect



the nuclear plant and also warned last week of "catastrophic consequences" if fighting continues near Zaporizhzhia.

Furthermore, Biden also discussed with the European leaders' ongoing negotiations with Iran over reviving a 2015 nuclear agreement that lifted sanctions on the Middle Eastern nation in return for the country not developing nuclear-grade material or weapons.

Earlier on August 19, after holding trilateral talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Turkish President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan in Ukraine's Lviv, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a demilitarization of the area around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant stating that any damage to the largest nuclear power station of Europe would be suicide.

The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), located in southern Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region has become a regular site for shelling in Ukraine and Moscow and Kyiv have each accused the other of striking the compound on Thursday and over the weekend.

Moreover, a delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency is likely to visit Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in early September.

On February 24, Russia launched a military operation in Ukraine after the Ukrainian breakaway regions of Donetsk and Luhansk asked for Russian help against Ukrainian forces. Russia maintains that the aim of the military operations is to "demilitarize" and "denazify" Ukraine. **ANI**

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WORLD

India has sufficient stocks of wheat, no plan for imports

Production of wheat during 2021-22 is estimated at 106.84 million tonnes, as against the reported earlier estimate of 111 million tonnes

NEW DELHI: India has no plan to import wheat as it has ample stocks to meet the domestic requirements, Department of Food & Public Distribution on Sunday clarified after a media report said India was likely to start importing the staple foodgrain.

“There is no such plan to import wheat into India. The country has sufficient stocks to meet our domestic requirements and FCI has enough stock for public distribution,” the department said on Twitter responding to the news item. Earlier this year, multiple rounds of heat waves in several wheat-growing regions in India ahead of the rabi harvest affected some wheat crops.

As per the fourth advance estimate of production of major agricultural crops released by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, production of wheat during 2021-22 is estimated at 106.84 million tonnes, as against the reported earlier estimate of 111 million tonnes.

As the tensions between Rus-



sia and Ukraine turned into a full-blown war, export demand for wheat got a boost, resulting in lifetime high prices of the staple foodgrain in the local mandis. Heat wave-led crop loss too led to price rises. Notably, both the countries involved in the conflict -- Ukraine and Russia -- are two major suppliers of wheat. In Indore in Madhya Pradesh, which is considered one of the key mandis, wheat prices touched as high as Rs 2,400-2,500 per 100 kg, against Rs 2,000-2,100 until the conflict in Ukraine broke out. Prices of wheat usually remain on the lower side during this time of the year as freshly harvested rabi crops make their way into the physical markets or mandis.

Still, the current wheat price in India is well above the Centre's assured Minimum Support Price of

Rs 2,015 per 100 kg, which in itself is a rare phenomenon. Currently, wheat is trading a little below Rs 2,400 per 100 kg in Indore. In other markets too, wheat prices have somewhat softened.

However, wholesale prices of wheat in the domestic mandis have lately managed to fall from their lifetime highs and have stabilized as the central government timely brought in a slew of policy interventions on the exports of the foodgrain.

For the record, to manage the overall food security of the country as well as meet the needs of the neighbouring and other vulnerable countries, India amended the export policy of wheat by putting its export under the “prohibited” category.

The government while banning exports of wheat had stated that the move was made with the purpose

to manage the overall food security of the country as well as meeting the needs of the neighbouring and other vulnerable countries. The Indian government did not stop at just restricting exports of wheat.

After a ban on exports of wheat grain, the Centre then put restrictions on the exports of wheat flour (atta) exports and other related products like maida, semolina (rava/sirgi), wholemeal atta and resultant atta.

During the recent Parliament session, the government said that there was no shortage of wheat stock in the central pool.

In a written reply to Lok Sabha during the recent Parliament session, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said: “As on 01.07.2022, the actual stock of wheat is 285.10 Lakh Metric Tons (LMT) against the Buffer norm of 275.80 LMT.”

In reply to another question on whether it is true that wheat procurement from farmers has fallen since there was a rise in private procurement who bought wheat directly from farmers, the minister agreed with it.

“The procurement of wheat has fallen due to higher purchase of wheat by traders as the market price of wheat had shot up due to prevailing international geopolitical situation,” the Union minister said.

“Moreover, if the farmer gets better price in comparison to MSP, they are free to sell their produce in the open market.”

Wheat prices rising above MSP essentially means the Centre had to purchase lesser quantities under the price guarantee scheme as the farmers are already getting higher prices for their produce from the private buyers. **ANI**

ANTI-TERROR CASE

Islamabad High Court grants pre-arrest bail to Imran Khan in anti-terror case



ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has granted pre-arrest bail to Pakistan former Prime Minister Imran Khan till August 25 after he was booked under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) for threatening an additional sessions judge and senior police officers of the Islamabad Police at a rally in the federal capital's F-9 Park.

During the hearing, the Islamabad High Court ordered Imran Khan to appear before the concerned anti-terrorism court on August 25. Until then, the court said, police must not arrest him. This comes as Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) legal team on Monday filed a pre-arrest bail plea for Imran Khan after a first information report (FIR) was registered against him in Islamabad High Court.

According to the details provided by Pakistan's local media outlet ARY News, Taking up the petition, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani asked what objections were raised on it. Replying to the judge, Imran Khan's lawyer Babar Awan claimed that “Imran's residence has been surrounded and he cannot even approach the relevant court”.

Imran's lawyers, Babar Awan and Faisal Chaudhry, filed a petition seeking pre-arrest bail on his behalf in a terrorism case registered for ‘threatening’ a female judge and senior police officers in a public rally.

