



MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM PROMOTES LOCAL PRODUCTS

Activities of a forum titled "Enhancing the Competitiveness of National Products and Services in Hotel Establishments" kicked off yesterday. Organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the two-day forum looks into various means of empowering domestic products and services, including policies and laws related to government procurements. **>A4**



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OMAN'S REAL ESTATE PROJECTS OFFER PROMISING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Sultan Haitham City, Al Khuwair Downtown, and the Al Luban Neighbourhood projects are very attractive for investors in light of the government incentives

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a bid to further stimulate economic growth, the Sultanate of Oman has announced tender invitations for a series of tourism projects and integrated residential areas, underscoring Oman's commitment to fostering development across various sectors.

The real estate development sector in Oman has emerged as a promising avenue, with significant potential for expansion, according to Khalid bin Nasser Al Mahrooqi,

Director-General of Real Estate Development at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

Al Mahrooqi reaffirmed the government's commitment in enhancing investment opportunities within the real estate sector.

The senior Omani official emphasised the ministry's efforts in formulating a comprehensive national plan aimed at bolstering the sector's contribution to the country's GDP.

Al Mahrooqi said that among the notable projects is the Sultan



Haitham City (Madinat A'Sultan Haitham), hailed as the first smart and sustainable development of its kind.

He said: "Sultan Haitham City covers an expansive area of 14.8 million square metres and the city is set to accommodate 20,000 residential units across 19 integrated neighbourhoods. The infrastructure includes essential amenities such as healthcare centres, educational institutions, mosques, and extensive road networks."

Additionally, Al Mahrooqi highlighted other significant ventures

like the Al Khuwair Downtown Project, valued at approximately OMR800 million.

He said: "Oman aims to attract a substantial portion - around 70% - of foreign direct investments (FDIs) to the real estate sector in the coming years."

As part of the growth in real estate, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has taken proactive steps by inviting bids for six residential projects across various governorates.

These projects, situated within integrated residential areas and

neighbourhoods, are strategically located to promote balanced development across different regions. Notable among these are the Al Luban Neighbourhood in the Wilayat of Nakhal, South Al Batinah Governorate, and the Majd Neighbourhood in the Wilayat of Sohar, North Al Batinah Governorate, among others.

Furthermore, the ministry has already awarded several integrated residential projects, totalling 1.3 million square metres, with an investment value of OMR5.7 million. These projects, spread across South Al Batinah, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, and North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, are poised to inject momentum into regional development efforts.

Overall, these initiatives signal Oman's proactive approach towards economic diversification and sustainable growth, positioning the country as an attractive destination for investors seeking opportunities in the realty sector.

DISPLACED PALESTINIANS

OIC condemns Israeli aggression in Gaza Strip

JEDDAH: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has strongly condemned the escalation of the criminal aggression launched by the Israeli occupation forces against the Gaza Strip, and the expansion of its scope through the invasion of the city of Rafah, which is inhabited by about 1.3 million displaced Palestinians.

Flagrant violation

In its statement, the OIC considered that this escalation constitutes an extension of the commission of the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and an attempt to displace the Palestinians from their land, in flagrant violation of all international resolutions and provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The OIC also condemned the Israeli Prime Minister's threats and intention to continue and expand the crime of the Israeli military aggression against the city of Rafah, whether with or without concluding a ceasefire agreement, which confirms his rejection of all UN resolutions and efforts aimed at achieving a ceasefire. **-ONA**

GAZA DEATH TOLL as of May 8, 2024



AIR INDIA EXPRESS

Flights to Muscat delayed, cancelled

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Several Air India Express flights from Kerala to Muscat were delayed or cancelled after the airlines crew went on strike on Wednesday.

Kerala airports witnessed uproarious scenes by passengers as Air India Express flights to the Gulf destinations were cancelled at the last minute.

Most of the travellers were informed about the cancellations after the security check was done.

According to sources, flights from Kannur, Thiruvananthapuram and Cochin were affected due to senior crew members calling in sick.

The sudden shortage of crew members led to flights being grounded, affecting both domestic and international routes.

Air India Express spokesperson said, "A section of our cabin crew has reported sick at the last minute, starting last night, resulting in flight delays and cancellations. While we are engaging with the crew to understand the reasons behind these occurrences, our teams are actively addressing this issue to minimize any inconvenience caused to our guests as a result."

The spokesperson added, "We



sincerely apologise to our guests for this unexpected disruption and emphasise that this situation does not reflect the standard of service we strive to provide. Guests impacted by cancellations will be offered a full refund or complimentary rescheduling to another date. Guests flying with us today are requested to check if their flight is affected, before heading to the airport."

