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Times OF OMAN
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BIDIYA- IDEAL FOR CAMPING DURING WINTER SEASON

The Wilayat of Bidiya in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, is one of the wilayats with ample tourism potential. The wilayat is ideal for camping during the winter tourism season in the Sultanate of Oman, which starts from October to March every year. >A4

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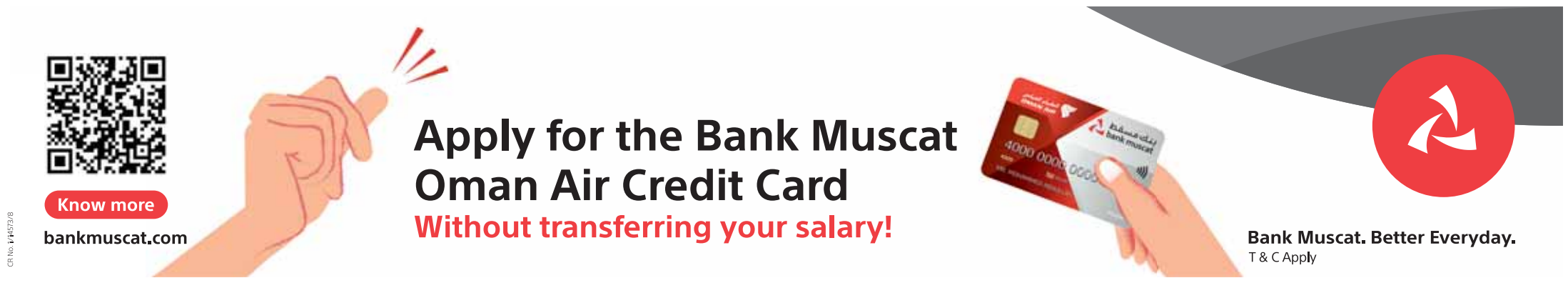


AL KHUWAIR DOWNTOWN PROJECT

Ministry of Housing, Tawoos Group forge historic relationship

In a landmark initiative poised to shape the future of Oman's urban development, Tawoos Group has entered into a significant relationship with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP) to pioneer the development and construction of cutting-edge mixed-use towers within the highly anticipated Al Khuwair Downtown project.

Tawoos will build the first mixed-use towers that will act as a lighthouse for the Al Khuwair Downtown project. The 12,000 sqm site will comprise 60,000 sqm GFA incorporating offices, residential and retail.

The project is an integral part of Oman's National Spatial Strategy (ONSS), guiding the nation's journey towards Oman Vision 2040.

It underlines the importance of planning new developments and infrastructure to maximise opportunities while preserving the country's natural heritage. The ground-breaking project is strategically designed to manage urban growth, optimise infrastructure services, and create vibrant, inclusive communities.

His Excellency Dr. Khalfan Said Al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, emphasised the significance of the collaboration. "The agreement between MoHUP and Tawoos Group marks a pioneering moment in Oman's urban evolution. By uniting our vision with Tawoos Group's aspirations, we are setting new standards for sustainability, architectural excellence, and community-centric urban development."

Renowned architectural firm Zaha Hadid Architects, founded by the late pioneering architect Zaha Hadid, has been entrusted with crafting the master plan for the Al Khuwair Downtown district, heralding a new era of transformative urban design.

Samir Fancy, Chairman of Tawoos Group, added, "As they say, we shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.

"This landmark destination will change the perception, work ethic and habits of the entire ecosystem which will reside within it. Our mixed-used towers will serve as a lighthouse that inspires the Al Khuwair Downtown project."

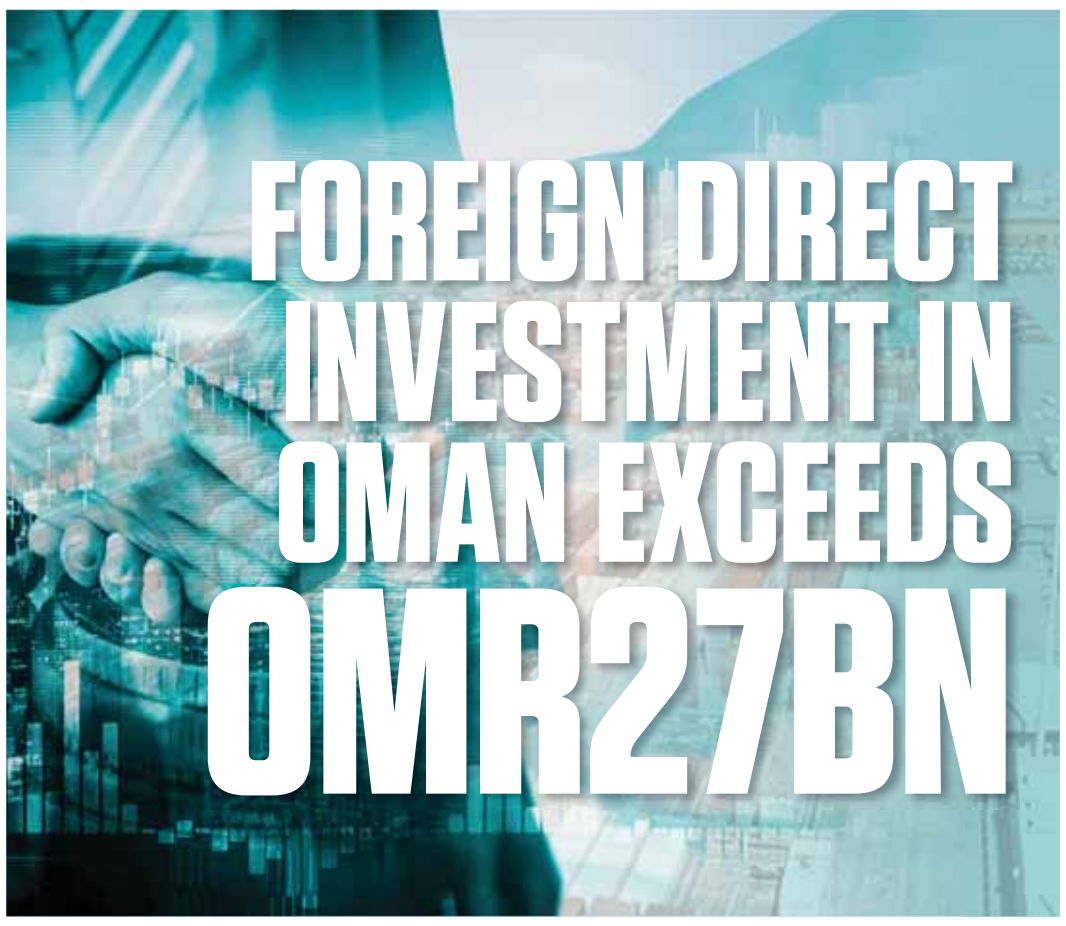
The towers envisioned by Tawoos Group are poised to redefine the standard for commercial, residential, and retail spaces, offering an unparalleled experience tailored to diverse needs and preferences.

HH Sayyid Tarik bin Shabib Al Said, Director of Tawoos Group said, "We congratulate MoHUP for their far-sighted vision and on this key milestone towards realising the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. Tawoos is honoured to be part of this extraordinary project. These towers will be innovative, sustainable and aligned with green building principles, attracting domestic and international investment positioning Oman as a dynamic, progressive destination."

Ibrahim Waili, Executive Director of Oman National Spatial Strategy (ONSS) at MoHUP, who has played a key role in laying the groundwork for the project, said, "Through ONSS, Oman envisions a future where investment in infrastructure is carefully orchestrated to enhance livability, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability. We are confident of the partnerships we have forged, and optimistic about realising the vision of the government."

About Tawoos Group

Founded in 1982, Tawoos Group is a pioneering conglomerate committed to driving innovation and excellence across diverse sectors in Oman and beyond. Established with a vision to contribute to the nation's socio-economic growth, Tawoos Group has emerged as a trusted leader in services, construction, hospitality, real estate development and investment. With a relentless focus on delivering value-driven solutions, Tawoos Group leverages its extensive expertise and strategic partnerships to create sustainable developments that enrich communities and leave a lasting impact.



Oil and gas extraction attracted the highest volume of foreign investments, at 56.4% of the total investments valued at OMR15.32 billion, according to the NCSI data

MUSCAT: The volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Sultanate of Oman reached OMR27.13 billion by the end of 2022 compared to OMR25.08 billion in the corresponding period of 2021.

This vital investment flow constituted 4.8 percent of gross domestic product at current prices, according to the preliminary data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

FDI constituted 75.9 percent of the total foreign investment by the end of 2022, NCSI data further added. According to the NCSI data, oil and gas extraction attracted the highest volume of foreign investments, at 56.4 percent of the total foreign investment valued at OMR15.32 billion.

FDI inflows from the financial brokerage activity stood at OMR5.55 billion, from converting industries at OMR2.37 billion and transportation, storage and communications activity at OMR1.61 billion.

Further, total foreign investment in the activities of real estate, leasing and commercial projects reached OMR1.11 billion while foreign investment in other activities reached OMR1.15 billion. FDI distribution over various sectors stood as follows: oil and gas (71.1 percent), converting industries (9.1 percent), financial brokerage (8.9 percent), real estate, leasing and commercial activities (4.9 percent) and other activities (6 percent).

The United Kingdom emerged as the most significant source of FDI, contributing OMR9.62 billion, followed by the United States of America at OMR3.68 billion and China at OMR1.03 billion. Moreover, other major contributors to the FDI inflows into Oman include the United Arab Emirates (OMR915 million), Kuwait (OMR797 million), Qatar (OMR593.7 million), the Kingdom of Bahrain (OMR487.5 million), the Netherlands (OMR363.5 million), India (OMR321 million) and Switzerland (OMR176.5 million).

Omani investment abroad

Meanwhile, the NCSI statistics further indicate that Omani investment abroad by the end of 2022 reached OMR5.38 billion at the end of 2022 compared to OMR6.02 billion by the end of 2021.

The United Arab Emirates come on top of the list of countries that attracted direct Omani investment abroad, with a total value of OMR960 million, followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia OMR129.1 million.

Omani direct investment in several countries stood as follows: the United Kingdom OMR93 million, Kuwait OMR32 million, Egypt OMR19.7 million, India OMR9.4 million and Bahrain OMR2.6 million. — ONA

"PARTNERSHIP AND INTEGRATION" PROGRAMME

Sultanate seeks to address private sector challenges

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, on Tuesday organised the "Partnership and Integration" programme.

The programme aims to find solutions to the challenges facing the progress of the Omani private sector, upgrade the level of performance, and keep pace with aspirations in light of the objectives of the Oman Vision 2040 towards an effective and proactive private sector.

Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, explained that the proposed solutions that were formulated and discussed during the programme will enhance the competitiveness of the private sector. These solutions were specific, clear, and tailored to address the real challenges of the sector, he added.

The minister stressed that the existing efforts made by private sector establishments are designed to develop the national economy through the continuous endeavor to find strategic partnerships that contribute to advancing economic development.

Al Yousef added that these meetings with the private sector represent the necessity of strategic partnership through the proposals and initiatives presented by the private sector through OCCI.

Empower private sector

The minister stated that the programme aims to empower the private sector, create new business opportunities and projects, attract quality investments, enhance exports, and develop a competitive business milieu. He noted that the ministry is moving forward to streamline procedures, improve services, protect competition and prevent monopoly.

For his part, Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy said that the national goals sought from these and similar programmes aims to further achieve integration, enhance the capabilities of the national economy and raise the ceiling of ambition for a more competitive performance through which the Sultanate of Oman rises to advanced levels in easing the business environment. >A3

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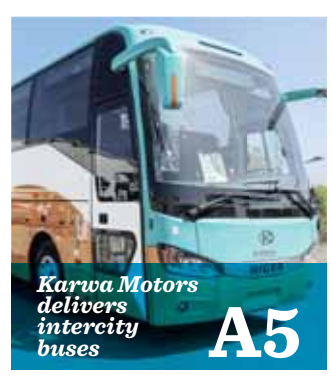

Karwa Motors delivers intercity buses A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Oman holds event in KSA to seek investment

1 Acting in cooperation with the Embassy of Oman in Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Tuesday organised an event codenamed "Oman in a 360 Degree Perspective" to explore investment opportunities available in Oman. The opening of the event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Faisal Turki Al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. >A2

OMAN
GED results for year 2023-2024 endorsed

2 Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al Shaibani, Minister of Education, approved General Education Diploma (GED) exams' general indicators of results, as well as the results of equivalent qualifications for the Academic Year 2023/2024. >A3

SPORTS
Al Nahda reach AFC Cup West Zone final

3 Oman's Al Nahda beat Bahrain's Al Riffa 3-1 after extra-time on Monday to wrap up a 4-2 aggregate victory in the AFC Cup 2023/24 West Zonal semi-final at the Sultan Qaboos Sport Complex. >A8

OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:26pm
Asr.....3:43pm
Maghrib.....6:10pm
Isha.....7:21pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:20am

AGREEMENT

Oman and USA sign agreement to bolster environmental laws

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the United States of America (USA) signed the Environmental Action Programme to activate the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Environmental Fields (2024-2027).

During the signing, Oman was represented by the Environment Authority, while the USA was represented by its Department of State.

The action programme includes a plan to bolster environmental laws and regulations, advance environmental expertise and practices related to the protection of the environment, controlling pollution, conserving natural resources and wildlife and sustainable ecosystem management. The programme seeks to boost efforts and action in areas related to adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change, as well as encouraging and adopting integrated environmental management practices and using innovative technology. -ONA

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Heritage Ministry holds event in KSA to seek investments in Oman

Oman in a 360 Degree Perspective focuses on major ongoing tourism projects and explores future potentials

RIYADH: Acting in cooperation with the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Tuesday organised an event codenamed "Oman in a 360 Degree Perspective" to explore investment opportunities available in Oman.

The opening of the event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Faisal Turki Al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the authorities concerned, tourism companies and investors.

"Oman in a 360 Degree Perspective" focuses on major ongoing tourism projects and explores future potentials.

The Ministry's partners from Omani sectors will showcase the investment opportunities to investors to enhance the existing partnership between tourism sector institutions in both countries.

The meeting included visual presentations and bilateral meetings between representatives of Omani institutions tasked with tourism development and their Saudi counterparts. -ONA

HUMAN SIGNIFICANCE

National Museum holds event on rock engravings, their human significance

MUSCAT: The National Museum, represented by the Department of Museum Learning and Community Outreach, yesterday organised an event titled "Rock Engravings".

