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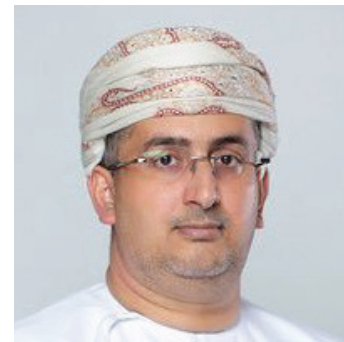
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New hospital plan for old airport site

The hospital will be mainly for aviation related emergencies, says Oman Aviation Group CEO Al Hinai



Oman Aviation Group CEO Mustafa Al Hinai.

of aviation, and a training centre. We are expecting an international hospital to be operated from the airport, which will mainly be for emergency purposes related to aviation.

"We are also expecting private jet business, FPOs and helicopters to be operated from the airport. Apart from that, we have some associated services, which will be a part of the airport community services. These are the major points which have been defined to be delivered within the old terminal," said Al Hinai

More than 20 companies have expressed their interest to participate in the investment projects, and a total of 10 companies have already been selected and work will begin by 2020. Al Hinai also discussed the direction that the aviation sector in Oman is moving towards this year. >A3

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The old Muscat airport building is set to be transformed into an operational hub, which will include a training centre, a hospital, and a point for private jet businesses, according to the Chief Executive Officer of the Oman Aviation Group, Mustafa

Al Hinai. The CEO of the Oman Aviation Group spoke to *Times of Oman* regarding the future plans for the old airport: "We have redefined the purpose of the old [Muscat] airport, and one of the main ideas which we are developing is for it to be an educational centre



HM GIVES AUDIENCE TO BRITISH DEFENCE SECRETARY

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said gave audience to British Secretary of Defence Gavin Williamson at Bait Al Barakah on Thursday evening. The audience discussed aspects of the existing bilateral cooperation between the Sultanate and the United Kingdom in various spheres to serve the common interests of the Omani and British people. The audience was attended by Sayyid Badr bin Saud bin Harih Al Busaidi, Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs, and Hamish Cowell, the UK appointed Ambassador to Oman. - OMA See also >A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Lutsenko crowned Tour of Oman champ



1 Alexey Lutsenko has been confirmed the winner of the 2019 Tour of Oman. Although he did not finish among the top three on the day, the Team Astana rider had done enough to retain his title. >A4

BUDGET AIRLINE

SalamAir eyes India flights

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SALALAH: SalamAir, the Sultanate's first budget airline, will be launching direct flights from Salalah to India and other international destinations this year, the airline has announced.

Speaking exclusively to the *Times of Oman* at the inauguration of the airline's first sales office in Salalah, Captain Mohamed Ahmed, CEO of SalamAir, said that the carrier will be expanding its operations in 2019 and will be



looking into some international destinations, including India.

"This year, we are going to start direct flights to some of the GCC destinations such as Abu Dhabi and Kuwait from Salalah. Hope-

fully, the flights to Sohar that were temporarily stopped due to the lighting issue, will be resolved in a week or two, and as soon as that happens, we will resume the flight."

"Furthermore, we are looking to expand our flights to more international destinations, including the Indian sub-continent. The operation of these flights will all depend on the approvals that we get from different authorities, and the support that we get from the local stakeholders here," Ahmed said. >A8



Huge footfall on first day of Muscat Book Fair

A7

OMAN Four expats killed in car accident

2 Four expatriates of Asian nationality have died and two others seriously injured in a car accident in Jabal Al Akhdar, the Royal Oman Police has confirmed. >A3

MARKET OMR25.1bn credit extended by banks

3 The banking sector in Oman continued to witness reasonable growth and support economic diversification initiatives, including providing adequate credit to the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector. >B1



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GCC STANDARDISATION ORGANISATION

Gulf lab competence meet to be hosted by Oman from Tuesday

MUSCAT: The Sultanate will host next Tuesday the 5th Gulf Conference for Laboratory Competence.

The conference is being organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with the GCC Standardisation Organisation (GSO).

The opening ceremony of the conference will be held under the patronage of Dr. Ali bin Mas'oud Al Sunaidi, Minister of Commerce and Industry, member of the GCC Ministerial Committee.

It is part of the GCC strategic plan to improve the standardisation infrastructure to develop trade and industry and support the national economy of the member states GCC Standardisation Organisation aims to improve standardisation authorities in the member states, facilitating access to technical services, such as proficiency testing programmes, in order to enhance competence and ensure reliable examination and analysis results for all bodies operating in the region. -ONA

CABLE

HM sends condolences to King of Saudi Arabia

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has sent a cable of condolences and sympathy to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the death of Princess Adhwa'a bint Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Abdulaziz Al Saud.

In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his condolences and sympathy, praying to the Almighty Allah to rest her soul in peace and grant her family patience to bear the loss. -ONA

PENINSULA SHIELD EXERCISE BEGINS

The Joint Dir'a Al Jazeera (Peninsula Shield) Exercise 10 kicked off yesterday in the Eastern Region of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia. The exercise is being conducted by the armed forces of the GCC States and planned by the Unified Joint Operations aimed at acquainting them with preparations for thwarting any probable threat to the GCC States. -ONA



MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Conference held on women's health

MUSCAT: The opening ceremony of the 3rd International Conference on Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (3rd ICAOG) organised by the Department of Gynaecology & Obstetrics at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) was held at Crown Plaza Madinat Al Irfan on Thursday under the patronage of Dr. Rawya bint Saud Al Busaidi, Minister of Higher Education.

The conference was held under the theme "Towards Excellence in Women's Health", which aims to provide a platform for discussion on how to deal with critical and high-risk pregnancies due to complications of pregnancy or maternity conditions and to highlight the latest advances in medical fields.

The conference topics included the latest developments in various subspecialties. The presentations by renowned international and national speakers highlight the best practices and



evidence based medicine. The pre-conference workshops are aimed at sharpening the participant's skills and offer a platform for sharing their experiences.

Six international speakers from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Italy and Kuwait will share their knowledge and experience in gynecology and obstetrics during the event.

This is in addition to 19 national experts in OBGYN, genetics, hematology, neonatology, radiology, psychiatry, pathology, infectious disease and oncology. -ONA

VITAL ROLE

Oman to mark Teachers' Day today

MUSCAT: The Sultanate will celebrate today the Omani Teachers' Day which is observed on February 24 every year.

The celebration reaffirms the efficient and vital role teachers play in the education field.

Vocational training

Dr. Madiha bint Ahmed Al Shibani, Minister of Education expressed pride over the achievements of the Teachers' Specialised Vocational Training Centre and over the graduation of its first batch.

She also pointed to the recently announced Oman Vision 2040, which stated that education would be one of its key elements.

The training programmes in 2018 amounted to 624 programmes, which reaffirmed the continued attention and care accorded to the training of teachers, she added. -ONA

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RECEIVED: His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad and his delegation were received by Hisham Tawfiq, Minister of Business Sector; Dr. Ali bin Ahmed Al Isaei, the Sultanate's Ambassador to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the Arab League. -ONA

Sayyid Asa'ad in Egypt for first Arab-EU Summit

SHARM EL SHEIKH: Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, His Highness Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan arrived here, yesterday, leading the Sultanate's delegation to first Arab-EU Summit scheduled for today and tomorrow in the city of Sharm El Sheikh.

On their arrival, Sayyid Asa'ad and his delegation were received by Hisham Tawfiq, Minister of Business Sector; Dr. Ali bin Ahmed Al Isaei, the Sultanate's Ambassador to Egypt and Perma-

nent Representative to the Arab League and a number of members of the Sultanate's embassy in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Sayyid Asa'ad is accompanied by an official delegation comprising Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry; Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Futaisi, Minister of Transport and Communications; Dr. Fuad bin Jafar Al Sajwani, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries; Dr. Ali bin Ahmed Al Isaei, the Sultanate's Ambassador to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the Arab League; Khalifa bin Hamad Al Badi and Saif bin Ahmed Al Sawafi, Advi-

sors at the Office of His Highness and a number of officials.

On their departure from Muscat, yesterday, Sayyid Asa'ad and his delegation were seen off by Sheikh Saif bin Mohammed Al Shabibi, Minister of Housing; Dr. Madiha bint Ahmed Al Shibani, Minister of Education; Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat; Ahmed bin Nasser Al Mahrazi, Minister of Tourism; Mohammed Ahmed Fahmi Ghanim, the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate and Saif bin Mohammed Al Abri, Secretary General of the Office of His Highness. -ONA

WEATHER

Rain reported in northern parts

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A number of wilayats in the northern parts of Sultanate received rain yesterday, the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) has informed.

In a statement issued online on Saturday, PACA said: "Clear to partly cloudy skies over northern governorates of the Sultanate

with chances of isolated rain."

Forecast

"Mainly clear skies over the rest of the Sultanate with chances of late night to early morning low level clouds or fog patches over the governorates of South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and parts of Dhofar governorates," PACA added.



ACCIDENT

Four expats killed, two injured in car crash

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Four expats have died and two others sustained serious injuries in a car crash in Jabal Al

Akhdar, the Royal Oman Police confirmed. The expats were all of "an Asian nationality." A police official said. "At 12:49, a vehicle crashed and collided with a fixed

object on Jabal Al Akhdar before the mountain point. The accident resulted in the death of 4 persons and serious injury to two others of Asian nationality."

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NEW PLANS

FROM A1 Aviation sector

"Technology is a critical focus point for us this year, we are investing in technology for all our operating businesses; we are recognising the efforts put in earlier in terms of having the right infrastructure for the country and having movable assets in place, but now, our focus is on how to build a digital world with all the entities."

"Within the aviation sector, initially, we are moving with the transformation strategy on Oman Air which is very crucial for us to ensure that there is sustainable traffic to Oman that can allow us to increase our point-to-point traffic," Al Hinai said.

"Another plan for us this year is to exploit our airports in terms of their commercial and operational positioning. We also plan on maximising the sector's impact through other sectors, and this will be done by looking at how the aviation sector can enable other sectors in terms of their requirements; so, focusing on our sea-to-air model or our engagement with the Ministry of Tourism to study ways in which we can bring larger crowds of tourists to the country," added Al Hinai.

On February 20, the Ministry of Transport and Communications held a press conference where the minister reviewed all the purposed plans for 2019. During the event, Al Hinai presented the plans for the aviation sector, which include "focusing on digitisation and cybersecurity, implementing the Air Cargo Strategy to enhance the capacity to transport 780,000 tonnes through air by 2030, and developing long-term initiatives for the sector to enable tourism services through the development of a comprehensive electronic system."

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Lutsenko crowned 2019 winner

Although Alexey Lutsenko did not finish among the top three on the last day, the Team Astana rider, who hails from Kazakhstan, had done enough throughout the race to retain his title

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Alexey Lutsenko has been confirmed the winner of the 2019 Tour of Oman.

The final leg of the race from Al Mouj to Muttrah Corniche ended on Thursday. Although he did not finish among the top three, the Team Astana rider, who hails from Kazakhstan, had done enough throughout the race to retain his title. Lutsenko had also previously won three of the six stages of the tour, as he emerged in front on days two, three and five.



On the day, however, it was Giacomo Nizzolo of Team Dimension Data who finished first, followed by Sonny Colbrelli of Bahrain Merida, and David Ballerini in third place.

Bahrain Merida's Domenico Pozzovivo also finished second overall, after suffering a crash while on the bike trail.

A statement from Team Astana said, "It's official, your 2019 Tour of Oman winner: Alexey Lutsenko!" with the defending champion himself adding, "We will have a

celebration, but the main goals of the season are still ahead of us."

Team Bahrain Merida added, "Sonny Colbrelli sprints to second place in Muttrah Corniche. After the crash, Domenico Pozzovivo was able to cross the line safely in the bunch and grabs second place overall."

Team Dimension Data also congratulated their riders, adding, "Stage 6 of the 2019 Tour of Oman in the bag! Great ride by Giacomo Nizzolo and Team Dimension

Data - well done, guys! Great reward for a super team effort this week." Jean-Paul van Poppel, the director of sport for team Roompot-Charles, added, "It's been a difficult Tour of Oman for us, but I saw some positive things as well."

Nathan van Hooydonck, one of the pro-cyclers for Continuum Cycling's Pro Team, said, "Tour of Oman done & dusted! A good preparation for what will be one of the most important weeks of the season. Looking forward to the



The results mean that Lutsenko of Team Astana wins the red jersey for the best individual time

Classics!" André Greipel of Team Arkéa Samsic chipped in, "The team had done everything it needed to do. I was placed really well ahead of the final 300 metres, but then everything stopped at once. I hesitated to throw myself ahead of the rest of the pack, and then, all of the other racers came from behind, and I was unable to even finish the sprint. I wouldn't want to know what happened to me."

Alongside Lutsenko and Pozzovivo, it was Jesús Herrada Lopez who also secured a podium finish, and he revealed his excitement at finishing among the top three: "This podium finish in the Tour of Oman would not have been possi-

ble without the help of all my companions at Team Cofidis, thanks for the support! Now it's time to get some rest, regain strength and think about the next adventure."

The results mean that Lutsenko of Team Astana wins the red jersey for the best individual time, while the green jersey for the best points tally lies with Alexander Kristoff of Team UAE Emirates, and the white jersey for the best young rider is given to Ryan Gibbons of Dimensions Data.

The yellow jersey for the most aggressive cyclist at the 10th edition of the Tour of Oman goes to Preben van Hecke of Sport Vlaanderen Baloise.



