

HM THE SULTAN GREETES PRESIDENT OF GABON

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Republic of Gabon, on the occasion of his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan wished President Ondimba good health and happiness. His Majesty also wished the people of Gabon further progress and prosperity. -**ONA**



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HM THE SULTAN GREETES PRESIDENT OF INDONESIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Joko Widodo of the Republic of Indonesia, on the occasion of his country's Independence Day anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan wished President Widodo good health and happiness and the people of Indonesia further progress and prosperity. -**ONA**



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CATHETERISATION OPERATION



First transplant of Watchman devices for patients suffering from recurrent thrombosis

SALALAH: A medical team at the Cardiac Centre in Salalah managed to transplant two Watchman devices for patients suffering recurrent thrombosis due to atrial fibrillation.

Dr. Said Musallam Al Ma'ashani, Director of the Cardiology and Surgery Centre, said that the facility succeeded in this type of catheterisation operations for the first time in the Governorate of Dhofar. Earlier,

such cases were treated either abroad or at The Royal Hospital (Muscat).

Atrial appendage

A Watchman device is planted in the atrial appendage of the left atrium in patients suffering atrial fibrillation and cannot take blood-thinning treatments due to frequent bleeding, Al Ma'ashani added. The two operated persons were aged above 60 years. -**ONA**

ROAD ACCIDENTS IN OMAN DOWN BY 60%



While speeding was the most common cause of road accidents, 58 percent of the mishaps occurred outside city boundaries

Times News Service

MUSCAT A tangible improvement in road safety indicators in the Sultanate of Oman over the past five years (2017-2021) is reflected in the latest statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

A fall in the number of road accidents, an increase in length of roads and a rise in the number of vehicles are some of the main takeaways from the new set of road traffic data.

According to the NCSI, the number of road accidents in Oman dropped by 60 percent over the past five years (2017-2021), down from 3,845 (or the equivalent of 1 road accident per 3 hours by the end of 2017) to 1,539 accidents (1 accident per 6 hours by the end of 2021).

During the above mentioned period, the road accidents left 1,621 people injured and 434 dead. Omanis constituted 76 percent of the injured and 66 percent of the dead at the end of 2021.

Speeding was cited as the most common cause of road accidents (53.3 percent accounting for 820 accidents), while collisions topped

the list of 'types' of road accidents (41.1 percent).

Data shows that most accidents (58 percent) in the Sultanate of Oman occur outside the boundary of cities and that accidents along straight roads accounted for 51 percent of the total number of accidents, of which 809 happened in the night and 730 in the daytime.

Statistics show that the number of vehicles registered in Oman in 2021 stood at 1,553,000 (1.55 million), down by 0.3 percent as against 2020. Private vehicles constituted 79.4 percent of the total number of vehicles registered in Oman. With **ONA** inputs

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN CBO's Tawasul launch

1 The ceremony was held under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and attended by a number of officials. >**A2**

WORLD Win for Kenya's Ruto

2 Deputy President William Ruto was declared winner of the Kenya's presidential race minutes after four of seven poll officials 'rejected the imminent announcement.' >**A7**

MARKET e-service for SMEs

3 Opaz has announced opening an electronic service for registering SMEs in the One-stop shop, through its Digital Investment Portal. >**B1**

**Qalhat-Oman's
ancient city**

A4



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TRAGIC INCIDENT

A family joy trip that turned into a tragic incident

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a tragic incident in the Wilayat of Mussanah in South Al Batinah Governorate, a man and his two children died of drowning, bringing a pall of gloom all around, especially in the village of Al-Salif, to which he belonged, in the wilayat of Ibri.

Speaking about the incident to *Times of Oman*, Sultan Al Hinai, younger brother of the victim, said "my brother Salem had decided to go to Rustaq for recreation and hiking, but his children wanted to go to the sea, hence, he changed his plan and went to Al-Sawadi Beach in the Wilayat of Mussanah in South Al Batinah Governorate.

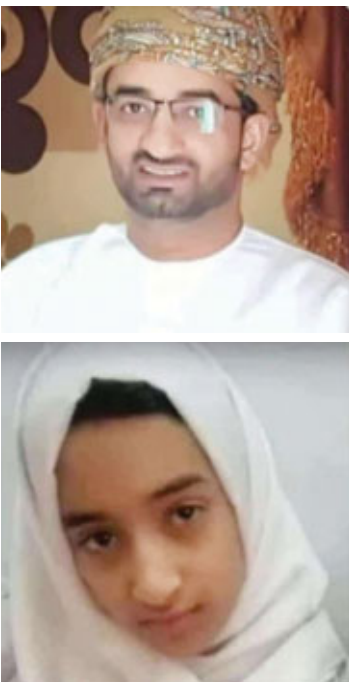
"My brother set off for the trip around 7 am on Thursday, August 11, 2022, accompanied by his wife and children Tuqa, 10, Anas, 7 and his 3-year-old daughter Zulfa."

Around 10 am, Sultan received a call from his elder brother Nasser, saying that Salem and his family had drowned in sea and all had died. "I could not believe what I heard and I collapsed from the shock of the news."

Before confirmation of the hor-



rific news, however, contradictory reports came in for a while. Some said that his brother and his family are fine and that they have been taken to the health complex in Al-Sawadi. Others said all of them



had drowned. Still others said his brother had drowned and the remaining members of his family were fine. "It was a very difficult situation for me. I did not know what to do," Sultan said.

Suddenly a treacherous wave appeared and devoured Tuqa and Anas. My husband rushed to rescue them, and for a while succeeded in his attempt, but the waves were too powerful for him to save them

"We went to the Wilayat of Mussanah, and when we reached the health complex at Al-Sawadi, we found my brother's wife wailing and in an utter state of shock. I could not find my brother and the children. I was torn asunder when the health staff there told me that my brother and his two children had died and their bodies had been shifted to the health centre in Al-Malda in the wilayat of Mussanah," Sultan said.

His brother's wife, still in shock, said, "We were together eating food and enjoying the sea, and the children had gone to play near the beach. Suddenly a treacherous wave appeared and devoured Tuqa and Anas. My husband rushed to rescue them, and for a while succeeded in his attempt, but the waves were too powerful for him to save them. Tuqa, Anas and my husband drowned," she said.

Sad goodbye

Sultan continued: "My brother's wife says he was asking her to get help, so she rushed to look for someone, but could not see anyone nearby. Suddenly she heard her husband saying goodbye to her while he disappeared under the waves of the sea."

Sultan appealed to the authorities to set warning signals in areas unsuitable for swimming or playing and provide life collars on rent so that visitors would get them without the need to purchase them. He also appealed for deployment of guides at the tourist sites.

"I hope the authorities take serious and tangible steps to stop these painful incidents."



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PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:16pm
Asr.....3:42pm
Maghrib.....6:44pm
Isha.....7:58pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:24am

Due to improved indicators, agencies worldwide raise Oman’s credit rating

While Fitch raised Oman’s credit rating to ‘BB’, Standard & Poors amended the country’s credit rating to ‘BB-’, with a stable outlook and so did Moody’s, from ‘negative’ to ‘stable’

MUSCAT: Many international agencies upgraded the Sultanate of Oman’s credit rating with ‘stable’ outlook due to Oman’s commitment to fiscal performance control procedures and initiatives within the context of the Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP), higher oil prices and improved economic and financial indicators.

While Fitch raised Oman’s credit rating to ‘BB’, Standard & Poors amended the country’s credit rating to ‘BB-’, with a stable outlook and so did Moody’s, from ‘negative’ to ‘stable’.

Fiscal balance plan

One of the direct factors that prompted Fitch’s action was the performance of the Sultanate of Oman’s general finance, fiscal control measures undertaken within the context of the Fiscal Balance Plan 2020-2024, an ability to ease external borrowing pressure, sustained efforts to reform general finance, high oil prices’ boosting budgets 2022-2023 and a sharp fall in general debt.

Dr. Said Mubarak Al Mahrami, Member of the State Council and



CREDIT RATING UPGRADE: Fitch Solutions has raised the Sultanate’s credit rating to ‘BB’ with stable future outlook. – ONA

Finance Professor at the Sultan Qaboos University’s College of Economy and Political Sciences, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the reasons behind Oman Fitch’s ameliorating Oman’s credit rating include the government’s sincere desire to cut down the general debt, Oman’s serious abidance by the Fiscal Balance Plan and high revenues from oil and gas prices. He hoped that Oman’s next credit rating will be an investment-based one.