As per the petition, Imran Khan was being targeted by the ruling Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) for being blunt against corruption and corrupt politicians. The plea alleged that the government had decided to “cross all limits” to arrest Imran “under false accusations” and was “hell-bent to sort out the petitioner and his party at all costs,” as per the media portal. The petition also added that the most recent FIR against the PTI chairman was “politically motivated” and it added that Imran had been “falsely” involved with “mala fide intention and ulterior motives to humiliate” him. The pre-arrest bail plea contended the case was based on “surmises and conjectures” and that no evidence was available on record against Imran in connection with the case. It also contended that there was no “direct or indirect” evidence available on record against Imran in the case. Another point which was highlighted in the plea was the assurance that if granted protective bail there will be “no likelihood” of Imran absconding or tampering with prosecution evidence. **ANI**

CRISIS-RIDDEN NEIGHBOUR

India hands over 21,000 tonnes of fertiliser to Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: India on Monday handed over 21,000 tonnes of fertiliser to the crisis-ridden neighbour Sri Lanka.

“Adding to the fragrance of friendship and cooperation. High Commissioner formally handed over 21,000 tonnes of fertilizer supplied under India's special support to the people of Sri Lanka,” tweeted the High Commission of India in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

“This follows 44,000 tonnes supplied last month under Indian support totalling about USD 4 billion in 2022. The fertilizer will contribute to food security and support the farmers of Sri Lanka. It demonstrates benefits to the people from close ties with #India and mutual trust and goodwill between #India and #Sri Lanka,” added the High Commission of India.

India has been at forefront of extending economic assistance to Sri Lanka as per their requirements and is one of the countries that have provided the maximum amount of assistance in time of need.

Since the beginning of 2022, Sri Lanka has experienced an escalating economic crisis and the government has defaulted on its foreign loans. The United Nations warned that 5.7 million people “require immediate humanitarian assistance.”



With many Sri Lankans experiencing extreme shortages of essentials including food and fuel, peaceful protests began in March. Sri Lanka is battling a severe economic crisis with food and fuel scarcity affecting a large number of the people in the island nation.

The economy has been in a free-fall since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sri Lanka is also facing a foreign exchange shortage, which has, incidentally, affected its capacity to import food and fuel, leading to the power cuts in the country. The shortage of essential goods forced Sri Lanka to seek assistance from friendly countries. **ANI**

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PREMIER LEAGUE

Leeds beat Chelsea to continue their unbeaten start at EPL

LONDON: Leeds continued their unbeaten start to the season as they secured a famous win over Chelsea's new-look team with a display which will cause Thomas Tuchel nightmares.

Chelsea, who spent more than £170m on players over the summer, were the architects of their own downfall in the first half.

Eduard Mendy gifted Leeds the opener by miscontrolling a backpass, allowing Brenden Aaronson to pounce.

Four minutes later Raheem Sterling gave away a free-kick on the edge of the box, from which Rodrigo scored his fourth of the season after Jack Harrison's delivery. But Leeds also out-fought their opponents, particularly in midfield, in echoes of the famous historical battles between the two rivals.

And they sealed a first English Premier League (EPL) win over Chelsea in seven attempts, dating back to 2002, when Harrison



scored after Daniel James' cross was touched to him by Rodrigo.

An already raucous Elland Road was in disbelief at that moment; the home fans taunted their Chelsea counterparts and manager Jesse Marsch punched the air in wild joy.

Yet there were chances for the visitors. Sterling curled wide in the first minute and had a goal

disallowed, while Marc Cucurella, signed for £62m, was also off-target twice.

But when Kalidou Koulibaly was sent off six minutes from time for a second booking, it summed up Chelsea's afternoon, allowing Leeds fans to wallow in the elation of a superb start to the season as their team moved into second place in the table. **ONA**

ASIA CUP QUALIFIER

Kuwait defy odds to register first victory against UAE

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan will be joined by a sixth team, in the Asia Cup 2022. This is to be decided through a qualifying tournament, the Asia Cup Qualifier 2022, currently underway in Oman, being contested by Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.

Day two was witness to a historic victory for Kuwait, their first against the United Arab Emirates.

After winning the toss, Kuwait chose to field first, and were set a

target of 174. The run chase was filled with drama, Kuwait pulling through to win by a wicket, with one ball to spare.

Chundangapoyil Puthiyapurayil Rizwan, UAE Captain, said, "I would like to congratulate Kuwait for their extraordinary victory. To be honest, we have only ourselves to blame. We had our moments but were unable to grab those opportunities. We would have liked to start with a victory. We could have done better in the field. With the wickets in hand, we were short by about 15-20 runs, and this was crucial in the end. Now we have to try to win

the remaining matches, but if we don't play to our potential, we can only blame ourselves."

Mohammed Aslam, Kuwait Captain, said, "I have no words; this is a historic moment for Kuwait cricket. At this moment, the boys, the team management, and everyone on our team is incredibly happy. "We have been attempting to win against UAE since 2020, We played against them previously on two occasions but were unable to win. This time we had planned our approach, and prepared by analysing all their players, and as a team we did well today."

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FOOTBALL

Lewandowski brace inspires Barcelona to win over Real Sociedad

BARCELONA: Robert Lewandowski's first two goals for Barcelona helped them to a 4-1 win in the Basque Country over a Real Sociedad side who gave a good account of themselves for most of the game.

The Polish striker got his birthday celebrations off to the best possible start with a goal inside the first minute, steering home Alejandro Balde's low cross after a positive run by the young left back.

Swedish striker Aleksandr Isak levelled the scoring just minutes later, however, with a dink over Marc-Andre Ter Stegen. An even half finished 1-1 at the break. In the second period, Barcelona took their chances well, and although the eventual scoreline flattered them, each goal brought confidence and they finished with a spring in their step.

La Real had the ball in the back of the net in the 53rd minute, but it was correctly ruled out for offside. Within 15 minutes, they would go from believing they were ahead to seeing the game slip away from them. Ousmane Dembele emphatically struck home the second Blaugrana goal after a clever backheel by Ansu Fati in the 66th minute. **-ONA**

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by October 2022 reaching \$94.64, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 38 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$95.02. - **ONA**

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BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,617 points, up by 0.25 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.36 per cent at 488.02 points. Shell Oman Marketing, up 5.91 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 8.48 per cent, was the top loser.