SULTANATE OF OMAN MINISTRY OF REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES AND WATER RESOURCES - MUSCAT

RE-TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources invites A-Specialized Companies/Establishments/Enterprises Registered with the Ministry and Tender Board to the following Tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Grade	The last date for the purchase of tender document	Submission Date	Payment
152/2018	MAINTENANCE WORKS AT WADI AL FARA DAM, WILAYAT AL RUSTAQA, GOVERNORATE OF SOUTH AL BATINAH (RE-TENDER)	2	11/3/2019	26/3/2019	R.O 30/- non-refundable fees
81/2018	MAINTENANCE SERVICES AT UPSTREAM DAM AT WADI ASSARIN AND DOWNSTREAM DAM AT SIYA VILLAGE (RE-TENDER)	1	4/3/2019	19/3/2019	R.O 25/- non-refundable fees
157/2018	MAINTENANCE WORKS AT WADI AL SAROOJ DAM, WILAYAT MADHA MUSANDAM GOVERNORATE (RE-TENDER)	2	11/3/2019	26/3/2019	R.O 55/- non-refundable
14/2019	INSTALLATION OF ALUMINIUM GLASS PARTITION AND FURNITURE IN THE FIRST FLOOR THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE MAIN MINISTRY BUILDING AT AL KHUWAIIR (RE-TENDER)	SPECIALIZED & REGISTERED	17/3/2019	1/4/2019	R.O 40/- non-refundable

Specialized Companies that has valid tenders registration certificates from the tender board can in such works get the technical specifications and conditions for tenders from the website <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> and the bidders submit bids electronically through the website referred. Every company must attaché each bid with electronic version of the temporary insurance in the form of a bank guarantee or a certified check from operating banks in the Sultanate of Oman in the amount of 1% of the value of the tender and valid for 90 days from the last date for submission of tenders in the name of His Excellency the chairman of the internal tender Committee, the bidders submit the original bank guarantee in closed envelopes sealed with red wax. The Tender No. and name of the project shall be written on the top of the envelope. Nothing should be written on the exterior of the envelope to display the identity of the tender and to be submitted for the Department of tenders in the ground floor of the ministry building in Al Khuwair before 10.00 AM on the date of submission the tender.

Preference will be given in reference to companies or institutions that include contribution for the largest proportion of Omanisation ratio and possible purchase of national products.

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Over 30,000 animals in Dhofar treated at clinics, situation stable



Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 30,000 animals in Dhofar have been treated in veterinary clinics, while 4,042 of the livestock were treated for infectious diseases.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries confirmed that the epidemiological situation of animal diseases was stable in the Sultanate in general and in Dhofar Governorate in particular.

The Ministry pointed out that the increase in epidemic diseases in Dhofar Governorate last year due to environmental changes (Mekunu) contributed to the spread of vector pathogens.

However, it confirmed that the situation is stable due to the existence of integrated legislative policies of veterinary services and basic veterinary services, such as quarries, laboratories, fixed and mobile veterinary clinics.

The Ministry is currently implementing projects that are important in enhancing the role of prevention and protection of livestock in Dhofar, which includes the implementation of the National Immunisation Project for goats, sheep and cows; providing therapeutic services through veterinary clinics for all livestock herds; and implementing the emergency plan, such as during climatic conditions.

The data provided by the ministry revealed that the epidemio-

logical and infectious diseases spread in Dhofar Governorate during the year 2018 were foot and mouth disease, dermatitis and three-day fever. The various veterinary clinics in the governorate treated 4,042 of the infected cases, while 387 died.

Statistics issued by the Ministry for 2018 indicate that the number of treated animals in the veterinary clinics in Dhofar Governorate reached 31,6795, while the number of treated animals in 2017 was some 33,6709.

Immunisation services

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries also covers treatment and immunisation services through mobile veterinary clinics in areas where there are no fixed veterinary clinics through the annual immunisation and treatment campaigns in wilayat Muqashin and Al Mazyouna and weekly visits to the Mazyouna mobile clinic to provide animal curative services, immunisation and guidelines on how to use veterinary drugs.

The ministry emphasises the continuation of its efforts to develop livestock in the Sultanate in order to achieve the requirements of food security and sustainable development.

The Ministry takes all necessary measures to provide and develop veterinary preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic services for livestock.

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DEFENCE PACT

Oman plays a critical role in regional peace, stability: UK Defence Secretary

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman has a critical role to play in maintaining regional peace and stability, according to the UK's Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson.

"I think Oman, especially His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, plays such a special, pivotal role. The statesmanship, the knowledge, the wisdom that His Majesty brings to all these discussions is something that is recognised around the world," said Williamson.

"The role that Oman can play in being able to talk to all sides is so critical and so important because in order to bring peace, stability, and build for the future, you need visionaries such as His Majesty the Sultan and nations such as Oman that are sometimes able to reach across the divide and actually heal wounds."

He added, "It is this spirit of compromise and understanding that will be the pathway to peace and (solve) so many critical problems that have plagued this region for far too long."

The comments were made during Williamson's recent visit to the Sultanate, where the UK and Oman both signed the Joint Defence Agreement on



COMMITTED TO PEACE: UK's Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson said Britain has made it clear that its commitment is not just to the security of Oman but to the entire Gulf region.

February 21, 2019.

Speaking to members of the press, he said, "As our Prime Minister stated a couple of years ago, 'Gulf security is our security'."

"We are looking at how to enhance that further. That is part of the reason we decided to sign the Joint Defence Agreement with Oman. Oman is one of our oldest friends not just in the Gulf but in the world."

The agreement, according to Williamson, marks a historic moment for defence ties between both countries.

"It is about how we work close-

ly in the future with our armed forces. Britain has made it clear that our commitment is not just to the security of Oman but to the entire Gulf region. This is about training together," he stated.

The agreement aims to align the two countries' views on security, stability, and prosperity of their people.

Additionally, it aims to deepen military relations and ensure the commitment of both countries towards bilateral military cooperation and mutual defence frameworks to lead to the integration of the armed forces of

both nations. It is also intended to support its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"My hope is that it (the agreement) builds on that common shared interest between our two nations, not just in terms of defence, but in the future in how we can enable more cooperation in the fields of education, in terms of the economy, in terms of creating jobs, growth and the prosperity that Oman and Britain value so highly."

While addressing the media, Williamson spoke about the UK's upcoming departure from the European Union, which is scheduled to happen on March 29, 2019, and the "Global Britain" concept.

"It's about Britain being involved. Britain is willing to act and stand by its friends, such as Oman, in terms of their defence, their interests, their territorial integrity and actually working together to seize the opportunities that we can take together," said Williamson.

"What we have committed to doing is spending three billion pounds in the whole region over the next few years because we understand that these friendships that we have are the ones that are important to continue to invest in," added Williamson.



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Directorate General of Customs

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Directorate General of Customs at Royal Oman Police announces to the owners of vehicles, trucks and equipments detained in the Directorate for customs cases that they have to liaise with Dhofar Customs Department (Al Mazyouna Customs Section) to finalize the procedures for receiving those vehicles, trucks and equipments, for which release decisions have been issued, within the period 25/2/2019 to 26/2/2019; otherwise they shall be sold in the public auction scheduled to be held in Al Mazyouna Customs Section on 27/2/2019.

The auction will be held according to the following terms and conditions:

- The buyer must pay the vehicle's value in cash and immediately.
- The buyer must pay the auctioneer's fees.
- The buyer must remove the vehicle within a period of three days from the selling date; otherwise they shall pay a charge of RO 5/- per each day of delay.

SOHAR

Two injured in mall blaze

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Two people were reported to have been injured in a fire that broke out at a shopping mall in the wilayat of Sohar, the Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance (PACDA), said on Friday.

"With regards to the fire in one of the commercial malls in the Wilayat of Sohar, we would like to announce that the fire was controlled and extinguished. As a result of the fire, two Asian nationals suffered minor injuries and emergency medical care was provided to them at the site. They are now in good health," PACDA said in a statement.

شركة المطاحن العمانية (ش.م.ع.ع.)
Oman Flour Mills Company (S.A.O.G.)
P.O. Box 566, P.C. 112, Jibroo, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

REF: RO/18-4887 Tender for building glass elevation maintenance and protection

Oman Flour Mills Co. (SAOG) invites quotations from experienced companies for the below mentioned work on our office building at Jibroo, Muscat.

- Building glass elevation maintenance and protection

For more information and site visit, please contact our purchase department at the address shown below.

Oman Flour Mills Co. (SAOG), P.O. Box 566, Ruwi - 112, Jibroo, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, Phone : 24717261

Vendor selection will be based on "BEST and FINAL OFFER" process, please provide the contact details of the authorized person for final discussions.

The closing date of the tender is 28.02.2019 2.00 PM and interested parties need to submit the technical and commercial bids separately in a sealed envelope with our ref. no duly mentioned and drop them at the tender box of our Atiyab Investment Building.

DAHABI **BAKARAT feeds**

ROP

106 arrested

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP), arrested 106 infiltrators of different nationalities for entering the country illegally. It also deported 127 infiltrators

The ROP said: "According to statistics issued by the Department of Anti-infiltration of the police, 106 infiltrators last week for illegally entering the country."



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Finance
Secretariat General for Taxation

Announcement

The Secretariat General for Taxation calls upon all taxpayers whose Financial Year ended on 31/12/2018 to submit their tax returns and pay the due tax, if any, according to the forms prepared for this purpose as follows:

- Provisional returns to be submitted on or before 31/03/2019.
- Final returns with accounts to be submitted on or before 30/06/2019.

Enterprises that meet the criteria stipulated in Part Five bis of Royal Decree No. 7/2017 shall submit the Final return on or before 31/03/2019 (Please note that submission of Provisional returns or audited accounts is not required).

Tax returns shall be submitted through one of the following ways:

1. The Secretariat's E-portal (www.taxoman.gov.om)
2. At the Secretariat General for Taxation's premises in Muscat.
3. At the service outlets located in one-stop-shop stations of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Sohar, Nizwa and Salalah.
4. Post offices in other governorates of the Sultanate.

Kindly, abide by the set out deadlines in order to avoid penalties and punishments set for non-compliance of returns submission within the specified time as stipulated in Part Seven of the Income Tax Law issued by Royal Decree No. 28/2009.

For more information and inquiries, please contact the following phone numbers:
Muscat: 24746895/24746898 Ruwi: 24828572, Salalah: 23238207, Nizwa: 25431022
Ext.15, Sohar: 26842246 Ext. 255.

Alternatively, by post to:
P.O.Box: 285, Postal Code: 100

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (13/2019)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following biddings :

Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Documents Fee	Deadline for inquiries	Deadline for obtaining Bidding & Starting date of Receipt the offers	Deadline for the submission
BB/17/2018 Re-Bidding	Car Cleaning Service at the Parking of Directorates General of Muscat Municipality	25/- Rials	10/03/2019	21/03/2019	25/03/2019
BB/1/2019	Rental & Operation of the shops located in SOUQ AL-MUNUMH	25/- Rials	10/03/2019	21/03/2019	25/03/2019
BB/2/2019	Car Cleaning Service at the Parking at Al-Seeb, Bousher and Muttrah	25/- Rials	10/03/2019	21/03/2019	25/03/2019
BB/3/2019	Rental of bicycles in the new walkway in Al-Mahj Area at Al-Amerat	25/- Rials	10/03/2019	21/03/2019	25/03/2019
BB/4/2019	Building ,Management & Operation the coffee shop located in Plot Number (806), Block (PHASE 2) at Al-Wadi Al-Kaber	25/- Rials	10/03/2019	21/03/2019	25/03/2019

Specialized Companies with a valid registration from Muscat Municipality may obtain bidding documents during official working hours (8:00 AM - 12:00 PM.) from Muscat Municipality Head Office, Darsait (CUSTOMER SERVICES HALL) against non-refundable fees as mentioned above.

Submitted offers must be accompanied with a bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat Municipality. The bond shall be as the Bidding terms valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of submission. Tenders which do not meet the required bond will not be accepted.

Documents must be enclosed in a plain envelope sealed with red wax (without any information to the company). Biddings should be addressed to Head of Tenders Subcommittee for Muscat Municipality central authorities' work and deposited in the tender box no. (B) in sub-entrance, ground floor, Muscat Municipality building in Ruwi at 10:00 AM on the above mentioned dates.

Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason whatsoever.

Preference shall be given to companies that includes the largest possible proportion of national products.

Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om

ESTONIA

His Majesty sends greetings

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has sent a cable of greetings to President Kersti Kaljulaid of the Republic of Estonia on her country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to the president and her country's people. —**ONA**

CABLE

HM sends condolences to Bangladesh

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has sent a cable of condolences and sympathy to President Mohammad Abdul Hamid of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the victims of fire which broke out in a number of residential buildings in Dhaka.

In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his condolences and sympathy to the president, the deceased families and the people of Bangladesh, praying to the Almighty Allah to rest their souls in peace and grant their families patience to bear the loss, wishing the injured persons speedy recovery. —**ONA**

AL FAIQAIN CASTLE

An example of traditional architecture in Manah

MANAH: 'Al Faiqain' Castle in the Wilayat of Manah in the Governorate of A'Dakhiliyah, with its high towers standing in the middle of 'Al Faiqain' Village, is considered one of the most important historical monuments in the wilaya.

It reflects the depth of the traditional Omani architecture in the construction of the defensive fortifications.

The castle is surrounded by old houses and oasis of date-palm trees from all sides, casting its shadow on the place. The castle has maintained its construction formations and details for more than 400 years until it was completely restored by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture. It was officially opened during the Heritage Year on June 24th 1994.

Khalfan bin Salim Al Busaidi, researcher in Omani history said "The inscriptions found in the upper part of the castle indicate the date of its construction, which dates back to 1027 AH, corresponding to 1617 AD. It was built by a group of skilled and experienced engineers from the Wilayat of Manah. Some Imams then had a role in protecting 'Al Faiqain' Castle as found in some manuscripts dating back to 1333 AH, including a manuscript of Imam Salim bin Rashid Al Kharousi.

He said that 'Al Faiqain' Castle is known for its defensive fortifications, the strength of its construction and its ancient architecture. He added that the door remained unknown to all and can only be accessed by a rope hanging from a hole on the second floor. "It was difficult for visitors to climb to the castle until a main gate was allocated to the castle on the south side during the restoration process", he said.