On his turn, Dr. Mohammed Humaid Al Wardi, an academic and economist, echoed a similar

view, noting that Oman’s credit rating’s upgrade came as a result of the government’s commitment to the Fiscal Balance Plan (aimed to achieve financial sustainability), Omani economy’s ability to rebound, realise good performance in accelerating the execution of development projects, enhance factors that furnish an attractive investment environment and reassure investors, the country’s ability to stay firm on the general debt rectification course and shrink external borrowing. – ONA



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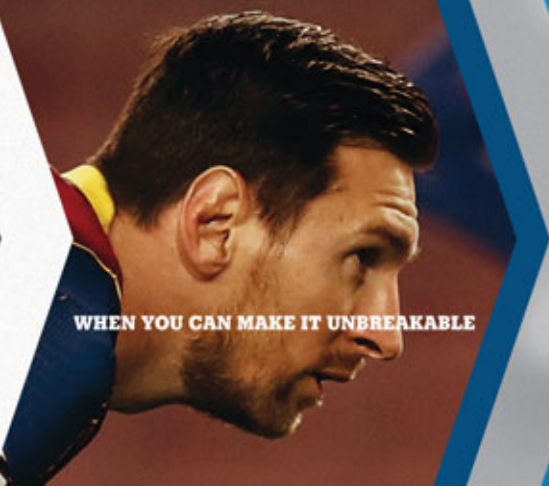
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CREDENTIALS RECEIVED

Shaikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, the Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Affairs Undersecretary, has received the credentials of Sumaira Chowdhury, Representative of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

— ONA

FOR AGCC YOUTH

Intellectual Forum concludes in Salalah

SALALAH: The Intellectual Forum for the AGCC Youth concluded on Tuesday at Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment.

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in Dhofar Governorate hosted the forum, which saw the participation of the AGCC States.

Conclusion ceremony

The conclusion ceremony was organised under the patronage of Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al Ameri, Chairman of Environment Authority in the presence of Khalid bin Salim Al Ghassani, Advisor of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth; Mansour Al Mansour representative of the Secretariat General of the AGCC and a number of officials.

Exchange of expertise

Ali bin Mohammed Baqi, Director of the Department of Sports and Youth Activities at the Directorate General of Culture, Sports and Youth in Dhofar Governorate gave a speech in which he said that the forum aimed to further cement communication among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) youth through exchange of expertise and youth experiences and to provide the youth with the skills of dialogue.

It also aimed to acquaint the participants with the tourism landmarks and developments in the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (AGCC) States, he added.

Balqis Basloum from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Dr. Yousef Tandil from Kuwait delivered the speech of the participants in the forum.

Video presentation

The forum also saw video presentation on the forum and honouring the participants. The activities of the forum also included seminars and delivering various working papers by experts from the various AGCC States and a visit to the main tourism sites in Dhofar Governorate. — ONA

HIGHER EDUCATION

Research award registrations on

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Registrations for the 9th cycle of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation's annual National Research Award 2022, is open for applicants until Sunday, 25 September 2022 at 2.00 pm.

It is divided into two categories: Best published research led by a PhD holder or equivalent (Senior Specialist or higher in the medical field) and Best published research led by a young researcher (a non-PhD holder). As for the research fields, it consists of six fields and they are Education and Human Resources, Information and Communication Technologies, Health and Social Services, Cultural, Social, and Basic Sciences, Energy and Industry, and Environmental and Biological Resources.

General conditions

Some of the general conditions are that research article must be of relevance to Oman and falls under one of the six research fields of the award, the published research must not have won any other award nationally or internationally, the applicant must be the first author whose name appears first in the published article.

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The project cost OMR3.5 million.



Story on opening of OMR3.5m Sohar Logistics Station in Oman

A story on OMR3.5m Sohar Logistics Station opened in Oman reached 47,226 people and had 1,357 link clicks on Facebook.

📺 MOST WATCHED VIDEO ON FACEBOOK

4,700 VIEWS



Video on India celebrating 76th Independence Day

A video on India celebrating 76th Independence Day had 4,700 views and reached 15,100 people on Facebook.

📷 MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON INSTAGRAM

1,442 VIEWS



An interview with Oman Air Regional Vice President

An interview with Oman Air Regional Vice President (Europe, Middle East & Africa) had 1,442 views and 70 likes on Instagram.



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Times OF OMAN

CBO launches 'Tawasul' initiative to boost awareness about savings

The ceremony was held under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and attended by government officials and private sector representatives



SALALAH: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) organised a ceremony at Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment on Tuesday to mark the start of a three-day awareness initiative codenamed 'Tawasul' or 'communication'. The ceremony was held under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and attended by government officials and private sector representatives.

Tahir Salim Al Amri, Executive President of CBO, gave a speech on the occasion indicating that the programme focuses on CBO's

role in enhancing social awareness about saving and the principles of responsible (informed) funding.

Lectures and specialised workshops were held to discuss the latest developments in the banking sector and elucidate CBO's role and responsibilities.

The ceremony included two visual presentations.

The first featured the First National Strategy on e-payment Services and the role of the CBO in regulating national payment systems in the Sultanate of Oman. It was presented by Ali Hamad Al Jabri, Manager of Payment System Operations at the CBO.

The second display explored 'responsible funding', which is considered an important instrument in individuals' decision making when borrowing or financing.

It directs financial establishments to make products that meet the actual needs of consumers, their living standards and their ability to repay.

The visual display was presented by Saud Saif Al Busaidi, Acting General Manager of Surveillance at the CBO.

The initiative, Tawasul, will be implemented in different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman this year and next year. — OMA



QALHAT

OMAN'S ANCIENT CITY



Located north of Sur, Qalhat's history traces back to the Bronze Age. It was once a shining jewel along the Omani coastline. According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "In the past, Qalhat City witnessed an ancient Omani civilization, being Oman's first capital before the advent of Islam. In the 13th century, it was the main commercial port linking Oman and abroad."

"But the city has since slipped away from history, geography, time and place. Nature overpowered man here and transformed the city into a pile of rocks, scattered over a wasteland, starting at the beach, to homes that fell to ruin, to crumbling citadels and walls that once fortified the city. It is said that the city fell prey to an earthquake in the 14th century."

The city of Qalhat is in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites for its historical significance and its role in Oman's evolution between the 11th and 15th centuries. The ruins of Qalhat include Bibi Mariam's shrine who is said to be an elderly woman who built a mosque, while some historical sources mentioned that she was the governor of Qalhat during the

reign of King Hormuz (Kotob Ed-dine Yamtuhin). At the shrine entrance, there is a crypt leading to underground corridors beneath the floor of the shrine.

According to UNESCO, "The Ancient City of Qalhat presents a unique testimony to the Kingdom of Hormuz, as it prospered from the 11th to 16th century CE. Ancient Qalhat presents exceptional evidence of a major trade hub, which came under the rule of the Princes of Hormuz and profited from its geo-political position in the region."

During its time of trade in earlier times Qalhat received many famous visitors. In the 13th century, Marco Polo, a Venetian explorer, may have visited Qalhat. Famous traveller Ibn Battuta is said to have travelled to Qalhat and praised the city's bazaars and mosques.

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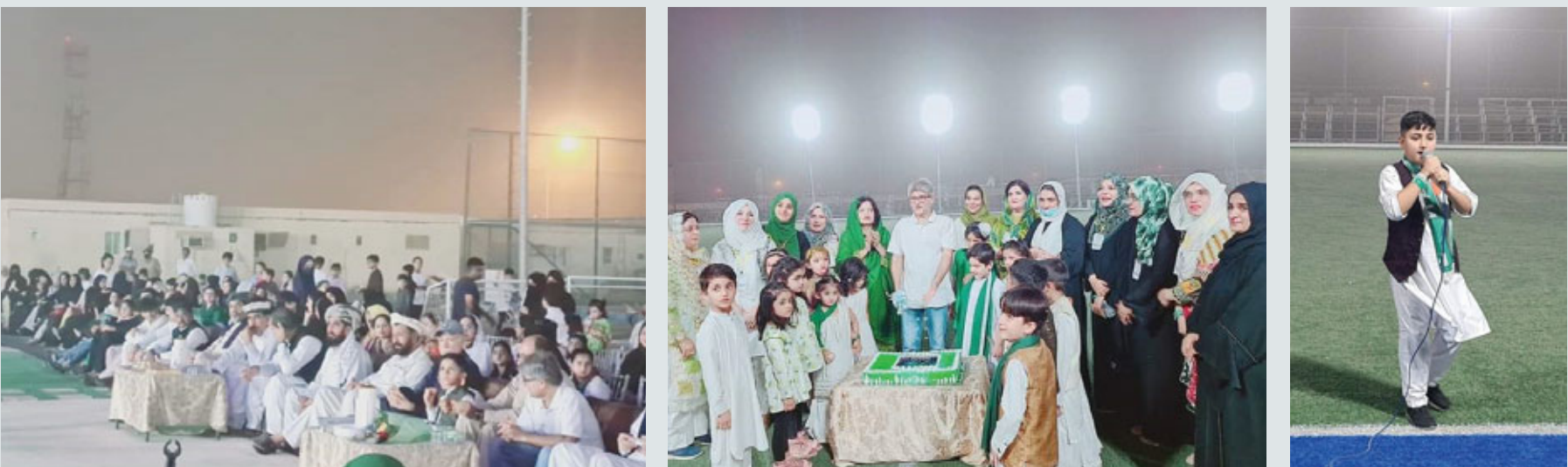
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PAKISTAN SCHOOL BURAIMI

Pakistan School Buraimi celebrates 75th Independence Day

BURAIMI: Pakistan School Buraimi celebrated 75th Independence Day of Pakistan with zeal. On this auspicious occasion, ardent students of PSB presented colourful programme to show their innate love for their beloved mother land. A friendly cricket match among Kings 11 and Zalmi 11, was organised at Al-Nadi Stadium, Buraimi. Pakistani community of Buraimi appreciated the efforts of Acting Principal Ma'am Shahnaz Arshad, teachers and students for celebrating Independence Day enthusiastically. The Chief Guest was Mahmud Muizuddin, president SMC Buraimi.