In a major flight disruption, more than 70 international and domestic flights of Air India Express were cancelled or delayed due to senior crew members calling in sick. The situation has raised concerns within the Ministry of Civil Aviation, which is closely monitoring the developments.

Sources said that some senior crew members switched off their mobile phones just before flight operations, citing health issues.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Municipality's role in sustainable economy

1 The Muscat Municipality played a significant role in the Second Gulf Municipal Week recently held in Qatar. The event aimed to bolster cooperation among member countries, exchange experiences and knowledge, and foster innovative solutions. It aimed to identify opportunities and address challenges facing the region, such as environmental protection and promoting a sustainable economy. **>A3**

WORLD Pharma firm recalls COVID-19 vaccine

2 AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine is being withdrawn worldwide after the company acknowledged for the first time in court documents that it can cause a rare and dangerous side effect, according to a media report. AstraZeneca has announced that the vaccine was being removed from markets for commercial reasons. It further said that the vaccine was no longer being made or supplied. **>A6**



MARKET OCCI team briefed on entrepreneurship

3 A delegation from Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) visiting the Republic of Singapore was briefed about the Singaporean experience in the fields of entrepreneurship and food security. The briefing took place during the Omani delegation's meeting with officials of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Support institution affiliated to the Singaporean Ministry of Commerce. **>B1**

RARE SPECIES

Ten new species of Omani plants discovered

MUSCAT: Oman Botanic Garden registered 10 new species of plants that are native to the Sultanate of Oman.

The newly registered plants, discovered by local and international researchers in different governorates of Oman, include a rare species of wild barley strain that is indigenous to Sahasah area in the Wilayat of Khasab.

Four offspring of the newly discovered species grow in Dhofar Governorate, three of them grow in Musandam Governorate, two in Al Buraimi Governorate and one in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

These plants are extremely rare.



They spread sparsely in limited geographical areas and in very small numbers.

In addition to international re-

searchers, the team that discovered the new species included researchers from Oman Botanic Garden. The discoveries were re-



cently published in a scientific paper in the Edinburgh Journal of Botany (EJB) in the United Kingdom (UK). **-ONA**

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:08pm
Asr.....	3:32pm
Maghrib.....	6:44pm
Isha.....	8:01pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:05am

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TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Labour announces the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender title	Last date for tender purchase online	Bid submission date
24/2024	Purchase of an advanced anti-virus software to protect employees' devices and main operational servers at the Ministry	Tuesday 28/05/2024 2:00 p.m.	Monday 17/06/2024 10 a.m.
06/2024 Re-floated	Providing cleaning services for the building of the Directorate General of Labour in North Al Sharqeyah Governorate	Tuesday 28/05/2024 2:00 p.m.	Monday 17/06/2024 10 a.m.

- Specialized establishments may obtain the tender's documents online through the following link, starting from Thursday 09/05/2024 at 08:00 a.m.: [/https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)
- Bids shall be submitted online.
- Bids shall be opened at 11:00 am on Monday 17/06/2024.

(The Ministry shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid)

labour_OMAN

MEETING

Foreign Minister receives ambassador of Spain

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister yesterday received Maria Luisa, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the Sultanate of Oman to bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty.

Sayyid Badr expressed his appreciation for the efforts exerted by the ambassador in boosting bilateral relations, wishing her success in her future endeavors. -ONA



AVIATION SAFETY

Conference on standards needed to help aircraft accident victims

MUSCAT: An international conference titled "Helping Victims of Airline Accidents and their Families" kicked off in Muscat yesterday.

As many as 200 experts specialised in the field of aviation safety are taking part in the two-day conference organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).



The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr.Hilal Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health.

The conference aims to enlighten the organisations concerned about standards required by the ICAO in serving aircraft accident victims and their families, the obligations of member states and airline firms, and the role of the aviation sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The first day's activities dealt with applications of ICAO air safety standards and the responsibility of member states during air accidents, among other topics. -ONA

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GULF MUNICIPAL WEEK

Muscat Municipality plays a key role in sustainable economy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Muscat Municipality played a significant role in the Second Gulf Municipal Week recently held in Qatar.

The event aimed to bolster co-operation among member countries, exchange experiences and knowledge, and foster innovative solutions.

This year's theme, "A Common Vision for a Sustainable Future," underscored the importance of adopting a sustainable vision based on principles of environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

It aimed to identify opportunities and address common challenges facing the region, such as environmental protection and promoting a sustainable economy.