The ingenuity of Omani architecture lies in the divisions of the four-storey Castle. It is divided into northern and southern parts. The northern part is dedicated to the military defence of the castle and the surrounding ancient



affected areas as a result of the weather conditions over time were restored and were opened before visitors in 1994. In 2008, the castle was restored again by renovating the towers, corridors, arches, and laying the surface stones on the first floor of the castle and the opening of a new door connecting the northern part and the southern part in the third floor to facilitate the task of visitors, as well as the placement of a belt surrounding the castle from all directions for aesthetic purposes. Plaster was used in maintaining the whole castle.

houses while the southern part is dedicated to housing, in addition to storing dates, cereals and other foodstuffs. The fourth floor contains a library full of shelves used for religious and scientific books, manuscripts, documents and other archives.

In 1991, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture restored the entire castle as it is part of the Omani history. The damaged and

The castle welcomes visitors and tourists from inside and outside the Sultanate to view this historical facility, its details and secrets in the traditional military architecture. —**ONA**



VISION REAL ECONOMY GCC FUND

Notice to Unit Holders

The Fund Management Body of Vision Real Economy GCC Fund in their meeting held on 20 February 2019, approved to pay cash dividend of 5% i.e. 50 baiza per unit for the financial year ended 31st December 2018, to the unit holders as of record date of 14 March 2019.

In case of any queries, Please contact Mr. ManishJajodia at +968-24726022 OR Email: fundoperations@investvis.com



SWEETS OF OMAN SAOG

P.O. Box 49, Rusayl - 124, Sultanate of Oman
Tel : 24446278 / 79 / Fax : 24446276

Invitation to The Annual Ordinary General Meeting for Sweets of Oman SAOG for the financial year ended 31st December 2018

The Board of Directors of Sweets of Oman SAOG is pleased to invite the shareholders of the Company to attend the Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the Company to be held on Thursday 14/03/2019, at 3:00 pm, at Al Falaj Hotel Ruwi to consider the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the Report of the Board of Directors for the Financial Year ended 31/12/2018.
- To consider and Approve of the Board of Directors performance report for the Financial year ended 31/12/2018.
- To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report of the Company for the Financial Year ended 31/12/2018.
- To consider the Auditor's Report and approve the Balance Sheet and the Statement of Income account for the Financial Year ended 31/12/2018.
- To approve the sitting fee paid to the Board of Directors meetings and its Sub-committees for the financial year ended 31/12/2018, and determines the fee for the forthcoming Financial Year ending 31/12/2019.
- To consider and approve the amounts allocated and spent for the company's social responsibilities for the Financial Year ended 31/12/2018.
- To consider and approve a proposal to donate an amount of R.O.5,000/- (Riyal Omani Five thousand only) to the local Society for the Financial Year ending on 31/12/2019.
- To approve the criteria for measuring the performance of the Board of Directors for the financial year ending 31/12/2019.
- To appoint an independent expert to evaluate the performance of the Board for the financial year ending 31/12/2019 and determine their fees.
- The appointment of the Auditors for the financial year ending 31/12/2019 and approve their fee.

Pursuant to the Articles of Association of the Company, any shareholder has the right to appoint a proxy in writing to attend and vote on decisions taken on his behalf. The proxy must carry the authorized proxy card attached with the notice to attend the general meeting as issued by Muscat Clearing and Depository Company SAOC. If the shareholder is a natural person, he is required to attach with the proxy card a copy of ID for adults, passport for females and minors who don't have an ID card, and resident cards or passports for expatriates. If the shareholder is a juristic person, the proxy card shall be signed by an authorized signatory and sealed with the company's seal and submitted together with a copy of the commercial registration certificate and authorized signatories form.

All invitees are requested to attend the meeting at least half an hour before the meeting time.

If you have any inquiries kindly contact Mr. S.Balakrishna at the following numbers: Tel : (968) 24446278 /24446279. Fax : 24446276

Chairman Auditor Legal Advisor



AL BATINAH POWER COMPANY SAOG

P.O. Box 39, P.C 103, Bareeq Al Shatti, Sultanate of Oman
albatinahpower.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Al Batinah Power Company SAOG (the "Company"), I have the pleasure to present the Directors' Report of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2018.

Operational Highlights

The plant's operation was excellent during the year achieving a reliability of 99.74% and delivered 4,778 GWh to the MIS network. The plant load for the period was 74.02% against 66.98% in corresponding period of 2017. Also the Company maintained its excellent record of zero lost time accidents and zero environmental incidents, thereby clocking 2,735 lost time accident free days (717,554 man hours) at site since inception, which is reflective of our continued focus on health, safety and environment ("HSE").

Financial Results

	2018 RO'000s	2017 RO'000s	Percentage change
Revenues	75,138	70,643	6.36%
Direct costs	(53,957)	(50,297)	
Gross profit	21,181	20,346	4.10%
General and administrative expenses	(778)	(783)	
Profit before interest and tax	20,518	19,588	4.75%
Finance costs (net)	(9,871)	(10,562)	
Profit before tax	10,647	9,026	18.0%
Tax	(1,575)	(4,470)	
Net profit for the period	9,072	4,556	99.12%

Higher revenue as compared to the previous year is attributed mainly to higher plant load factor. High load factor leads to more consumption of the fuel gas and energy variable fee which is the reason for the increase in direct costs as compared to the last year. Less Gas turbine maintenance expenses and better plant reliability during the period as compared to previous year contributes to better operating profit.

Lower operation expenses and the steady reduction in finance costs positively contributed to the better profit before tax.

The net profit is almost doubled as compared previous year. The main reason was the impact on the deferred tax, due the income tax rate increase from 12% to 15% pursuant to the Royal Decree 9/2017 which was issued on 19 February 2017, considered in the previous year's accounts.

Pursuant to the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) clauses, Oman Power and Water procurement Company (OPWP) agrees to compensate the company, on a monthly basis, for any impact on the company's cost or company's revenue that is caused or will be caused by the amendment of the tax law.

The Company distributed a cash dividend of 2.80% (Baizas 2.80 per share) in June 2018 and 5.68% (Baizas 5.68 per share) in December 2018

The share price was 101 Baizas at the end of December 2018.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Driven by its CSR Policy to support the local community in education and health sectors, The company has entered into sponsorship agreement with three other power companies to install 80 KW solar PV system in one of the school in Barak area. The work has been completed and the inauguration was done in December 2018. The total project cost is around 60,000 OMR which is sponsored by four power companies. The Company has donated to Liwa Health Centre specialized equipment for skin clinic and a dental chair for the same Centre. The delivery of this equipment is expected in Jan 2019.

Medium term Outlook

There is no major inspection planned during this winter period (October 2018 – March 2019). Minor inspections for gas turbine no. 11 and Heat Recovery Steam Generator no. 11 are planned in January 2019. Lessons learnt from the previous inspections are being considered and management will endeavor to achieve smooth and timely completion of this inspection. The major inspections of other Steam Turbine and Steam Turbine Generator are planned in Q4 2019.

Authority of Electricity Regulation (AER) has modified the company Generation License to reflect the introduction of the Electricity spot market in 2021. As the company entered into PPA with OPWP valid until 2028, all of its invoices will be settled under the PPA, However the company should participate in this Market pursuant to modified Generation License. The Company is participating in Working Group committee meeting and preparing the implementation plan as per the guidance from AER. The company is protected by PPA for any cost it may incur as a result of the spot Market. Beyond that date, this Market constitutes one of the options the company may participate in.

All reasonable measures are taken by the management to maintain the high availability levels in 2019. Any change in the power supply and demand landscape in the Sultanate has substantially no impact on the financial performance of the Company since its net profit is mainly derived from its plant availability.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said and His Government for their continued support and encouragement to the private sector by creating an environment that allows us to participate effectively in the growth of the Sultanate's economy and to dedicate our achievements to the building of a strong nation.

Saif Al Harthy
Chairperson of the Board

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018 (AUDITED)

	2018 RO'000s	2017 RO'000s
Revenues	75,138	70,643
Direct costs	(53,957)	(50,297)
Gross profit	21,181	20,346
Other income	115	25
	21,296	20,371
General and administrative expenses	(778)	(783)
Profit before interest and tax	20,518	19,588
Finance costs (net)	(9,871)	(10,562)
Profit before tax	10,647	9,026
Income tax expense	(1,575)	(4,470)
Net profit	9,072	4,556
Earnings per share		
Basic earnings per share (Baizas)	13.44	6.75

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018 (AUDITED)

	2018 RO'000s	2017 RO'000s
Assets		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	253,649	261,025
Capital spares	305	293
Total non-current assets	253,954	261,318
Current assets		
Trade and other receivables	5,905	4,776
Inventory	1,878	1,769
Short term deposit	1,807	2,001
Cash and cash equivalents	2,021	2,991
Total current assets	11,611	11,537
Total assets	265,565	272,855
Equity and liabilities		
Equity		
Share capital	67,489	67,489
Legal reserve	4,493	3,586
Retained earnings	11,935	9,493
Total equity	83,917	80,568
Hedging reserve	(3,249)	(5,093)
Net equity	80,668	75,475
Liabilities		
Non-current liabilities		
Term loans	137,490	151,294
Derivative instruments	3,822	5,991
End of service benefits	34	28
Asset retirement obligation	256	238
Deferred tax liability	16,867	14,966
Total non-current liabilities	158,469	172,517
Current liabilities		
Term loans	14,887	14,178
Trade and other payables	9,341	5,841
Short term borrowing	2,200	4,844
Total current liabilities	26,428	24,863
Total liabilities	184,897	197,380
Total equity and liabilities	265,565	272,855
Net assets per share (Baizas)	124.34	119.38

T FM Muscat & Batinah 95.4 Dhofar 91.0

OMAN

Over 70,000 visit Muscat book fair on the first day

The entrances to the event were packed on the second day of the fair too

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 70,000 people visited the Muscat International Book Fair on the first day.

The entrances to the event were packed on Friday, the second day of the fair, but the convention centre's multiple entrances made it easy for visitors to move about. According to the organisers, "On the first day, we saw 73,547 visitors."

An employee at Al Bahj Books stall told *Times of Oman*, "I saw so many people with bags and luggage bags to be filled with books."

Many of these visitors already knew the books they wanted to buy in advance. "A lady came and asked for specific books, more than five of them," the employee said, adding, "She had a big list."

"People come looking for best-sellers," he added, "They look for books such as Milkman, Milk and Honey, and Paulo Coelho's new book, Hippiie. They also look for new books by Malayalam authors."

Yosuf, one of the younger visitors at the fair, spoke to *Times of Oman* about his interests. "My favourite books are Goosebumps. I like reading them; they're not that scary," he said. Most of the visitors on Friday were Omani. The book fair occupied five halls, but a large section located at the back of halls two and three was specifically set aside for books in



SELF-SERVICE: The fair also featured book vending machines, where visitors could pick out a book, insert money, and receive their order in a quick and easy manner.

the English language, according to fair officials.

An employee at Dar Kredieh from Lebanon said, "We are specialised in distributing English books but also have Arabic ones. Muscat is one of the best venues for us because the readership is quite high, especially among locals. Every year, despite the fact that the book business is going down globally, here, it always gets better. This is the second day, and things have been good so far."

"The crowd is quite good today, especially since it is a Friday, and it's especially good compared to the first days from last year. Basically, visitors come here after looking through search engines for a specific book. Sometimes we might not have a particular book and try to find alterna-

tives, but since readers are not very flexible about the books they want to read, we try to find the books they want delivered to them after the book fair."

According to him, finding trends is difficult. "Different people want different books based on their age and interest, but if I had to generalise, I'd say that novels and self-improvement books sell quite well."

The fair also featured book vending machines, where visitors could pick out a book, insert money, and receive their order in a quick and easy manner.

Furthermore, organisers with tablets toured the fair, and they could search for any book on their devices if a visitor had something in mind but did not know where to find it.

SQU

Omanis strongly favour locally produced food products: Study

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omanis prefer locally produced food products, according to a recent study by Sultan Qaboos University (SQU).

As part of her master's programme in the Department of Natural Resources Economics of the College of Agricultural & Marine Sciences at SQU, Arwa Al Ma'mari recently conducted a study to investigate the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Oman and willingness to pay for locally produced valued added food products. Dr Msafiri Daudi Mbaga, Associate Professor at the Department, supervised Al Ma'mari's research.

In this study, seven locally produced (processed) food commodities were investigated. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire. The mall intercept approach was employed to collect data. A total of 345 shoppers were interviewed.

The sample comprised mostly Omanis at 71 per cent. Males and females were 68 and 32 per cent, respectively. The majority of respondents (85.4 per cent) were between 20 and 50 years old. Results showed that Omani consumers are strongly ethnocentric because the mean score obtained which is 59.2, is significantly above the middle of the range of the CETSCALE Score (17 to 85), which is 51.

A majority of the consumers who participated in the study indicated that they would buy locally produced valued added food products when the price and quality of the products were as good as the imported ones.

Consumers indicated that they would buy products that offer the best value for money, regardless of whether they are locally produced in Oman or imported. Almost a half of the respondents stated that Oman's locally produced value added food products were not of poor quality.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Truck breaks down

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A truck broke down on Bidbid road causing traffic congestion, the Royal Oman

Police (ROP) said. According to ROP, the truck broke down on the main road and that led to a slow-down of traffic on the Dhakiliyah road towards Nizwa.

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 Friday 4Pm to 10Pm (Tel: 24562139 / 99009756)



AL SUWADI POWER COMPANY SAOG

P.O. Box: 39, P.C. 103, Bareeq Al Shatti, Sultanate of Oman
alsuwadipower.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,
 On behalf of the Board of Directors of Al Suwadi Power Company SAOG (the "Company"), I have the pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2018.