Independence Day celebrations held at Pakistan School Muscat

MUSCAT: 14th August 1947 marks a great day in the history of the sub-continent when Pakistan came into being. On this very day the white and green flag sways in hands and eyes are filled with tears of joy representing the happiness and importance of independence. Pakistan School Muscat celebrated the 75th Independence Day of Pakistan with great zeal and fervour. Students expressed their passion and excitement by wearing traditional dresses, singing the national songs and presenting tableaus. A large number of students, parents, dignitaries and community members attended the flag hoisting ceremony. The Chief Guest the Ambassador of Pakistan to the Sultanate hoisted the

flag along with the defence Attache, Chairman Board of Directors, Members BoDs and other dignitaries, addressed the audience. The Chairman Board of Directors, Ameer Hamza and scholars from Pakistan Yasir Peerzada and Ms. Sughra Sadaf also addressed the audience on this auspicious occasion. Top students and their teachers were also awarded with certificates for excellent results in the FBISE SSC-II Exams 2021-22. The ceremony ended with the cake cutting ceremony. Indeed, this great day flashbacks the sacrifices of our ancestors who laid down their lives for the establishment of Pakistan. Long live Pakistan!



AT PORTSMOUTH PORT

British Royal Naval Chief of Staff visits Shabab Oman II

PORTSMOUTH: Admiral Sir Benjamin Key, Chief of Naval Staff of the United Kingdom visited Shabab Oman II at the Portsmouth Port in the UK, as part of the RNO vessel's 6th international tour (Oman; the Land of Peace) to Europe. Briefed about the vessel Admiral Sir, Benjamin was briefed about the vessel and its itinerary during the international tour to Europe (Oman; the Land of Peace), the facilities, the vessel's training programmes and the tourism landmarks of the Sultanate of Oman besides its naval participations and achievements.





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TENDER FOR FOUR AVIATION FUEL REFUELLER	18/2022	29/09/2022	10/10/2022	378 RO

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PM Modi thanks leaders for Independence Day wishes

Several events have been held over the last 75 weeks to celebrate the 75 years of India’s independence

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked leaders across the world who showered Indian leadership and its people with their wishes on the occasion of the 76th Independence Day on Monday which is being celebrated in the country under the banner of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

French President Emmanuel Macron congratulated India on the occasion of its 76th Independence Day. “Dear friend @NarendraModi, dear people of India, congratulations on your Independence Day! As you proudly celebrate India’s stunning achievements in the past 75 years, you can count on France to always stand by your side,” he tweeted.

Thanking Macron, PM Modi wrote, “Touched by your Independence Day greetings, President @EmmanuelMacron. India truly cherishes its close relations with France. Ours is a bilateral partnership for global good.”

Wishing India for completing 75 years of Independence, Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba wrote, “Hearty felicitations to PM Shri @narendramodiji and people of India on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day



INDEPENDENCE DAY: Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the youth to dedicate the next 25 years of their lives to the development of the nation.

of India. My best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of India. Spirit of cooperation and friendship will further deepen in the days to come.”

Hoping that the India-Nepal friendship will continue to flourish in the years to come, PM Modi thanked the Nepali PM. “Thank you for the wishes, PM @SherB-Deuba. May the India-Nepal friendship continue to flourish in the years to come,” he wrote.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday (local time) wished India on its 75th Independence Day and lauded its achievements.

Wishing all those marking India’s Independence Day a wonderful celebration, Albanese said

Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Indian leadership and its people on the occasion of its 76th Independence Day. “Please, accept warmest congratulations on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of India’s independence. Over the decades of independent development, your country has achieved universally recognized success in the economic, social, scientific, technical and other fields. India rightfully enjoys considerable prestige on the world stage and plays an important constructive role in resolving pressing issues on the international agenda,” he said while highlighting India’s importance in the world.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson also extended wishes to the people of India on the occasion and highlighted the thriving living bridge between the two countries.

“Congratulations to the people of India on 75 years of independence. During my recent visit to Gujarat and New Delhi I saw for myself the thriving Living Bridge between our countries. I look forward to seeing these bonds go from strength to strength in the next 75 years,” tweeted Johnson.

US President Joe Biden also extended wishes to India on the occasion. “As people around the world, including nearly four million proud Indian-Americans, celebrate the 75th anniversary of India’s independence on August 15, the United States joins the people of India to honour its democratic journey, guided by Mahatma Gandhi’s enduring message of truth and non-violence,” added the US President.

Meanwhile, the Embassy of Japan presented a vocal and instrumental rendition of India’s national anthem. -ANI



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START-UP BOOM

India holds world’s highest rate of recognising start-ups per day

NEW DELHI: Start-ups have been the buzzword in India for the last several years. India is powering its growth with innovation and entrepreneurship. Currently, there are 75,000 start-ups in the country, which coincides with the 75th year of independence.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had envisioned “a new India that taps on the entrepreneurial potential of its people” as he mentioned in the Independence Day speech from the Red Fort on August 15, 2015 (Indian Independence Day).

A programme has been initiated to lay out an action plan to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and start-ups in the country. In the past six years, the action plan has successfully guided into making India the third largest ecosystem. While the initial 10,000 start-ups were recognised in 808 days, the latest 10,000 were achieved in only 156 days. With more than 80 start-ups getting recognised per day- India holds the highest rate in the world. This further encourages the future start-up culture that is promising and encouraging for budding entrepreneurs. The Indian start-up ecosystem is promising not just for entrepreneurs but also for job seekers too.

An impressive, 746 lakh jobs have been created, so far, which has seen a 110 per cent yearly increase over the last six years. In fact, about 49 per cent of Indian start-ups are from Tier II & Tier III, a picture that validates the tremendous potential of Indian youth not limited to metropolitan states. The start-ups India programme, launched by the government of India in 2016, was



primarily set up to provide an enabling environment for start-ups.

Today it has evolved into the launch pad for all the budding entrepreneurs and innovators across the nation. It has helped start-ups by providing funds, tax incentives, support for intellectual property rights, an eased public procurement, enabling regulatory reforms, access to international fests and events, and much more.

Currently, of the total recognised start-ups, around 12 per cent cater to IT services, 9 per cent to Healthcare and Life Sciences, 7 per cent to education, 5 per cent to professional and commercial services and 5 per cent to agriculture. The start-up India programme has become synonymous with sustainable economic growth.

A start-up India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS), is being implemented by the Indian government with effect from 1 April 2021, which provides financial assistance to eligible Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recognised start-ups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialisation. -ANI

DRY WEATHER

Rhine water level sinks to record low

BERLIN: The water level of the Rhine river at one of the benchmark measuring points near the Dutch border has decreased again, reaching a historic low of zero centimetres amid a period of extremely dry weather in many parts of Germany.

The measurement in the city of Emmerich is a decrease of 4 centimetres compared to Monday morning.

According to the waterways and shipping administrator GDWS,

the previous low was in October 2018 when the lowest daily reading was 4 centimetres.

Standardised readings

The water levels measured at benchmark points along the river are standardised readings that are not the same as the actual depth of the water.

On Monday, the channel at Emmerich was still almost 2 metres deep, which is deep enough for commercial shipping. -ONA



APOLOGY

Academy apologises to Native American actress for 1973 Oscars abuse

CALIFORNIA: Almost 50 years after she was heckled on the Oscars stage for declining Marlon Brando’s award on his behalf in protest at the film industry’s treatment of Native Americans, Sacheen Littlefeather has received an apology from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences..

Littlefeather, who is part Apache and Yaqui, was booed by some members of the audience at the 1973 Academy Awards while explaining why an absent Brando could not accept his best actor Oscar for “The Godfather.”



Apology for abuse decades later

In the years since, Littlefeather has said she’s been mocked, dis-

criminated against, and personally attacked for her brief Academy Awards appearance.

“The abuse you endured because of this statement was unwarranted and unjustified,” said the apology letter sent in June from then-Academy president David Rubin.

He wrote that the emotional burden and the cost to Littlefeather’s career in our industry is “irreparable.”

“For too long the courage you showed has been unacknowledged. For this, we offer both our deepest apologies and our sincere admiration,” the letter said.

What happened at the 1973 event?

In a short speech, Littlefeather told the audience that Brando could not accept the award due to “the treatment of American Indians today by the film industry.”