EDO announces Fitch Credit Rating of BB with Stable Outlook

The agency also assessed Energy Development Oman's Standalone Credit Profile (SCP) at investment grade rating 'bbb', supported by large-scale operations and low leverage

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Energy Development Oman (EDO) has announced that Fitch Ratings has assigned it a



ment of Oman (BB/Stable), given their close links.

The agency also assessed EDO's Standalone Credit Profile (SCP) at investment grade rating 'bbb', supported by large-scale operations and low leverage.

The inaugural assessment by Fitch Ratings is another mile-

stone in EDO's development, as it serves to enhance the status of Oman's hydrocarbon and alternative energy sectors as attractive spheres for investment and financing. Furthermore, the rating increases transparency and comparability for debt investors and capital market participants active

in the Sultanate.

Commenting on the credit rating, Sultan bin Ali Al Mamari, Chief Financial Officer- EDO, stated, "this assessment by Fitch is a recognition of EDO's financial strengths as well as the prudent fiscal management of the economy by the Omani government. The rating provides a firm platform to attract multiple forms of investment into the country."

"As a landmark achievement for EDO, this is an important step towards our objective of leading the energy transition in alignment with Oman's Vision 2040," the CFO added.

In their report, Fitch outlined the key drivers that influenced

EDO's rating. These included the Sovereign rating, EDO's strong financial profile, supportive scale of operations, mature oil reserves base, favourable unit economics and improving ESG footprint. In terms of liquidity and debt structure, Fitch Ratings emphasised EDO's strong liquidity and no short-term debt.

Energy Development Oman was established in December 2020 by Royal Decree (2020/128) to focus on realising efficiencies and pursuing new growth opportunities in Oman's energy sector. The company's stated vision is to be a world-class partner for growth while driving a sustainable energy future.

SHARE MARKETS

Asian stocks mixed before Fed meeting after China cuts rate

BEIJING: Asian stock markets mixed after China cut an interest rate that affects mortgage lending while investors looked ahead to this week's Federal Reserve conference for signals about more possible US rate hikes to cool surging inflation.

Shanghai advanced after the Chinese central bank nudged down its target rate for a five-year loan to shore up weak housing sales, and Tokyo and Hong Kong declined. Oil prices rose nearly \$1 per barrel.

Investors are watching the annual Fed meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for rates guidance after minutes last week from the US central bank's July board meeting affirmed plans for more increases despite signs of weaker economic activity, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

Traders worry aggressive rate hikes this year by the Fed and central banks in Europe and Asia to contain inflation that is running at multi-decade highs might derail global economic growth.

"The Fed is still feeling inflation. Its actions have not even begun to dent inflationary pressures at all," said Clifford Bennett of ACY Securities in a report. "Nor have they begun to crimp economic activity at all. The economic slowdown was already in play for other reasons."

The Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.4 per cent to 3,270.59 while the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo sank 0.4 per cent to 28,805.52. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong shed less than 0.1 per cent to 19,770.92.

The Kospi in South Korea gave up 0.7 per cent to 2,475.35 and Sydney's S&P ASX-200 fell 0.8 per cent to 7,060.20. New Zealand and Singapore advanced while Indonesia declined.

On Wall Street, the benchmark S&P 500 lost 1.3 per cent on Friday, wiping out gains earlier in the week.

The S&P fell to 4,227.48, ending down 1.2 per cent for the week. It is down 11.3 per cent this year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.9 per cent to 33,706.74. The Nasdaq composite lost 2 per cent to 12,705.22. Technology stocks had some of the biggest losses.

Microsoft fell 1.4 per cent. Retailers, banks, and communications companies also fell.

Bright spots included General Motors, which rose 2.5 per cent after reinstating its dividend. Foot Locker soared 20 per cent after replacing its CEO and reporting earnings that beat forecasts.

The Chinese central bank lowered its Loan Prime Rate, a target for market rates, as part of efforts to shore up weak economic growth after a crack-down on debt caused a real estate slump, and Shanghai and other cities were shut down to fight virus outbreaks. - **BNA**

MINERALS DEVELOPMENT OMAN



Aerial survey for exploration of minerals begins

MUSCAT: Minerals Development Oman (MDO), announced the start of the aerial survey for the exploration of metallic minerals, which is conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and a number of government units.

The survey aircraft started flying yesterday over Masirah Island, as part of the first phase of the project. Nasser Saif Al Maqbali, MDO's CEO, said that the airborne survey on MDO's concession areas aims to obtain geophysical and geological data, which will contribute to supporting the exploration of metallic minerals.

He added, "The first phase of the programme will cover Masirah Island on an area of 658 square kilometres. The next phases will target big areas in a number of governorates, including North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Al Dhahirah, Al

Buraimi, Al Dakhiliyah and North Al Sharqiyah.

"Last month, MDO conducted a mini-pilot program successfully over 14 days in Sohar to identify the potential challenges that the survey may face when it launches."

The airborne survey is the first step in the exploration of metallic ores, which is expected to identify several potential sites. Excavation activities will continue in these sites by conducting geochemical studies, excavation works and other exploration activities.

It is worth mentioning that MDO signed an agreement in March 2022 with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals that grants MDO 12 concession areas.

The move reflects the government's directions aimed at promoting the mining sector for effective contribution to the national economic growth. - **ONA**

PARTNERSHIP

Bank Muscat inks pact with Savills Oman for digital banking solutions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate and Savills Oman, the leading global real estate advisor, has signed an agreement to extend Bank Muscat's cutting-edge digital solutions of corporate online banking and Remote Deposit Capture (RDC) solution to the company.

Through this agreement, Bank Muscat leverages its digital capabilities in providing industry-proven digital solutions for payments and collections of receivables through an efficient, seamless and secure channel.

The agreement was signed by Wafa Ibrahim Al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager - Transaction and Government Banking, Bank Muscat and Ihsan Kharouf, Head of Savills Oman.