Corporate Governance

The Company has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance and applicable circulars issued from time to time by the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

Operational Results

The operational performance of the plant during the year was excellent, with 99.7% plant reliability. The fuel efficiency of the plant currently places it at the higher end of the merit order list for dispatch among the power plants in Oman and, as such, the plant witnessed an all-time high plant load of 74.7%. The total power generated and delivered was 4,821 GW, an increase of 7.8% over the previous year. The Company continued to experience thermal inefficiency at high generation levels and consequently was unable to recover its entire fuel gas cost expended to generate power. Continuous efforts are being made with the assistance of the equipment manufacturer and consultants to address this important factor in the plant's operation.

The splendid plant reliability and high plant load operation was achieved with a continued focus on excellence in Health, Safety, Environment and Quality Management, with the plant reaching 2,738 days since inception without any lost time accidents. We acknowledge the excellent performance of our dedicated and diligent Operation and Maintenance Contractor's (STOMO) team.

The Company duly met all the stringent environment permit conditions promulgated by Ministry of Environment and Climate. As part of energy conservation efforts the plant has replaced tube lights with LED tube lights and installed solar panel lighting at many locations including the plant's car park. The cyber security for the plant has also been strengthened in association with our Operations & Maintenance Contractor and is presently consistent with the regulations issued by the Authority for Electricity Regulation.

Financial Results

Excellent plant availability and higher power generation has led to a 4.6% growth in the total revenues earned by the Company. Despite plant's thermal inefficiency, the gross profit witnessed an increase of 2.1% due to reduction in operation and maintenance expenses. The steady reduction in the finance costs due to scheduled loan repayments and a lower deferred tax expense has contributed to a significant improvement in net profit compared to year 2017.

The Company has duly met all its commitments under the term loan agreements. Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC (OPWP) continues to settle all invoices raised by the Company as per the payment provisions provided within the Power Purchase Agreement.

Finally, the Company's better operational performance during 2018 enabled it to declare and pay dividend of 9 Baizas per share, higher than a dividend of 8.56 Baizas per share paid in 2017.

The share price stood at 101 Baizas per share at the close of year 2018.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The Company takes its role as a responsible corporate citizen seriously. Most of the Company's social responsibility programs are focused at the Wilayat of Barka. During

the year, the Company worked with three other power sector companies to install a solar power facility at the Government school. This initiative has been highly appreciated by the Ministry of Education. Further, the Company also donated medical equipment and wheel chairs to the primary health clinic of the Ministry of Health in the Wilayat of Barka. The total amount spent on CSR activities during the year 2018 was RO 20,000.

As a CSR initiative during 2019, it is proposed to install a solar power facility at another school in Shinas in the Wilayat of Sohar, in active participation with three other power sector companies.

Medium term Outlook

The Company continuously endeavours to identify and implement areas of improvement in plant operations. All reasonable measures are being taken by the management to maintain excellent operational performance during the year 2019 and improve the thermal efficiency of the plant. Any change in the power supply and demand landscape in the Sultanate has limited impact on the financial performance of the Company since its profitability is mainly derived from plant's availability and reliability.

The Company is constantly monitoring the international financial markets to relaunch the suspended refinancing exercise of the Company's long term loans. This project will be taken up once the financial markets improve to a level that could make the refinancing exercise financially feasible.

The Company and its Operation & Maintenance Contractor are making serious efforts to steadily increase the Omanisation, while ensuring smooth and reliable operation of the plant. Presently, the Company is on track to meet Omanisation commitment made to the Authority for Electricity Regulation.

OPWP launched their Spot Market project in 2015. OPWP intends to further liberalize the Oman's power sector and encourage private sector participation in a broader way. According to OPWP, this will open up access to available capacity that may not be readily accessible through the existing PPA procurement model. The spot market will go live by the end of 2020 and will be fully operational in 2022. The Company's Power Purchase Agreement with OPWP expires in 2028. Accordingly, the spot market will have no impact on the revenue stream of our Company until the expiry of the Power Purchase Agreement.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to express gratitude to OPWP, the Authority for Electricity Regulation, the Capital Market Authority and other governmental and non-governmental bodies for their guidance and support. I would also like to thank all personnel associated with the operation of Al Suwadi Power plant and the staff of the Company for their hard work and dedication, and also to those others such as our contractors, whose expertise has assisted us in achieving these excellent results.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said and His Government for their continued support and encouragement to the private sector, by creating an environment that allows us to participate effectively in the growth of the Sultanate's economy and to dedicate our achievements to the building of a strong nation.

Charles Paul Dexter
 Chairperson

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018 (AUDITED)

	2018 RO '000	2017 RO '000
Revenues	76,623	73,220
Direct costs	(53,597)	(50,668)
Gross profit	23,026	22,552
Other income	19	20
	23,045	22,572
General and administrative expenses	(779)	(763)
Profit before interest and tax	22,266	21,809
Finance costs (net)	(10,574)	(11,329)
Profit before tax	11,692	10,480
Tax expense	(2,683)	(4,828)
Net profit	9,009	5,652
Earnings per share		
Basic earnings per share (Baizas)	12.61	7.91

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018 (AUDITED)

	2018 RO '000	2017 RO '000
Assets		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	273,016	280,988
Capital spares	413	413
Total non-current assets	273,429	281,401
Current assets		
Inventory	1,812	1,745
Trade and other receivables	5,635	3,734
Short term deposit	1,461	1,770
Cash and cash equivalents	1,274	2,609
Total current assets	10,182	9,858
Total assets	283,611	291,259
Equity and liabilities		
Equity		
Share capital	71,441	71,441
Legal reserve	5,377	4,476
Retained earnings	13,564	11,886
Total equity	90,382	87,803
Hedging reserve	(3,290)	(5,331)
Net equity	87,092	82,472
Liabilities		
Non-current liabilities		
Term loans	147,529	162,324
Derivative instruments	3,871	6,307
Deferred tax liability	18,980	15,933
Asset retirement obligation	268	249
End of service benefits	7	6
Total non-current liabilities	170,655	184,819
Current liabilities		
Term loans	15,969	15,288
Trade and other payables	8,895	6,680
Short term borrowing	1,000	2,000
Total current liabilities	25,864	23,968
Total liabilities	196,519	208,787
Total equity and liabilities	283,611	291,259
Net assets per share (Baizas)	126.51	122.90



PASI DATA

Number of insured workers up

MUSCAT: The latest statistics issued by the Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI) by the end of January 2019 showed an increase in the number of active establishments covered by the social insurance system to 16,676 facilities due to the increase of the youth's tendency to open private projects.

This was reflected in the increase in the number of active insured workers in the private sector in the Sultanate to 236,277 with a total of 7,135 registered cases.

The majority of active insured employees within the age group (26-30) years, which constitutes 22.5 per cent of the total active insureds. The average wage for the total active insureds was OMR704.

Within the framework of the indicators of their services (private

sector workers within the Sultanate), the severance of service cases, including resignation, transfer to another employer and termination of service due to death or disability and termination of service for other reasons reached until the end of January 5,719 cases.

The number of active insureds in the GCC insurance protection extension system stood at 1,750. The number of active insureds in the insurance system for Omanis working abroad and their equivalent stood at 54 insureds by the end of January 2019. The number of active insureds in the Omanis self-employed insurance scheme and their equivalent was 10,006 until the end of January 2019.

As for the indicators of beneficiaries of insurance benefits, the

number of cumulative pension cases issued to entitlements in all insurance systems reached 268 until the end of January.

The cases of old-age pensions amounted to 67.9 per cent of the total number of pension cases, followed by death cases with 17.2 per cent followed by the cases of disability pension due to non-professional cause, which constituted 13.1 per cent.

The percentage of professional death pensions out of the total pension was 1.1 per cent and the total and partial professional disability constituted 0.7 per cent of the total paid pensions. The number of cases of insurance benefits due to work injuries amounted to 27 and traffic incidents accounted for 33.3 per cent. -OMA

Bashir declares year-long state of emergency

Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir said the 'demands of our people for better living conditions are lawful'



Omar Al Bashir

KHARTOUM: Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir has declared a year-long state of emergency, dissolving his cabinet and local governments throughout the country.

In a televised address on Friday, Bashir also called on Sudan's parliament to postpone constitutional amendments that would allow him to run for another term in a presidential election in 2020.

Acknowledging the popular protests that have rocked his administration in recent months, the 75-year-old said the "demands of our people for better living conditions are lawful".

"I will not stop calling for all parties to sit at the dialogue table," Bashir said, adding he would remain on the "side of the youth who

represent the future of Sudan".

Bashir's Friday address followed months of near-daily protests against his rule, with thousands of people taking to the streets across the country since December 19 calling for him to stand down after nearly three decades in office.

While the protests were initially set off by the rising cost of bread and fuel in the north of Sudan, they quickly grew into a demand for more political freedom and an end to Bashir's rule.

The Sudanese leader's term ends in 2020 and he has repeatedly promised over the years not to make new runs for the presidency. Without amending the

country's constitution, he cannot run for a third term.

His announcement came days after a parliamentary committee tasked with amending the constitution to scrap Sudan's presidential term limit cancelled its meetings.

The Sudanese Professional Association, which is spearheading the country's demonstrations, warned of any measures that could "turn against" the demands of the Sudanese people, and vowed that it will respond with more escalation in street protests.

"The demands of this revolution are crystal clear," the statement said, "the regime and its head must step down." - Agencies

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SalamAir inaugurates sales office in Salalah

The sales office, inaugurated under the presence of Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, and other officials, aims to reach more customers, while providing them with a convenient product offering and a full suite of services.



Expanding wings

"Salalah is a very important station to us, as two years ago we started our first flight from Salalah to Muscat and today we are expanding our wings in Salalah. The city has a lot of potential and is a well sought after destination, and there are many people here that do a lot of travelling," Ahmed said. He added that the office in Salalah will not only serve as a

sales office but will also provide customer service to people who can come and acquire additional services and information.

Located on Al Matar Street opposite Dhofar Municipality's new building in Salalah, it will

offer a full range of services including reservations and ticketing, itinerary changes, purchase of value-added options, as well as provide guests with general information and support to better plan their travels.

The National Detergent Company S.A.O.G.
P.O. Box 3104, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman

INVITATION TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of The National Detergent Co. SAOG takes pleasure in inviting the shareholders to attend the 38th Annual General Meeting to be held at 5.00 P.M. on Tuesday, 12th March 2019 at "Al Maha Hall" Hotel Crowne Plaza, Qurum to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the Directors' Report for the year ended 31 December 2018;
- To consider & approve the evaluation report of the performance of the Board for the financial year ended 31/12/2018;
- To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the year ended 31 December 2018;
- To consider Auditors' Report, approve and adopt the Company's financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018;
- To consider and approve the proposed final cash dividend to the shareholders @ 50% of Share capital i.e. Bz. 50 per share, recommended by the Board, for the year ended 31 December 2018;
- To approve the Directors' sitting fees paid for the year ended 31 December 2018, and to determine the sitting fee for the next year;
- To consider and approve the proposal of distributing Directors' remuneration amounting to RO 30,000/-, recommended by the Board, for the year ended 31 December 2018;
- To disclose and approve the contracts and transactions entered into by the Company with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2018 (in line with the list sent to the shareholders along with the notice);
- To approve contribution as part of the social responsibilities for the financial year ended 31/12/2018; (as per annexure attached)
- To consider and approve a proposal to donate an amount of RO. 10,000/- (Rial Omani Ten thousand only) towards social responsibilities for the financial year ending 31/12/2019;
- To elect new Board members in accordance with the rules and conditions prescribed for the joint stock companies. The candidates who wish to nominate himself for the directorship, as per articles of association of the company, should have not less than 20,000 shares in the company at the time of annual general meeting. Those wishing to stand as a candidate for election must complete the prescribed form and hand over to the company latest by Thursday, 7th March 2019. No application will be accepted after this date.
- To appoint Statutory Auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2019 and fix their remuneration;
- To discuss and approve the criteria for the evaluation of the performance of the Board for the financial year ending 31/12/2019;
- To appoint an independent expert to evaluate the performance of the Board for the financial year ending 31/12/2019;

Under the statute of the company, shareholders have the right of appointing, in writing, a proxy to attend the meeting and vote on his/her behalf, wherever necessary.

Note: The SAOG Companies should deposit the investors' funds unclaimed within a period of 6 months from its due date to the Investors' Trust Funds. Shareholders are advised to refer to the Muscat Depository and Securities Registration Company to enquire about any amounts due from them.

In case of enquiry, please contact
Mr. Nasser Al Rawahi, Tel: 24493824-92869333

Chairman of the Board of Directors Auditors Legal Advisor

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WORLD



Nigerians finally vote in delayed general election

The election is reported to be a two-horse race between Muhammadu Buhari of the governing All Progressives Congress party and Atiku Abubakar of the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party



EXERCISING FRANCHISE: President Muhammadu Buhari and wife, Aisha cast their votes at Kofar Baru in Daura his home town.

More than 72 million Nigerians were expected to vote in the general elections in the country.

President Muhammadu Buhari on Saturday morning reaffirmed his confidence in winning the presidential election.

Buhari told newsmen shortly after voting at Kofar Baru, Sarkin Yara "A" ward in Daura, his home town, that he would win the election and congratulate himself.

The election is reported to be a two-horse race between Muhammadu Buhari of the governing All Progressives Congress party and

Atiku Abubakar of the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party.

Seeking second term

The incumbent President Buhari is seeking a second term of office on the platform of the APC.

He came into power in 2015, becoming the first Nigerian opposition candidate to unseat an incumbent president.

In the capital Abuja, a large turnout of voters was seen as early as 7am local time.

In many parts of the city, electoral units were seen awaiting the ar-

rival of electoral officials and election materials.

Voting commenced amid tight security across the country at 8am local time, INEC said.

Large turnout of voters has also been reported in most parts of the country, despite last week's delay of polls, according to domestic and foreign observers.

"I am very impressed with the large turnout of voters. Despite the delay of the polls by one week, it is highly impressive to see this crowd of voters. Let us hope this will end well, as it has started well," a political party's agent identified as Ahmadu said.