“He has asked me to tell you in a very long speech which I cannot share with you presently, because of time... that he very regrettably cannot accept this very generous award.”

Before the ceremony, Brando had reportedly decided that — as the favorite to win — he would boycott as a protest against an ongoing

siege of indigenous rights protesters at the town of Wounded Knee. His decision to decline was also based on his views on the stereotypical way that Native Americans were represented in American films. He had called Littlefeather and asked her to appear on his behalf, and act as a spokesperson.

John Wayne, who was backstage at the time, was reportedly furious, with a number of witnesses describing how he needed to be restrained.

The Academy released the letter on Monday as it announced that Littlefeather, now 75, has been in-

vited to speak at its film museum in Los Angeles on September 17.

The upcoming event is described as a “very special program of conversation, reflection, healing, and celebration.”

The museum, which opened last September, has pledged to confront the Oscars’ “problematic history” including racism. One display already tackles the harassment of Littlefeather.

“Regarding the Academy’s apology to me, we Indians are very patient people — it’s only been 50 years!” Littlefeather said in a statement. -DW

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WORLD

Ruto declared Kenya’s presidential race winner after chaos over count

The results were called just minutes after four out of seven election officials said that they rejected the announcement

NAIROBI: Kenya’s electoral commission chair on Monday announced that Deputy President William Ruto won the tight presidential race.

The results were called just minutes after four out of seven election officials said that they rejected the imminent, highly anticipated announcement.

“We cannot take ownership of the result that will be announced,” Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) vice chair Juliana Cherera told reporters, saying the process was “opaque.”

At the same time, Ruto declared victory, stating that “there are no losers. The people of Kenya



PRESIDENTIAL RACE: There were chaotic scenes before the results were made official, with scuffles breaking out in the tallying hall.

have won because we raised the political bar.”

Announcement prompts scuffles

There were chaotic scenes before the results were made official, with scuffles breaking out in the

tallying hall. Footage showed a man throwing a podium off the stage and diplomats were reportedly whisked to safety.

Two election officials were also reportedly injured.

DW correspondent Felix Maringa said that the elections authori-

ties alleged that “the IEBC systems had been hacked” and that the vote counting office was “a crime scene.” Maringa described an “ugly scene” with officials throwing chairs at each other.

The August 9 election saw two candidates run almost neck-

and-neck — Ruto and opposition leader Raila Odinga.

A tally published by the mass-circulation Daily Nation newspaper showed, based on results from more than 80% of constituencies, that Ruto was edging ahead.

Ruto was leading with slightly more than 51% of the vote, while Odinga had 48%.

Reporting from a traffic roundabout in Odinga’s hometown, Kisumu, in western Kenya, DW correspondent Mariel Müller described the situation Monday evening after the results were announced as “very tense.”

Müller said riot police had fired tear gas to disperse protesters who became aggressive after receiving word of Ruto’s victory.

“This morning when we arrived here, this whole place was packed with people, celebrating and convinced their favored candidate, Raila Odinga, would win this election. So, they were devastated when they heard the news that William Ruto won, and the mood changed very quickly.”

dential race, they need to receive 50%+1 of the votes.

Besides electing the president, Kenyans last week cast their votes for some 1,882 legislators and local officials.

The election saw a low turnout, with about 65% of the 22.1 million registered voters casting their ballots, according to the IEBC. The turnout in the 2017 election was nearly 80%.

Who were the front runners?

Ruto has served as deputy president since 2013. His boss, outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta, endorsed Odinga in this presidential election.

Kenyatta’s support for Odinga, a longtime opposition figure, effectively made Ruto run as the challenger. His lead is seen as a symbol of discontent with Kenyatta’s legacy.

Ruto has pledged to implement a new bottom-up economic model, with a focus on Kenya’s informal workers’ sector.

The 55-year-old previously served as minister of home affairs, minister of agriculture, and minister of higher education.

Odinga, 77, was making his fifth bid for the top job, after losing in 1997, 2007, 2013, and 2017. The veteran opposition leader also pledged to reform the economy in the East African nation. **bw**

NEW REPORT

Biden administration slams report critical of US withdrawal from Afghanistan

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration has slammed a new report by the Republican Party assessing the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The memo, which came in response to the GOP report, has put the blame on former US President Trump for securing a 2020 deal with the Taliban to evacuate the US from the region by May 2021.

“This partisan report is riddled with inaccurate characterizations, cherry-picked information, and false claims. It advocates for endless war and for sending even more American troops to Afghanistan. And it ignores the impacts of the flawed deal that former President Trump struck with the Taliban,” National Security Council (NSC) Spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in the memo, the text of which was first reported by Axios and obtained by The Hill.

Watson said the United States does not need a permanent troop presence on the ground in harm’s way to remain vigilant against terrorist threats or to remove the world’s most wanted terrorist from the battlefield. “We just demonstrated unequivocally in the recent Zawahiri strike to take out the leader of Al Qaeda,” she said.



The NSC official even went to blame former President Trump’s 2020 agreement with the Taliban that she says “empowered the Taliban, weakened our partners in the Afghan government, and committed to withdrawing our troops a few months after Presi-

dent Biden’s inauguration - with no clear plan for what should come next.”

Earlier, the Republican report stated the Biden administration’s failure to adequately plan for and execute the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

It said the Biden administration did not accurately portray the nature of the events on the ground and failed to put a plan in place to prevent American-trained Afghan commandos from being recruited by America’s adversaries.

“There are many sins, if you will. There was a complete lack of, and a failure to plan. There was no plan, and there was no plan executed...We had to rely on the Taliban to secure the perimeter of HKIA. That led to the chaos,” said House Foreign Affairs Committee Lead Republican Michael McCaul on CBS after the release of the report last week.

“And it also led to the suicide bomber that killed 13 service-members, men and women, and injured hundreds of people. And it could have been avoided,” he added.

The Biden administration announced in mid-April last year that Washington would withdraw its remaining troops from Afghanistan by the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The current administration held the previous government responsible for the deal that was brokered deal with the Taliban, which had a commitment to withdraw by May 1, 2021. **ANI**

COVID VACCINE

UK approves Omicron-ready COVID vaccine

LONDON: The UK’s drug regulator on Monday said it had approved an updated Moderna vaccine which is supposed to offer better protection against the so-called “Omicron” variant of COVID-19.

The Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said in a statement that it had approved the vaccine for adult booster doses “after it was found to meet the UK regulator’s standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.”

As in late 2020, when the UK rushed to become the first country to approve the first COVID vaccine, the MHRA decision came ahead of pending ones expected soon from European regulators, among others.

Moderna calls the new vaccine “bivalent” because it is designed to stimulate an immune response against two different antigens — both the original COVID variant and the first “Omicron” (or BA.1) variant, which has demonstrated a degree of resistance to existing vaccines.

The MHRA’s top official said the approval did not mean that exist-



ing COVID vaccines were no longer useful, however.

“The first generation of COVID-19 vaccines being used in the UK continue to provide important protection against the disease and save lives,” MHRA’s Chief Executive June Raine said. “What this bivalent vaccine gives us is a sharpened tool in our armory to help protect us against this disease as the virus continues to evolve.” **bw**

RETURN TO PAKISTAN

Nawaz Sharif to return to Pakistan in September

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan federal minister has claimed that former Prime Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Nawaz Sharif would return to the country in September.

After Shehbaz Sharif, brother of Nawaz Sharif became the Prime Minister in April, PML-N leaders were hoping for their party leader’s early return, reported Dawn. In 2018, an accountability court sentenced Nawaz to seven years in prison in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference, while he was also sentenced to a total of 11 years in prison and slapped a Pound 8 million fine (Rs 1.3 billion) in the Avenfield properties reference.

Subsequently, in 2019, the Lahore High Court (LHC) after suspending his sentence, allowed Nawaz to go abroad for medical treatment. He departed for London on November 19, 2019, and since then, he never returned to the country.

Sharif, who is in a self-imposed exile in London on medical grounds, will be looking to make a comeback as the PML-N



government is considering relevant legislation to ease the former PM’s return.

The coalition government is looking to make relevant amendments that would help repeal the ban imposed on Sharif by a Supreme Court judgement in the Panama Papers case against him.

Speaking at a press conference in Lahore, Pakistan Federal minister Javed Latif said a “level playing field” in Pakistani politics was impossible without Nawaz’s presence. The minister said the people had expressed their opinion and now wished for Nawaz’s return, reported Dawn.

He said the PML-N would not allow the former PM to go back

to jail upon his return. Latif also claimed that his party chief was disqualified on the instructions and directions of former chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar.

Latif’s statement comes after PTI Chairman Imran Khan, during his address to his party’s jalsa in Lahore, claimed that a conspiracy was being hatched to disqualify him in the Toshakhana and prohibited funding cases to pave the way for Nawaz’s return from London, reported Geo News.

“They have made a new plan to register new cases and disqualify Imran Khan in Toshakhana and prohibited funding cases,” he said.

“Under the conspiracy, Nawaz will be brought back to the country by the end of September [...] and a character assassination campaign will be launched to malign me.”