The purpose of the event was to introduce rock drawings and engravings and their human significance inspired by Oman's nature across the ages.

The event included a lecture titled "Examples of Rock Drawings in the Sultanate of Oman".

The lecture introduced rock drawings found in numerous valleys and mountains in Oman, dating back to ancient times. It showcased examples, explained their meanings, discussed drawing techniques, and highlighted the tools used.

The lecture was followed by a guided tour for participants to explore examples of rock drawings and engravings in the Prehistory and Ancient History Galleries of the National Museum.

Continuing with the event, an art workshop was conducted for drawing and engraving on wood, mimicking the rock drawings and engravings displayed in the Prehistory and Ancient History Galleries.

It is worth noting that rock drawings and engravings have been discovered in numerous valleys and mountains across Oman, spanning various provinces and dating back to prehistoric and ancient eras. Some of the well-known drawings depict human life symbols, animals like oryx, horses, camels, dogs, and elephants, as well as reptiles like scorpions and snakes.

In the realm of tools, war-related items such as spears, swords, and shields are highlighted. Symbolic representations in Omani rock art include stars and the sun, among others. -ONA

NCCHT

Discussion on plan to combat human trafficking

MUSCAT: The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT) on Tuesday held its periodic meeting under the chairmanship of Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, Chairman of the NCCHT.

During the meeting, the committee reviewed its prominent achievements and efforts till date, as well as updates on implementing the national action plan to combat human trafficking in Oman (2024-2026).

The member parties in the committee highlighted their activities and efforts that are exerted to increase awareness on the importance of combating human trafficking. -ONA

OMANI MARITIME ENVIRONMENT

Pakistan delegation visits MSC

MUSCAT: A delegation from Maritime Security Agency in Pakistan, led by Rear Admiral Imtiaz Ali, Director General of Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC) in Muscat on Tuesday.

Upon the guests' arrival, they were greeted by Commodore Adil Hamoud Al Busaidi, Head of the MSC.

Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the tactical roles and tasks carried out by the centre in the safety of the Omani maritime environment. They also toured the centre's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies used in carrying out its national duties. -ONA

GOODWILL VISIT: The Pakistani delegation led by Rear Admiral Imtiaz Ali, Director General of Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency, was greeted by Commodore Adil Hamoud Al Busaidi, Head of the MSC. - ONA

BAIT AL FALAJ CAMP

Egyptian delegation tours Oman's military institutions

MUSCAT: Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies received in his office at Bait Al Falaj Camp yesterday a delegation from the faculty and students at the Command and Staff College in Egypt, headed by Brigadier Walid Adel Ahmed Al Shorbaji.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed several matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Air Commodore Abdullah Fayez Al Dhafri, Director General of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Commodore Khalid Amer Al Salti, Director of Studies and Academic Affairs, senior officers at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

The Egyptian Delegation visited the National Defence College (NDC) in the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies at Bait Al Falaj Camp.

Upon their arrival at the college, the guests were greeted by Rear Admiral Ali Abdullah Al Shidi, NDC Commandant.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a range of topics of common interest, especially in academic and training fields.

Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the college's facilities. They also toured the NDC's departments.

The Egyptian Military Delegation also visited the Joint Command and Staff College (CSC) at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

Upon their arrival at the college, they were greeted by Brigadier Saif Hamad Al Yousifi, Commandant of the CSC. The visiting delegation watched a visual presentation about the college, its curriculum and training programmes. -ONA

Ministry approves GED results for 2023-2024 session

As many as 50,508 male and female students sat for the GED, with an overall success rate of 80.85 percent in the public schools' category

MUSCAT: Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al Shaibani, Minister of Education, approved General Education Diploma (GED) exams' general indicators of results, as well as the results of equivalent qualifications, for the first sitting of the GED during Academic Year 2023/2024.

As many as 50,508 male and female students sat for the GED, with an overall success rate of 80.85 percent in the public schools' category.

In the private (bilingual) schools' segment, a total of 1,555 students sat for the GED exams, with an overall success rate of 90.98 percent.

In the GED of technical education, that of the Royal Guard of Oman's Technical College (bilingual), a total of 58 students sat for the exams, with an overall success rate of 100 percent.

In the GED for Islamic sciences education, a total of 115 students sat for the exams, with an overall success rate of 98.26 percent.

In the GED for Special Education, a total of 69 students sat for the exams, with an overall success rate of 90.16 percent.

Results will be available starting from the day after on Thursday, 22 February, at 4 pm, through the services of Omantel, Ooredoo and Vodafone. The results can be obtained by an enquirer sending a short text message to 90200, quoting the seat number.

The results will also be available later on the educational portal of the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Steps to create a favourable climate

< FROM A1

The move contributes positively on global competitiveness indicators and expanding production structures with highly efficient national cadres, he added.

Dr. Mahad Said Ba'owain, Minister of Labour said that integration between the public and private sectors aims to achieve a stimulating business environment that ensures sustainability and growth for the private sector so that this sector can contribute to supporting the national economy in general and enhance its role as a major employer of labour.

Faisal Abdullah Al Rowas, OCCI Chairman presented a visual presentation in which he explained the participatory paths with the government's legislative and executive departments.

The step aims to create a favourable climate for the consensus of ideas and visions to achieve integration and adopt sustainable solutions that enhance the performance indicators of the private sector and its contributions to the national economic system. He also highlighted the OCCI strategic approach to improve the business environment in the private sector.

HH Dr. Adham Turki Al Said, Head of the OCCI Economic Committee explained that the "Partnership and Integration" programme provided valuable insights that lead the private sector towards sustainability in achieving strong growth based on the opportunities outlined by Oman Vision 2040 in various sectors.

The programme requires doubling efforts, accelerating achievement, and creating a flexible legislative and procedural environment that supports improving the business environment and contributes to creating a qualitative shift in the business community, he added.

-ONA

OMAN

Bidiya- ideal for camping during winter season

Times News Service

BIDIYA: The Wilayat of Bidiya , North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, is one of the wilayats with ample tourism potential.

It is ideal for camping during the winter tourism season in the Sultanate of Oman, which starts from October to March every year.

The Wilayat of Bidiya has 15 tourism camps and it offers various services to tourists such as camel riding, traditional food and Omani art. Hamdan bin Ali Al Hajri, the owner of the Arabian Oryx Camp, said that his tourism camp in the Wilayat of Bidiya offers services to the tourists from within and outside the Sultanate of Oman. The camp has a strategic location in the desert and has architectural designs that combine the past with the present, he said, adding the camp offers various programmes to its visitors.

The programmes include Omani folk events, star gauging, and camel riding among other activities.

The tourism camps in the Wilayat of Bidiya offer exploration tours in the desert and other areas so that tourists get acquainted with the traditions and customs of the area and local handicrafts.

-With inputs from ONA

OMAN INTERNATIONAL DRIFT CAR PARADE

Drift parade explodes with smoke and backfires

THE DRIFT CAR Parade was held on February 19th, 2024 at the Oman Automobile Association in Muscat. The parade was an impressive spectacle that left the onlookers in amazement as the sound of engines reverberated through the streets. The event was not only about the impressive tire-shredding moves but also the epic backfire that filled the air with thunderous booms, creating a smoke-filled display of controlled chaos in the city.

From the moment the first modified beast erupted in a symphony of flames and exhaust, the energy was electric. The Muscat Drift Arena pulsed with excitement as drivers pushed their machines to the limit. The backfires, punctuating each manoeuvre with a dramatic curlicue, added a raw, wild element to the already impressive displays of skill.

But the excitement didn't stop there. Fans weren't just spectators; they were part of the experience. The dedicated Meet & Greet zone transformed into a thrilling reunion, as fans had the chance to rub shoulders and celebrate with the very drifters who conquered Rounds One and Two of the Oman International Drift Championship (OIDC). Selfies, autographs, and animated discussions flowed freely, solidifying the deep bond between these motorsport heroes and their passionate fans.

Supercar Showcase: Dazzling arrays of the world's most prestigious and luxurious supercars, each a marvel of engineering and automotive excellence, were on display for all to admire in a static showcase.

Digital Drift Motorsports Competition: Beyond the roar of engines and the smoke-filled spectacle, the Drift Car Parade embraced the cutting edge of motorsport with the Digital Drift Motorsports Competition. In a mesmerizing display of virtual ability, skilled e-racers battled it out on simulated tracks, replicating the adrenaline-pumping thrills of drifting in the digital realm.

More than just drifting

The Drift Car Parade excelled expectations. It wasn't just about drifting; it was a celebration of passion, skill, and the raw power of automobiles. From the smoke-filled drifts to the thunderous backfires, the event etched itself into the memories of all who witnessed it, leaving them desire for the next smoke-filled, adrenaline-pumping spectacle.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

National Robotics Competition held

Times News Service

Muscat: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympiads, implemented on Monday the National Robotics Competition. It saw 40 students participating in this competition, representing 10 teams from 10 educational directorates from the various governorates of Oman.

This competition comes as the qualifiers for the participation in the World Robot Championship in the United States of America.

The competition consists of a number of challenges, including robot skills, such as the "Driving Skills Challenge," in which the robot driver controls the robot remotely and collects the largest number of colored cubes from the playing field within 60 seconds.

The number of points is calculated based on the number of cubes placed in the goals, their colours, and according to specific rules, and then the points scored by the team are calculated.

The second challenge is the "programming challenge match," in which the robot works under autonomous control for 60 seconds, and the team's points are calculated by the same rules.

The implementation of this competition confirms the Ministry of Education's interest in diversifying competitions in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence, which in turn diversifies the situations that excite students and increases their passion for science, engineering, mathematics, and information technology, noting that this competition is being implemented for the first time at the national level.

The competition aims to develop the spirit of creativity among the participants, develop their skills in the field of robotics, and provide a competitive environment stimulating the use of engineering and innovative skills, in addition to achieving honorable representation in tournaments, whether at the local, regional, or global level.

Karwa Motors launches new type of intercity buses

The new type of the buses designed to accommodate 45 passengers in line with Gulf standard specifications approved for buses operating in the oil and gas sector

MUSCAT: Karwa Motors, a subsidiary of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Qatar Transportation Company, announced the launch of a new type of buses, specifically intercity buses.

The new type of the buses designed to accommodate 45 passengers in line with Gulf standard specifications approved for buses operating in the oil and gas sector.

The company on Tuesday celebrated delivering two of these buses to a leading transportation company in the Sultanate of Oman.

Karwa Motors said that the delivery of these two new intercity buses marks an important step towards introducing this bus category into the local market, amidst significant demand from both local companies and individuals interested in utilizing this mode of transportation.

With this new bus category, Karwa aims to enter both the local and regional markets, enhancing the production capabilities of the Karwa Motors factory located in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) to meet the growing demand for "Karwa" buses, following their successful deployment during the Qatar World Cup 2022.

In a press statement, Karwa Motors revealed that these two new buses are the first of Karwa Motors' intercity bus type to be introduced into the Omani market, noting that there are underway orders from a group of local clients scheduled for delivery in the upcoming months.

— ONA

TWO-DAY EVENT

Ministry organises educational meeting

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision - School Administration Supervision Department, under the patronage of Dr. Sulaiman Al-Jamoudi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, held an educational meeting.

The meeting was for Head of Departments and Senior Supervisors of School Administration over the course of two days at the Maani Hotel Muscat.

The meeting targeted 35 head of departments and senior supervisors of school administration in the educational directorates at the governorates, with the aim of enhancing communication with head of departments and senior supervisors of school administration.

They discussed the impact of supervision roles and its impact on monitoring the performance of public and private school administrations in developing the performance of the educational body, in addition to identifying educational developments in the field of school administration supervision.

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A TIMES OF OMAN HANDS-FREE DRIVING INITIATIVE

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وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصات
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tenders:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MTCIT/ 8/2023	Consultancy services for condition assessment and repair design of marine infrastructures at Port Sultan Qaboos	4-2-2024	18-2-2024	14-3-2024	Experienced Companies registered in services category, with the secretariat general of tender Board (Excellent, First class)	(300/-)Three Omani Hundred Riyals (local, regional and international) (10/-) Ten Omani Riyal for SME **Non- Refundable**
MTCIT/ 9/2023	Consultancy of supervision services for construction of balance work at Sohar Gate (free zone link road)	4-2-2024	18-2-2024	7-3-2024	Experienced Companies registered in services category, with the secretariat general of tender Board (First class)	(56/900) Fifty six Omani Riyals and nine hundred baiza (Local and Regional) (10/-) Ten Omani Riyal for SME **Non- Refundable**
MTCIT/ 10/2023	Planning, implementing, and managing awareness campaigns for the land transportation sector	4-2-2024	18-2-2024	17-3-2024	Experienced Companies registered in services category, with the secretariat general of tender Board (All classes)	(125/-) One hundred twenty five Omani Riyals (Local and Regional) (25/-) Twenty five Omani Riyal for SME **Non- Refundable**

Interested Companies registered with the Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: **https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om** against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:

1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. **(https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)**
2. E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200 e-mail: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

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Ahli Global Equity Fund

ahliGlobal equityfund

On behalf of the Fund Management Board, I am pleased to present the audited financial results of ahli Global Equity Fund for the year ended 31st December 2023

	31-Dec-2023	31-Dec-2022
Number of units	3,410,000	3,377,311
Net asset value (RO)	2,730,741	2,379,581
Net asset value per unit (RO)	0.801	0.705
Dividend Paid Per Unit (RO)	0.02	0
Net profit/(loss)	391,722	14,170

The Fund witnessed a gain of (+17.1% YTD) outperforming the benchmark (an average of S&P GCC and MSCI World) by (+14.0%). Our outperformance, achieved through our strategic overweight allocation from the beginning of the year into Saudi and Dubai especially in the Non-Oil Private Sector, has proven valuable as investors place their bets on higher-than-expected GDP growth in MENA fueled by Non-Oil Sectors of the economy.

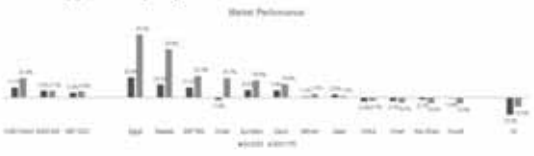
Looking ahead, as we close the year up 17.1% we continue to build on our capabilities and showcase resilience and outperformance throughout the market cycles. We continue to prefer GCC markets given supportive oil prices and will recycle globally amidst correction periods.