Shops were under lock and key; private and government offices remained shut and roads, including those leading to the government secretariat, were deserted; security patrol vehicles were seen driving on major roads in Abuja to ensure a smooth electoral process.

In some polling units, local traders selling food items were seen making brisk business.

"After trekking a long distance to this polling unit to exercise my civic responsibility, I think it is good enough to buy some food and drinks here," Vincent Arinze, a voter, said. "I've just cast my ballot and feel great," he added. - With inputs from agencies

ABUJA: Nigerians turned out in huge numbers on Saturday to elect their president, a week after the polls were delayed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Citizens of the most populous African nation will also elect a total of 469 members of the National Assembly during the election.

INDIA

Assam hooch tragedy toll rises to 84

GUWAHATI: As many as 84 people are dead after consuming spurious liquor in Golaghat and Jorhat districts, confirmed Assam's Excise Department.

The officials of the department said at least 40 people have been admitted in various hospitals.

Golaghat Deputy Superintendent of Police Parthopratim Saikia said, "As many as 40 people are being treated in hospitals in Golaghat and Jorhat".

"Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday condoled the deaths in a Facebook post saying, "I am saddened by the incident which occurred in Assam's Golaghat area. My deepest condolences to the families of the victims. I hope that those undergoing treatments get well soon."

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, who visited the hospitals, announced ex-gratia of Rs. 200,000 to the family of each of the deceased and Rs50,000 of those admitted in hospitals.

"We have ordered an inquiry to identify the guilty and take action against them," he said.

Seven persons arrested

Excise department said seven persons have been arrested so far and booked under non-bailable sections and over 10,000 litres of country liquor destroyed.

The deaths came less than two weeks after more than 70 people died in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand from consuming illegally produced local alcohol. - Agencies

PHILIPPINES

'Duterte gov't focused despite mudslinging by critics'

MANILA : The administration of President Rodrigo R. Duterte remains focused despite criticisms from critics, Malacañang said on Saturday.

"While detractors of this Administration consistently deliberate on how to mudsling the President's achievements, we remain focused on how to improve the lives of our countrymen through projects that will bring about genuine change for the nation," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

Panelo was reacting to criticisms regarding the government's massive 'Build, Build, Build' infrastructure programme and the war on drugs. He took a swipe at the opposition-critics, whom he said failed to initiate major reforms during their tenure in office.

"Expectedly, the opposition, especially those who wielded powers prior to the present ones, who either by incompetence or sheer negligence failed to initiate any major infrastructure, has denigrated the initiatives of PRRD to establish the foundation for the country's development and growth," he said.

"Shrill discordant voices have polluted the air from the usual suspects disparaging the Administration's Build, Build, Build programme and its war on drugs," he added.

Panelo said the 'Build, Build, Build' programme already kicked-off after delays due to "bureau-



REMAIN FOCUSED: Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo reacting to criticisms regarding the government's massive 'Build, Build, Build' infrastructure programme and war on drugs. - File photo

cratic rigmarole caused by the legal restraints and resort to judicial remedies by the losing bidders".

He added that President Duterte is facing these legal obstacles in accordance with the Constitution.

"The government's Build Build, Build program, 'grossly inefficient', among other nonsensical descriptives and false narratives."

"We will ignore her rantings as her senses apparently have flown to the cuckoo's nest."

We will just watch her in amusement as she cantankerously pontificates like a headless chicken running berserk," he said.

Panelo took pride in the administration's drug war, which resulted in the surrender of more than a million drug addicts and pushers, arrests of drug syndicate members, and neutralization of drug lords. - With inputs from agencies

Indian government's trifecta of failure

RAMESH THAKUR

On January 7, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government suddenly announced that an additional 10 per cent of school seats and government jobs would be set aside for the "economically weaker sections," meaning the poor among the upper castes.

This was on top of the already extensive quotas for various historically oppressed castes under India's wide-ranging affirmative action policy. The government rushed through a constitutional amendment to this effect on January 8 and 9. The decision may well be challenged in the courts, but the announcement was an implicit confession of three failures.

The first failure is that of affirmative action. After almost seven decades, the world's biggest and longest-running such programme - mandated in India's 1950 constitution as a temporary expedient for 15 years - has failed to ameliorate historical caste injustice.

Governments have repeatedly broadened affirmative action to include larger swathes of public life, target more groups, and cover promotions as well as recruitment. Modi has been unable to fix this situation, which he inherited, but did not create.

On January 21, following Modi's surprise announcement, Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of the state of Bihar, called for a census of all castes in 2021 to create a system for reserving jobs based on each caste's share of the population.

The net result is that Indians are more sharply conscious of caste identity today than at independence in 1947. Far from steadily weakening over time, caste identity - and caste-based inequality - has been further entrenched. India now has a frozen equilibrium of caste-defined access to public institutions and services. And with Dalits (formerly called "untouchables") being such a powerful voting group, no political party or leader dares to suggest the abolition of these set-asides.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of benefits intended for the poor, downtrodden, and oppressed castes have been captured by the elite among them. Entitlements that were meant to address moral claims of equal citizenship have been swallowed by cynical political powerbrokers. This is especially true of caste-based political parties in which the founders' children inherit the leadership, creating family dynasties.

A second, related failure is that more than 70 years after independence, India has not managed to forge a truly national identity. Instead, the country consists of a

collection of minorities who cling ever more fiercely to their group identities in order to obtain various public benefits.

Dalit caste identity is recorded at birth and reinforced throughout a citizen's life. In politics, caste calculations are crucial in selecting candidates to match the demographics of each constituency, and in choosing coalition leaders to head state and federal governments.

Finally, the government's recent set-aside announcement was an implicit admission of failure to create jobs for the millions of young people entering the workforce.

Modi promised in his 2014 election campaign to create 20 million new jobs per year by unleashing India's entrepreneurial potential. Instead, the unemployment rate is currently at its highest level since the early 1970s.

The government sat on the bleak unemployment figures for months, prompting two members of the National Statistical Commission to resign in protest, before the report was finally leaked to the *Business Standard* newspaper on January 31. According to the National Sample Survey Office, the unemployment rate reached 6.1 per cent in 2017-18 (compared to 2.2 per cent in 2011-12), with people aged 15-29 and urban women the worst hit.

Higher unemployment is partly a result of Modi's egregious decision in 2016 to demonetize India's highest-denomination bank notes of 500 and 1,000 rupees (about \$7 and \$14 respectively). This had a particularly severe effect on the informal sector, which employs over 90 per cent of the country's workforce. Demonetization not only cost India at least 1.5 million jobs; it also failed to achieve its primary goal of uncovering "black money," because 99 per cent of the cash was returned to banks.

According to independent experts, the latest unemployment numbers are alarming, but not surprising, because signs of rising joblessness had been visible for some time. With a general election due by May, the government's reluctance to release the report is understandable.

The approaching election also helps to explain the government's sudden embrace of expanded set-asides. Having failed to create jobs, the government is instead dividing the existing pie among important groups of voters. The reality of job scarcity is to be camouflaged in the sop of set-asides.

This is "placebo politics" at its worst. Electoral imperatives have also driven budget giveaways, with something for nearly everyone. - Project Syndicate

NEW UPDATE

Now, Facebook won't transmit your location while you're not using the app

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Facebook users who access their accounts on Android phones will now be able to choose whether or not the app has access to your location when they're not actively using it.

A new update launched for Android platforms by the social media giant on Thursday, 21 February, also clarified that people who allowed Facebook to share their location also did so while they weren't using the app, and would allow Facebook to store a history of the user's precise locations.

"Today we're introducing a new background location control on Facebook for Android so people can choose if they want us to collect location information when they're not using the app," said Paul McDonald, Engineering Director for Location Infrastructure at Facebook. "For example,

when people choose to use Nearby Friends, a feature that lets friends share their locations with each other, they give Facebook permission to access their location even when they're not using the app.

"Until today, people using these features were asked to enable Location History," he added. "If you enabled this setting, two things happened: you would share your location when you weren't using the app and you would allow Facebook to store a history of your precise locations. With this update, you'll have a dedicated way to choose whether or not to share your location when you aren't using the app."

For people who previously chose to turn their Location History setting 'on', the new background location setting is 'on'. For people who had turned Location History 'off' - or never turned it on in the first place - the new background

location setting is 'off'.

Facebook decided to roll out the update after receiving complaints from Android users over privacy issues, which differ from those of the Apple iOS. Apple's operating system offers an additional option, so you can share your precise location always, only when the app is in use, or never. Android offers a single on/off switch for Location Services, so you can decide whether to share your precise location with Facebook and other apps.

"As a result, one of the questions we often hear from people using Facebook for Android - but not those using iOS - is whether Facebook gets their location even when they're not using the app," explained McDonald. "Today we're announcing an update to Facebook's location controls on Android to give people more choice over how we collect location information and how we

store it. We're not making any changes to the choices you've previously made nor are we collecting any new information as a result of this update."

He added, "We're alerting everyone using the Facebook app on an Android device who chose to turn on Location History in the past, letting them know about the new control, and asking them to take a moment to check that their settings are right for them. If you've never turned on Location History, you don't have to do anything. We won't turn either of these settings on unless you specifically tell us to."

For people who use Facebook for iOS, nothing is changing. But the company will send a similar alert to everyone who chose to turn on Location History in the past so they can check to make sure their settings are right for them.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/world

Full story @ timesofoman.com/opinion



COMMON SIGNS OF LEARNING DISABILITY IN TODDLERS

Are you worrying that your little one is catching up with the learning material slower than his peers? Do you feel that there is some reason behind this slow pace and it is making you anxious? Are there any signs that show the child is behaving differently in social and personal life, such as inability to enjoy the time on preschool playground equipment? If there are such worries about your child's learning curve then read on to know some of the

clear signs to know if your child has a learning disability or you are worried for nothing. Every child has different limits and boundaries for when they reach a milestone. That applies on learning curve as well. If your child is having difficulty in reading, writing, speaking or any other particular learning activity, that is not necessarily a disability. Some of the most common disabilities are Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia. If the problem is actually because of a disability, there will be clear signs and

symptoms and they will not be one off things. Such symptoms persist for a long period of time. These signs vary from child to child and more often than not these signs are interrelated. Here are some of the signs.

- The child is not able to read or write, or have speech difficulties even after the age of two years. He might have difficulty in understanding the pronunciation or cannot speak at a regular pace. He might also face difficulty in finding the right words to express what he wishes to say.

- Teaching him basic concepts like up down, left right, shapes or colours, is difficult.

- Everyday simple things like throwing a ball or shutting or opening a zipper or undoing buttons is extremely difficult for the child.

- Mathematical learning skills are exceptionally difficult for the child to understand, including numbers, equations etc. The child finds it hard to pay attention or remember stuff.

- Understanding of time is challenging and it is hard for parents to teach these concepts to the child too.

- The child's coordination are not synchronized and it is also difficult for him to manage multiple things at a time. It is difficult for the child to be organised and parents also often find that it is a struggle for him to keep note of his tasks and things.

- The child also faces hardship in following parents' instructions even though they are given in a very toddler-friendly manner and parents do their utmost to make sure that the child understands. The toddler might also face difficulty in understanding

what he listens or it is hard for him to listen as well. Or even if he does listen, he is unable to understand its meaning or connect it to what is needed to be done.

- His performance in school is declining for a consistent period and shows a significant decrease.

- Even if the child is able to speak, he does it in an immature manner as compared to his age fellows. He might lisp or stutter even after the age when doing so is normal. Change or any sort of new thing is troublesome for the child.

— articlesfactory.com



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WELLNESS



Look for ways to relax

HIGHER LEVELS of stress can cause problems at work and home. But stress is not just hard on your mental well-being, it is hard on your body and can lead to many negative health outcomes. Stress levels can also increase significantly when economic times are tough. To help you stay calm and focused, consider these four ways to reduce stress.

Smells

Certain smells can bring back very specific and detailed memories. These could be of a person, event or place. Most often the memory also has a deeply emotional feeling that is recalled. This is because smells are processed by a specific part of the brain that stores emotional memories. Taking the time to seek out smells that bring back those happy memories can help reduce stress levels.

Salt

Stress is characterized in the human body by high levels of the hormone cortisol, referred to as the "stress hormone." Scientific research has shown, in animals and humans, that increased levels of salt consumption are effective in reducing levels of cortisol. Research from the University of Haifa, published in the science journal *Appetite*, confirmed the relationship between salt and

stress in humans. Researchers found an inverse correlation between salt and depression/stress, especially in women. Craving salty foods may very well be a biological defense mechanism we evolved to cope with daily stress.

Pets

Animal therapy has long been used to relieve stress, improve mood and treat anxiety. Some studies have also indicated that just being around an animal can reduce blood pressure. This pet therapy has been used in hospitals and nursing homes and even with military veterans suffering from depression. And it is not limited to dogs and cats. Rabbits, guinea pigs and even horses are used. An added benefit is that having a pet encourages exercise.

Exercise

Regular exercise, even if mild, may be the best stress reducer. When you are active the body releases endorphins, which produce a feeling of well-being. Regular activity can improve your concentration as well as your sleep, which can often be negatively affected by stress.

Just going for a daily walk can help improve how you feel. And the results of exercise can also improve your self-image and confidence. — **BPT**

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SPORTS



Bank Muscat holds field visits to review Green Sports applications

The Green Sports initiative has benefited a total of 93 sports teams across the country to date

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the flagship financial services provider in the Sultanate, in step with its vision 'To serve you better, everyday' and commitment to support youth and promote Oman as a sporting nation, organised field visits by a committee to review and short-list 2019 Green Sports applications from sports teams for greening and infrastructure development of football fields across the Sultanate. Following the field visits, the Green Sports committee is presently reviewing the applications and will soon announce the list of 15 beneficiaries.