Earlier, Pakistan Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said the coalition government might make certain amendments that would help repeal the ban imposed on Nawaz by a Supreme Court judgement in the Panama Papers case against him. **ANI**

FIRST VISIT

Special UN envoy travels to strife-torn Myanmar

NAYPYITAW: The United Nations special envoy to Myanmar, Noeleen Heyzer, travelled to the Southeast Asian nation on Tuesday. She is visiting Myanmar for the first time since being appointed to the post in October, and a day after Myanmar’s ruling junta sentenced deposed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to an additional six years in prison.

Heyzer’s predecessor, Christine Schraner Burgener, a Swiss diplomat, was constantly blocked by Myanmar’s ruling generals from from visiting the country.

Heyzer “will focus on addressing the deteriorating situation and immediate concerns as well as other priority areas of her mandate,” UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. Dujarric gave no details on whether Heyzer would meet with Myanmar’s ruling military or its former leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Nobel laureate was arrested after the military overthrew her elected government in February 2021. Suu Kyi’s location has been kept under tight wraps since, and it



is not clear whether Heyzer could meet her, which has long been a UN demand.

Multiple charges

Suu Kyi has so far been tried on multiple charges at a special court in capital city, Naypyitaw. The 77-year-old already faces 11 corruption charges, with each of the charges being punishable by up to 15 years in prison. She was handed another six years on Monday.

Critics say charges are politically motivated and meant to keep her out of power. Myanmar’s military rulers agreed to a “five-point consensus” with the Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN) in April 2021 to restore peace and

stability to the country, but have done little to halt violence in the country, human rights groups say.

UN Security Council condemns worsening situation

Additionally, Heyzer’s visit comes after the UN Security Council roundly condemned Myanmar’s ruling junta for the execution of four pro-democracy activists last month.

“The members of the Security Council called for the pursuance of dialogue with all parties concerned and reconciliation in accordance with the will and interests of the people of Myanmar,” read a Security Council press release at the end of July. **bw**



SPORTS



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Three teams share leadership of La Liga after first round matches

Betis beat Elche after their job was made much easier by the sending off of Elche defender John Chetauya after just 15 minutes for a professional foul

MADRID: Real Betis, Atletico Madrid and Villarreal share the leadership of La Liga following the first round of matches, after the three sides kicked off the season with 3-0 wins.

Betis beat Elche after their job was made much easier by the sending off of Elche defender John Chetauya after just 15 min-



utes for a professional foul on Aitor Ruibales.

Borja Iglesias opened the scoring for Betis in the 27th minute,

and last season's top scorer Juanmi kicked off the season with two goals in the 38th and 59th minutes, as the home side

enjoyed an easy win.

Alvaro Morata celebrated his return to Atletico Madrid from Juventus with two goals as his side

opened the season with a 3-0 win away to Getafe.

Joao Felix supplied both assists for Morata, before Antoine Griezmann completed the scoring with a left-foot shot with 15 minutes left to play.

Athletic Bilbao couldn't start Ernesto Valverde's third spell in charge or celebrate Iker Muniain's 500 appearance for the club with a win, despite having over 20 shots and hitting the woodwork twice at home to Real Mallorca, whose keeper Predrag Rajkovic had a brilliant debut with several important saves in a 0-0 draw.

On Sunday, second-half goals from Lucas Vazquez and David Alaba saw Real Madrid fight back from conceding an early goal to win 2-1 away to newly-promoted Almeria.

Carlos Soler's second-half penalty allowed Gennaro Gattuso to begin his spell as Valencia boss with a 1-0 win at home to newly-promoted Girona, although Valencia had defender Eray Comret sent off early in the second half.

Real Sociedad won 1-0 in Cadiz thanks to Takefusa Kubo's debut goal from an excellent Mikel Merino through-ball.

Saturday saw FC Barcelona kick off the new La Liga season with a disappointing 0-0 draw at home to Rayo Vallecano, whose keeper Stole Dimitrievski only had to make two difficult saves.

Sergio Busquets was sent off in injury-time to complete a disappointing evening for Barca in a full Camp Nou.

Villarreal spoiled Real Valladolid's return to the top flight, with second-half goals from Nicolas Jackson and Alex Baena giving Unai Emery's side a 3-0 win in the Jose Zorrilla Stadium.

Joselu's 98th-minute penalty saved a point for Espanyol away to Celta Vigo, who had led 2-0 through Iago Aspas and Goncalo Palencia, only for Edu Esposito to pull a goal back in the 72nd minute penalty and set up the late drama.

The new season began on Friday night with Osasuna winning 2-1 at home to Sevilla thanks to Chimy Avila's ninth-minute header and Aimar Oroz's 74th-minute penalty, with Rafa Mir scoring for the visitors.

ENGLAND VS SOUTH AFRICA

England will continue with its aggressive approach in Tests: James Anderson

LONDON: Ahead of their first Test against South Africa at home, legendary England pacer James Anderson said that his side will continue with its aggressive approach to the longest format of the game even if it means they may come "unstuck" if things do not go in their favour.

"Bazball", a term coined for exhilarating style of Test cricket played by England under their new head coach Brendon McCullum has captured the imagination of English fans during this summer. McCullum and captain Ben Stokes took charge of a misfiring English side that had won just one of their 17 Tests previously. Since their takeover, they have won four games straight while chasing 275-plus targets in the final innings.

Anderson is well aware that England may struggle while playing in this way but still remains excited for what the side can achieve with Stokes and McCullum at the helm.

"The way him (Mark Boucher) and his team play (South Africa), they have a certain way of playing cricket. At the minute, Ben (Stokes) and Brendon McCullum have an idea of how they want us to play our cricket so we are buying into that and trying to play our



way and we are absolutely loving doing it. There might be times when we do come unstuck and moments when things do not go our way, but I think the fact that we are buying into this and enjoying doing it is exciting for the whole group," Sky Sports quoted Anderson as saying.

England's all-time leading Test wicket taker, Anderson is still focused on showing what he can do on the field despite turning 40 last month and is energised by the new setup.

"When the scoreboard ticks over, you do not really take too much notice of it and you start

again as a batter. I have not got to 40 much in my career, but when you do hit a milestone you try and reset and go again, and that is exactly my mindset, it is just a number next to my name," he said.

"I do not feel old or like I am slowing down or anything. The last few weeks I have been working hard and training, trying to work on my bowling again and keep that ticking over, then the last couple of days I have felt in a great rhythm and hopefully I can show that on the field," he added.

The first Test between England and South Africa will take place on August 17 at Lord's.

ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY GAMES



Omani shooting team misses medals by a whisker in Konya

Times News Service

KONYA: Oman's national shooting team completed their participation in trap and skeet competitions in the fifth edition of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Konya.

While the team completed (mixed trap) competition on Friday by achieving ninth place in the mixed competitions (men and women) by hitting 128 dishes out of 150.

In the (skeet) category, the team finished the competition on Monday by qualifying into the semi-finals through Naghmouh Al Hatali, who finished in fifth place.

The mixed skeet competition ended on Tuesday in which (men and women) got fifth place and they scored 136 dishes out of 150.



Oman team included, Mohammed bin Suleiman Al Hatali as administrator, Saud bin Salem Al Abadi as skateboard trainer, Marco Conti as shotgun trainer, and the shooters including Reem bint Juma Al Hosni, Salim bin Salem Al Nasiri,

Abdullah bin Saif Al Mandhari and Hussein ben Rashid Al Shahoumi, Fakhriya bint Khamis Al Jahafia, Naghmus bin Adnan Al Hatali, Muhammad bin Hamad Al Gharbi, Yasser bin Salem Al Nasiri and Fatima bint Abdullah Al Sulaimiya.

SUSPENDED

FIFA suspends All India Football Federation

NEW DELHI: Global football body FIFA announced on Monday that it would be suspending the All India Football Federation (AIFF) with immediate effect.

The decision was "due to undue influence from third parties," constituting a serious violation of the FIFA statutes, the organization's governing body said.

The AIFF is in a state of some chaos and being run by administrators after long-serving former chief Praful Patel stayed in office beyond the maximum term of 12 years without fresh elections, which courts ruled invalid.

Patel, who has held a number of high-profile government positions alongside his AIFF post, ran Indian football from 2009 and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the German football association (DFB) in 2019.

Fresh elections are to be held on August 28 and the poll process began last week, after India's Supreme Court approved a timeline prepared by the administrators.

India won't host FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

The suspension means that the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup



2022, scheduled to take place in India on 11-30 October, cannot currently be held in the country as planned. Patel had a significant role in the tournament being awarded to India.

World football's governing body is assessing the next steps with regard to the tournament. FIFA said it is in constant contact with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and

Sports in India and that it was hopeful that a positive outcome could still be achieved.

India's highest court disbanded the AIFF in May and appointed a three-member committee to govern the sport, amend the AIFF's constitution and conduct elections that have been pending for 18 months.