Markets Performance

Markets continued to rally as benchmark yields dropped amid renewed speculation of a dovish shift by the Federal Reserve. US Core PCE decreased further from 3.4% in October to 3.2% in November, below consensus expectations. The print marks continued progress toward the Fed's 2% inflation target, informing our view that rate cuts may begin as early as March. Meanwhile, Fund Managers and Strategists have all published a rosy outlook for 2024, fueling the rally and FOMO (Fear-Of-Missing-Out).

Long duration and interest rate sensitive sectors saw a hefty rally during the last two months. The Santa Clause rally pushed Nasdaq to historic YTD gain of 53.8%, followed by the S&P 500, up 24.2% YTD. An almost picture-perfect retracement from the double-digit losses of 2022.

Taking a cue from the risk-on sentiment, GCC markets rallied, with Saudi and Qatar being the major beneficiary of the rally up 7.1% and 7.9% respectively. S&P GCC closed the year in positive territory of +6.2% YTD from just flat a month ago as Banks and non-oil sectors closed significantly higher.



*As of December 31st 2023

Market Outlook

Our focus for the next quarter would be to gauge inflationary pressures and economic activity. Overall, encouraging trends in both US Inflation and Employment along with dovish comments from the Fed pushed markets higher given expectations of peak rates and earlier than expected rate cuts.

As such AMD turned incrementally positive on regional and global markets driven by resilient economic data and cooling inflation. In our view, lower rates and modestly rising earnings will help equities build on this year's gains. We see an opportunity for laggards to catch up as the headwind of rising yields subsides. Our preferred markets continue to remain Saudi and UAE in the region with selective exposure to US and Chinese equities

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	31 Dec 2023 RO	31 Dec 2022 RO
ASSETS		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	2,726,946	1,977,375
Dividend receivable	-	209
Due from broker	3,577	-
Cash and cash equivalents	13,640	409,711
Total assets	2,744,163	2,387,295
LIABILITIES		
Accruals and other payables	12,906	7,569
Due to unitholders	516	145
Total liabilities	13,422	7,714
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	2,730,741	2,379,581
Net assets value per unit	0.801	0.705

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Year ended 31 Dec 2023 RO	Year ended 31 Dec 2022 RO
INCOME:		
Dividend income	90,618	77,437
Realised gain on disposal of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss - net	161,985	102,972
Unrealised gain / (loss) on re-measurement of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss - net	215,873	(95,271)
Total income	468,476	85,138
EXPENSES:		
General and administrative expenses	(37,747)	(34,234)
Management fee	(31,359)	(30,734)
Custodian fee	(7,648)	(6,000)
Total expenses	(76,754)	(70,968)
Profit for the year	391,722	14,170
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	391,722	14,170
Earnings per unit	0.117	0.004

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WORLD

STUDY

Almonds boost post-exercise muscle recovery

BERN: A recent study, detailed in Frontiers in Nutrition, highlights the potential benefits of almonds for post-exercise muscle recovery and performance.

Over eight weeks, 25 mildly overweight middle-aged participants consumed 57 grams of almonds daily.

The study revealed a significant reduction in muscle soreness and enhanced muscle performance during a vertical jump challenge, indicating improved recovery.

Notably, the reduction in soreness amounted to nearly 25 percent over a 72-hour recovery period following exercise.

However, the study's applicability is limited as it focused solely on non-smoking individuals who were mildly overweight and occasionally physically active.

Nevertheless, researchers underscore the potential of almonds as a nutritious snack to aid in exercise recovery, which could facilitate adherence to new training programs, especially among those less accustomed to regular exercise.

Experts stress the importance of incorporating such nutrient-rich foods into balanced diets to support overall health and fitness goals.

These findings provide valuable insights into dietary strategies for optimizing exercise recovery and performance, although further research across diverse demographic groups is warranted to validate and extend these initial findings. — ONA

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Barka بركاء

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BARKA WATER AND POWER COMPANY S.A.O.G
P.O. Box: 572, P.C.320, Barka. Tel.: 26896499, Fax: 26894387

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT (YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023)

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Barka Water and Power Company SAOG ('The Company'), I have the pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Highlights of the year

Our proudest achievement remains our safety record of 21 years without a Lost Time Incident achieved on 2 May 2023. A safe working environment is our topmost priority in line with government directives, The Company and its Operator (NOMAC Oman) established special HSE and operational procedures ensuring safe operation. The credit of this remarkable milestone goes to the entire Barka team who all played a critical role in building such a safe environment.

Company was successfully secured WPAs extension upto 31 March 2024 upon expiry of PWPA on 9 February 2022. WPAs can be further extended for nine months in three equal tranches of three months at Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (NPWP) discretion.

The Company has carefully monitored the spot market in the sector and believe that operating its power units under the spot market at this stage is not economically viable. Based on this, the Company has decided to put its power units in preservation mode. The units will be available to operate as soon as demand for power increases and there is an economic justification to operate in the spot market. Further the Company continue exploring the market for a potential Bilateral Agreement with industrial consumers.

NPWP had commenced the formal procedures for Power 2024 and Water 2024 procurement process and the Company registered its interest to participate in both. Management completed proposals' submissions as per NPWP timelines and the final outcome is expected by 1Q 2024.

The MSFE Water Desalination Plant has been fully depreciated and the Company is in consultation with its Board of Directors and Project Lenders for the most viable option including sale or disposal of this asset.

The performance of the two SWRO Plants was affected throughout the year due to changes in the seawater quality. The Company was adequately protected under force majeure provisions of the project agreements for such events.

The Company has met its obligations to the lenders by timely debt service of OMR 4.0m during the year.

The Company under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) is required to make an internal assessment of future discounted cash flows from its assets and then compare it with the respective book values. The Company believes that there is a significant economic value remaining on its assets which it will be able to recover in future. Based on this no impairment is recognized in the 2023 financial statement of the Company.

The Company held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2022 on 29 March 2023. All agenda items were approved by the shareholders.

Strategic positioning

NPWP is the sole procurer of the power and water in Omani market and the primary fuel supplier is Ministry of Energy & Minerals. The operations and maintenance of the plants is performed by NOMAC Oman which is wholly owned by ACWA Power.

Operational performance

The operational performance will always remain the key contributor towards the Company's performance and is the backbone of any company in this sector. The Power Plant remains in preservation mode during the year.

The forced outages of the two RO plants due to continued severe seawater quality beyond design/technical limits of the pretreatment units. The Company is protected against such a situation under the force majeure provisions of its Water Purchase Agreement (WPA). The force majeure claims are submitted regularly to the Off taker.

Occupational Health, Safety, and environment

The landmark achievement during the year was the achievement of 21 years without a Lost Time Accident on 2 May 2023. This safety record is not merely a statistic but represents a lot of effort by all the individuals working at the plant. The Barka team strives to improve its work practice based on both internal and external reviews on its safety culture.

Safety remains your Company's topmost priority. The Operator has completed all maintenance activities including the repair work without any accident, which is a remarkable achievement considering the hazards involved with such activities. Preserving the environment is also one of the key considerations of your Company. We are pleased to inform you that there were no environmental exceedances during the year.

Financial performance

The Company strongly believes in an open, transparent environment where integrity and sound ethics are imperative to success. The Company maintains the highest level of financial controls and reporting standards. Your Company continues to achieve these standards, and this is periodically confirmed by timely, accurate reporting as well as rigorous internal and external auditing processes and procedures. Your Company remains in compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance of the Capital Market Authority.

The Company recorded a gross profit of RO 2.5m (2022: RO 0.6m) for the year 2023. The increase mainly attributable to higher RO plants capacity revenues and lower maintenance and technical services costs partially offset with no capacity revenue from main plant. The Company is reporting a net profit after tax of RO 0.4m (2022: net loss after tax of RO 2.3m) which corresponds to earning per share of RO 0.002 (2022: loss per share RO 0.014).

The debt service payments for 2023 under the Amended Loan Agreement were due on 22 June 2023 and 31 December 2023. The Company successfully served both the debt service payments within the due date.

In December 2022, Tax Authority (TA) issued assessment orders for the Tax Years 2017 to 2020 with an additional tax demand of RO 7,045,616. The Company paid the additional demands in January 2023 and Company had filed an objection with tax authority which was turned down. Subsequently the Company has filed an appeal to Tax Grievances Committee which is in process.

The Company has not declared any dividends in the year 2023.

The Company remains in compliance with the revised Code of Corporate Governance of the Capital Market Authority.

People

The success of any business is driven by its people, the real assets, and their motivation.

The directors of your Company are a set of diversified individuals with vast financial, operational, technical, and market-oriented experience. They have successfully guided the business during challenging times. The Management of the Company, under the guidance of the Board, have worked diligently and creatively to implement the vision of the Board and to bring excellence to the business. The directors and Management of your Company have demonstrated their business acumen and strategy of looking after all shareholders' interests and generating value for everyone.

I, along with the Board, would like to extend my gratitude to the team, which includes the operations and maintenance people of the Operator, who have given their fullest contribution to survive in challenging time. We reaffirm our commitment to develop and garner Omani talent.

The board recognizes the importance of nurturing local talent in line with the national vision and is fully committed to developing the local skill set.

Social Responsibility

The Company firmly believes in the importance of being a good corporate citizen in the conduct of its business activities as well as in fulfilling its corporate and social responsibilities.

#	Beneficiary	Amount (OMR)	Description
1	Oman Charity Organization	2,000	20% of CSR budget was paid to Oman Charitable Organisation as required under the ministerial decision No: 205/2021.
2	Trainees fee under Eidad program	8,000	Sponsored for internship for Omani students trainees under the Eiddad program during the year.
	Total	**10,000**	

Outlook for 2024

The Company has completed bid submissions in relation to Power 2024 and Water 2024 procurement process and has taken proactive measures to prepare in the event of new contracts award. The Company believes that there are reasonable chances that the Company will secure long-term power contract. As an alternative, the Company power units are ready to participate in Spot market upon viability and the Company will consider entering into Bilateral Agreements with certain industrial units during the summer period (i.e May to September) in coming year.

Existing WPAs will expire 31st March 2024, and NPWP has an option to extend until December 2024 if deemed required. The Company is seeking to secure long-term contract as well as exploring opportunities for extension of the existing WPAs.

The Company has disclosed details of these current challenges in notes to the Financial Statements. Please refer to Note 3: Going Concern Assumption. The Company is not considering any dividend distribution for 2023.

Acknowledgements

The Company would like to take this opportunity to express its respect and gratitude to all our stakeholders especially NPWP, Ministry of Energy & Minerals, the Authority for Public Services Regulation, and the Capital Market Authority.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Government for their vision, guidance, wisdom, and continued support. We would also like to acknowledge the progressive and enlightened vision of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said which continues to be a model for others to emulate and without it, the success being achieved by many would not have been possible.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023 (Expressed in Omani Rial)

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	**61,300,910**	64,788,680
Intangible assets	**3,710**	14,103
Right-of-use assets	**388,348**	410,633
Total non-current assets	**61,692,968**	65,213,416
Current assets		
Inventories	**3,899,653**	4,586,405
Trade and other receivables	**2,155,969**	4,706,880
Cash and bank balances	**2,097,400**	6,090,276
Total current assets	**8,153,022**	15,383,561
Total assets	**69,845,990**	80,596,977
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves		
Share capital	**1,60,00,000**	1,60,00,000
Legal reserve	**53,33,333**	53,33,333
Special reserve	**85,555**	85,555
Retained earnings	**13,252,339**	12,890,210
Total capital and reserves	**34,671,227**	34,309,098
Non-current liabilities		
Long-term loan - non -	-	14,578,699
Deferred tax liability	**5,473,773**	5,547,498
Provision for site restoration	**4,087,562**	3,788,134
Employee benefit liabilities	**9,851**	29,084
Lease liabilities	**779,027**	744,599
Total non-current liabilities	**10,350,213**	24,688,014
Current liabilities		
Long-term loan - current portion	**15,236,374**	4,658,983
Trade and other payables	**8,042,748**	8,349,584
Lease liabilities - current portion	**11,267**	11,521
Taxation	**1,534,161**	8,579,777
Total current liabilities	**24,824,550**	21,599,865
Total liabilities	**35,174,763**	46,287,879
Total equity and liabilities	**69,845,990**	80,596,977
Net assets per share (RO)	**0.217**	0.214

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 15 February2024 and are signed on their behalf by:

BARKA WATER AND POWER COMPANY SAOG STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
Revenue	**13,339,144**	14,671,330
Direct costs	**(10,888,419)**	(14,113,797)
Gross profit / (loss)	**2,450,725**	557,533
Other income	**414,998**	29,895
Expected credit loss on trade receivable	**(199,826)**	-
General and administrative expenses	**(1,036,122)**	(1,140,601)
Profit / (loss) from operations	**1,629,775**	(553,173)
Finance costs	**(1,341,371)**	(1,682,047)
Profit / (loss) before tax	**288,404**	(2,235,220)
Income tax	**73,725**	(27,050)
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	**362,129**	(2,262,270)
Basic and diluted earnings per share (RO)	**0.002**	(0.014)

Israel-Hamas war: UN warns of more child deaths in Gaza Strip

At least 90% of children under five in Gaza are affected by one or more infectious diseases, UN officials said

GAZA: A lack of food and safe water, as well as malnutrition and disease, could lead to a spike in child deaths in Gaza, United Nations officials warned.

In a joint statement, the UN children's agency UNICEF, the World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization (WHO) said at least 90% of children under five in Gaza are affected by one or more infectious diseases.

Data collected in January showed 70% of children had had diarrhea two weeks before the assessment.

"The Gaza Strip is poised to witness an explosion in preventable child deaths which would compound the already unbearable level of child deaths in Gaza," Ted Chaibans, UNICEF deputy executive director for humanitarian action and supply operations, said.

One in six children under the age of two were acutely malnourished, according to surveys in the region's north.

"Hunger and disease are a deadly combination," WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan said.

The WHO found that 95% of households "are limiting meals and portion sizes," and 64% of households eat only one meal daily.

More than 95% of households also said they had restricted the amount of food adults ate in order to ensure small children had food, the WHO said.

Nearly 29,200 killed so far in Gaza

The ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip has thus far killed 29,195 people, the Hamas-run Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

Some 69,170 more people have been injured since the conflict erupted on October 7 last year.

In the past 24 hours alone, 103 Palestinians were killed, and 142 were injured, the ministry added.