The event brought together experts and specialists in municipal affairs from Gulf Cooperation Council countries, who presented various research studies and working papers.

The Sultanate's delegation, led by the Ministry of Interior, presented four working papers on critical topics, including food safety, sustainable city planning, waste management and the conservation of energy, and building permit procedures and completion certificates.

Dr Mohammed bin Said Al Balushi, Director of the Food and Laboratories Department at Muscat Municipality, commenting on the Muscat Municipality's participation in the event, said: "We are pleased with the positive re-



SUSTAINABLE VISION: The municipality focuses on improving infrastructure, local services, and public health to achieve its sustainable development goals.

sults and are reflecting on the outcomes of the First Gulf Municipal Week in Salalah. We observed fruitful discussions and in-depth debates among participants, which significantly contributed to enhancing municipal work and improving adopted practices in the field of food safety, enabling us to stay abreast of the world's environmental risks. Our commitment is to leverage modern technologies, enhance laboratory facilities, and adhere to the highest health standards essential for ensuring food safety. We are dedicated to addressing challenges in this field to enhance public health

within the community."

Muscat Municipality actively participates in local and regional events to exchange experiences and knowledge, aiming to enhance the quality of life and services for citizens.

The municipality focuses on improving infrastructure, local services, and public health to achieve its sustainable development goals.

Efforts are concentrated on raising awareness and implementing international best practices in food safety and trade to ensure the highest safety standards for consumers.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION CENTRE

Media meeting focuses on internal communication

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Information, represented by the Government Communication Centre, on Wednesday organised the 24th meeting of communication and media departments in government institutions.

The meeting reviewed strategic projects, events and topics undertaken by the Government Communication Centre in cooperation with government units over the past few months.

The participants engaged in in-depth study of internal communication, strategies for professional activation of this practice in government units and the importance of applying it within each institution. They also reviewed standard measures of internal communication and its impact on raising the level of productivity at work.

The meeting laid emphasis on enhancing the sense of belonging to



the institution, exchanging experiences, strengthening ties between employees and leaders and addressing rumours and misleading news targeting their institution.

It also looked into ways of making decisions that accommodate the opinions of all, improving employee satisfaction and augmenting the level of transparency.

The Government Communication Centre showcased successful models of internal communication applied in a number of government

units, including the experience of the Media Communication Centre at the Foreign Ministry that was presented by First Secretary Isma Karim Al Balushi.

In her presentation, Isma made an analysis of the work environment at the Foreign Ministry.

She spoke about the channels used to activate internal communication and the importance of implementing an organised internal communication plan that targets measurable performance indicators. -ONA

CAMPAIGN

Over 923,000 invasive birds eliminated

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 923,000 invasive birds were eliminated until May 6, 2024 by the national campaign to combat invasive birds.

The Main Committee for combating invasive birds discussed the latest developments in the campaign in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, and the sustainability plan for the coming period, headed by Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, at the General Office of the Environment Authority.

The number of invasive birds that were eliminated from the launch of the campaign in December 2022 until May 6, 2024 topped 923,000 invasive birds.

559,453 birds were killed in North Al Batinah Governorate.

In the South Al Batinah Governorate, 188,333 invasive birds have been controlled since January 2024. In the Dhofar Governorate, 126,659 invasive birds have been eliminated, through the involvement of a number of members of the local community in the governorates in teams and subcommittees.

In Muscat Governorate, 48,634 invasive birds were eliminated by applying mechanisms that have proven effective to combat these type of birds.



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MUSCAT GOVERNORATE

Young Crafters programme aims to train students in traditional crafts



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Curriculum Development, in cooperation with the Scientific College of Design, is implementing the ‘Young Crafters’ programme.

The programme began last week and aims to train 30 students from Muscat Governorate for preserving the traditional Omani crafts by employing modern technology to produce various designs.

The Young Crafters programme is a vocational training project with the aim of providing students with technical skills that contribute to raising a generation proud

of its cultural heritage as wells as contribute to the local and global market.

The programme aims to increase interest in crafts and traditional industries, and enable students to train their colleagues in the handicrafts.

The training includes a number of skills, such as metal shaping, pottery, ceramics, artistic works, graphic design, and photography.

The workshops are presented by professors specialised in the field of metals, pottery, artistic works, and graphic design from the Scientific College of Design.

Ahmed Al-Sabhani, a senior educational researcher at the Department of Citizenship, said:

“The programme was organised in the form of interactive workshops, where students learn under the supervision of experienced trainers from the Scientific College of Design. On this basis, the programme was divided into two parts.