Speaking on the occasion, Wafa Ibrahim al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager - Transaction and Government Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "At Bank Muscat, we have always been at the forefront of providing innovative digital solutions to our customers. Our corporate and institutional customers are on a digital transformation journey and are looking for digital solutions to improve their transactions and processes. We are delighted to tie up with Savills Oman by offering our state-of-the-art digital solutions of corporate online banking and remote data capture, which will bring increased efficiencies to Savills Oman's business.

Ihsan Kharouf, Head of Savills Oman stated, "Savills Oman and Bank Muscat have a strong



banking relationship and this latest partnership strengthens it further. The implementation of digital solutions for payments and collection of receivables is a hugely significant step in our strategy for streamlining operations for our property management clients. The Corporate Online Banking and Remote Deposit Capture solutions will provide us with enhanced control and efficiency, faster payment clearance as well as prompt identification of bounced cheques. We are delighted to tie up with Bank Muscat for our digitisation efforts to increase business efficiencies and are proud to offer this enhanced service to our clients."

With business connectivity and digitalisation now more important than ever, Bank Muscat's corporate banking solutions are providing its valued clients with seamless access to a number of corporate services that are crucial to their success in the modern world.

Bank Muscat's RDC solution offers a host of benefits and fea-

tures to corporates including faster clearing of cheques; elimination of financial losses related to missed or delayed presentation of cheques; faster reconciliation of cheques using the reports available to the company from the RDC system and better management of post-dated cheques. Corporates have the facility to scan cheques from any bank from the convenience of their offices without the need to manually sort the cheques or visit a Bank Muscat branch daily. The RDC solution also facilitates electronic endorsement on scanned cheques eliminating the need for manual stamping.

Bank Muscat's Transaction Banking solutions enable the achievement of automation in the activities of the treasury/finance team through cutting-edge technology and processes aligned with corporates' needs. The Account Services solution provides an enhanced visualisation of the overall banking relationship across all banks which include accounts with Bank Muscat as well as other local/international banks.

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MSX index ends higher

Shell Oman Marketing, up 5.91 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 8.48 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,617 points, up by 0.25 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.36 per cent at 488.02 points. Shell Oman Marketing, up 5.91 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 8.48 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Galfar Engineering were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 543 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.54 million, with more than 11.75 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded securities, 9 advanced, 22 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR290,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR158,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR132,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,361.71 points, up 0.32 per cent. Prices of HSBC Bank Oman, Ominvest and Bank Muscat were up by 1.95 per cent, 1.8 per cent and 0.65 per cent respectively. Prices

of Oman & Emirates Investment, Oman United Insurance, Al Madina Takaful, Oman Arab Bank and Muscat Finance were down by 3.49 per cent, 3.29 per cent, 2.22 per cent, 1.64 per cent and 1.49 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,407.73 points, up 0.55 per cent. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Jazeera Steel Products, A'Saffa Foods and Oman Cables Industry were up by 5.1 per cent, 4 per cent, 3.02 per cent and 2.94 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Thread Mill, Construction Materials, Raysut Cement, Oman Cement and Oman Fisheries were down by 8.48 per cent, 4.65 per cent, 3.67 per cent, 1.96 per cent and 0.92 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.08 per cent before closing at 1,667.42 points. Prices of Shell Oman Marketing and Oman Telecom were up by 5.91 per cent and 2.24 per cent respectively. Prices of Sharqiyah Desalination, SMN Power Holding, Phoenix Power, Ooredoo and Muscat Desalination were down by 7.83 per cent, 6.67 per cent, 4.26 per cent, 2.94 per cent and 1.74 per cent respectively. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%	
MSX 30 INDEX	4,642.65	4,601.19	4,617.00	4,605.66	11.34	0.25	
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,373.51	7,338.55	7,361.71	7,338.55	23.16	0.32	
Industry Index	6,435.78	6,372.71	6,407.73	6,372.71	35.01	0.55	
Services Index	1,688.53	1,662.49	1,667.42	1,668.75	-1.33	-0.08	
MSX Shariah Index	492.81	487.87	488.02	486.29	1.73	0.36	
MSX TR INDEX	5,855.46	5,803.17	5,823.10	5,808.80	14.30	0.25	
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,715.55	7,678.97	7,703.20	7,678.97	24.23	0.32	
SERVICES TR IDX	1,753.38	1,726.34	1,731.46	1,732.84	-1.38	-0.08	
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,679.26	6,613.81	6,650.14	6,613.81	36.34	0.55	
Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
11,751,381	2,535,389	543	23,279,825,423	9	22	17	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 22