The United Nations and multiple humanitarian organizations consider the death toll and casualty numbers provided by Gaza's Health Ministry to be broadly reliable.

Though the ministry does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths, around half of Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants are children, and the UN says the majority of civilians killed have been women and children.

— Agencies

BRIEFS

Male lion kills zookeeper at in Nigeria

ABUJA: A zookeeper at the Obafemi Awolowo University in southwestern Nigeria has died after being attacked by a male lion he had been looking after for nearly a decade. Olabode Olawuyi was feeding the lion when the incident happened. Another staff member working at the zoo was also injured, local media reported.

Guinea military leaders dissolve government

CONAKRY: Guinea's military leaders have dissolved the country's interim government and say they will appoint a new one, according to a address late Monday from presidential spokesperson and Secretary General of the Presidency Amara Camara. The West African country has been ruled by the junta since a coup in September 2021.

US official Rena Bitter to visit India

NEW DELHI: US Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, Rena Bitter, will be travelling to India, during which she will engage with embassy and consulate colleagues in Chennai, Mumbai and New Delhi. She will be travelling to India and Qatar during her visit from February 19-27. In Doha, she will observe the work of US consular teams.

5 killed in roadside blast in Somalia: Police

MOGADISHU: Somali police confirmed on Tuesday that five people were killed and 10 others wounded in a roadside blast in the national capital of Mogadishu Monday night. "The landmine was planted along the road in Heliwa District, targeting passengers of a minibus and a motorcycle taxi," the police said in a statement, blaming al-Shabab for the latest attack in the capital. — Agencies

GOVERNMENT AUCTION

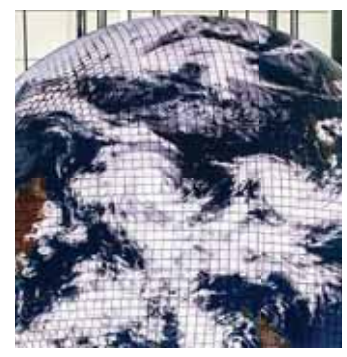
Japan aims high with climate bonds for clean tech

TOKYO: Japan is selling climate bonds — last week saw the government auction off 800 billion yen ($5.33 billion, €4.95 billion) in 10-year bonds, with the next tranche planned for later this month. And that is only the beginning. The authorities hope to sell sovereign bonds worth 20 trillion yen in total to fund the country's green transition, which is often referred to in Japan as GX.

The Asian country is the first and so far the only country in the world to offer sovereign bonds for funding the reforms targeted toward tackling climate change. These government-issued debt securities are being sold to private investors. The investors are entitled to periodic interest payments and the full nominal value of the bond several years from now.

In this way, the government can funnel private money into its climate goals without breaking its budget.

Some of the funds are set for projects such as low-cost wind power generators, carbon recycling technology and aircraft that utilise alternative fuels. A primary focus, however, will be the development of state-of-the-art batteries and microchips, designed to reduce emissions over the long term.



Ahead of the first sale, the chairman of the Japan Securities Dealers Association, Toshio Morita, emphasised that Japan lacks natural resources and is therefore vulnerable to energy shocks — but "exhibits technological strengths."

Green Transformation

"The Green Transformation, which aims to shift the foundations of society and industry from one centred around fossil fuels to one based on clean energy, is a core initiative to transform industrial and energy policies and strengthen corporate and national competitiveness," he said.

The bonds are a key element of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's plans to fund the transformation of Japanese industry and society. By the end of the decade, Japan hopes to cut its greenhouse gas emissions to less than half of what they were in 2013. By 2050, the country hopes to achieve zero emissions. An estimated 150 trillion yen in public and private GX-related investments are required over the next decade if Japan is to meet its declared targets.

The response to the climate bonds from the finance sector has been broadly positive.

Japan's Dai-Ichi Life Insurance Co came out strongly in support of the bonds on the day they were launched, confirming that it was investing to "encourage the transition of Japanese society to a decarbonised growth economic structure." — DW

EUROPEAN UNIO

Ursula Von der Leyen to seek second term as EU Commission chief

BRUSSELS: European Union President Ursula von der Leyen, who has held the post since 2019 and has emerged as the face of Europe's response to major crises, is seeking a second five-year term as the top EU official, according to media report.

"I ran in 2019 because I firmly believe in Europe. Europe is home to me," von der Leyen said on Monday in Berlin at the Christian Democratic Union party conference. "And when the question came up back then as to whether I could imagine becoming president of the European Commission, I immediately said 'yes' intuitively."

"Today, five years later, I am making a very conscious and well-considered decision: I would like to run for a second term," she added. Given her strong record steering the European response to both the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, von der Leyen is seen as a relatively sure bet to keep the job, which is not elected but decided in negotiations among European Union leaders.

According to the NYT, another term for von der Leyen would provide continuity for the bloc. She is also expected to further expand the authority of her position, even beyond its duties overseeing the 32,000-strong European Commission.

Notably, von der Leyen is the first woman to hold the office. She has used the resources at her disposal to steer the EU through crises and emerged as one of the most visible leaders to have held the position.

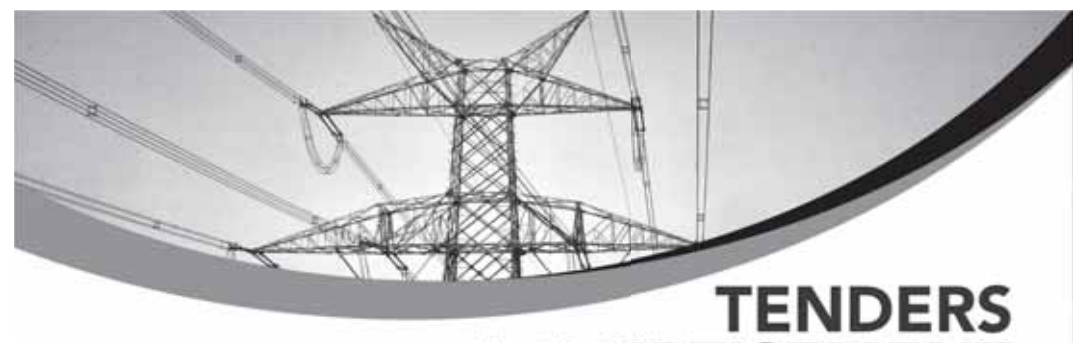
A German gynaecologist and conservative politician, von der Leyen had a 'lacklustre' record as a minister in the administration of former Chancellor Angela Merkel. But she has emerged as a trusted figure in the Byzantine working of the EU. For President Biden, who frequently refers to her simply as Ursula, von der Leyen (65) has been the 'go-to person' to coordinate EU-US policies, the NYT reported.

The EU President has been an advocate for the bloc's expanding eastward to include Ukraine and Moldova as well as some Balkan states.

Thousands of EU staff members have written at least three letters of complaint over her position on the conflict, and she has clashed with her top diplomatic official as well as some EU leaders, who believe she is too supportive of Israel to represent the bloc. However, she is very likely to secure a second term as president of the European Commission, but the selection process hasn't even begun yet, as reported by NYT.

While Monday's announcement means she is the chosen candidate for the job from the European mainstream conservative movement, other political groups — such as the Greens and the Social Democrats — will propose their own candidates.

The balance of power among those political movements will be gauged in the European Parliament elections in early June, which will take place across all 27 EU countries. von der Leyen's political alliance is currently leading polls, New York Times reported. — DW



TENDERS ADVERTISEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) announces the following tenders:

SR. NO.	TENDER NO.	TENDER NAME	LAST DATE FOR OBTAINING THE DOCUMENTS	BID SUBMISSION DATE	REQUIREMENTS FROM PARTICIPATORS	TENDER DOCUMENT'S FEES (INCLUDING VAT) (RO)
1	19/2024 (Extended)	Supply and Installation of Air Conditioning of Split Units (2.5 Tons) and Standalone Units (5 Tons) in Batinah & Al Buraimi Governorate.	26/02/2024	19/03//2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	26/250
2	23/2024	Repairing and Refurbishment of Grid Station Doors and Rolling Shutter Doors in South & North Batinah & Al Buraimi Governorates.	04/03/2024	02/04/2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	26/250
3	24/2024	Construction of Wadi Protections for Overhead Line Tower Foundations and Underground Cable Corridor in Muscat Governorate.	04/03/2024	02/04/2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	52/500
4	26/2024	Supply and Installation of Maintenance Free Self-Dehydrating Breathers for Power & Earthing Transformers at Muscat Governorate Grid Stations.	04/03/2024	02/04/2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	26/250
5	27/2024	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of HVAC Package Units (30 Tons) and Standalone Air Conditioning Units (05 Tons) in Muscat Governorate Grid Stations with AMC.	04/03/2024	02/04/2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	52/500
6	28/2024	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of HVAC Package Units (30 Tons) & (5 Tons) in Al Batinah Governorates Grid Stations.	04/03/2024	02/04/2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	105/-
7	29/2024	Provides Consultancy Services (Design and Supervision) for Solar Systems at the OETC Offices.	04/03/2024	02/04/2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	52/500
8	30/2024	Supply and Installation of Transformer Airbags (Air Cell) and Rupture Relays for OETC Grid Stations in the Governorates of Al Batinah and Musandam.	04/03/2024	02/04/2024	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	26/250

Participation	Interested Companies may obtain Tender Document with the necessity Apply on E-tendering
Buying the Tender	By E-Tendering System.
Fees	Against non-refundable payment as mentioned above against each set of document. (Payment Through Bank Transfer), SMEs are exempted from tender's fees.
The deadline for clarification	Before (21) Days from bid submission date.
Submission	The submission of hard copy will be only for Bid Bond & other documents by E-Tendering
Terms and conditions	• Specifying the name of the Company or whatever refers to in the Bid Guarantee Envelope. • The bid should be valid for not less than (90) days from bid submission date. • The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the bid value and should be valid for (90) days from bid submission date, addressed to Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC). Small & Medium Enterprises are exempted from the submission of 1% of the bid bond. • Any bid not comply with the required guarantee, will not be accepted.
Offer	The bid bond should be submitted in Tender Box No. (1) at the company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission of the Tenders.
Company Address	**Road No: 2153 - Building No. 423 0 Block No: 321 -** **Contact Details: 99242969, 93515198, 99105413, 91491551, 99849517**
Email Website	**tenders@omangrid.com** **www.omangrid.com / link of E-Tendering System** **https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx**

OETCOMAN

SPORTS

Al Nahda beat Al Riffa, reach AFC Cup West Zone final

Oman's Al Nahda wrapped up the victory two minutes into the second half of extra-time

MUSCAT: Oman's Al Nahda beat Bahrain's Al Riffa 3-1 after extra-time on Monday to wrap up a 4-2 aggregate victory in the AFC Cup 2023/24 West Zonal semi-final at the Sultan Qaboos Sport Complex.

They will face either Iraq's Al Kahrabaa Club or Al Ahed FC of Lebanon in the two-leg West Zonal final in April.

The hosts looked to get a foothold in the game from the first minute, but Al Riffa were able to defend resolutely and soak up the early pressure. After the opening exchanges in favour of Al Nahda, it was the visitors who took control of the first half.

Al Riffa's first real opening was a glorious opportunity on the half hour mark. An in-swinging corner found Jaco unmarked in the box, but the Brazilian couldn't guide his header on target.

However, a few minutes later the visitors were the first to find the back of the net. Al Nahda failed to clear the ball and Al Riffa pounced.

Jassim Al Shaikh threaded a neat ball through to Ali Hasan Isa, whose tremendous strike found the far right hand top corner to put his team in front.

Al Nahda came out fighting in the second half and before the 60th minute mark, they had drawn level.

A long ball over the top from Junior Ngede found Walter Bwalya in behind the defence, and the Congolese forward hit a superb striker on the half volley into the far corner, where Mahmood Al Ajmi could do nothing about it.

It was almost the perfect response from Al Riffa, who once again looked to play Jaco in on goal with a wide cross. However, his powerful header struck the post and he couldn't keep the rebound down.

Al Nahda almost turned the game on its head when substitute Issam Al Sabhi's shot from inside the box was well saved by Al Ajmi, who was able to prevent Inters Gui from tapping in from close range on the follow up.

Neither side could make the breakthrough within 90 minutes, but four minutes into extra-time Al Nahda were in front for the first time. Al Sabhi was played through on goal who attempted to lift the ball over the goalkeeper. It was wide of the mark but Hammoud Al Saadi found himself in the right place to head home from close range.

The hosts wrapped up the victory two minutes into the second half of extra-time. Al Sabhi assisted the second, and now he got his name on the scoresheet. He timed his run to perfection, pinched the ball away from the goalkeeper and rolled the ball into the back of the net. [With inputs from www.the-afc.com]

FORMULA ONE

To finish on a high would be a dream, says Lewis Hamilton ahead of final

LONDON: The seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton has called it "the greatest honour" if he could assist Mercedes return to the top of Formula One in his final season with the Silver Arrows before joining Ferrari.

Hamilton stunned the F1 world at the beginning of this month when he announced that he would be leaving Mercedes at the conclusion of the season to join the Italian team for the 2025 Formula One season on a multi-year contract.

"I feel the most motivated and focused I've ever been. I mean every year you come back and you're like 'I'm fitter than ever' and all these different things but I genuinely feel I've put more work and more time and more focus into preparation this year," Hamilton said in an interview released by Mercedes from their Silverstone car launch as quoted by Sky Sports.

"I never thought that at this point in my life that I would have hunger like I do right now and to finish on a high with this team, it would be a dream," he added.

"We've gone through a whole heap together so to finish on a high it would be the greatest honour to be able to help them to get back to the top," said the seven-time world champion.

Hamilton and Mercedes have secured their positions in history during an incredible association since the British driver joined the team from McLaren in 2013, with the 39-year-old becoming statistically the most successful driver of all time.

Earlier, the legendary Formula One driver said that it has been a crazy few days for him, opening up about his shocking move for the first time since announcing the switch.

Taking to X, Hamilton said that 11 years with Mercedes will come to an end in 2025, as he is looking forward to starting a new journey with the Ferrari.

"It's been a crazy few days which have been filled with a whole range of emotions. But as you all now know, after an incredible 11 years at Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team, the time has come for me to start a new chapter in my life and I will be joining Scuderia Ferrari in 2025," Hamilton wrote on X.

The British driver said that driving in red for Scuderia Ferrari has been his "childhood dream".