In response, FIFA and the

Asian Football Confederation sent a team led by AFC general secretary Windsor John to meet Indian football stakeholders and laid down a roadmap for the AIFF to amend its statutes by the end of July and conclude elections at the latest by September 15.

"The suspension will be lifted once an order to set up a committee of administrators to assume

the powers of the AIFF Executive Committee has been repealed and the AIFF administration regains full control of the AIFF's daily affairs," FIFA said in a statement.

No games for India's men or women

The ruling will also mean that Indian men's and women's national teams cannot play junior or senior international games for now.

Former men's captain Bhai-chung Bhutia called the suspension "very harsh".

"At the same time I think it's a great opportunity to get our system right," he told Indian sports news outlet Sportstar.

"And [it's] very important that all the stakeholders, the federations, state associations, sport ministry, come together to get the system right and everybody work for the betterment of the sport."

According to FIFA statutes, member federations must be free from legal and political interference in their respective countries. FIFA has previously suspended other national associations over similar concerns. Pakistan, Kenya and Zimbabwe have been suspended this year alone.

FOOTBALL

Di Maria's fantastic debut helps Juve to winning start in Serie A

ROME: Angel Di Maria made a brilliant Serie A debut on Monday, scoring one and setting up another to help Juventus open the new season with a comfortable 3-0 home victory over Sassuolo.

Juve ended last season empty-handed, and entered Monday's game without Federico Chiesa, Paul Pogba, Wojciech Szczesny, Moise Kean and Adrien Rabiot.

Di Maria, who joined the Bianconeri from PSG in the summer on a free transfer, got the nod in the starting line-up, while fellow new arrival Filip Kostic was on the bench.

After a run of plays, the home side broke the deadlock in the 25th minute as Alex Sandro rolled across from the left and Di Maria hit a first-time volley that looped over the goalkeeper.

Dusan Vlahovic doubled the lead before the break as he converted a penalty after being tripped in the box.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by October 2022 reaching \$92.30, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$2.96 from the price of Monday, which was \$95.26. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,651.87 points, up by 0.17 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.73 per cent at 481.38 points. Voltamp Energy, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while, SMN Power Holding, down 5.88 per cent, was the top loser.

Opaz offers e-service for registering SMEs in Sezad and the free zones

Through this service, entrepreneurs registered with the SMEs Development Authority, holding Riyada cards, can get more opportunities in procurement, tenders, and works assigned to SMEs from the projects operating in Sezad and the free zones

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has announced opening an electronic service for registering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the One-Stop Shop (OSS), through the digital investment portal of the authority.

Through this service, entrepreneurs registered with the SMEs Development Authority, holding Riyada cards, can get more opportunities in procurement, tenders, and works assigned to SMEs

from the projects operating in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) and the free zones.

In this context, Abdulaziz bin Mohamed Al Hinai from Opaz said, there are many prospects and opportunities in Sezad and the zones affiliated with the authority for entrepreneurs to benefit from.

This service which has been converted to e-service in the One-Stop Shop aims to create a database that facilitates reaching out to entrepreneurs, with Riyada cards and those registered in the zones affiliated with the authority.

Al Hinai added that these enterprises can benefit from the opportunities offered (which represent 10 per cent of the value of the projects implemented in the zones).

Through its digital transformation plans, Opaz seeks to automate its procedures for the benefit of entrepreneurs and to facilitate Opaz access to entrepreneurs by creating a database that classifies the types of activities offered by SMEs.

Through this database, SMEs will have the opportunities to take part in the tenders and contracts of the projects implemented in Opaz's various zones through the Digital Investment Portal of the authority.

It is worth noting that Opaz also intends to achieve continuous development in all electronic services offered to entrepreneurs.

It is worth noting that the works assigned to SMEs in the Sezad from 2016 to 2022 amounted to OMR68 million and more than 230 SMEs have benefited from these amounts which are registered with Opaz, while Opaz seeks to develop all electronic services provided to entrepreneurs.



CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN



Treasury bills worth OMR10mn issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR10 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The treasury bills are for a maturity period of 28 days, from August 17 until September 14, 2022.

The average accepted price reached 99.830 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 99.830 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 2.21607 per cent and 2.21985 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The CBO acts as the issue

manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 2.21607 per cent and 2.21985 per cent, respectively.

It may be noted that the interest rate on the repo operations with CBO is 3.00 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 3.50 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

TRADE TRANSACTIONS

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has launched the Bank Muscat trade portal for online initiation of trade transactions such as issuance/amendment of letters of credit, guarantees and trade financing.

The portal is an e-channel that also helps customers access required information/reports online. Instead of customers visiting branches and submitting their requests in person, the same can now be sent to the bank online, thereby enhancing customer convenience and accessibility. Customers can access the new portal through the bank's online banking platform.

The digital platform is easy to navigate and allows corporate banking customers to log in from anywhere and at any time. It enables paperless transaction processing for a range of trade products and real-time tracking of transactions. Customers shall also benefit from a single sign-on using their online banking credentials and will receive auto notifications/email alerts upon processing of transactions by the



“Bank Muscat has now launched this new portal that will enable speedier, efficient trade-financing solutions

Fatma Al Maskiry
Senior Assistant General Manager – Global Trade Services, Bank Muscat

bank and can generate electronic copies of all transaction advice / related swift messages.

Easy-to-use templates, an in-built search tool for easy retrieval of records, and a calendar menu option to schedule transactions are some of the other main features of the Bank Muscat trade portal. Corporate customers are

reassured of the portal's world-class security.

Speaking about the new trade portal, Fatma Khalifa Al Maskiry, Senior Assistant General Manager – Global Trade Services, Bank Muscat, said, “Global Trade Services play an important role in facilitating trade and economic development across the globe. As

one of the leading trade finance providers in the region, Bank Muscat has been continually digitising services and has now launched this new portal that will enable speedier, efficient and highly secure trade-financing solutions for our corporate clients.”

Global Trade Services at Bank Muscat through its tailor-made products and services provide an entire gamut of trade financing solutions that are simple to use with a competitive pricing structure. With its strong global network of over 500 correspondent banks and highly-experienced pool of trade specialists, Bank Muscat offers a number of customised solutions to meet the challenging demands of exporters, importers and local traders in the Sultanate.

The bank issues Letters of Credit, all types of Guarantees, Standby LCs, handles documents under collection, offers document checking services under export letters of credit, confirms letters of credit and provides various trade financing solutions including forfaiting, receivables finance, trust receipt financing etc., and facilitates secured trade payments and receipts between buyers and sellers.

REPORT

Residential real estate prices in India rise 5%

NEW DELHI: A resurgence in demand for residential real estate has led to an average 5 per cent increase in prices across the top eight cities - Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad - while registering a marginal decline in unsold stocks during Q2 of 2022 (April-June), a joint report by real estate association CREDAI and domain experts Colliers and Liases Foras said.

Prices for residential properties, which have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, have been seeing an upward trend led by rising demand amidst rising prices of construction materials. The sales momentum that started in the latter part of last year continued in Q2 2022 as well, led by pent-up demand and attractive pricing, a statement said on Tuesday. - **ANI**

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CASH MIGHT NOT BE THE BEST WAY

TO ACHIEVE EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION



Rewards are constellations of attributes, and firms should focus more on the motivational effects of the attributes associated with a reward rather than the reward type itself,” Presslee said.

The findings of a new study suggest that tangible rewards motivate employees when they're easy to use, pleasurable, unexpected, and distinct from salary. The study was recently published in the journal Accounting, Organisations, and Society. A recent survey of firms in the United States revealed that 84 percent spent more than USD 90 billion annually on tangible employee rewards, such as gift cards, recreation trips and merchandise in hopes of increasing productivity. “We found that there is, at best, mixed evidence regarding the motivational efficacy of tangible rewards versus cash rewards,” said Adam Presslee, an associate professor at the University of Waterloo’s School of Accounting and Finance. “It is somewhat puzzling why so many companies go to the trouble of tangible rewards when cash rewards also lead to motivational differences.”

Presslee and his co-author, University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Willie Choi, used four experiments to investigate the factors driving the preference between cash and tangible rewards. The attributes examined include ease of use of the reward (fungibility), hedonic nature of the reward (want vs. need), the novelty of the reward, and how the reward is presented.