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	80,000	24,205	6	0.300	0.312	0.300	0.312	0.300	0.012	4.000	0.312	0.300	0.308	0.100	38,968,164
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR	26,500	36,910	17	1.390	1.400	1.390	1.400	1.360	0.040	2.941	1.400	1.250	1.400	0.100	125,580,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	758,845	673,915	24	0.916	0.916	0.888	0.912	0.892	0.020	2.242	0.912	0.912	0.912	0.100	84,000,000
OM0000001533	OMNIVEST	100	34	1	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.334	0.006	1.796	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.100	227,244,245
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	298,170	182,320	36	0.612	0.616	0.608	0.616	0.612	0.004	0.654	0.616	0.608	0.616	0.100	2,311,970,295
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST&FIN	615,470	79,396	24	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.125	0.129	0.100	30,573,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	30,000	8,700	2	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.280	0.290	0.100	1,774,923.9
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV	20,000	1,680	1	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.100	7,560,000
OM0000003009	AL MAHA MARKTING	3,000	2,364	1	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.000	0.000	0.788	0.000	0.800	0.100	54,372,000
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	50,140	4,763	3	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.094	0.097	0.100	24,572,871
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	118,119	12,550	6	0.109	0.109	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.000	0.000	0.106	0.105	0.108	0.100	316,946,603
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	35,428	14,679	3	0.418	0.420	0.418	0.420	0.420	0.000	0.000	0.420	0.418	0.420	0.100	23,100,000
OM0000003234	RENAISSANCE SER	34,500	17,920	2	0.520	0.520	0.516	0.516	0.520	-0.004	-0.769	0.516	0.510	0.520	0.100	121,987,269
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	21,339	2,310	5	0.109	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	-0.001	-0.917	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	15,120,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	17,418	5,225	2	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.306	-0.006	-1.961	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.100	99,261,813
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	112,500	46,138	17	0.420	0.420	0.396	0.396	0.408	-0.012	-2.941	0.396	0.398	0.420	0.100	257,773,915
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR	10,000	2,940	2	0.294	0.294	0.294	0.294	0.304	-0.010	-3.289	0.294	0.280	0.302	0.100	29,400,000
Total		2,231,529	1,116,249	152												
Parallel Market																
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK	100	93	1	0.932	0.932	0.932	0.932	0.880	0.052	5.909	0.932	0.880	0.932	0.100	88,540,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	5,139,824	832,694	96	0.160	0.165	0.154	0.165	0.157	0.008	5.096	0.165	0.161	0.165	0.100	33,492,764
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	422,161	102,349	76	0.236	0.249	0.236	0.239	0.232	0.007	3.017	0.239	0.226	0.239	0.100	28,680,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	1,944,958	303,246	55	0.155	0.157	0.155	0.157	0.154	0.003	1.948	0.157	0.156	0.157	0.100	314,049,108
OM0000001319	ALUMINIUM PROD.	29,470	2,475	3	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.077	0.084	0.100	2,820,002
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	138,333	18,675	14	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.135	0.140	0.100	404,507,444
OM0000003661	VOLTAIR ENERGY	641	67	1	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.103	0.105	0.100	8,547,289
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	6,500	644	1	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.096	0.100	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000004735	SEMCORP SALALAH	12,845	899	3	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.068	0.070	0.100	66,820,037
OM0000004925	ALBATHINAH POWER	148	7	1	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.045	0.044	0.045	0.100	30,389,934
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	33,650	1,513	12	0.045	0.046	0.044	0.046	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	32,862,692
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	10,000	1,330	2	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.134	-0.001	-0.746	0.133	0.133	0.137	0.100	11,305,000
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	30,900	3,347	6	0.109	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	-0.001	-0.917	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	19,664,467
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	20,000	1,240	2	0.060	0.064	0.060	0.064	0.065	-0.001	-1.053	0.064	0.060	0.064	0.100	32,819,575
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	328,910	24,997	12	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.100	15,200,000
OM0000002580	OMAN EDU TRAINING	1,000	211	1	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.000	0.000	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.100	14,770,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	182,000	12,017	13	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.066	0.068	0.100	20,271,657
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	34,051	4,088	3	0.121	0.121	0.120	0.120	0.122	-0.002	-1.639	0.120	0.120	0.125	0.100	200,329,200
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	7,692	869	6	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.115	-0.002	-1.739	0.113	0.113	0.119	0.100	17,577,195
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	109,530	9,763	10	0.089	0.091	0.088	0.088	0.090	-0.002	-2.222	0.088	0.088	0.091	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	90	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.093	-0.003	-3.226	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMBRATES HO.	145,735	12,387	10	0.085	0.085	0.083	0.083	0.086	-0.003	-3.488	0.083	0.084	0.088	0.100	11,115,625
OM0000004148	RAYSUT CEMENT	49,660	10,542	11	0.214	0.214	0.210	0.210	0.218	-0.008	-3.670	0.210	0.208	0.210	0.100	42,000,000
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	189,294	8,517	16	0.045	0.046	0.045	0.045	0.047	-0.002	-4.255	0.045	0.045	0.048	0.100	65,817,066
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION M.	123,000	10,086	8	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.086	-0.004	-4.651	0.082	0.082	0.085	0.100	5,125,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	344,500	9,958	18	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	0.030	-0.002	-6.667	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.100	5,589,797
OM0000004689	SHARQIYAH DESALIN.	1,500	159	1	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.115	-0.009	-7.826	0.106	0.106	0.000	0.100	10,367,029
OM0000002036	Muscat Thread MILL	10,680	5,977	9	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.059	-0.005	-8.475	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.100	897,923
Total	28	9,418,052	1,378,841	386												

WORLD FINTECH DAY CELEBRATION

Thawani highlights development of financial technologies in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Thawani, the leading provider of financial technology services in Oman and licensed by the Central Bank of Oman as a provider of non-banking financial services, celebrated World Fintech Day, which falls on August 20 every year.

During the celebration, Thawani highlighted the development of financial technologies in Oman, its history as a leader in the sector, and the contributions it has made to the development of mobile payments for individual consumers, merchants and institutions. A series of specialised workshops were held for employees in the sector, raising awareness of the most prominent global practices used in developing financial technology services, and acquiring and retaining customers.

Khalfan Al Amri, Application



Developer at Thawani, says, "I am happy to experience working in this new and promising sector in Oman. Being part of such a rapidly growing sector inspires me to keep learning and stay ahead of the curve when it comes to the deployment of innovations and technologies."

Lina Al Harthy, User Experi-

ence Designer at Thawani, added: "Working in such a dynamic sector has challenged me to improve my skills. I continue to gain important knowledge every single day and use it to support my work customising the app's design to cater to the distinct needs of users in Oman."

Founded in 2016, Thawani

Technologies is an Omani company that specialises in providing smart payment solutions, while holding a global certificate in card security. Licensed by the Central Bank of Oman, the company has been providing innovative payment solutions in financial technology, to expedite payments processes, improve user experiences, and make payments safer, faster, and easier.

In addition to the basic payments system, Thawani Technologies provides smart payment solutions through payment solutions that are built to meet the needs and challenges faced by institutions. The company also provides services through its platform to pay bills, top-up credit, pay tuition fees, and social insurance. The company recently launched the updated version of its app, offering new products and significant improvements to its portfolio of services.