"I feel incredibly fortunate, after achieving things with Mercedes that I could only have dreamed of as a kid, that I now have the chance to fulfil another childhood dream. Driving in Ferrari red..."

"Mercedes has been a huge part of my life since I was 13 years old, so this decision has been the hardest I've ever had to make. I'm incredibly proud of all that we've achieved together and I'm very grateful for the hard work and dedication of everyone I have worked with over the years and of course Toto, for his friendship, guidance and leadership. Together we have won titles, broken records and become the most successful Driver-Team partnership in F1 history. And of course I cannot forget Niki who was a huge supporter and who I still miss everyday," he added.

Hamilton is regarded as the most successful driver in Formula One history, with seven world championships, 103 race victories, 104 pole positions, 197 podium finishes, and nearly 4,600 points. -ANI

CRICKET FEST 2024

Ruwi Smashers emerge as the champions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The first ever Muscat KMCC Trikaripur Constituency Cricket Fest 2024 concluded successfully as the organised committee orchestrated a thrilling finale, where Ruwi Smashers emerged victorious against Asfandyar X1.

This prestigious tournament, which consisted of 16 teams, displayed remarkable cricketing skills and set the foundation for what is expected to be an annual event.

The semifinals were intense, featuring clashes between Ruwi Smashers and Aldaam, and Asfandyar X1 against UPC Oman.

The final battle between Ruwi Smashers and Asfandyar X1 added a captivating chapter, with Ruwi Smashers displaying exceptional skills to claim the championship.

Shanid of Ruwi Smashers was bestowed with the 'Man of the Series' award for his stellar all-round performance.

Additionally, he secured the 'Best Bowler' title, showcasing his prowess on the field. The title of 'Best Batsman' was awarded to Umar Aslam of Asfandyar XI for his outstanding contributions throughout the tournament.

Conducted across four grounds, the cricket fest provided an electrifying experience for both players and spectators.

FORMER ENGLAND SKIPPER

Yashasvi hasn't learned from you: Nasser to Duckett on his comment

RAJKOT: Former England skipper Nasser Hussain has responded emphatically to Ben Duckett's comments on India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal's aggressive batting.

Duckett asserted that Jaiswal played an aggressive style of cricket as a result of England's much-discussed Bazball approach in the game's purest form.

Jaiswal's attacking approach has yielded runs in tons for him across the three Tests played so far in the five-match series between India and England. However, Duckett remarked that England deserve "some credit" for the way Jaiswal has adopted an attacking brand of cricket in Tests. The 29-year-old England batter has faced plenty of backlash for the comment.

Speaking about Jaiswal's effort after the third day's play, Duckett stated, "When you see players from the opposition playing like that, it almost feels like we should take some credit that they're playing differently than how other people play Test cricket."

The opening batsman's opinion did not sit well with ex-England captain Hussain, who chastised Duckett for his statements and urged England players to "self-reflect" when it comes to supporting 'Bazball'.

"He's not learnt from you. He's learnt from his upbringing, all the hard yards he had to put in growing up. If anything, lads, look at him and learn from him. I hope there's a little bit of self-introspection going on. Otherwise it becomes a cult - and, at times, Bazball and this regime has been described as such, where you cannot criticise within or externally," Hussain told Sky Sports.

Jaiswal has scored the most runs in the series so far, with 545 in six innings at an average of 109. The left-hander scored double-centuries in consecutive Tests and finished unbeaten on 214 in Rajkot. -ANI

130 PARTICIPANTS

Oman Open Tennis Championship competitions reach decisive stage

MUSCAT: The Oman Open Tennis Championship competitions reached the decisive stage after stiff competition in the past few days among 130 participants from the men's, women's and veterans at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

In the men's singles category, Italian player Gampaolo won over the Syrian player Joma 6-1, 7-5 in under men's 50 category and qualified for the quarter-finals.

In the mixed doubles quarter-finals, Oche and Anaam Al-Mas won over the doubles pair Jacqueline and Sunday As 6-3 and 6-2.

In the under 14 boys, Waleed Al Hasmi defeated Anas Vays 6-1 and 6-2.

In the 18-year-old boys category, Advey Kapoor advanced to the quarter-finals by beating Manraj 7-6 (3-6, 10-7). Four-year-old Sivan defeated Ratish Andak 6-0 and 6-0 and the Lebanese team Faten defeated Turkish player Serpil 6-1 and 6-1.

Mohammed Al Falahi, the assistant general referee, said that the OTA tournament commenced amidst much anticipation and excitement.

With top players showing their prowess on the courts, the tournament has unfolded into a spectacle of skill , determination and sportsmanship

Despite encountering a few setbacks in the form of minor injuries to some players in the men's draw, the resilience and professionalism of players and organisers have ensured seamless continuation of the event.

"It is imperative to extend my gratitude to the Oman Tennis Federation for entrusting me with the responsibility of organising and officiating this prestigious tournament," added Mohammed Al Falahi.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by April 2024 reaching $82.77, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 51 cents from the price of Monday, which was $82.26. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,581.51 points, down by 1.04 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.46 per cent at 446.18 points. Al Batinah Power, up 9.09 per cent, was the top gainer while, Dhofar Generating, down 6.38 per cent, was the top loser. >B2

Protection dams, government jetty opened at Port of Duqm

The berths are divided into two areas, one for military authorities and the other for civil uses and gates and roads are separating each area from the other

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Dr Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz), presided over the inauguration ceremony of the newly constructed government berth at the Port of Duqm. The event, attended by government and private sector dignitaries, marks a significant milestone in bolstering the port's capabilities and infrastructure.

Eng. Ahmed bin Ali bin Issa Akaak, Acting CEO of Sezad, stated during the opening ceremony that the project to protect Sezad fell within the scope of protection from flood risks and drainage of surface water resulting from potential rainfall, thereby offering the maximum protection for large projects, facilities, and residents. The dam lakes were designed to accommodate the storage of about 50 million cubic meters of water and secure its access to the sea through drainage channels that were created earlier.

Akaak explained that Sezad celebrates also the completion of the infrastructure works at the government berth in Duqm Port, which is roughly one kilometre long and is divided into two areas — one designated as a berth for military authorities and the other for civil uses. Gates and roads are separating each area from the other.

Wadi Jurf and Wadi Saay protection dams project

Wadi Jurf Dam is roughly 19.4 metres tall and 1600 metres long. Its base is about 100 metres wide, and its thickness gets thinner as it gets higher, ending in an 8-meter-wide dam body at the top. The dam lake has an estimated storage capacity of 32.8 million cubic metres of water.

Wadi Saay Dam has a height of approximately 16.4 metres, a length of 3665 metres, and a base width of 100 metres. The intended capacity of the dam lake was 17 million cubic metres of water.

3 water drainage channels

The flood protection system in Duqm includes 3 channels to discharge surface water safely from dams to the sea: Wadi Dangertch-annel, Wadi Jurf dam channel, and Wadi Saay dam channel.

Drainage channels

The drainage channels have been thoughtfully chosen and planned to align with the wadis' surface runoff as well as the volume of flow from the dams and sub-wadis that empty into the main wadis beneath the dams and the three channels.

The Wadi Dangart canal is 11km long and varies in width from 40 meters at its highest point to 100 meters at its seaward outlet. The Wadi Saay channel is approximately 9km long and 320 meters wide at its confluence with the Jurf channel.

Jurf Channel

Flowing from the west, the Jurf Channel collects the waters of Wadi Ashnan, Wadi Jurf, and a few tiny valleys and reefs west of Sezad before emptying into the sea. The channel stretches approximately 12 kilometres in length and 450 meters in width at its widest point, which is at the mouth on the shore of the Duqm Sea, to 750 metres.

Infrastructure works at government berth at Port of Duqm

The government berth project at the Port of Duqm includes a berth for government agencies divided into 5 zones distributed for government uses and facilities, including the Royal Yachts, the Royal Navy of Oman, the Coast Guard of the Royal Oman Police, the Sultan's Special Force, and the fifth zone designated for civil, commercial, and tourist uses.

The project also includes a security gate for the administration, housing, and maintenance workshops, boats, related equipment and firefighting systems in addition 2 helipad for helicopters.

EMBRACING PROGRESS

Maisarah Islamic Banking rebrands to Dhofar Islamic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Maisarah Islamic Banking Services, a leading financial institution dedicated to providing Sharia-compliant banking solutions, is proud to announce the unveiling of its new rebranding to Dhofar Islamic, with a new visual identity.

The new identity was announced during a ceremony held yesterday at the JW Marriott Hotel - Muscat under the patronage of Dr Mohammed bin Said Al Maamari - Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, in the presence of a number of officials in the Sultanate of Oman and members of the executive management of BankDhofar and Dhofar Islamic. This strategic move marks a significant milestone in the bank's 10-year journey, reflecting a harmonious fusion of heritage and modernity.

The new logo represents Dhofar Islamic's evolution from a single star to a galaxy of enhanced capabilities. Each star in the constellation symbolises our core values, emphasizing ethical banking, transparency, and customer-centricity. It reflects the Bank's commitment to customers to offer the best in class products and services

This rebranding is more than just a change in name; but it is about redefining the value proposition to its valued customers. This exercise started almost 18 months ago when Dhofar Islamic doubled its branch and ATM/CDM network, enhanced its product propositions and customer offering, trained staff on service values and enhanced its digital experience apart from building a strong foundation for our wealth offerings.

Speaking on the occasion, Kamal Uddin Al Maraza, GM and Chief Officer of Dhofar Islamic Banking said, "Our rebranding to Dhofar Islamic is a forward-looking step that reflects our deep connection with the Islamic values.

"It is not just a change in name but a commitment to our heritage, our customers, and our dedication to providing exceptional banking experiences. The rebranding positions Dhofar Islamic as a dynamic and forward-thinking institution, committed to providing innovative and ethical financial solutions. It reinforces our presence in the competitive landscape with a refreshed identity that resonates with our values and vision."

Existing customers can anticipate a smooth transition as we execute a meticulous and orderly process. We are committed to engaging customers with utmost care to ensure a seamless experience. The new brand strongly emphasizes the bank's dedication to delivering excellent service, rooted in ethical banking, transparency, and customer-centricity. This identity reflects our evolution in alignment with Shari'a principles.

Currently, Dhofar Islamic & BankDhofar's national wide network consists of more than 112 branches and three corporate branches. The network also includes more than 320 ATMs, CDMs, FFMs and MFKs.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

Tethys Oil signs drilling rig contract for Block 58 exploration well in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil is continuing its operational activities on Block 58, onshore Oman. The preparations for the drilling of the first exploration well, Kunooz-1, in the Fahd area are ongoing and a rig contract has been signed with Gulf Oilfield Services.

The contract for the rig was signed with Gulf Oilfield Services (GOS) during a signature ceremony. Signatory on behalf of Tethys Oil was Dr. Fredrik Robelius, CTO and General Manager of Block 58. The Signatory of GOS was CEO Ali Al Busaidi. The ceremony was attended by Magnus Nordin, Tethys Oil's Managing Director.

Gulf Oilfield Services is fully owned by Kuwait Drilling Company (KDC) and has been drilling in Block 7 Oman, contracted with Hydrocarbon Finder E&P, utilising heavy rigs since May 2022. The company has achieved zero lost time incidents (LTI), including one full year of achieving goal zero milestones. In less than two years, the company has managed to achieve more than 60 percent Omanisation. KDC as the parent company of GOS, is one of the first drilling contractors in the region and has been drilling oil and gas wells since the early 1960s with a comprehensive experience in all types of wells, from shallow to deep wells. GOS is proud to contribute and to be a vital part of Oman's Oil & Gas sector development.

"We are very pleased to have signed a drilling rig contract with GOS for the first exploration well on the Kunooz prospect as they have a strong track record of safe and efficient drilling operations. We plan to commence drilling on the high-potential prospect, estimated to hold unrisked recoverable prospective resources of more than 100 mmbo, in mid-April," said Magnus Nordin, Managing Director of Tethys Oil.

Tethys Oil is an oil exploration and production company with a focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The company's core area is the Sultanate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58. Tethys Oil has net working interest 2P reserves of 21.7 mmbo and net working interest 2C Contingent Resources of 15.5 mmbo and had an average oil production of 8,818 barrels per day during 2023.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Batinah Power, up 9.09 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 6.38 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,581.51 points, down by 1.04 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.46 per cent at 446.18 points. Al Batinah Power, up 9.09 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 6.38 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Phoenix Power were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while OQGN were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 950 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR1.57 million, with more than 10.38 million shares changing hands. Out of 47 traded securities, 14 advanced, 21 declined, and 12 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR278,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR225,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR53,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,232.50 points, down 0.98 per cent. Prices of Al Batinah Development Company, Al Madina Investments, Al Anwar Investment were up by 3.26 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 1.41 per cent respectively. Prices of National Bank Oman, Ominvest, Oman United Insurance, Global Financial Investments, Bank Muscat were down by 5.66 per cent, 2.05 per cent, 1.82 per cent, 1.67 per cent, 1.11 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,503.46 points, up 0.14 per cent. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Gulf International Chemicals, Al Anwar Ceramics, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 6.59 per cent, 6.15 per cent, 1.12 per cent, 0.43 per cent respectively. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products, Galfar Engineering, Raysut Cement were down by 1.42 per cent, 1.32 per cent, 0.81 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.06 per cent before closing at 1,700.20 points. Prices of Al Batinah Power, Al Suwadi Power, Al Jazeera Services, SMN Power Holding, Oman National Engineering were up by 9.09 per cent, 9.09 per cent, 6.99 per cent, 2.30 per cent, 0.84 per cent respectively.