“Rewards are constellations of attributes, and firms should focus more on the motivational effects of the attributes associated with a reward rather than the reward type itself,” Presslee said. “Results

confirmed that each of these attributes — individually and in combination — increases employee effort and performance.” The researchers recommend managers interested in motivating employees using tangible rewards would be best served to offer tangible rewards that incorporate these four attributes. “If for whatever reason tangible rewards are the only tool available, our results show compelling evidence that employees are motivated by rewards that are perceived as distinct from salary,” Presslee said. “Therefore, firms looking to get the most out of their reward programs should emphasize the distinctiveness of those rewards, and the attributes above are four ways firms can do that.” -ANI





IN-PICTURES



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Animals in Namibia's Etosha National Park
Tourists park their vehicles to wait as an elephant walks across a road in the Etosha National Park in Namibia. *xinhua*



Kuwait's Nayef Palace included in list of Islamic Heritage Sites
Picture shows a scene of the Nayef Palace in Kuwait City, Kuwait. The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO) recently included the Nayef Palace in the list of Islamic Heritage Sites. *xinhua*



Rwandan youth becomes a hit on Douyin, Chinese version of TikTok
Pacifique Izabayo (left) and his team member sing a Chinese song together for sharing a short video on Douyin in Kigali, Rwanda. Rwandan youth, Pacifique Izabayo, has become a hit on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, for singing Chinese songs while showing Rwandan rural life. *xinhua*



650 Afghan destitute families receive food aid in Kabul
Afghan people wait to receive food aid in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. A total of 650 Afghan destitute families received food aid in capital city of Kabul on Tuesday, Abdul Matin Rahimzai, head of Kabul provincial Refugees and Repatriation Affairs Department, said. *xinhua*



Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) scheduled to open in September
Aerial picture shows the campus of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province. After three years of construction, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) is scheduled to open in September. *xinhua*



Wujiang grand bridge in SW China's Guizhou completes closure
Aerial picture shows the construction site for the closure of Wujiang grand bridge, a main project of the expressway linking Dejiang and Yuqing, in southwest China's Guizhou Province. *xinhua*



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ROUND-UP



Nissan Patrol Super Safari now available with attractive benefits

With its ability to conquer even the most difficult road conditions and the harshest of terrains without compromising on comfort and luxury, the Super Safari is a model that is highly in demand, especially due to the region being a hub for outdoor activity and adventure

MUSCAT: Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA) is offering a special promotion on Nissan Patrol Super Safari. With its proud heritage, composed of power, determination and strength, the Nissan Patrol Super Safari transcends one's expectations of any vehicle.

As part of the special scheme Nissan Patrol Super Safari customers can enjoy special EMI, free periodic vehicle service package (3 years/60/000 km), free insurance and free registration. Customers can also avail additional benefits on purchase of second Nissan in the family.

The offer, which is available on Nissan Patrol Super Safari model purchased for personal use, will go on till August 19. Vehicles purchased with commercial registration will not be eligible for the scheme. Vehicles bought for taxi, driving school, ministries, fleet and rent-a-car usage will not be eligible for this scheme.

A senior official from Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), "We are delighted to offer special pro-



motion on Nissan Patrol Super Safari. Popular among adventure lovers in the region, Nissan Patrol Super Safari comes part and parcel of the culture in this region.

"With its ability to conquer even the most difficult road conditions and the harshest of terrains without compromising on comfort and luxury, the Super Safari is a model that is highly in demand, especially due to the region being a hub for outdoor activity and adventure."

Nissan Patrol Super Safari astounds auto enthusiasts because of its legacy and reputation for versatility, capability and extreme performance. Its legendary capability and its deep-rooted heritage in the region make it a popular vehicle.

Customers can avail low EMI rate of OMR 190 on Nissan Patrol Y 61 Super Safari. These EMIs are calculated on the price of the base

model with 20% down payment, 3 per cent rate of interest for 10 years loan tenure, through Bank Muscat. Subject to credit approvals.

All customers purchasing Nissan Patrol Y 61 Super Safari will be eligible for free periodic maintenance service package for three years / 60,000 km (whichever is earlier), limited to six services only. This offer includes only the service intervals of 10,000km.

All customers purchasing Nissan Patrol Y 61 Super Safari during this scheme period will be eligible for free first year vehicle insurance (Oman and UAE only).

All customers purchasing Nissan Patrol Y 61 Super Safari during this scheme period will be eligible for free first year vehicle registration.

As per a loyalty programme, all Nissan existing owners and their immediate family members (father, mother, son(s) and unmarried daughter(s) will be eligible for additional benefits on purchase of a second Nissan vehicle. Additional benefits include PMS service for new car, exclusive discount on labour charges and trade in benefits.

This legacy of reliability and superior 4x4 capability remains true today, and it is why one can take the Nissan Patrol Safari where others don't dare to go. Nissan Patrol Super Safari boasts of all the elements that have elevated the vehicle to iconic status such as the rugged design and the off-road capability, while delivering a modern approach that is complemented by the special upgrades and enhancements that add to its usability and visual appeal.

The Patrol Super Safari boasts all-new tan leather seats and door trim with 8-way power seats for the driver and 4-way for the front passenger. New driver aids in-

clude a navigation system as well as front and rear parking sensors with rear view camera, Bluetooth, USB, CD, auxiliary input socket and FM/AM radio to complete the in-car entertainment offering. The vehicle comes equipped with automatic climate control and a built-in, refrigerated cool box.

Building on the iconic Super Safari model, the new Nissan Patrol Super Safari enjoys the legendary exterior design which has distinguished it from other Patrol models and made it one of the most recognized icons of modern off-road vehicles. Distinctive machine cut 17" black alloy wheels, dual-tone body colors, flared fenders, a rear spoiler and a Super Safari body stripe all build on its iconic looks.

The Patrol Super Safari boasts a 4.8L DOHC in-line 6-cylinder engine producing 280hp and a mighty 46kg or 451Nm of torque which allows it to power up dunes or tow heavy objects with ease. The engine is mated to a 5-speed automatic transmission with manual mode.

Dual front airbags, ABS, an immobilizer and cruise control are among the other features contributing to both safety and driver convenience, while the vehicle boasts rear locking differentials, an electric front winch, as well as front and rear tow hooks as standard equipment for desert use.

Nissan Patrol Super Safari marries legendary off-road capability with modern day comfort and innovation that truly excites.

Designed to be a remarkable off-road vehicle while maintaining all the comforts of a road going full size SUV, the Patrol Super Safari incorporates some of the latest innovation and features that Nissan customers have come to expect.

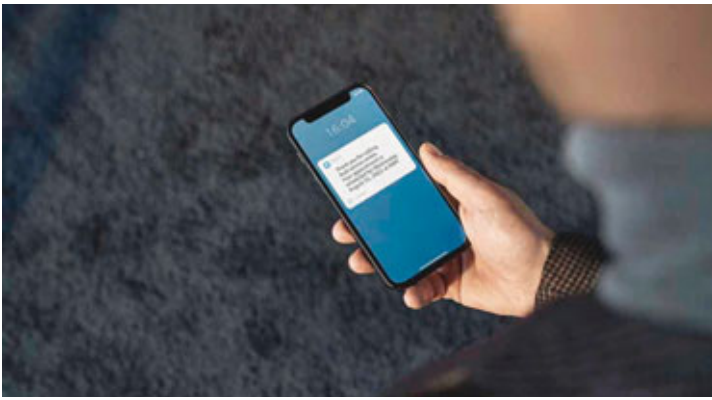
QUALITY SERVICE

Book your Audi service appointment in advance for special experience

MUSCAT: Urging owners to keep up with their vehicle's scheduled maintenance, Audi Oman, represented by Premium Motors has asked them to book their next Audi service appointment in advance for a professional experience.

By using the convenient online form on the Audi Oman website, customers can schedule a service appointment from the comfort of their home or office. On completing the form, a member of the staff will get back as soon as possible to confirm the appointment.

The service centre will call the day before to confirm details and be ready for the visit. With no excessive waiting, the visit will be efficient and well organised and



the vehicle will be ready at a time convenient to the customer.

Christian Nehme, General Manager of Premium Motors Oman, said, "We aim to give owners the best quality service. Booking an advanced service for Audi means customers will receive excellent

service and quality from our team of trained technicians. We have the know-how and facilities to perform a wide selection of servicing jobs through a team of certified Audi technicians. We also use only genuine manufacturer parts when a replacement needs to be fitted."

The objective of the service team is to help maintain the brilliance of Audi for many years of fun driving.

Owners can make the appointment when they have time or are thinking about it even late at night when the service centre is closed. They can schedule the appointment online and not have to worry about making a note to call during regular business hours.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Al Hashar Pharmacy organises tree plantation drive

MUSCAT: With the increased element of afforestation in Muscat, Al Hashar Pharmacy has taken a noble step under its corporate social responsibility. Al Hashar Pharmacy in cooperation with Muscat Municipality planted several flowering shade trees along Jabal Street leading to the intersection of Al-Mahaj in the wilayat of Amerat in both directions.

Earlier, Al Hashar Pharmacy organised "A Green Initiative Drive" by planting more than 30 saplings on their office premises. As an extension of this initiative, 50 more well-grown flowering shade trees have been planted on July 28 in Al Amerat, an area that is witnessing rapid urbanization and an amazing place to visit too. This will be followed by cosmetic stages in future by Muscat Municipality.

This green initiative drive also commemorates Al Hashar

Pharmacy's 50th glorious year in healthcare services in the Sultanate of Oman. In celebration of Al Hashar Pharmacy's 5 decades of quality services in Oman, all staff members join hands to organise various campaigns and activities throughout the year to mark this glorious occasion.