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BANANA PEELS MAKE SUGAR COOKIES HEALTHIER

People are becoming more interested in plant-based diets and finding innovative ways to use every part of their fruits and vegetables.



In a recent study, researchers found that adding banana peel flour to the dough for sugar cookies increases the cookies' nutritional value. Cookies that had been enriched with some banana peel flour in taste tests were more satisfying than those that had only been made with wheat flour. The study's results were published in the journal ACS Food Science and Technology. Peels from bananas are no longer always thrown in the garbage or compost. They are replacing meat in sandwiches.

People are becoming more interested in plant-based diets and finding innovative ways to use every part of their fruits and vegetables. Chefs and home cooks have been experimenting with banana peels as one of these waste materials, but because the skins are so fibrous, they are unpleasant to consume raw.

The peels can recently be ground into flour that is high in fibre, magnesium, potassium, and antioxidant compounds. Additionally, the baked goods had more palatable flavours and were more nutritious when small amounts of wheat flour were substituted with the new flour in bread and cakes.

Similar studies with cookies haven't, however, been carried out frequently. Faizan Ahmad and colleagues decided to test out sugar cookies' nutritional value, shelf life, and consumer acceptance by replacing some of the wheat flour with banana peel flour.

The researchers removed the peels from ripe, undamaged bananas, blanched, dried, and ground them into a fine powder to create banana peel flour. They made five batches of sugar cookies by combining various amounts of the powder with butter, skim milk powder, powdered sugar, vegetable oil, and wheat flour. They then baked the cookies.

The browner and harder products that resulted from adding more banana peel flour to the batches--from 0% to 15%--might have been caused by the peels' higher fibre content. Additionally, cookies made with banana peel flour were healthier than traditional ones because they contained more phenols and had better antioxidant properties. They also contained less fat and protein.

A trained panel found that compared to the other batches, the cookies with the smallest substitution of banana peel flour (7.5%) had the best texture and the highest overall acceptability. After three months of storage at room temperature, this batch still tasted the same as the versions made with only wheat. The researchers claim that adding some banana peel flour to cookies could increase their nutritional value without negatively affecting consumer acceptance. -ANI

IN-PICTURES

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Giant panda cub Xiao Qi Ji celebrates 2nd birthday in US
Giant panda cub Xiao Qi Ji is seen at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, DC. Xiao Qi Ji celebrated his second birthday at the zoo in Washington on Sunday. Keepers made a cake with frozen diluted apple and pineapple juices for the cute cub, and decorated it with a red '2' as well as the cub's favourite treats -- sweet potato, apple, carrot, pear, sugar cane, banana, and bamboo. **Xinhua**



UNGA President hails Cambodia for its key contribution to UN peacekeeping missions
Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen (right) meets with visiting President of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Abdulla Shahid in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Shahid on Monday praised Cambodia for its key contribution to keeping peace in the world, according to a senior Cambodian official. **Xinhua**

Wild elephants seen at wetland in northeastern India

A herd of wild Asiatic elephants are seen at a wetland at Thakurkuchi village, outskirts of Guwahati city of India's northeastern state of Assam. **Xinhua**