Prices of Dhofar Generating, Phoenix Power, Muscat Gases, National Gas, Renaissance Services were down by 6.38 per cent, 3.51 per cent, 3.00 per cent, 2.53 per cent, 2.36 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,637.25	4,568.28	4,581.51	4,629.68	-48.17	-1.04
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,309.23	7,219.30	7,232.50	7,304.14	-71.64	-0.98
Industry Index	5,531.97	5,503.08	5,503.46	5,495.87	7.59	0.14
Services Index	1,718.21	1,696.79	1,700.20	1,699.16	1.04	0.06
MSX Shariah Index	447.22	444.14	446.18	444.14	2.05	0.46
MSX TR INDEX	6,114.97	6,024.02	6,041.46	6,104.99	-63.53	-1.04
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,975.71	7,877.58	7,891.99	7,970.15	-78.17	-0.98
SERVICES TR IDX	1,917.02	1,893.12	1,896.92	1,895.77	1.16	0.06
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	5,909.52	5,878.66	5,879.07	5,870.95	8.11	0.14
FIXED INCOME INDEX	992.89	992.89	992.89	992.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,382,091	1,568,179	950	23,795,697,743	14	21	12	47

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	5,000	1,196	4	0.230	0.245	0.230	0.245	0.229	0.016	6.987	0.245	0.226	0.245	0.100	14,995,047
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	246,276	21,769	16	0.088	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.087	0.002	2.299	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.100	17,767,568
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,266,826	228,352	93	0.179	0.183	0.179	0.180	0.178	0.002	1.124	0.180	0.180	0.182	0.100	39,600,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	137,400	16,488	7	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.119	0.001	0.840	0.120	0.120	0.122	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	16,000	4,879	5	0.304	0.305	0.304	0.305	0.305	0.000	0.000	0.305	0.304	0.305	0.100	100,916,177
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	100,000	5,700	5	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.057	0.062	0.100	20,299,256
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	75,000	5,350	7	0.072	0.072	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071	0.072	0.100	6,390,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	3,706	556	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.137	0.150	0.100	449,452,715
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	155,589	168,174	49	1.089	1.089	1.080	1.080	1.080	0.000	0.000	1.080	1.080	1.082	0.100	810,000,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	953,000	104,998	45	0.110	0.111	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.100	601,467,735
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	54,464	4,793	4	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	10,000	1,710	1	0.171	0.171	0.171	0.171	0.171	0.000	0.000	0.171	0.170	0.175	0.100	9,405,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	736,959	198,398	114	0.270	0.270	0.267	0.267	0.270	-0.003	-1.111	0.267	0.267	0.272	0.100	2,004,208,016
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	15,000	4,155	2	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.281	-0.004	-1.423	0.277	0.273	0.277	0.100	34,596,735
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	276,334	93,868	59	0.345	0.345	0.334	0.340	0.345	-0.005	-1.449	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.100	221,321,038
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	182,524	10,956	9	0.061	0.061	0.059	0.059	0.060	-0.001	-1.667	0.059	0.059	0.060	0.100	11,800,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	55,100	14,917	5	0.280	0.280	0.270	0.270	0.275	-0.005	-1.818	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.100	27,000,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	6,200	2,672	2	0.435	0.435	0.430	0.430	0.439	-0.009	-2.050	0.430	0.430	0.482	0.100	287,397,133
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	17,610	7,291	18	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.424	-0.010	-2.358	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.100	97,873,740
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	212,670	53,903	31	0.250	0.255	0.245	0.250	0.265	-0.015	-5.660	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.100	406,486,589
Total	20	4,525,658	950,123	477												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	37,290	2,237	4	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.055	0.005	9.091	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.100	40,493,246
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	366,410	21,985	12	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.055	0.005	9.091	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	42,864,380
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	40,465	8,041	11	0.197	0.200	0.194	0.194	0.182	0.012	6.593	0.194	0.197	0.197	0.100	15,792,134
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	9,300	642	5	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.065	0.004	6.154	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.100	1,449,000
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO.	100,000	9,500	2	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.092	0.003	3.261	0.095	0.089	0.098	0.100	2,850,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	29,821	1,403	8	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.001	2.128	0.048	0.047	0.050	0.100	4,080,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	363,423	26,001	18	0.072	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.071	0.001	1.408	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.100	14,832,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	12,870	1,561	4	0.122	0.123	0.121	0.123	0.122	0.001	0.820	0.123	0.122	0.123	0.100	62,496,736
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	2,000	464	1	0.232	0.232	0.232	0.232	0.231	0.001	0.433	0.232	0.230	0.238	0.100	10,617,665
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	10,900	15,260	1	1.400	1.400	1.400	1.400	1.400	0.000	0.000	1.400	1.400	0.000	0.100	70,000,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	22,350	1,610	2	0.074	0.074	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.071	0.073	0.100	1,157,231
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	500	425	2	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.000	0.000	0.850	0.800	0.850	0.100	52,083,750
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	110,041	13,479	17	0.125	0.125	0.122	0.122	0.123	-0.001	-0.813	0.122	0.122	0.123	0.100	24,400,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	37,280	3,678	6	0.101	0.101	0.098	0.098	0.099	-0.001	-1.010	0.098	0.098	0.100	0.100	93,548,051
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	427,264	40,702	35	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.095	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	237,029	74,533	39	0.317	0.317	0.312	0.313	0.317	-0.004	-1.262	0.313	0.313	0.313	0.100	241,072,600
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	27,932	4,211	11	0.152	0.152	0.150	0.150	0.152	-0.002	-1.316	0.150	0.145	0.150	0.100	30,447,967
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,859,940	269,164	217	0.145	0.146	0.144	0.144	0.146	-0.002	-1.370	0.144	0.144	0.145	0.100	623,609,844
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	5,130	605	2	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.120	-0.002	-1.667	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	8,911,596
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	44,000	2,024	6	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.047	-0.001	-2.128	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.100	7,360,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	920	71	1	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.079	-0.002	-2.532	0.077	0.077	0.079	0.100	6,545,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	5,000	485	1	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.100	-0.003	-3.000	0.097	0.098	0.105	0.100	2,910,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	1,968,468	110,349	48	0.058	0.058	0.055	0.055	0.057	-0.002	-3.509	0.055	0.055	0.056	0.100	80,443,080
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	105,004	4,587	9	0.045	0.045	0.043	0.044	0.047	-0.003	-6.383	0.044	0.043	0.044	0.100	9,778,560
Total	24	5,823,337	613,017	462												

UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

Oman Post hosts director-general of UPU

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Post, the national postal operator, hosted Masahiko Metoki, Director General of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). This high-profile visit, which came in parallel to the first Arab Postal Leaders Forum held in Muscat, highlighted Oman Post's pivotal role in the international postal community and its commitment to global postal service standards.

Metoki's visit included a tour of the state-of-the-art operations and fulfilment centre of Oman Post & Asyad Express and was attended by Sheikh Ibrahim bin Sultan Al Hosni, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Oman Post & Asyad Express, and the management team.

"Oman Post has consistently played a vital role in enhancing postal services and the logistics ecosystem," said Sheikh Ibrahim bin Sultan Alhosni.

"This was the perfect occasion for us to showcase our achievements in the postal service, particularly in light of Oman's digital transformation and global connectivity initiatives as part of Oman Vision 2040. We remain committed to driving excellence in mail operations, trackability, e-commerce facilitation, and customer service, as well as upholding the standards advocated by the UPU," he added.

Oman Post places significance on its partnership with the Universal Postal Union by reaffirming its commitment to meeting international postal service standards and facilitating seamless international mail exchanges. By adhering to the Universal Service Obligation, Oman Post makes postal services available to the public with the required quality at a reasonable price. Additionally, Oman Post's capabilities and readiness to provide International Financial Services (IFS) showcase its role to become a facilitator of essential financial services that transcend geopolitical barriers. This will enable customers at post offices to benefit from financial services, including international money transfers to any country within the UPU network.

Oman Post, part of Asyad Group, has significantly enhanced its postal services to meet international standards, a commitment that has been recognised through prestigious awards. Notably, it was ranked the first in Express Mail Service (EMS) globally and the third in customer experience globally. Additionally, Oman Post was lauded with the Excellence Award in the Postal Development Index and received the International Addressing Standard Certificate, underscoring its dedication to operational excellence and service quality.

APPOINTMENT

Alizz Islamic Bank appoints Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Rashid Al Gharbi as Sharia Supervisory board member

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Aizz Islamic Bank recently announced the appointment of Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Gharbi as the newest member of the Sharia Supervisory Board.

This comes as part of the bank's dedication and commitment to providing Sharia-compliant banking solutions by strengthening the Sharia Supervisory Board with leading Islamic scholars.

Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Gharbi is an academic at Sultan Qaboos University. He has presented many studies in Islamic Sharia and conducted academic research on financial transactions within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence. Sheikh Dr Mohammed Al Gharbi holds a doctorate in the field of Islamic sciences from Al-Zaytoona University in Tunisia, a master's degree from the University of Jordan, and a bachelor's degree from the Sharia Judiciary, Preaching and Guidance Institute in the Sultanate of Oman

The Sharia Supervisory Board of Alizz Islamic Bank includes in its membership scholars distinguished by extensive knowledge of Islamic Sharia. It is chaired by Sheikh Dr. Essam Khalaf Al-Enezi and also includes Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Subhi Ahmed Ayadi and Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim bin Nasser bin Salem Al-Sawafi as members of the board. The Sharia Supervisory Board of Alizz Islamic Bank reviews all Islamic banking agreements, documents, products and services launched by the bank.

Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Gharbi is an academic at Sultan Qaboos University

The board includes members who are knowledgeable about Sharia law and transaction jurisprudence in particular. They work in accordance with the Central Bank of Oman and with the Higher Sharia Supervisory Authority to provide the bank customers with peace of mind by offering products and services that are approved by fatwas and resolutions. This comes as part of the efforts to achieve the goals of Islamic banking, which is to provide customers with financing solutions that are consistent with their beliefs and with full transparency and clarity.

The Sharia supervisory bodies through their knowledge and experience play a key role towards the growth of this sector locally and globally.

Alizz Islamic Bank aims to provide a banking experience that is exemplified by superior customer service that is guided by the directives of the members of the Sharia Supervisory Board.

DATA

Russia bolsters copper sales to China, Turkey to offset decline in EU exports

NEW DELHI: In a manoeuvre to counterbalance the significant decline in copper exports to the European Union (EU), Russia has intensified its sales to China and Turkey, according to an analysis of data from S&P Global Market Intelligence's (GMI) Global Trade Analytics Suite.

The move comes amidst geopolitical tensions and economic shifts triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has disrupted trade dynamics and prompted Russia to seek alternative markets for its copper exports.

The analysis revealed that approximately half of the copper tonnage that Russia could no longer export to the EU, totalling around 238,600 metric tonnes, found new markets in China and Turkey.

Notably, these two countries received 111,580 metric tonnes more than they did in 2022, indicating a significant surge in Russian copper imports.

The decline in Russian copper exports to the EU was stark, with imports of refined copper plummeting by 79 per cent in 2023, amounting to just 62,372 metric tonnes. This sharp downturn contrasted sharply with previous years. -ANI

LIFESTYLE

YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION:

RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

When a person talks about killing himself or feeling hopeless or trapped, it should always be taken seriously.

Children and teens can be moody, but when signs of mental health troubles last for weeks, don't assume it's just a passing mood.

Suicide is a leading cause of death among U.S. children, teens and young adults ages 10-24, and rates have been on the rise. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all teens be screened for suicide risk starting at age 12.

While no single cause has been identified, suicide is often preceded by depression that is undiagnosed or untreated. Most youth show some warning signs or behaviour changes in advance. Families and their doctors can work together to identify if a child or teen is struggling with depression, anxiety or substance use, all of which increase the risk of suicide.

"Suicide is complex, but often preventable," said Janet Lee, MD, FAAP. "When a person talks about killing himself or feeling hopeless or trapped, it should always be taken seriously."

Don't be afraid to ask your child or teen to talk about their mental health or if they're contemplating suicide. Asking directly is the best way to know what your child is thinking. Studies show that it is safe to ask about suicide risk and that asking the question will not put the idea into their head. Note that your child may initially turn away or be silent, but actions may speak louder than words. Watch for major changes in your child's sleep patterns, appetite and social activities. Self-isolation, especially for kids who usually enjoy hanging out with friends or participating in activities, can signal serious difficulties.

"Your goal should be to create a safe space where your child can trust you to listen and express concern without judgment or blame," Dr. Lee said.

If your child says something like "I want to die" or "I don't care anymore," some suggested responses are:

- "I'm sorry you are feeling this way—can you share a bit more?"
- "It sounds like you're in tremendous pain and you can't see a way out."
- "Maybe you're wondering how life got this complicated and difficult."
- "Right now, you're not sure of the answers to the problems you're facing."
- "You must really, really be hurting inside to consider ending your life."

Common causes of stress that increase the risk of suicide include major life-changing events, including the loss of a loved one to death, divorce, deployment or incarceration. Bullying, discrimination, racism and stigma surrounding mental heath or suicide can also increase risks. Children who have witnessed or are suffering violence or domestic abuse, engage in self-harming behavior or experienced a suicide in their school or friend group are also at higher risk of suicide.

Research has shown there are protective factors that help reduce the risk of suicide, including ready access to health care. Maintaining close connections to family, friends and one's community is also important.

Parents and guardians should limit access to lethal means, such as removing firearms and locking up medications or other potential poisons or weapons in the home. Half of youth suicides occur with firearms—and suicide attempts with firearms are almost always fatal. Teens and adolescents who attempt suicide with a firearm almost always use a gun found in their house, studies find.

"Suicide is often impulsive and a moment of crisis can escalate quickly," Dr. Lee said. "If your child is considering suicide, call or text 988 or chat on 988lifeline.org right away. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, as well as prevention and crisis resources."

As children grow and become more independent, it can be more challenging to know what they are thinking and feeling. However, if you see signs that your child's mental health is under threat, it's important to tune in and take action. -StatePoint

SPORTS

Messi clarifies why he didn't play against Hong Kong Team

The eighth-time Ballon d'Or winner shared a video statement on the Chinese social media website Weibo and explained that he wanted to play, otherwise he wouldn't have travelled to China and Japan

NEW DELHI: Weeks after Inter Miami's friendly match against the Hong Kong Team, the legendary Argentine footballer Lionel Messi clarified why he could not take part in the game after his name was attached to false narratives.

The eighth-time Ballon d'Or winner shared a video statement on the Chinese social media website Weibo and explained that he wanted to play otherwise, he wouldn't have travelled to China and Japan.

"I've read and heard a lot of things about what happened after the match in Hong Kong. That's why I wanted to make this video to give the real explanation and avoid reading false reports. As everyone knows, I always want to play. I want to play in every match. I heard that I didn't want to play because of politics and many other things that have nothing to do with this. If that were the case I wouldn't have traveled to Japan or to China like I have so many times in my career," Messi was quoted by Goal.com as saying.

Messi added that he "always had a very close relationship with China" and played a lot of matches in the country with Barcelona and Argentina. The Argentine further added that he had an "inflammation" in his adductor for which he couldn't take part in the game.