The 2019 Green Sports programme evoked big response as



SUPPORTING THE YOUTH: The 2019 Green Sports programme evoked big response as more sports teams have applied seeking support for greening and infrastructure development of football fields. - Supplied Photo

more than 95 sports teams applied seeking support for greening and infrastructure development of football fields. Ever since its inception in 2012, the programme

has gained momentum with the number of applicants increasing every year. Bank Muscat recently celebrated the 53rd football field developed as part of the Green

Sports initiative in the Wilayat of Dima Wataeen in Sharqiyah governorate. The unique CSR initiative reiterates the bank's commitment to develop modern sports

infrastructure across the Sultanate. Complementing government efforts in building a sporting nation, the initiative benefiting communities, especially youth, is

aimed at contributing to sustainable development and all-round progress in Oman.

The Green Sports initiative has benefited a total of 93 sports teams across the country to date. The programme has spread across the entire nation, reinforcing the bank's leadership role in social responsibility. Marking the eighth year of the unique CSR initiative, the bank will support the development of 15 football fields across the Sultanate in 2019.

The scope of Green Sports support for sports teams include greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights or water desalination equipment in areas facing problems of water salinity. Ensuring wider representation, the Green Sports support is extended to develop sustainable sports infrastructure in all parts of the Sultanate.

Bank Muscat is committed to its vision 'To serve you better, everyday' and is proud to have led the way in contributing to sustainable development in Oman with various initiatives. As the nation's leading financial institution, Bank Muscat aims to provide the impetus for youth to excel in all arenas and thereby contribute to the development and progress of Oman.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Oman Sail skills programme to boost employability



HAND IN HAND: Students from the Oman Academy for Special Skills attending the outdoor activities programme. - Supplied Photo



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Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Sail's corporate personal development programme, Zimam, is organising a three-day physical outdoor activities and practical experiential learning exercises for students from the newly-launched "Omani Academy for Special Skills" in an effort to develop employability abilities and provide on-the-job training for people with learning disabilities. The academy will be run by the Oman Down Syndrome Association and will begin its programme with the Zimam.

Dr Lamyia Harub, co-founder and manager of the Academy for Special Skills, said: "The Academy is offering the first inclusive training programme in Oman that includes an integrated group of people ranging from those with intellectual disabilities to others in society with different abilities.

"The Academy aims to build and reinforce professional capabilities for this inclusive group by providing them with practical and theoretical workshops, as well as conducting internships and on-the-job training in cooperation with private and public entities in the Sultanate."

The programme, will include 40 participants, 20 of whom have mental disabilities, and aims to encourage all participants to integrate within the group, work together, and communicate effectively in a variety of individual and group activities.

Oman Sail's Zimam team will deliver 15-minute keynote sessions about cooperation within a group, communication and planning, followed by practical 30-minute activities to explore the ideas. The practical activities are designed to open opportuni-

ties for dialogue within the group allowing members to express their feelings and identify how to improve in the next challenge. The last day of the programme will involve activities between groups after which an assessment will be conducted to evaluate which achieved their goals effectively.

Khamis Al Anbouri, Oman Sail's Head of Corporate and Personal Development, said: "All the activities offered by our Zimam team are tailored to teach participants self-determination and perseverance to help them achieve their goals, and expose them to opportunities to channel their potential. "We are delighted to be able to assist the Academy for Special Skills and Oman Down Syndrome Association with their imaginative and inspiring programme."

The Academy's two-year programme is divided into a number of phases, including a foundation year with a variety of development courses, followed by on-the-job training programmes. Ali bin Abdullah Yousif, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Down Syndrome Association, said: "The Omani Academy for Special Skills programme is divided into five semesters over this year and next.

"The comprehensive programme includes a foundation course during the first year that provides theoretical and practical skills through workshops on innovation and entrepreneurship, arts, craftsmanship, artificial intelligence, first aid, and many other areas.

"In the second year the programme focuses on on-the-job training, with students placed in internships based on evaluation results from the workshops they took part in."

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TENNIS

Shlok crowned champion of ISC Open final

MUSCAT: Shlok Ail exhibited all the attributes of a true champion as he stole the show at the grand final of the ISC-Muscat Pharmacy Open Junior Tennis Tournament organised by the Indian Social Club Oman.

Ambassador of India to Oman, Munu Mahawar presided over the finals and watched as Shlok Ail displayed sound temperament and

fighting qualities to win the Boys Under-18 singles crown. In the final, the top seed defeated second seed Vivek Kolluru with a hard-fought 6-3, 6-4 victory.

Tennis enthusiasts were treated to tennis of a high order as Shlok and Vivek gave out their best with Vivek dictating terms in both sets before Shlok staged brilliant rearguard action to turn

the tables on his opponent. Vivek held a 3-1 lead in the first set and was cruising at 4-1 in the second when Shlok saved a break point and after two deuces held to win the sixth game and broke Vivek in the seventh and ninth games to take the crucial 5-4 lead.

Shlok put in brilliant serves to win the second set and claim a brilliant victory and the Boys Un-

der-18 singles title. Others present at the finals included B.S. Mehta of Muscat Pharmacy and Stores LLC, the main sponsor, ISC Chairman Dr. Satish Nambiar, Percy Pereira, General Manager of Supa Sportsman, Salman Al Balushi, Executive Manager of Oman Tennis Association, office bearers of the ISC and a large gathering of tennis enthusiasts.



ALL SMILES: Shlok, fourth from right, and Vivek runner-up, third from right, with their trophies. - supplied photo

Ghazanfar stars in Enhance Eagles' win

Veteran batsman Ghazanfar Iqbal slammed a sizzling century to steer MDC Enhance Eagles to a thumping 7-wicket victory against Glory Bower Strikers in an A Division encounter



TOP PERFORMERS: Enhance Eagles stars Allan Gawdya, Vamshi Vadthya, Sudeep Chavan, Mohammed Mohsin. - Supplied Photo

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Veteran batsman Ghazanfar Iqbal slammed a sizzling century to steer MDC Enhance Eagles to a thumping 7-wicket victory against Glory Bower Strikers in an A Division encounter at Oman Cricket grassy ground 2 in Amerat on Friday.

Asked to bat first, the Strikers were dismissed 207 despite a brilliant 105 not out by Mohammed Samir batting at No. 6. Amanpreet Singh and Mohammed Mohsin claimed three wickets each.

Eagles rode on Ghazanfar's hard-hitting 110 off only 44 balls including 19 fours and 3 sixes to surpass the target in the 21st over. Vamshi Vadthya (50 off 41) and Sudeep Chavan 32 not out off 21) were the other notable scorers.

Brief scores: Glory Bower Strikers 207 all out in 46.5 overs (Mohammed Samir 110 not out - 10x4, Amanpreet Singh 3-38, Mohammed Mohsin 3-46, Allan Gawdya 2-18, Adeel Abbas 2-51) lost to MDC Enhance Eagles 208 for 3 in 20.2 overs (Ghazanfar Iqbal 110 - 19x4, 3x6, Vamshi Vadthya 50 - 5x4, 2x6, Sudeep Chavan 32 not out - 5x4) by 7 wickets.

NBO trounce Design Group Yasir Jamal picked up three wickets while Maanas Kapoor

shone with bat and ball to power NBO to a six-wicket win over Design Group Engineering Consultants in an Intermediate Cup Knockout game at Muscat Municipality ground 2.

NBO bundled out Design Group for a paltry 110 thanks to brilliant bowling by Yasir Jamal, Mustansar Hussain and Maanas Kapoor and then chased down the target in the 17th over, scoring 116 for 4. Maanas topscored with an unbeaten 23 while Syed Arfan Ali contributed 22. Mujahid Surve took two wickets.

Brief scores: Design Group 110 all out in 18.2 overs (Dileep Chandran 24 - 3x4, Mathankumar 19 - 2x4, Yasir Jamal 3-14, Mustansar Hussain 2-09, Maanas Kapoor 2-19) lost to NBO 116 for 4 in 16.4 overs (Maanas Kapoor 23 not out - 2x4, 1x6, Syed Arfan Ali 22 - 2x4, Mujahid Surve 2-14) by 6 wickets.

Danish shines for Masters Danish Mohammad hit up an unbeaten 75 to help Muscat Masters to an easy 6-wicket victory against Majees CT in an Intermediate Cup Knockout match at Muscat Municipality ground 3.

Praveen Lewis took 3 for 19 as Majees was bowled out for 127 in the last over. Deepak Kandal and Micjael Bose got two wickets each.

Masters raced to the target in only 16.1 overs, scoring 131 for 4

thanks to superb batting by Danish who got good support from Narendra Vandaria who chipped in with a useful 30.

Brief scores: Majees CT 127 all out in 19.4 overs (Manumon 20 - 1x4, 1x6, Praveen Lewis 3-19, Deepak Kandpal 2-24, Michael Bose 2-27) lost to Muscat Masters 131 for 4 in 16.1 overs (Danish Mohammad 75 not out - 12x4, Narendra Vandaria 30 - 5x4, Nadeer Malot 2-18) by 6 wickets.

STS sink Douglas OHI In another Intermediate Cup Knockout game, Muhammed Ali and Ajithkumar Krishna slammed sparkling half-centuries as STS Tebodin scored an emphatic 78-run win over Douglas OHI at Muscat Municipality ground 2.

STS piled up 234 for 5 in 20 overs thanks to vital knocks by Ali (79), Ajithkumar (77) and Vikas Bhadoria (57) and then restricted OHI to 156 for 7. Santosh Vishwakarma (39) and Abhishek Rai (37) were its main scorers. Nihal and Neev Poojari bagged two wickets each.

Brief scores: STS Tebodin 234 for 5 in 20 overs (Muhammed Ali 79 - 10x4, 3x6, Ajithkumar Krishna 77 - 13x4, 2x6, Vikas Bhadoria 57 - 4x4, Viplav Kumar 2-26) thrashed Douglas OHI 156 for 7 in 20 overs (Santosh Vishwakarma 39 - 4x4, 1x6, Abhishek Rai 37 - 4x4, 2x6, Nihal Poojari 2-09, Neev Poojari 2-20) by 78 runs.

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EDUCATION TECH MARKET

UAE schools and universities digitally transforming is supporting the global education technology market to top US\$40 billion by 2022, industry experts announced today ahead of major educational events being held in the UAE. — Times News Service

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



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Omantel gearing up for key exhibition
Omantel is gearing up for participating in Mobile World Congress in Barcelona with a high-level delegation. >B2



Commercial activities registered
The number of registered commercial activities during the third quarter of 2018 was 34,828. >B2

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GARTNER REPORT

Global smartphone sales stalled in 2018 fourth quarter



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Global sales of smartphones to end users stalled in the fourth quarter of 2018, totaling 408.40 million units – growth of just 0.1 per cent over the fourth quarter of 2017, according to Gartner. Apple recorded its worst quarterly decline (11.8 per cent) since the first quarter of 2016.

“Demand for entry-level and mid-price smartphones remained strong across markets, but demand for high-end smartphones continued to slow in the fourth quarter of 2018,” said Anshul Gupta, senior research director at Gartner. “Slowing incremental innovation at the high end, coupled with price increases, deterred replacement decisions for high-end smartphones. This led to a flat-growth market in the fourth quarter of 2018.”

Apple sales

Sales of Apple iPhones hit 64.5 million units in the fourth quarter of 2018, a decline of 11.8 per cent year over year. This double-digit decline made Apple experience the biggest decline in growth for the quarter among the top five global smartphone vendors.

Apple saw iPhone demand weaken in most regions, except North America and mature Asia/Pacific. Apple's sales declined most in Greater China, where its market share dropped to 8.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2018 from 14.6 per cent in the corresponding quarter of 2017. For 2018 as a whole, iPhone sales were down 2.7 per cent, to just over 209 million units.

“Apple has to deal not only with buyers delaying upgrades as they wait for more innovative smartphones, but it also continues to

face compelling high-price and mid-price smartphone alternatives from Chinese vendors. Both these challenges limit Apple's unit sales growth prospects,” added Gupta.

At the high end, Samsung smartphones such as the Galaxy S9, S9+ and Note9 struggled to drive growth in the fourth quarter of 2018.

In the mid-tier, Xiaomi and Huawei continued to grab more market share. As a result, Samsung's smartphone sales declined by 4.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Samsung lost market share in Greater China, Western Europe and Latin America, which contributed greatly to an overall 8.2 per cent fall in its smartphone sales in 2018.

“Although Samsung is strengthening its smartphone offering at the mid-tier, it continues to face

growing competition from Chinese brands that are expanding into more markets. It also faces difficulty bringing significant innovation to high-end smartphones,” said Gupta. “Samsung introduced new mid-tier-focused M series smartphones in the first quarter of 2019 to compete with aggressive Chinese manufacturers in emerging markets, and to expand into the online sales channel.”

Fourth quarter

In the fourth quarter of 2018 Huawei sold over 60 million smartphones and achieved the strongest growth of the quarter among the top five global smartphone vendors (37.6 per cent). Huawei grew throughout 2018, to close the gap with Apple.

“Beyond its strongholds of China and Europe, Huawei continued to increase its investment in

Asia/Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East, to drive further growth,” said Gupta. “Huawei also exploited growth opportunities through continued expansion of the Honor series in the second half of 2018, especially in emerging markets, which helped Huawei grow its market share to 13.0 per cent in 2018,” he added.

In 2018 as a whole, global sales of smartphones to end users grew 1.2 per cent year over year, to 1.6 billion units. North America, mature Asia/Pacific and Greater China recorded the worst declines of the year, at 6.8 per cent, 3.4 per cent and 3.0 per cent, respectively.

“In mature markets, demand for smartphones largely relies on the appeal of flagship smartphones from the top three brands – Samsung, Apple and Huawei – and two of them recorded declines in 2018,” added Gupta.