“The first part focuses on training students in learning the skill of graphic design using well-known programmes, namely Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator, in addition to learning the skill of advertising photography. The students were divided into two groups and alternated between the two workshops for two weeks.”

“The second part focuses on training each student in one of the following skills: Artistic works,

metal shaping, ceramics making, and pottery and the students were divided into three groups according to the their inclinations and choices, with a focus on the numbers,” he added.

The Young Crafters programme aims to develop the cultural legacies of Omani crafts, enhance belonging and pride in national identity among school students, and keep pace with the directions of Oman Vision 2040, whose priorities include supporting citizens in various industries, and developing students’ skills to employ modern technology in craft industries, opening students’ horizons and expanding their awareness of entrepreneurship.



Tourism Ministry stresses the importance of local products

Minister of Heritage and Tourism said that the tourism sector will open horizons with communities to implement the best sustainability practices in all its aspects and preserving the local component, since the sector is growing steadily and sustainably



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Salem bin Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism stressed on the importance of giving priority to local content by the hotel establishments, to achieve sustainability, as well as achieving the government’s aspirations to enrich local communities and markets.

At the opening of the Forum for Enhancing the Competitiveness of National Products and Services in Hotel Establishments, organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism from 8 to 9 May, His Excellency emphasised that the ministry is keen to place local content within the indicators of evaluating hotel establishments, as it is important in reviving the traditional heritage that the Sultanate abounds with, as well as enriching the experiences of the visitors to the Sultanate of Oman.

His Excellency added that achieving fruitful partnership between all parties of the hotels sector will contribute to reflect the nature of the sector and its great potential in maximising local content by providing job opportunities and creating sustainability that embodies the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

He stressed that it is time to pay attention to tourism sector

policies, maximising local content, and work to strengthen local communities and the national product, as well as partnership with sector chains, which requires great attention to local content in order to be within the criteria for evaluating hotel establishments.

His Excellency expressed his hope that the tourism sector will open horizons with communities to implement the best sustainability practices in all its aspects, preserving the local component since the sector is growing steadily.

He pointed out that MHT directs its capabilities to develop all tourism products, such as medical tourism, adventure tourism, and natural tourism, while all these components are linked to the sector to allow the tourist to spend an enjoyable experience.

The Forum for Enhancing the Competitiveness of National Products and Services in Hotel Establishments, highlighted a number of aspects that enrich local content, such as policies and laws related to government procurement in local content, while reviewing the experiences of localising local content.

For his part, Dr. Rashid Al Hinai, Director General of Planning at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said: “The adoption of local value is aligned with the standards set by the World Council for Sustainable

Tourism and the internationally recognised standards for sustainable tourism practices, particularly in the aspects of community participation, cultural preservation and economic benefits for local stakeholders, through incorporating the in-country value into their operations, while the hoteliers demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and responsible tourism practices to enhance their appeal to environmentally and community-conscious travellers.

He clarified that Oman Vision 2040 sets ambitious goals for economic diversification and sustainable development in the country. He pointed out that promoting tourism as a key driver of economic growth and job creation by prioritising value within the country, as well as promoting inclusive growth, supporting local communities and preserving the country’s cultural and natural heritage are considered as part of the main goals of this vision.

He added that the local value refers to the economic benefits generated locally through tourism activities, including employment opportunities, local purchases and revenue retention within the country, while embracing and enhancing in-country value is not only a strategic business decision, but also a commitment to sustain-

able tourism practices that are in line with global sustainability standards.

The first day of the forum witnessed the presentation of a number of working papers, including a working paper entitled: Policies and Laws Related to Government Procurement in Local Content, presented by the General Secretariat of the Tender Board. It included a definition of the structure of the General Secretariat of the Tender Board, as well as the types of contracting in government projects and the exemptions that constitute an incentive to implement local content.

The Investment Authority also presented a working paper in which it reviewed the experience of localising local products in hotel establishments, while the Food Safety and Quality Centre reviewed in a working paper the initiative to enhance the competitiveness of the national food product.

The forum also witnessed the holding of a discussion session during which emphasis was placed on cooperation in the local content file, exchanging knowledge, and benefiting from existing experiences locally and internationally to maximise the experiences of the tourism industry and knowledge of local institutions and enrich them.

MEETING

Maj. Gen Hamid receives top UK military official

MUSCAT: Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies received in his office at Bait Al Falaj Garrison on Wednesday Commodore Matt Solly, Deputy Commandant of the United Kingdom's (UK) Defence Academy and his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a set of topics in academic and training fields.