"I've always had a very close relationship with China. I've done so many things with China like interviews, (friendly) matches, events and games with Barcelona and the Argentina national team. Like I said during the press conference that I gave: I had inflammation in my adductor and I couldn't play. I felt it in the first game that I played in Saudi Arabia and I tried to play in the second game (in Saudi) but it felt worse," he added.

After the Argentine great failed to take part in the game due to "discomfort," the football fans who were present in the stadium to get a glimpse of the 'greatest footballer of all time' burst into anger, and this reached the politicians of the region. Following that, Beijing said that they would not hold Argentina's friendly clash in March.

"I tried the day before to take part in that training session to be there for all those people. I did what I could and I took part in the clinic with all those kids, but I honestly couldn't play because I felt discomfort," he added.

"After a few days had passed I felt a little better and that's why I played a bit in the friendly in Japan in order to continue improving physically and continue to prepare for what's coming next for me. I had to play to get some rhythm back. I've already said this but I felt it was important to repeat it after everything that has been said. I want to send my love to the people of China, a (feeling) I've always had with them. I hope we can see each other again soon," he concluded.

In the friendly fixture against the Hong Kong Team, Messi-less Inter Miami clinched a 4-1 win after Robert Taylor, Lawson Sunderland, Leonardo Campana, and Rya Sailor made their names on the scoresheet.

Miami will start their Major League Soccer (MLS) campaign against Real Salt Lake on February 22 at DRV PNK Stadium.

FOOTBALL

Four things to know about Spain's La Liga matches

MADRID: Real Madrid dropped two points away to Rayo Vallecano, while Atletico Madrid claimed a convincing win and Barcelona rode their luck. Here are some things we learned this weekend in La Liga.

1. Real Madrid missing Rudiger

Although he would not be top of most people's list of key players, Real Madrid are suffering without central defender Antonio Rudiger in their team as the 1-1 draw away to Rayo Vallecano showed on Sunday.

The absence of the powerful defender after a collision in Madrid's game against Getafe just over two weeks ago has robbed them of a dominating presence in defense and also for attacking set-pieces, and they have suffered accordingly.

2. Barca ride their luck

FC Barcelona got lucky on Saturday as they won 2-1 away to relegation-threatened Celta Vigo thanks to two goals from Robert Lewandowski. The Pole's first effort was a lovely control and first-time shot, while his second was a twice-taken 97th-minute penalty after Celta goalkeeper Vicente Guaita had saved his first effort only for the VAR to show he had moved off his line.

Lewandowski kept his cool and give Barca a win they barely deserved, but the question is, why did the VAR allow his second effort to stand when two Barca players had clearly encroached into the penalty area?

3. Llorente impresses as Atletico score five

Marcos Llorente was the star of Atletico Madrid's 5-0 thrashing of Las Palmas on Saturday lunchtime. While the visitors produced an untypical defensive horror show, Llorente showed that when used correctly, his pace and power make him a potent threat.

Llorente's main strength is his ability to do a job in several different roles: from fullback to attacking midfield, but paradoxically his adaptability has also been a problem. The former Real Madrid player has often found himself switching position from one game to another, or used as a substitute who can cover in a variety of roles rather than in a settled position.

4. Mutually assured destruction for Granada and Almeria

Sunday's game between second-from-bottom Granada and bottom-of-the-table Almeria was tense and entertaining, with Granada looking for a win to give themselves a slight chance of avoiding relegation, while Almeria was searching for their first win of the season.

A 1-1 draw left both unhappy, with Almeria still winless, despite improving considerably in recent weeks, while Granada is still six points from safety. -Xinhua

FOOTBALL

Manchester City love to keep 'clean sheets', says Guardiola

NEW DELHI: Ahead of Manchester City's Premier League (PL) fixture against Brentford on Wednesday, head coach Pep Guardiola said that they want to keep more clean sheets in the league.

While speaking at the prematch press conference, Guardiola accepted that they wanted to concede a few goals and win more matches.

"We love to have clean sheets. All the teams want it, and we are not an exception. We want to concede few [but] at the end we want to win games. Sometimes you have periods where you defend well and concede goals, sometimes you don't concede," Guardiola was quoted by Manchester City's official website as saying.

The Catalan coach added that his main focus was to keep clean sheets from the day he arrived at the English club.

"Never since I arrived [at City] was I focused on clean sheets, clean sheets, clean sheets. The players know it but I don't go to them and say 'Today clean sheets, clean sheets, clean sheets. If you say 'clean sheets, clean sheets' they forget to play and forget defending and forget what they have to do," he added.

"What we have to do is play better and better and better and concede few and attack better and create more chances. This is my target every time. Every time I make a meeting with them or prepare for a game. The average to concede few chances is the most important thing from my point of view but when we concede goals, we have to improve it. The goal is avoidable and hopefully, next time it doesn't happen," he added.

City are in top form and haven't lost a single game in their previous five games. In their previous clash against Chelsea, City ended the game with a 1-1 draw at the Etihad Stadium. Guardiola's side hold 3rd place in the PL standings with 53 points after winning 16 of 24 matches. -ANI

CRICKET

Hasaranga joins elite club with 100 T20I wickets

DAMBULLA: Sri Lanka's prime spinner Wanindu Hasaranga joined the elite list with a massive career milestone, becoming just the second Sri Lankan to take 100 T20I wickets.

Hasaranga became the eleventh men's player overall and the second Sri Lankan bowler to reach 100 wickets in T20Is, after only Lasith Malinga.

The leg-spinner, who is currently the captain of the T20I team, accomplished the feat during the second T20I against Afghanistan at Dambulla.

Hasaranga has taken more wickets than any other bowler in men's T20Is since debuting in 2019.

Malinga was the only other Sri Lankan bowler with over 100 T20I wickets. Malinga reached the milestone in his 76th T20I, whilst Hasaranga did so in his 63rd, second quickest to 100 T20I wickets, after only Rashid Khan, who did so in 53 matches in 2021.

Hasaranga, who concluded with 2/19 in four overs at Dambulla on Monday, now has 101 wickets in 63 T20Is at an average of 15.36 and a strike rate of 6.78.

Sri Lanka defeated Afghanistan in the second T20I, taking a 2-0 lead in the three-match series. -ANI

CRICKET

England middle-order to blame for poor show

NEW DELHI: England is down by 2-1 during the ongoing series against India away from home and while the Three Lions have given Men in Blue a lot of headaches with their highly-attacking, positive and result-oriented 'Bazball' approach as compared to other recent visiting teams, it is the poor show by the middle-order that has separated both the sides in what has been a very closely-fought series in other aspects.

During the course of the series, the top-order consisting of openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett and number three Ollie Pope have frustrated India and its star bowlers Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Jasprit Bumrah. Indians have had to toil and earn their wickets after facing some serious counterattacks and hard-hitting stroke-making from the trio.

Duckett has been England's top run-scorer in the series and overall at number two. While he has disturbed the Indian bowlers with his brief but fiery cameos at the top, he has converted those into big scores too. In three matches, he has scored 288 runs at an average of 48.00 at a strike rate of 95.68, with one century and best score of 153.

Pope is the third-highest run-getter and played a masterclass knock of 196 in the first Hyderabad Test which England won by 28 runs, taking the hosts by a shock with his lengthy stay at crease and an array of unorthodox shots and sweeps. India could not win the Test despite a 190-run first innings lead and Pope took the game away from India single-handedly. In three matches, he scored 285 runs at an average of 47.5 and a strike rate of 65.66, with a century.

Crawley, under-fire just previous summer for a low-batting average and inconsistent run of scores, has been on a path of redemption since the last year's Ashes, where he top-scored for England with 480 runs in five matches at an average of 53.33. The attacking right-hander posted two remarkable half-centuries in the second Test, which England lost by 106 runs. In three matches, he has scored 226 runs in six innings at an average of 37.66 and a strike rate of over 67, with two half-centuries and best score of 76.

Three Lions

However, the English middle-order consisting of stars like Joe Root, Jonny Bairstow and skipper Ben Stokes has not clicked as expected. Root and Bairstow, the poster-boys of 'Bazball' across the fine run of Three Lions since mid 2022, have failed miserably.

Root has had a shockingly bad series, scoring 77 runs across six games at a poor average of 12.33, with the best score of 29. His strike rate of 49.04 suggests that despite the reverse scoop he has attempted so much on this tour, Indians have managed to put England's premier batter into a shell.

Bairstow, the big-armed right-hander willing to take on bowlers from ball one, has not set the cricketing world on fire either, not coming even remotely close to the 'Summer of Bairstow' he had back in 2022, scoring just 102 runs in six innings at an average of 17, with the best score of 37 at a strike rate of over 62.

Skipper Stokes has delivered in dosage, though not like the 'Crisis man' he is for Three Lions. India have not allowed Stokes to put out lengthy rescue acts, dousing the fire before it could get bigger. In three matches and six innings, he has scored 190 runs at an average of 31.66 and a strike rate of over 57, with a knock of 70 in first Test being his solitary fifty.

Wicketkeeper-batter Ben Foakes, England's best glovesman, often playing the supporting role in crucial, match-saving partnerships during the 'Bazball' era, has not delivered with the bat, scoring just 109 runs in six innings at an average of 18.16, with the best score of 36 and a strike rate of 41.92. -ANI

Go places with loved ones in Toyota Veloz

The Veloz makes an impressive mark with its fuel-efficient performance, easy manoeuvrability and ample interior space

MUSCAT: Toyota's crossover Veloz SUV is spacious, power-packed and built to take you and your loved ones places.

The Veloz makes an impressive mark with its fuel-efficient performance, easy manoeuvrability and ample interior space. The Veloz features three rows of seats that can comfortably accommodate seven passengers due to flexible configurations, to offer an exceptional ride. The vehicle's outstanding performance is ready to heighten the thrills and excitement in daily drives, while its enhanced safety features deliver added protection and peace of mind.

The Toyota Veloz is equipped with MacPherson strut-type front suspension, which provides linear and direct driving dynamics, while the rear is equipped with a new torsion beam suspension system. Drivers can experience three different driving modes with a choice of ECO, Sport, and Power modes to suit a variety of driving conditions and styles. The vehicle also boasts excellent manoeuvrability, with a 5.0-meter turning radius.

Powering the Veloz is a four-cylinder 1.5-liter capacity engine with 16-valve DOHC and dual VVT-i, which produces 104.6 horsepower and 138 Nm of torque with fuel consumption of 19.3 km/l. Paired with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) that simulates a seven-speed sequential shift transmission to deliver powerful, smooth acceleration from start-off and at low speeds, as well as quiet, efficient transmission at higher speeds with excellent fuel efficiency.

Upon entering the vehicle, passengers are welcomed by ambient lighting that complements the overall feel of the spacious cabin, which comes with a range of advanced and practical features. These include a 7-inch colour Multi-Information Display (MID), which is complemented by an 8-inch multimedia screen with Apple CarPlay® and Android AutoTM integration for seamlessly connected journeys.

The Toyota Veloz's three rows of seats can accommodate up to seven people, while the second and third rows can be folded together or individually for different layouts that provides passengers with more comfort and can carry more cargo, including longer items. Additional comforts include a 6-speaker sound system, a powerful automatic air conditioning system with rear control panel, rear sonar, and smart entry and start systems. Meanwhile, parents benefit from the added peace of mind with the ISOFIX safety system, which attaches baby seats securely.

As with any Toyota model, the vehicle comes complete with a comprehensive array of safety features. These include six SRS airbags (front airbags for the driver and passenger, side airbags for the front seats, and side-curtain airbags for all three rows of seats), Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electric Parking Brake (EPB) with Brake hold function, Emergency Stop Signal (ESS), Traction Control (TRC), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), Tire Pressure Warning System (TPWS), and many more.

FORUM

Zubair Corporation concludes Zubair Townhall 2024

MUSCAT: The Zubair Corporation successfully concluded the Zubair Townhall 2024.

The event, which saw a remarkable turnout of over 400 executives from varied sectors of the corporation, served as a platform for all employees to reflect on the accomplishments of 2023, and to engage in discussions regarding the corporation's future endeavours. Distinguished guests included Al Zubair bin Mohammed Al Zubair, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, esteemed members of the Board, and Niels Bormans, the Group CEO of The Zubair Corporation.

The forum commenced with a comprehensive presentation by the Group CEO, highlighting the previous year's achievements, sector-specific challenges, and outlining the strategic goals of The Zubair Corporation for the future. A power-packed discussion session followed, featuring insights from The Zubair Corporation Leadership Team. The panel took questions from attendees and highlighted programmes and future investments, encouraging employees to strive for further accomplishments.

The spotlight was then placed on the distribution of the Let's Go for GOLD awards by the Vice Chairman and GCEO. These were handed to outstanding employees as part of the initiative. The awards recognised exceptional performance and significant contributions to the Corporation's growth and success.

Addressing the audience, Al Zubair bin Mohammad AlZubair, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Zubair Foundation, expressed profound pride in the collective dedication and sincerity demonstrated by the Corporation's members. He emphasised the commitment to advancing towards business excellence and success, inviting everyone to join in this inspiring journey. Al Zubair concluded his remarks by urging optimism, persistence, and a focus on seizing available opportunities, reaffirming the commitment to upholding the highest standards across all operations.

Additionally, the Zubair Townhall 2024 featured a captivating lecture by renowned international keynote speaker James Taylor, titled "Supercreativity," emphasising the vital role of creativity in driving business development.

ART OF PERFUMERY

Amouage invites you to rediscover its Secret Garden and savour delicious pleasures of its latest creation Love Delight

MUSCAT: The universe of Amouage has always encompassed a breathtaking variety of landscapes. From the boundary-pushing territory of the Library Collection to the complex realm of the Exceptional Extraits, each facet of the House's creativity has reflected the numerous possibilities offered by the art of perfumery.

The Secret Garden Collection occupies a singular position in this rarefied space. Since its inception in 2016, it has been an invitation to enter the uniqueness of the Amouage fragrance aesthetic. With warmth and openness, the perfumes of the Collection have captured the true spirit of femininity in the modern woman. Now, having formed a distinct stylistic profile, Amouage's Secret Garden has been imagined, ready to embark on further journeys of creative exploration. To mark the occasion, a brand new composition, Love Delight, joins the Collection – a delicious creation that adds an alluring dimension to the quartet's expression of womanhood.

Temptation of Love Delight

From the moment they emerged, the aim of the Secret Garden scents has been clear — each Eau de Parfum has explored a facet of contemporary femininity by pairing a tantalisingly flavoursome accord with a distinctive floral note. "In the case of Love Delight, I absolutely knew I wanted to stay faithful to the idea at the core of all the Secret Garden perfumes," explains Chief Creative Officer, Renaud Salmon, "but I wanted to push the olfactory vocabulary into areas we had not really explored before."