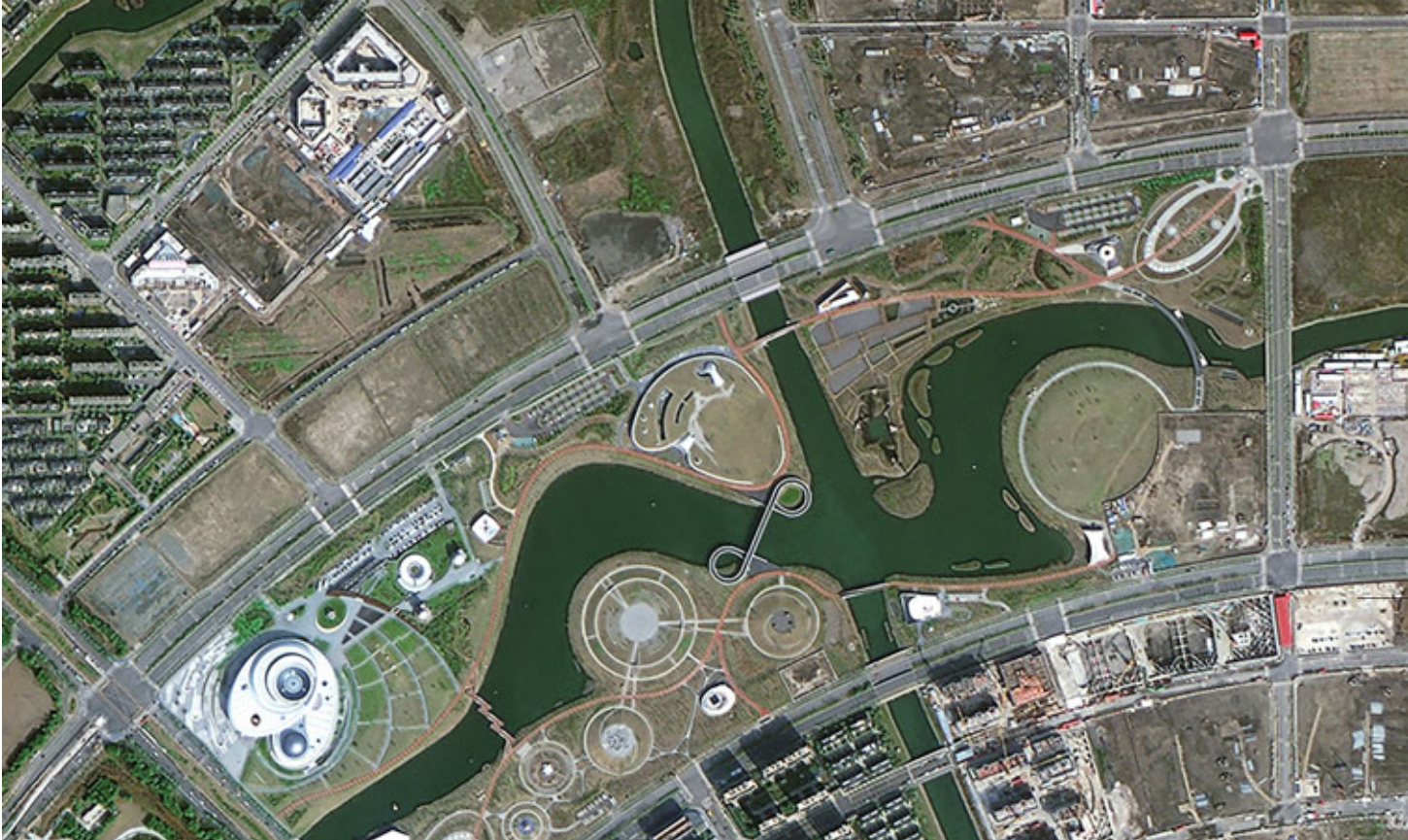


International tea festival held in Prague, Czech Republic

Visitors taste Chinese tea at a stand during the Cajomir Fest, an international tea festival, in Prague, the Czech Republic. **Xinhua**



East Africa mega hydro power project nears completion
Water flows through the open spillway gates upstream the waterfalls at the Rusumo border between Rwanda and Tanzania for the regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project. Construction of the regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project has reached an implementation status of 95 percent before operational, Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU) said in a statement. **Xinhua**



Remote sensing images show changes of pilot FTZ in Shanghai
Image captured by a Gaofen series satellite show the Shanghai Astronomy Museum in Lingang new area of the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone in east China's Shanghai. Saturday marked the 3rd anniversary of the launching of Lingang new area. **Xinhua**



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FEATURES



40 YEARS OF CDS:

It's 1985. We — budding sound engineers — are sitting in the classroom, listening spellbound to the sounds of “Friday Night in San Francisco” — the legendary guitar album by Al di Meola, Paco de Lucia and John McLaughlin, among the best guitarists in the world at the time.

The sound is crystal clear, the tones bubble out of the speakers. Although the music is playing at “room volume,” we have the feeling we can hear every note, every finger stroking the strings. We even think we can hear the breathing of the musicians.

What we don't hear: The hiss from a tape or cassette, or the scratch and crackle of a vinyl record. It was the first acoustic encounter with a CD for most of us and a revelation for our young sound-engineer ears.

From Beethoven to ABBA

The compact disc had been around for some time; there was just a long argument about how much music should be pressed onto it. Finally, it was agreed that the playing time of a CD should be long enough to fit one of the world's most famous classical works — Beethoven's 9th Symphony in Wilhelm Furtwängler's 74-minute version.

In 1981, the CD was presented at the Berlin Radio Exhibition. The first industrially produced discs rolled off the production line on August 17, 1982, and legend has it that the ABBA album “The Visitors” was burned on them. Perhaps it was also a recording of Richard Strauss' “An Alpine Symphony,” conducted by Herbert von Karajan, who had outed himself as a big fan of the CD from the very beginning, describing it as “a miracle.” Another legend says it was waltzes by Chopin that were pressed onto the first CDs.

A short time later, Sony and Philipps launched the first freely available CD play-

ers on the market for around €1,200 — unaffordable for many people at the time. Both companies had worked together on the development and were soon able to sit back and relax, because the CD business was going through the roof.

In 1984, 3 million CDs were sold in Germany alone; in 1989, the figure was 54 million. And the price wasn't cheap: A CD cost 30-40 German marks (about €15-20), more than twice as much as a long-playing record. And this success came despite the fact that nobody knew how long the data on the discs would last.

Over the years, CD players and CDs became more affordable, record stores had to rearrange as music fans started to trade in their vinyl collections for CDs — just like me. My favourite records had become so crackly that I was eager to enjoy this music without noise for a change. And without turning them over!

I spent horrendous sums on new Pink

Floyd and Prince CDs, and on The Beatles' White Album — the most important record of my life to this day. I bought jazz and classical music, and more and more pop, rock, soul and funk. Next to my record shelf, a CD shelf sprang up and quickly grew, spreading like weeds through the living room. Records and turntables collected dust and ended up in the basement.

It took on almost absurd proportions when I changed careers and became a music editor. The record companies, many of which were based in Cologne at the time, were very generous with promotional CDs. Once a month I went on a “foray” in Cologne, and when I came home with my bulging backpack full of new releases, there were still two to four packages in front of the door. My collection exploded — it needed its own room.

My CD collection grew to over 40,000. And it had to move with me three times. The curses of my movers echo to this day. But there's a certain style about walking along a five-by-two meter shelf looking for the CDs for a party, a music show or just a music evening with friends. It has less style when you find forgotten boxes with hundreds of old promo singles in basements and garages — where to put them?

And what about throwing them all away? That's a job in and of itself, what with separating them all properly for recycling: plastic covers in one bin, paper booklets in another, the CDs themselves in yet another.

So, it's better to give them away or put them out on the sidewalk for passersby to take them — or make art out of them. Probably the most creative solution was to cover the ceiling of our office in the Deutsche Welle broadcasting center with CDs. My colleague and I used every free minute to stick the silver discs to the ceiling with ad-

hesive tape. We also forced our trainees and interns to do this — after all, they had to learn that the job of a music editor also entails disposing of old promotional CDs.

My job changed again and I decided to part with my collection — as painlessly as possible. This was not easy. Because even used CD albums with pop and rock classics are virtually worthless.

Finally, before my last move, someone who can be safely described as a total music nerd took my collection. My remaining CDs are probably limited to about 1,000.

Old school is fun

Even today, I still play music at parties from time to time. People look at me in disbelief when they see the luggage I arrive with. Two DJ CD players, a mixer, two thick folders with burned CDs and a wooden box with original CDs. Completely old school. Other DJs use laptops, have their music on a big hard drive and play it with software. Sounds tempting — just like listening to music via Spotify & Co, which has been killing off the CD for years.