HIGH STANDARD OF INNOVATION

Galaxy S10 series now available for pre-order in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Don't miss your chance to be among the first in the Sultanate of Oman to own the latest Samsung Galaxy S10+, Galaxy S10 and Galaxy S10e. The devices are now available for pre-order from February 21 to March 2, 2019 across all major retailers. Customers who pre-order Galaxy S10 devices will be among the first to enjoy its new cinematic display and its professional-grade camera among other distinctive features.

Depending on the pre-ordered device, customers will receive a Galaxy Watch or the Galaxy Buds. However, stocks are limited and pre-orders are fulfilled on a first-come, first-served basis – so don't miss out!

Speaking about the soon-to-be-available Galaxy S10, Tarek Sabbagh, Head of IT and Mobile (IM) Division at Samsung Electronics Gulf said: “Our consumers are always looking to own the latest technology with high standard of innovation. We are thrilled to come up with a device that exceeds their expectations and presents possibilities beyond imagination. Today, with the pre-order option, they won't only be the first to own the latest member of the Galaxy S family, they will also benefit from its premium features and groundbreaking innovations in display, camera and

performance. We encourage everyone to place their pre-orders soon, as stocks are limited.”

In a drastic design and technology update which pushes the entire lineup further into the future, Galaxy S10 series boasts extraordinary features, including a super secure on-screen fingerprint scan, multi pro-grade cameras, a cinematic infinity display, wireless powershare and computer-size amounts of storage capacity.

Galaxy S10+ has a cutting-edge dual in-display selfie camera module. It also features a super secure on-screen fingerprint scan, 5 pro-grade cameras, a large 6.4in display, 4,100mAh battery and come with three different storage options. 128GB with 8GB of RAM, 512GB with 8GB of RAM and a huge (and ultra-fast) 1TB model with a gigantic 12GB of RAM.

Galaxy S10 also features a super secure on-screen fingerprint scan, among other things: it has a 6.1inch infinity display, three rear-facing cameras, an in-display selfie camera, 3,400mAh battery and will be available with 128GB storage and 8GB of RAM.

The Galaxy S10e features a 5.8inch infinity display, dual rear-facing cameras, an in-display selfie camera, a side-mounted fingerprint scanner, a 3,100mAh battery and will be available with 128GB of internal storage and 6GB of RAM.

performance. We encourage everyone to place their pre-orders soon, as stocks are limited.”

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Credit extended by banks in Sultanate exceeds OMR25bn

Total deposits grew by 7.8 per cent to OMR23.30 billion, with private sector deposits increasing by 2.6 per cent to OMR14.30 billion at the end of December 2018, the Central Bank of Oman said.

MUSCAT: The banking sector in the Sultanate continued to witness reasonable growth and support economic diversification initiatives, including providing adequate credit to the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector.

The combined balance sheet of conventional and Islamic banks (other depository corporations) taken together provides a complete overview of the financial



Central Bank of Oman. — Times file picture

intermediation taking place in the banking system in the Sultanate.

The total outstanding credit extended by other depository corporations stood at OMR25.10 billion at the end of December 2018, witnessing a year-on-year (YoY) growth of 6.4 per cent, according to the bulletin issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

Credit to the private sector increased by 4.9 per cent to OMR22

billion at the end of December 2018. The household sector (mainly under personal loans) constituted 45.6 per cent of the total credit to the private sector, closely followed by the non-financial corporate sector at 45.8 per cent, while financial corporations and other sectors constituted 5.4 per cent and 3.2 per cent, respectively.

Total deposits grew by 7.8 per

cent to OMR23.30 billion, with private sector deposits increasing by 2.6 per cent to OMR14.30 billion at the end of December 2018.

Sector-wise, the contribution of households to total private sector deposits stood at 48.5 per cent, followed by non-financial corporations at 30.4 per cent, financial corporations at 18.5 per cent, and the other sectors at 2.5 per cent.

— OMA

IN THE HEART OF DUBAI

Meraas unveils plans for 'Central Park' neighbourhood at City Walk

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Meraas has unveiled its plans for Central Park at City Walk, a new exclusive residential neighbourhood which will surround a 40,000 square metres private park in the heart of Dubai.

As part of its dedication to create mould-breaking, imaginative ways of experiencing city life that inspire an active lifestyle for residents and visitors in sustainably-

mind destinations, Meraas' latest neighbourhood will redefine community living in the emirate.

Spanning a total area of 230,000 square metres, Central Park at City Walk will include 12 terraced mid-rise residential buildings. The residential complex will comprise 187 spacious one- to four-bedroom units that overlook a year-round fertile park, with Dubai's majestic downtown skyline standing impressively in the background.

What's more, the new leafy community will come with a wide-ranging variety of active lifestyle amenities, including tennis and basketball courts, swimming pools, spas, cafes and a multi-purpose kids play area.

Units at Central Park will come in a sleek contemporary design, with light colours and carefully selected high-end materials that seamlessly blend with the natural environment, including plants and

flowers suspended in hanging baskets from balcony edges.

Immaculately decorated

The main entrance will lead to immaculately decorated lobby with concierge services.

The building will also include two large rooftop terraces on either side with a variety of exotic flora befitting the natural setting that enshrouds the community in green splendour.

Central Park at City Walk will also be one of the most connected and easiest to access communities in the city. Just two minutes from City Walk's retail complex and the 17,000 capacity Dubai Arena – the region's most anticipated entertainment destination.

Central Park at City Walk will combine a tranquil lifestyle with the city's best leisure, shopping, dining and wellness experiences. Further still, City Walk will be

a mere 10-minute drive from Jumeirah Beach, 15 minutes from the Burj Al Arab, 15 minutes from Dubai International Airport and 20 minutes from Dubai Marina.

And with convenient transport links, including Dubai metro and bus stations nearby, the park will be car-free, pedestrian-friendly, and an ideal setting for families seeking an environmentally-friendly residential neighbourhood.

MARKET

STATISTICS DEPARTMENT

34,828 commercial activities registered in 2018 third quarter

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of registered commercial activities during the third quarter of 2018 was 34,828 compared with 32,567 in the same period of 2017.

The statistics department of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that there were 6,166 construction contractors activities registered, the largest among the other activities.



Ministry of Commerce and Industry. - Times file picture

Export and import offices

This was followed by export and import offices with 4,355 activities. Some 3,605 activities of grocery stores were in the third position among the top registered activities during the third quarter of 2018.

With 3,305 activities, coffee shops which mainly provide food got fourth position; with 3,293 ac-

tivities, the sewing and stitching of Arab and non-Arab ladies' dresses was in fifth position; with 3,073, coffee shops selling primarily beverages were in sixth position; with 2,898, cold storages were seventh; and men's hair dressing was the eighth top activity registered in the third quarter of the year 2018 with 2,851.

Telecoms sector to lead digital transformation

Against a backdrop of 5G imminence, the State of Application Services report says that as many as 80 per cent of telecoms professionals are currently executing on digital transformation plans.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The telecoms industry is fast emerging as a digital transformation and application services trailblazer, according to

new research from F5 Networks.

Against a backdrop of 5G imminence, the fifth annual State of Application Services report indicates that as many as 80 per cent of telecoms professionals are currently executing on digital transformation plans.

This is well ahead of 69 per cent in all other examined industries, the report further added.

Telecom respondents

Telecom respondents are also pulling out the stops to re-evaluate their structures, processes, and workflows to reduce total cost of ownership, as well as embrace more agile methodologies. For example, 58 per cent claim to be migrating away from single function, siloed IT teams compared to 55 per cent of the total survey sample.

"The telecoms industry is fast emerging as a digital transformation and application services trailblazer," said Cindy Borovick, Business Intelligence Director, F5 Networks.

"With 5G around the corner – and in a world where network resources expand and contract

based on demand – a profitable service will only be achieved with cloud-based micro-services, automation, and orchestration."

A key SOAS report

A key SOAS report discovery is that telecom respondents are ahead of other industries for container adoption.

Three out of five (60%) are actively engaged with the technology, compared to 56 per cent of the total survey.

Furthermore, telecom respondents are starting to stand out for embracing newer application services.

The top four application services planned for deployment in the telecoms space are SDN gateway (37 per cent, compared to 22 per cent in all other industries), IoT gateways (29 per cent, compared to 20 per cent), service mesh (28 per cent, compared to 13 per cent), and compression (28 per cent, compared to 15 per cent).

The SOAS suggests that the rise of containers has boosted deployment plans for the latter three.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business

MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS



Omantel gearing up for key exhibition in Barcelona

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omantel – the first and leading provider of integrated telecommunication services in the Sultanate – is gearing up for participating in Mobile World Congress in Barcelona (MWC19) with a high-level delegation, which is set to start on Monday.

Organised by GSMA, the four-day event brings world leading telecom and ICT companies and regulators under one roof, making it a great platform for hunting latest technologies and ICT solutions, and to keep updated on industry trends.

Muna Al Mamari, Acting Senior Manager of Corporate Affairs at Omantel, commented "Omantel is keen on bringing latest technologies and smart solutions that drive 'eOman' forward, therefore the company participates in key industry events worldwide to stay up to date on latest market trends."

She also said, "Telecom and technology sectors are in a rapid growth globally. As MWC19 brings together thousands of companies, it offers a great opportunity to strike deals with tech-giants and have one-on-one meetings with top experts in the industry. Moreover, the event focuses on elements that make the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including 5G, artificial intelligence and many innovative technologies."

"Our Mobile World Congress participations in the past years were fruitful and we managed to form partnerships with leading technology companies, and we look forward for more partnerships this year too, in a way that will enrich our customers' experience."

Omantel will cover its MWC19 participation on its Instagram account, and everyone is invited to follow and enjoy.

DATES PRODUCTION

Ministry completes receiving of dates crop of last year

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has completed receiving of the crop of 2018, which continued between December 9, 2018 and February 7, 2019 from all the governorates of the Sultanate. These dates' crops were Al Mabsali, Al Madluki and Abu Naranjah.

These dates were received in the storage facility of the ministry in Al Wadi Al Kabear by completing the same and the warehouse of the Ministry of the Valley in accordance with the same procedures of previous years. This was also part of the role being played by the ministry to extend government support to the farmers who supply their dates to the ministry. The ministry is giving support also to the farmers who would supply their dates' crops of the year 2018 directly to the foreign markets encouraging them to find new and alternative markets for their products.

Ahmad Bin Hamad Al Harthy, Head of Dates' Department in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said: "This season, we have assigned the work to the Oman Dates Production and Packaging Company, to handle these dates, process them as well as market and sell them."

He said that the company had specialisation in the production, collection, storage and manufacturing of dates and its related items and was planning to make huge investment during next five years to reach to the appropriate production capacity level of dates, date paste and molasses.

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4	Environment Inspector (19004)	04	A recognized Bachelor degree in Environment Sciences/ Environment Engineering / Chemical Engineering or any similar with 3 years' experience.

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Badr Al Samaa, Barka marks 10th anniversary

The event was marked with the launch of its 10th Anniversary Campaign



MUSCAT: Badr Al Samaa, Barka marked its 10th anniversary with the launch of 10th Anniversary Campaign in a glittering ceremony held in its conference hall. Dr. Saleem Salim Khalfan Al Rushaidi, Member of Majlis Shura (Barka) was the chief guest of the event while Dr. Naseer Al Kharusi, DG Private Healthcare Establishment, South Al Batina Region and Dr. Naseer Rashid Al Shukeli, Director - Rustaq Hospital were the guests of honour. Dr. P A Mohammed and Dr. V T Vinod, Directors, Badr Al Samaa, executive directors Mr Naveej Vinod and Dr. Nithin Vinod, Senior Management, doctors and staff were present on this occasion.

10 years ago, in February 2009, Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals had set up a medical centre in Barka with the main aim of providing an access to quality healthcare services to the people of Al Batinah region.

Badr Al Samaa, continuing with the vision of setting up multi-speciality centres recognized for its advanced technology and expert doctors, underwent a massive expansion and renovation and transformed into an 80 bedded multi-speciality hospital with the introduction of many specialities including surgical ones

which are backed by advanced operation theatres, intensive care units, recovery units, allied specialities and advanced diagnostic facilities. ronix Laser Machine this month for proctology and varicose veins.

CT Scan System

The event marked the launch of latest CT Scan System by Philips by the chief guest and guests of honour. It also marked the launch of its campaign to introduce its advanced services to the people of Al Batinah region in the field of Obstetrics, Cardiology, ENT and Radio-diagnosis. A special 10 year anniversary emblem was revealed at this occasion.

Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Barka is providing baby delivery packages (normal and caesarean) at huge discounts and free goody bags for the period of three months along with screening packages in cardiology and ENT and CT Scan services at big discounts for the period of one month.

An audio-visual presentation showing the transformation from a clinic into advanced hospital

was also played on this occasion.

Dr. Saleem Salim Khalfan Al Rushaidi, Member of Majlis Shura said, "I have seen Badr Al Samaa, Barka transforming into an advanced hospital and catering to much increased demands and expectations of the people in this region with excellence. The hospital boasts of advanced facilities and infrastructure."

Dr. Naseer Al Kharusi, DG Private Healthcare Establishment, South Al Batina Region said, "This is a specialized hospital, critical care units, diagnostics, doctors, everything is very good here. We work together with Badr Al Samaa in inspections to improve quality of healthcare delivery and it is good to see that they have already implemented advanced protocols to ensure quality."

"I appreciate the doctors, nurses and administration of this hospital for very good response given to the requirements of Ministry Hospital."

Speaking on this occasion, Dr P A Mohammed, managing director said, "The advancements of this hospital will continue hap-

pening with the introduction of new technologies and specialities. We have an aim of making it a high-end surgical and critical care centre." In his address, Dr V T Vinod, managing director, said "We acknowledge the continuous support and encouragement given by various ministries and government departments, medical fraternity, and everyone."

He laid emphasis on unique advantages of Badr Al Samaa, Affordability, Accessibility and Availability (AAA)."