To meet this challenge, Salmon turned to renowned Vice President Senior Perfumer Pascal Gaurin. Taking his cue from the richness of Arabian sweets — which layer generous quantities of crumbly pastry alongside nuts, orange blossom and rosewater —Gaurincreated an almost impossibly appetising accord that he and Salmon came to call 'Honey Glazed Pastry'. Shimmering with golden temptation, and calling to mind the gleam and texture of mouth-watering treats, it is exuberant and refined without ever resorting to simplistic sugariness. For the floral facet of Love Delight's personality, Gaurin turned to Heliotrope. With its aroma of warm almonds, as well as its suggestion of ripe cherries, it was a perfect fit with the addictiveness of the Honey Glazed Pastry Accord. The result is the most enigmatically lustrous member of the Secret Garden Collection.

When the scent first reveals its optimistic personality, Ginger and Cinnamon project an effervescent insouciance – a glittering spark of joy. Adding to the light-filled effect is tender Rose Water, a material being used for the first time in an Amouage creation. As the perfume offers up further charms, the florals in its heart – Heliotrope, Jasmine and Rose –cast a knowing smile across the brightness of the opening. Finally, three precious absolutes, Vanilla Bean, Cocoa and Rum, unite themselves to Cypriol and the Honey Glazed Pastry accord to add an air of languorous ease, balancing the dazzling, solar elements.

Free-spirited and spontaneous, but also generous and open-hearted, Love Delight is an irrepressible tribute to the woman who seeks and finds all the pleasures life has to offer. It is, as its name suggests, a creation that is both full of love and full of delight.

Garden redesigned

All four Secret Garden Eaux de Parfum are now presented in re-imagined flacons, featuring a colour palette that emphasises a sense of the enigmatic without losing any of the Collection's vitality. The bottles' soft-touch ceramic coating adds an enchantingly tactile dimension to the ritual of applying the scent. Their texture calls to mind a fine, leafy down, making it feel familiar, inviting and confidently contemporary.

Love Delight joins the three existing Secret GardenEaux de Parfum to add a new chapter to Amouage's story of the modern woman. It takes its place alongside the powdery elegance of Lilac Love, which mixes Cocoa Bean with Lilac to explore the idea of classical femininity in today's world, as well as the nectar-like seductiveness of Blossom Love, in which Amaretto and Cherry Blossom burst forth with unashamed romanticism, and the creamy headiness of Love Tuberose, where Chantilly and Tuberose conjure a distinctly female aura of heightened sensuality. While their presentation has been updated, the fragrances of these three existing creations remain unchanged.

Dramatic visuals for return to a garden of mysteries

Shot by Charles Negre, under the artistic direction of Jade Lombard, the new visuals for the Collection find inspiration in the work of Joan Miró. A mix of organic and structural shapes against an all-black background, the compositions are an arresting array of textures and colours – a deceptive landscape where proportions are impossible to gauge, compelling the viewer to be drawn into the images. Encapsulating the Collection's combination of the carefree with the mysterious, the visuals reflect the mysteries at the heart of the Secret Garden, as well as the varied, contrasting forms of femininity itself.

TRAVEL AGENCY

Fahad Express celebrates 50 years in style with glittering 'birthday' bash

MUSCAT: Fahad Express, one of the first travel agencies in the country, yesterday (February 19, 2024) celebrated its 50 years at the Crowne Plaza, Al Qurum. To mark their 50th anniversary, the agency celebrated with a special night replete with travel memories, live entertainment and surprises. The owners and the top officials of Fahad Express, who gathered at the event, noted that they were celebrating "half a century of adventures" as they embarked on "a new chapter of exploration together".

New identity of Fahad Express

The occasion also saw the unveiling of a new logo in line with the achievement of the 50 years' milestone. "The market has evolved over the last 50 years and the customer experience of booking their travels has changed.

After understanding the changing needs of customers and viewing market trends and to celebrate 50 years, we created a new identity that reflects a complete and personalised approach," Jannat Shafaei, Marketing Director at Fahad Express, said.

Modern touch

"The refreshed logo has put in a modern touch while still retaining the essence of the previous one. It is now more bold, yet simple and conveys trust, peace of mind and reliability, which are values that we stand by. This reinforces our goal to make every experience more special and memorable. Today, I am proud to present you with the new identity of Fahad Express," Jannat declared.

Trip down memory lane

Back in 1974, Fahad Express, started out with its first office in Muttrah, Corniche, by Fahad Hussein Darwish.

Fahad Express was primarily handling and was the authorised ticketing agent with most ministries. "Until today, we have managed to maintain the same relationship with the customers over five decades and progressed to other opportunities from Corporates and Holidays," Hani Ali Mohammed Mirza, Partner and Managing Director, Fahad Express noted.

Key to long-term relationship

Referring to the long-term relationship between Fahad Express and its customers, he said: "The key to this long-term relationship is the flexibility and consistency of our customer service. This has helped build a deep-rooted trust with our customers, who have obliged us with their unwavering loyalty."

Challenges aplenty

While their relationship with customers has been long, strong and steady, Fahad Express, like other agencies in Oman, and well, the rest of the world, have faced the twin devils of natural calamities as well as market instability. "We have not escaped that. Globally, travel agencies have encountered these challenges, which have affected their businesses.

"We have also faced the brunt of the pandemic, but we are of the firm belief that crises are meant to test us and we should not succumb to such pressures. And in a market like this, it was a simple case of the survival of the fittest and we went through the storm of the pandemic. But we were back with minimal damages and emerged not just wise, but also gained more strength to face such calamities in the future," Juliet Irwin, General Manager, Fahad Express, said.

Rediscovered power of technology

However, the crisis taught travellers another story: how to harness technology to their needs. In fact, many have happily rediscovered the power of technology, especially that of the internet."It also taught them how to plan their journey from the comfort of their homes. And, therefore, the newly initiated tech-savvy traveller need not visit the travel agencies anymore for their tickets.

"Thus, in the post-pandemic era, travellers are no longer queuing up before the travel agencies. Passengers make their requests via email or WhatsApp or online portals," Juliet said, noting that this has also helped reduce the number of branches in and around the country.

50,000 passengers annually

Despite the challenges, Fahad Express is doing well. The agency, which has a staff strength of 40 spread over three outlets, caters to a good 50000 passengers annually. Fahad Express is also busily working on developing and diversifying their holidays and tours' division focusing on both inbound and outbound tourism.

"We are steadily moving towards developing the online booking tool for our customers. So, we will modernise our approach to business for the new generation, but will still maintain the legacy of the business for the customers who would love it that way," Juliet added.

Fahad Express is located in the Central Business District and the agency has two other branches, one in Azaiba and the other in Salalah.

ROUND-UP

Oman Avenues Mall enhances retail portfolio with newly opened Babyshop

This significant inclusion of the beloved children's apparel brand is testament to the mall's commitment to offering an unparalleled shopping experience for its discerning customers

MUSCAT: Oman Avenues Mall, the ultimate family shopping destination located in the heart of the city, announced the much-anticipated addition of Babyshop to its exciting range of retail offerings.

This significant inclusion of the beloved children's apparel brand is testament to the mall's commitment to offering an unparalleled shopping experience for its discerning customers.

The grand opening of Babyshop at Oman Avenues Mall on 14 February was graced by top executives from Lulu Group International and Landmark Group, marking a momentous milestone in their enduring partnership. Ushering in a new era of shopping excellence at the Mall, the new Babyshop store sprawls across 600 square meters of prime retail space, boasting an extensive array of children's apparel, accessories, toys, and baby gear. With a commitment to premium quality and an unmatched variety, the store endeavours to become the go-to destination for families seeking the best for their little ones.

Expressing his enthusiasm on the occasion, Gogi George, General Manager of Leasing and Development for Lulu Group International, said, "We are thrilled to further our partnership with the Landmark Group, with the opening of Babyshop at Oman Avenues Mall. The launch of this popular brand enriches our existing portfolio, elevating the diversity of retailers available to our cherished shoppers. We eagerly anticipate further collaborations with Landmark Group, promising more exciting brand introductions in the future."

Oman Avenues Mall recently extended its strategic collaboration with the Landmark Group, ushering in the expansion of the mall's retail portfolio with popular fashion and accessory brands.

The introduction of MAX Fashion to the mall's retail repertoire in 2023, brought patrons an extensive selection of high-quality, stylish, and affordable attire for men, women, and children. Following its resounding success, MAX Fashion is now poised for a substantial expansion to the Mall's first floor, resulting in 1,500 square meters of fashion-forward shopping brilliance.

Dedicated to cementing its position as the preferred family shopping destination in Muscat, Oman Avenues Mall actively forges partnerships with leading conglomerates in order to provide a world-class shopping experience to its valued shoppers, replete with trendy international retail brands. The mall, equipped with a host of apparel, homeware and beauty stores, a dedicated grocery offering, an array of eateries serving sumptuous fare, a movie theatre, and an entertainment zone for children and families, has something for everyone and beckons all to indulge in a delightful retail journey unlike any other.

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Mitsubishi's RALLIART original motorsports accessories now available in Oman

MUSCAT: Few brands in the world of motorsports command the respect that RALLIART does. It is synonymous with Mitsubishi's decades of dominance in the extremely competitive and grueling circuits of the World Rally Championship (WRC) and the Paris-Dakar Rally.

"RALLIART represents the motorsports heritage of Mitsubishi Motors. It stands for high performance and styling for enthusiasts around the world," said Manoj Ranade, General Manager of General Automotive Company "We at GAC are proud to bring the legendary badge to Mitsubishi owners in Oman."

A limited edition of RALLIART dynamic decals and accessories are available in the Sultanate of Oman, exclusively for Mitsubishi Montero Sport, Eclipse Cross and L200 owners since the end of 2023.

These include front & rear under garnish, side decals, mud flaps, and floor mats for Montero Sport, Eclipse Cross and L200; as well as fender arch molding for Montero Sport, tailgate spoiler and side extensions for Eclipse Cross, and over-rail bed liner for L200.

Also available are a range of branded Mitsubishi Motors and RALLIART merchandise, including t-shirts, caps, coffee mugs, flasks, and more.

"From the world's toughest rally routes to the streets of Oman, a limited edition RALLIART accessories captures all the thrills and adrenaline-pumping excitement of motorsports in an exclusive, rally-inspired trim that perfectly expresses the competitive spirit that drives us," he explained.

RALLIART accessories are available in Azaiba, Mabela, Barka, Sohar, Nizwa, Ibri, Sur, Bu Ali and Salalah showrooms across Oman.

SUPPORT

Sarco sponsors students from Care and Special Needs at Muscat Marathon

MUSCAT: Al Seeb Technical Establishment (Sarco) in association with G Shock, official timekeeper of the Muscat Marathon sponsored 63 students from the Care and Special Needs section of the Indian School, Muscat for the 1km kids run at the recently concluded Muscat Marathon. Running Group Acers & Pacers played a huge role in coordinating the entire event.

Students from diverse nationalities were accompanied by their parents and teachers for the kids' race. The main objective of the participation was to provide inclusion for the children at par with all other participants. All the 63 children completed the race and received completion medals at the finish line.

MULTIPLE ACCOLADES

Zawawi Trading Company recognised at Mercedes-Benz Trucks & Buses Elite Class Awards

MUSCAT: Zawawi Trading Company, the general distributor of Mercedes-Benz Trucks in Oman, was recently recognised at the prestigious Mercedes-Benz Trucks & Buses Elite Class Awards 2023. In a ceremony recently held in Dubai, UAE, Zawawi Trading Company won four accolades in Facility, Marketing, Training Activation and Truck Sales.

In addition, Zawawi Trading also secured overall third place in the prestigious awards. The event saw the participation of 16 Mercedes-Benz Trucks General Distributors from around the GCC, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Tunisia, Iraq, Pakistan, and Yemen, to name a few.

"These accolades are testament to our team's exemplary performance when it comes to customer-centricity. It is a privilege to be acknowledged for our unwavering commitment to providing customers with an upgraded Mercedes-Benz truck driving experience. We want them to enjoy a seamless and highly personalised experience – not just in the truck but in every touchpoint with our company and our brand," said Gary Brown, General Manager of Commercial Vehicles at Mercedez-Benz Oman.

With a rigorous prioritisation of providing all customers with a superior customer experience, Mercedes-Benz Oman Commercial Vehicles offer an unrivalled range of tailor-made and reliable transport solutions.

STATE-OF-THE-ART

Europcar opens new headquarters

MUSCAT: Europcar, a leading Mobility Services company in Oman and Bahrain, announced its relocation to a new, custom-built state-of-the-art office. The move to this cutting-edge facility represents Europcar's commitment to employee well-being, growth, innovation, and customer experience.

The new headquarters is strategically placed- situated opposite the Oman Exhibition and Convention Centre, 10 minutes from the Muscat Int'l Airport and nestled just in between the prime communities of Al Mouj and Muscat Hills.

It features a range of exceptional amenities designed to foster collaboration, creativity, and strong relationships among employees and partners.

Never seen before in the region, Europcar's new facility offers an array of exciting spaces, including:

1. 'The Boardroom': A spacious and airy room equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities, providing an ideal setting for important meetings and presentations.

2. 'The Energize Lounge': A unique gaming center that aims to boost employee happiness and productivity, creating a vibrant and engaging atmosphere within the office.

3. 'The Health & Wellness Spa': A dedicated space that includes a fully-equipped gym, yoga, and meditation studio, demonstrating the company's commitment to the well-being of its employees.

4. 'The Networking Hub': An ideal venue for hosting various networking events, fostering connections within the industry and strengthening partnerships.

This new facility not only provides Europcar with a modern and inspiring work environment but also serves as a symbolic representation of the company's growth and dedication to staying ahead in the industry.

Rishi Khimji, Managing Director at Ajit Khimji Group, said, "We are so proud of the team at Europcar! This move is a great step forward, and we wish you all the best in your new offices. We eagerly anticipate what 2024 has in store for us!"

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From the aromatic spices of Moroccan tagines to the rich flavors of Turkish kebabs, each dish tells a story of cultural heritage and culinary excellence. Delight your palate with the tangy note of Lebanese mezzes, the hearty stews of the Gulf, and the delicate sweets that mark the end of each day's fast.

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