"Our goal is to promote a green and sustainable environment in line with the Omani Vision 2040 to protect and conserve Oman's rich biodiversity and contribute towards the country's efforts to reduce carbon footprint. We believe this small step is the first of many to be taken in the right direction in creating a sustainable, clean, and eco-friendly environment for everyone", said Suresh Gandhi, the CEO of Al Hashar Pharmacy. He also thanked the Environment Authority & Muscat Municipality for extending their wholehearted support for the tree plantation drive.

AGENDA

Dhofar University's board of trustees holds its third ordinary meeting



MUSCAT: Chaired by Yousuf bin Alawi, Deputy Chairperson of Dhofar University' Board of Trustees, the board held its 3rd ordinary meeting for the AY 2021-22 on August 15.

The meeting discussed its agenda and made decisions accordingly that include: Approval of DU Budget for the AY 2022-23, Approval of a 5 year term plan (2022-27) to update the University's network and computing systems, Approval of a 5 year term plan (2022-27) for the maintenance of DU buildings and properties and approval of a guiding map for future expansion of DU Campus.



ROUND-UP

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Enjoy distinctive luxury in Lincoln Navigator Presidential experience

In Oman, the Lincoln Navigator Presidential experience is available as the Yacht Club theme which consists of seat surfaces which are holstered with coastal blue Venetian leather and detailed with elegant micro-perforations, giving you a charisma of a Captain

MUSCAT: The exceptionally detailed and uniquely themed Lincoln Navigator Presidential experience is remarkable in every sense. Every aspect in the Presidential range of the Lincoln Navigator is in place to envelop occupants in some of the most remarkable luxury experiences ever.

In Oman, the Lincoln Navigator Presidential experience is available as the Yacht Club theme which consists of seat surfaces which are holstered with coastal blue Venetian leather and detailed with elegant micro-perforations, giving you a charisma of a Captain. Whitewashed teak detailing balances the theme's blues with shades you might find during a warm day on the water.

Powering your journeys is a twin-turbo V6 engine producing 450 horsepower delivered through a 10-speed transmission. Navigator's lighter, high-strength aluminium-alloy body helps create a more refined ride.

The Navigator is equipped with a clean and uncluttered interior layout, with a simple, soothing ambience. At night, interior ambient lights sequentially illuminate each of the SUV's three rows. During the



day, a panoramic roof fills the cabin with natural light. Inside, spaciousness comes in all three rows, including storage in each to keep the cabin clean and organized. An available rear-seat entertainment system allows passengers to stream content wirelessly with an Android device to one of the 10-inch adjustable screens mounted on the rear of the front seats.

The Navigator is designed to be intuitive and easy to use. A 12-inch

configurable instrument cluster allows drivers to choose the information they want to be displayed. An available Head-Up Display can show selected information on the windshield instead of the instrument cluster. This helps drivers keep their eyes on the road and their hands on the wheel. It does not fade in the sunlight and is visible even with polarised lenses.

Occupants can enjoy available Revel® Ultima audio with 20 speakers

that work in concert with Navigator's interior design and acoustics. Standard SYNC® 3 enables clients to manage audio, phone, navigation and more from the vehicle touch screen or steering wheel-mounted controls. Second-row passengers have their audio and climate control, while third-row seats feature power recline capability.

While on the move, the Navigator is also easy to adjust to changing conditions. With the turn of a

dial, the driver can adapt the Navigator to changing roads or weather, and enjoy a smooth, confident ride. Additional available technology includes: Trailer Backup Assist, which automatically steers the vehicle to turn a trailer the desired amount – meaning less time required to perform the task; Navigator is expected to deliver more towing capability than any other premium full-size SUV; 360-degree camera and enhanced park

assist, which reduce stress from parallel and perpendicular parking. The system integrates views from four cameras to create an overhead image so the driver can see all around the vehicle; Adaptive cruise control, which automatically slows Navigator in stop-and-go traffic – resuming speed when traffic allows.

In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

SALARY TRANSFER CUSTOMERS

Ahli Islamic to continue its 10% cash reward



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MUSCAT: Ahli Islamic's ongoing initiative to enhance value-added benefits for its growing clientele has set in motion its ambitious 10% cash-back reward for salary transfer customers.

Launched earlier this year, the popular scheme continues to support Ahli Islamic's commitment to offering its patrons and potential customers newer avenues to grow and enhance their experience.

As per the scheme, Ahli Islamic offers a 10% cash reward on the total salary, reaching up to a maximum of OMR500. The one-time offer applies to all the existing and new customers, both Omanis and expatriates, whose monthly salaries are OMR1,000 and above.

Conceptualised and implemented to reflect Ahli Islamic's long-term goal to 'partner' with customers, the 10% cash-back is a windfall for salary transfer customers who

rely on Sharia-compliant products and services for their banking requirements. The one-time cash reward continues to translate the Ahli Islamic's intent to provide customers with Islamic banking products that comply with the changing market trends and choices of customers from diverse backgrounds.

Highlighting the advantages of the scheme against the backdrop of the growing global popularity of Islamic banking, Yousuf bin Salim Al Rawahi, Deputy General Manager and Head of Ahli Islamic, said, "It is encouraging to witness that Sharia-compliant financing is growing as one of the fastest segments of the worldwide financial system, with analysts demonstrating its positive role in economic growth. This shift can also be displayed in our local banking sector, which has recently seen a spurt in the number of young Omanis seeking

Islamic banking services. This trend is due to customer awareness of the advantages Islamic banking offers to meet their various requirements.

"Through the cash-back offer, we want to express our gratitude to our growing base of customers and applaud them for the trust they have bestowed on our ability to help them grow, whether as an individual or a business entity. We at Ahli Islamic are positive that this initiative will mirror our responsibility to the community we operate in and demonstrate our intent to generate financial inclusion, as mandated under Oman Vision 2040," he added.

The cash-back offer is an extension of Ahli Islamic's innovative services and products that conform to the Islamic-sharia principles. With its footprints growing in the Sultanate, it continues to ensure top-quality service standards for its loyal customers.



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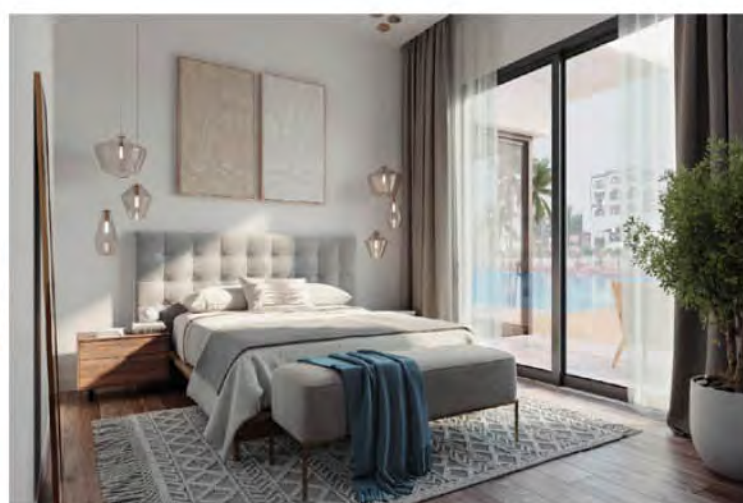
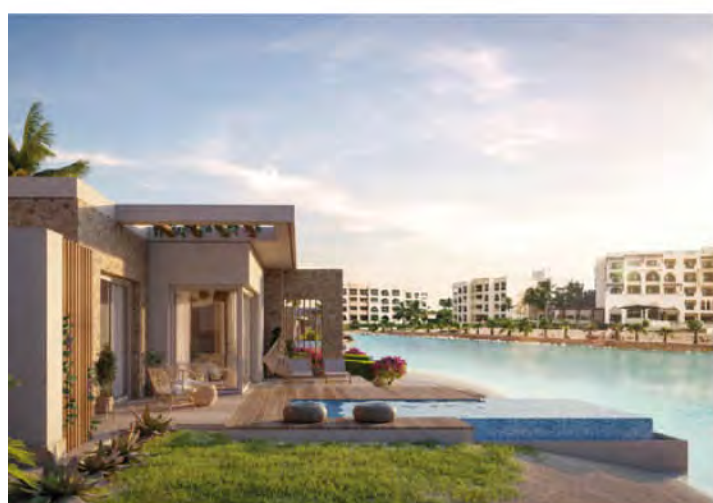
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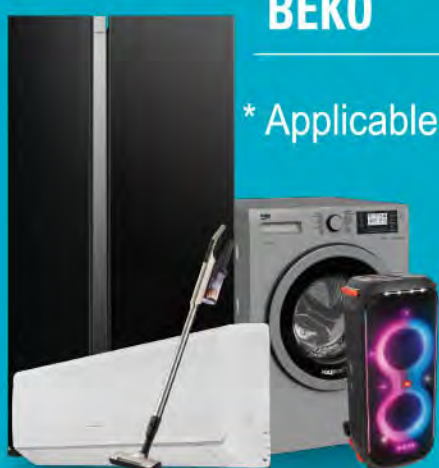


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