Mr. Abdul Latheef, Managing Director, on this occasion said, "Our aim is to make Badr Al Samaa, Barka an advanced and acknowledged centre for its quality services, advanced technology and compassionate care for the people of Al Batinah Region. He said every satisfied patient motivates us to touch more lives by bringing smiles on their faces."

Mr. Naveej Vinod, executive director, said that in 2009 when they set up the medical centre in Barka, it was not like what it is today.

"We are proud to be a part of growth story of Barka. Badr Al Samaa has kept well with the pace of development here and we are proud to launch it as a hospital," he said.

Speaking on this occasion Dr. Shafeek Mohammed, Group CEO, Mr. K O Devassy, Chief Marketing Officer, Mr. Alwin George, Group Finance Manager, Dr. Justine Augustine, Group General Manager, Mr. Joby Joseph, Centre Head and Dr. Raveendran A V, Specialist Internist expressed their happiness and satisfaction on the centre's successful transformation into an advanced hospital catering to the healthcare needs of the people of South Al Batinah Region with care and compassion.

FUTURE LEADERS

15 ISG students attend model UN conference in New York

MUSCAT: Fifteen students of Indian School Al Ghubra - Ambika Sharma, Aditya Sharma, Khushi Singh, Sarthak Trivedi, Ayaan Malhotra, Sadiq Mohammed Dohadwalla, Tejas Shetty, Maryam Hussain, Pratham Ashar, Kshama Mumbai, Dev Thakkar, Varun Pillai, Sai Dev Thatode, Chetas Purohit and Tiana Pinto - attended the WFUNA International Model

United Nations Conference at the Headquarters of UN, New York from 28 th of January to 5 th February. At the Opening Ceremony, H E Kai Sauer, permanent representative of Finland to the United Nations and Bill Yotive, MUN Coordinator at WFUNA, addressed the delegates. Tiana Pinto was selected to be the Plenary speaker at the U.N. General Assembly.

SALE OF VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT

Leading Construction Co. in Oman intends to dispose off their used vehicles & equipment, in 'as is where is' condition.

The items identified are presently located at their Al Khoud yard and will be offered for inspection to the public on 26, 27 & 28th February, 2019 between 8.00 am to 12.00 pm and 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

Last date for submission of closed tender is 28th February, 2019 at 5:00 pm at our Al Khoud office.

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TOTAL SECURITY

Ooredoo to safeguard customers with advanced security solution

MUSCAT: Safeguarding the best interests of customers, Ooredoo has partnered with US-based company Akamai to offer unprecedented levels of online protection over mobile and fixed networks. The advanced network-based solution will further enhance security by blocking access to unsafe sites, in addition to protect against malicious, phishing and ransomware attacks. The list of dangerous sites will be permanently updated via unique cybersecurity techniques to counter the new generation of Internet threats.

Feras bin Abdullah Al Shaikh, Director of Consumer Sales at Ooredoo, said, "In the digital world we live in today, protecting customers from cyberattacks is a responsibility we do not take



lightly. With consistently evolving threats, we always work to ensure that our Supernet network is not only secure but upgraded with the latest technology so that we can continue to provide a positive online experience for our customers and their families."

All devices, whether smartphones, PCs, Macs and even

gaming stations will be protected against Internet threats such as malware, botnets, spyware, phishing and ransomware without any action required from customers. Over the coming months, Ooredoo will also propose the possibility of customised cybersecurity services through a dashboard to manage protection against Internet threats at device level. Despite all these security measures, users remain a weak link in the security chain and may still be exposed to infections that are not visible such as local transfer of infected files via a USB key. Ooredoo continues to advise caution at all times.

To find out more about any of Ooredoo's value-packed products and services, visit www.ooredoo.om or visit any of their 57 stores located across Oman.

BARCELONA EVENT

Ooredoo to participate at Mobile World Congress 2019

MUSCAT: Ooredoo, one of the world's leading ICT providers, will showcase the transformative power of 5G at Mobile World Congress 2019 in Barcelona, with live demonstrations of how the technology can enable innovative services including child location monitoring and intelligent connected apps to assist visitors at mega events such as the upcoming football tournament in Qatar in 2022. MWC19 is being held under the theme of "Intelligent Connectivity" and is expected to attract some 107,000 professionals from over 200 countries and territories. Ooredoo will showcase its 5G technological prowess and an array of futuristic services and solutions that leverage the superior capacity and speeds of 5G.

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ROUND-UP

Gulf Great Sands offers low EMIs on BAIC cars

Gulf Great Sands LLC is extending very low EMIs on a six years loan tenure on its popular models

MUSCAT: Making BAIC range of vehicles even more affordable, Gulf Great Sands LLC, the exclusive importer of BAIC in Oman, is extending very low EMIs on a six years loan tenure on its popular models making it easier to own and avail value for money deal.

Customers can avail an EMI rate (terms and conditions apply) of OMR 49 for MY 2019 A115 Hatchback (1.5 litre, 4 AT, 111hp), OMR 80 for MY 2019 X65 Crossover Basic (2.0T, 174 HP 6AT) and OMR 66 for All-new Crossover BAIC X35 Elite (1.5 litre, 111hp).

One of China's top three auto groups, BAIC boasts of 60-years of engineering expertise.

The company, which was established in 1958, has eight major production bases and a cumulative output of 12 million cars. Part of the Bahwan International Group Holding Company (BIGH), Gulf Great Sands LLC (GGS) is an exclusive distributor of BAIC and many other reputed international automotive brands in Oman.

With 130,000 employees, BAIC is ranked 124 among Fortune's Global 500 companies (2018). BAIC has research and development centres in Silicon Valley and Detroit (USA), Aachen (Germany), Barcelona (Spain), Beijing (China) and Styling Centre in Turin (Italy). In 2019, BAIC acquired some assets of General Motors' SAAB unit as part of a push to develop its own-brand cars.

A Gulf Great Sands LLC spokesperson said, "All BAIC vehicles perfectly represent the combination of new generation design with refined features.

With very low EMI rates for 6 years, it is a great time to buy BAIC range of vehicles.

He added, "All BAIC models are very fashionable and comes with lots of technological features, designed to perform in local climatic conditions and safety is the top priority, which comes as standard in all BAIC range of vehicles".

BAIC A115

The A115 sedan and hatchback is equipped with 1.5 litre engine delivering a net power of 111 hp, four



speed automatic transmission with 14-inch alloy wheels. The stylish all-new BAIC A115 hatchback and sedan is spacious to suit multiple driving environments yet very affordable to own.

The cage-type body, stamped steel doors, dual airbags and ABS all contribute to its superior safety. The flying wing design upper grill resonates with the trapezoidal designs lower grill.

The new design rear and front lamps style gives the car a youthful appeal.

The instrument cluster digital design and round dials for AC contrasts with beige colour interiors give a fresh appeal inside. The safety control system, including its ESP and, 2 SRS airbags and high-rigidity body-cage structure, forms an impeccable safety shield protecting you from any danger and allowing to completely enjoy your driving experience.

All-new designs

The All-new BAIC X35 2WD Crossover, powered by a 1.5 litre engine is a perfect choice for the Youth and Small Families in Oman. BAIC X35 has an aggressive wide body SUV Exterior Styling, Luxury Class- Spacious Interiors and therefore meant for everyone in the family.

All-new X35 Front Design has a strong SUV stance with Double Grill, Lenticular headlamps, Three-hole lower guard plate, Square Fog Lamps and C-shaped LED Daytime Running Lights.

All-new BAIC X35 is a perfect combination of Design and Style with tough body contour, chrome plated rear under guard, Dual front air inlet grill, Front & Rear Fog Lamp.

All-new BAIC X35 provides the crossover buyers great Ground Clearance, host of safety features and a gratifying driving experience. It is equipped with Electric Power Steering, Hill Hold Control

SPECIAL MONTHLY INSTALMENT RATE

- Customers wanting to purchase can avail low monthly instalment rate on a six years loan tenure (terms and conditions apply).
- OMR 49 on A115 (Hatchback)
- OMR 80 on X65 Crossover (Basic)
- OMR 66 on X35 Elite

and with Super Long Wheel Base of 2570 mm.

All-new BAIC X35 has Two-tone layered design interior, 60:40 split rear seats, Piano style multimedia controls, stylish air outlet grill. The easy to read 7" suspending display screen makes the journey Comfortable, Classy and Convenient.

BAIC X65 Crossover: Urban Explorer (Comfort and Basic)
The all-new 2019 model BAIC X65 2WD crossover with 2.0 litre turbo engine comes in two variants - Basic and Comfort. Offering space of an MPV and comfort of a sedan, BAIC X65 ensures excellent performance with 174 hp turbo engines.

In the Basic crossover, exterior features include sunroof, 17-inch alloy wheels, headlight automatic lights, DRL, roof rail and rear spoiler, power ORVM with indicator, tire 225/60 R1 and rear wiper.

Some of the features of interiors are keyless entry and push button start, cruise control steering wheel (leather and multi-functional), leather seats, 6 speakers, AUX/USB/MP3 and power window. Safety features include

ABS+EBD, HPS, dual airbags, ESP and TPMS, parking sensor, central locking, theft-deterrent alarm system and immobilizer.

In the Comfort crossover, exterior features include panoramic sunroof, 17-inch alloy wheels, headlight automatic lights, DRL, roof rail and rear spoiler, power ORVM with indicator, tire 225/60 R1 and rear wiper.

Some of the features of interiors are keyless entry and push button start, cruise control steering wheel (leather and multi-functional), leather seats, 6 speakers, AUX/USB/MP3 and power window. Safety features include ABS+EBD, HPS, dual airbags, ESP and TPMS, parking sensor, central locking, theft-deterrent alarm system and immobilizer.

Additional features include 8-inch display screen, rear view camera, front side airbag, bluetooth, power driver seat- 6-way, ORVM-electric fold and heated, chrome tri and high-mounted brake lamp.

The crossover BAIC X65 has European safety standard, ESP & tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS) and five-star rating safety level ranked by China New Car Assessment Programme.

Equipped with new generation AISIN 6AT gearbox, the 2.0L turbo high-power engine of BAIC X65 reaches a maximum power of 130Kw and maximum torque reaches 240Nm.

The crossover also has steering mounted audio, bluetooth and cruise controls, smart automatic bi-zone air conditioner, projector headlamps, leather seats, power adjustable seats and 8-inch center console display.

European Engineering and Safety Standards

BAIC acquired SAAB (Svenska Aeroplan Aktiebolaget) which is a North European brand from Sweden.

At the end of 2009, BAIC Motor took over the SAAB's core assets, including its 9-5/9-3 vehicle platform, turbo engine transmission, R&D, manufacturing and supplier systems. The SAAB unique front wheel drive and steering technology was also inherited by BAIC.

Gulf Great Sands has a state of art service centre in Ghal, Muscat, spread over more than 2900 square meters to provide after-sales services to BAIC customers. GGS has already tied up for Periodic Maintenance Services in many cities including Salalah, Sohar, Sur, Nizwa, Ibra and Barka etc.

For more information and to Book Test drives, call BAIC OMAN Toll free number 80050800, WhatsApp on 79005800 or visit our showroom in Al Wattayah.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY



Luxury development opens for investment in Madinat Al Irfan

MUSCAT: Owning a prized piece of Muscat real estate is now an exciting reality for homebuyers and investors, regardless of their nationality. Boulevard Tower, a splendid mixed-used community, set in the heart of the capital's prestigious Madinat Al Irfan at Muscat Hills neighbourhood, is nearly ready for occupation on a freehold basis.

High-end in design and construction, ultra-modern in technology and amenities, and vibrant in its communal settings, the property's 176 residential apartments and 15 retail offerings also come with a solid value proposition for those seeking a high return on their investment.

Boulevard Tower is the latest venture of the well-known property developer ASAS Oman Group. The company has appointed leading Omani real estate brokerage firm tibiaan properties as the exclusive agency in the marketing of the project to local and international investors in an agreement signed by Sheikh Abdullah Al Khalili, Director - ASAS Oman Group and Mr. Fahad Al Ismaili, CEO - tibiaan properties.

To invest in Boulevard Tower is to be part of one of Muscat's most sought-after addresses. The centrepiece of the signature real estate development is a strikingly designed seven-storey tower set on a 5,137 sq metre plot within Madinat Al Irfan at Muscat Hills. It features an array of one, two and three-bedroom apartments superbly furnished and fitted out keeping in mind the discerning needs of individuals, couples and families as investors or tenants. Conceived as a safe and secure yet vibrant residential enclave, the property comes with, among other amenities, a temperature-controlled swimming pool, gym, children's play area, concierge, reception area and communal garden. All apartments are finished

to a high specification, both in terms of materials, finish and appliances. Solid beech wood main doors, ducted air-conditioners and luxury fitted bathrooms lend an element of sophistication to the apartments. Technology and convenience comes in the form of modern appliances including a cooker, hob, extractor, fridge/freezer and microwave oven.

Equally investment-worthy are the project's 15 retail offerings, all of which are accessible from the development's distinctive Boulevard setting - an avenue of chic cafes, restaurants and branded outlets.

Sheikh Abdullah Al Khalili, Director - ASAS Oman Group, added, "With the signing of this agreement with tibiaan, we are happy to enlist the expertise of a strong and proven market player in the marketing of Boulevard Tower to prospective customers in Oman and beyond. Boulevard Tower is targeted at those who wish to make a lifestyle choice that combines high quality of living space and modern amenities with an address that is truly distinctive."

"We are delighted to obtain the sole rights to market this stylish new ITC in Muscat," said Mr. Fahad Al Ismaili, CEO - tibiaan properties. "It attests to our growing reputation as a world-class provider of real estate brokerage and property management services to this rapidly growing economic sector. Boulevard Tower will soon be ready for occupation and we look forward to commencing sales for this superb property very shortly."

Adding cachet to the property's appeal is its unrivalled location. Built on a hillock that constitutes part of the master-planned Muscat Hills development, Boulevard Tower affords spectacular views of the picturesque suburbs laid out around Muscat International Airport.

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