Even more tempting than Spotify playlists, however, is the vinyl record, to which I have once again become addicted after parting with my CD collection — as have numerous music fans around the world. In 2021, for example, more vinyl records were sold in the US than CDs for the first time since 1991. And at these prices: €30-40 for a 180 gram vinyl record is standard. A record today costs more than twice as much as a CD — this sounds familiar...

So I'm right on trend: After I bought my beloved “White Album” by The Beatles as a new CD in 1991 because the old record had scratches and cracks, I now have it on my record shelf in a new vinyl special edition. **bw**

ROUND-UP



Customer wins fully paid trip to watch Fifa World Cup in Qatar

As part of the campaign, Kia customers buying a brand new Kia can get a chance to Scratch & Win more than 100 match tickets where they can witness teams like Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Japan and more, live in action

MUSCAT: Jamal Nasser Ali Al Jahdhami, a resident of Muscat, recently won a fully paid trip to watch Fifa World Cup 2022 in Qatar.

As part of the campaign, Kia customers buying a brand new Kia can get a chance to Scratch & Win more than 100 match tickets where they can witness teams like Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Japan and more, live in action. Apart from Fifa Qatar match tickets, customers will also get comprehensive service up to 50,000km and 1-year insurance. There are lots of fully paid trips to Fifa world cup 2022 in Qatar yet to be won. So vis-

it any Kia showroom to make the most of it. The campaign will end on November 4. (Conditions apply. Please visit the Kia showroom for details.)

An elated Jamal Nasser Ali Al Jahdhami could not believe his luck. Sharing his view he said, "I am absolutely delighted to have won this with Kia. I have always heard a lot of good things about Kia and wanted to experience this exceptional brand. Kia's products and services are really inspiring. In fact, their designs are so eye-catching that every new Kia model introduced is always ahead

of its time. Given an opportunity, I always recommend a Kia to my friends or family."

Speaking about Kia Oman's on-going campaign, he said, "There is no doubt that Kia always surprises. In terms of design, technology, features and more. Similarly, when comes to the campaigns too, it is always different and has a lot more to offer when compared. This time while buying a vehicle, I did my bit of research and finally narrowed it down to what I felt, would offer me the best value for money. I am glad I took this decision. Thank you Kia Oman for this fantastic campaign."

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers. Excellent product attributes and unmatched facilities easily ensure their absolute satisfaction, every mile of the way. No wonder then that Reliable International Automotive has been ranked amongst the top Kia distributors worldwide and has been honoured with prestigious accolades including the 'Good Partnership award', 'Family Like Care' Service award', and 'Kia 'Distributor of Distinction' award.



SHELL NXPLORERS STEM PROGRAMME

Oman Shell set to award best NXplorers projects of 2022

MUSCAT: With an aim to enhance and encourage science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills in Omani students across the nation, Oman Shell is set to award and celebrate the Shell NXplorers 2021/2022 season's best projects next month.

Launched in 2018 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Shell NXplorers STEM programme aims to encourage and develop creative and complex thinking skills among students in Omani schools to bring about positive change in the community. It also aims to encourage young minds to focus on finding innovative ways to solve food, water and energy challenges.

The Shell NXplorers 2021/2022 season was launched last year and saw the participation of over 500 students and 66 teachers from across the Sultanate.

Commenting on the impact Shell NXplorers has had, Walid Hadi, Oman Shell's Senior VP and Country Chairman stated, "Since its launch in 2018 and thanks to the tremendous support from the Ministry of Education, the Shell NXplorers pro-



gramme has benefited more than 1000 students and equipped over 150 teachers with key skills to mentor and nurture Omani youth in STEM-related fields of study. Shell is committed to supporting the people of Oman through sus-

tainable social investment programmes like Shell NXplorers."

Initiatives like the NXplorers programme are also an essential part of Oman Shell's commitment to supporting the Sultanate's energy transition and national eco-

nomical diversification goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040. Shell NXplorers is an integral part of this plan, as it creates relevant and purposeful ways to give young people the tools they need to shape and create positive change.

IN-HOUSE WORKSHOP

Global Financial Technology organises workshop for Omantel staff

MUSCAT: Global Financial Technology organised an in-house workshop for employees of Omantel about its key product - OM Pay/Lamma. Global Financial Technology is a subsidiary of Omantel and is one of the leading FinTech companies driving local innovations in the country.

The Lamma app was authorised by the Telecom Regulation Authority (TRA) in May 2020, and its wallet feature OM Pay was launched in March 2022. Available on iPhone and Android systems as Lamma Oman, it is the country's first licensed voice and video call app with a key wallet feature OM

Pay for various payment solutions.

At the workshop, the team of OM Pay Lamma familiarised the Omantel staff with the features of the app. They were also given a top-up in the OM Pay wallet that could be utilised at the office cafeterias to get a firsthand experience of using the app. The staff was impressed with the quick and smart features of the wallet and the cutting-edge technology of the app.

OM Pay Lamma app has an e-wallet, in-chat fund transfer, QR and NFC payment, adding cards, chat and call facilities.

Going forward, the app will be enhanced with features like in-

ternational remittances, bill payments and many more.

The OMPay Lamma app is using emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Analytics to provide ease in payment solutions. Those who have multiple bank accounts can transact from one app with money in any of their bank accounts.

Those who are not banked can leverage OM Pay's network to come into a digital world. Merchants and business owners can use OMPay application for digital transactions, thus reducing dependency on cash and increasing their customer base.





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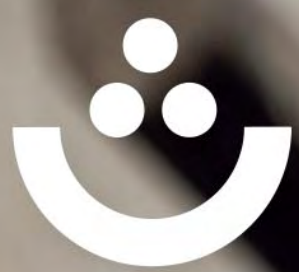
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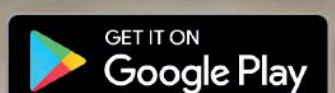
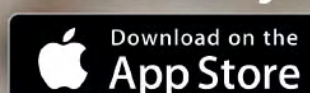
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