The meeting was attended by Commodore Khalid Amer Al Salti, Director of Studies and Academic Affairs and several senior officers at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

As part of the visit, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on cooperation in the academic and scientific fields between the Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies at the Ministry of Defense and the Defense Academy of the UK.

The MoU was signed by Commodore Khalid Amir Al Salti, Director General of Studies and Academic Affairs and Commodore Matt Solly, Deputy Commandant of the UK Defence Academy.

Moreover, the Deputy Commandant of the UK Defence Academy and his accompanying delegation on Wednesday vis-



ited the Joint Command and Staff College (CSC) at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

Upon their arrival at the college, the guests were greeted by Brigadier Saif Hamad Al Yousifi, Commandant of the CSC.

The guests were briefed on the CSC, its curricula and training and educational programmes. They also toured the college's facilities and departments.

Further, the guests also yesterday visited the National Defence College (NDC) in the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies at Bait Al Falaj Garrison.

Upon the guests' arrival at the NDC, they were greeted by Rear Admiral Ali Abdullah Al Shidi, Commandant of the NDC.

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

Moreover, the Deputy Commandant of the UK's Defence Academy and his accompanying delegation visited the Centre for Strategic and Defence Studies in the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies at Bait Al Falaj Garrison.

Upon the guests' arrival at the Centre, they were received by the Acting Head of the Centre.

The delegation was briefed on the centre's roles and tasks, as well as the various strategic and defence activities carried out by the centre.

-DNA

TACTICAL ROLES

Pakistan delegation visits MSC

MUSCAT: A delegation from the National Defence University in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan yesterday visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC).

The delegation was greeted upon their arrival at the centre by the Head of the Maritime Security Centre .

Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the tactical roles and tasks carried out by the centre in the safety of the Omani



maritime environment.

They also toured the centre's facilities and viewed its latest

equipment and technologies used in carrying out its national duties. -DNA

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Tender



Local Online Tender Announcement

Local Online Tender Announcement

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

S.N.	Tender No.	Tender Subject	Establishments eligible to bid	Document's Price	Last date for tender purchase online	Last date for bid submission
1	12/2024	Organizing a student trip to the Republic of Turkey for the students of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences for the year 2023/2024	Companies specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board at the Excellent, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Grades	RO 25/- (Twenty Five Omani Riyals)	19/05/2024	28/05/2024
2	11/2024	Organizing a student trip to the State of Qatar for the students of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences	Companies specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board at the Excellent, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Grades	RO 25/- (Twenty Five Omani Riyals)	19/05/2024	28/05/2024
3	13/2024	Organizing a student trip to the Federal Kingdom of Malaysia for the students of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences for the year 2023/2024	Companies specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board at the Excellent, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Grades	RO 25/- (Twenty Five Omani Riyals)	19/05/2024	28/05/2024

- Tender documents may be purchased online starting at 07:30 am on the dates fixed for tender purchase through the following link:
<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Preference in awarding will be given to small and medium enterprises registered with the Authority for SME development and whose bid includes the biggest percentage of Omaniisation and a biggest purchase percentage of national products.
- The University shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid.

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Financial statements for the last year 31 December 2023



FOR COMMERCIAL REASONS

AstraZeneca withdraws COVID-19 vaccine

CAMBRIDGE: The pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine is being withdrawn worldwide after the company acknowledged for the first time in court documents that it can cause a rare and dangerous side effect, according to a media report . AstraZeneca has announced that the vaccine was being removed from markets for commercial reasons. It further said that the vaccine was no longer being made or supplied, having been superseded by updated vaccines that fight new variants. The application to withdraw the vaccine was made on March 5 and came into effect on May 7. The vaccine can be no longer used in the European Union following the company's decision to withdraw its "marketing authori-

sation." Similar applications will be submitted in the UK and other nations in the coming months that have given a go-ahead to the vaccine, known as Vaxzevria. In recent months, Vaxzevria has come under scrutiny over a very rare side effect, which causes blood clots and low blood platelet counts. In court documents, AstraZeneca in the High Court in Febru-

ary admitted that the vaccine "can, in very rare cases, cause TTS". TTS which stands for Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome has been associated with at least 81 deaths in the UK and hundreds of serious injuries. More than 50 alleged victims and grieving relatives have filed a lawsuit against AstraZeneca in a High Court case. — **ANI**

AFGHANISTAN

OIC reiterates support for girls' education and women's employment

KABUL: At a time when the basic rights of Afghan women are crushed under the Taliban regime, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), too, reiterated once again during its 15th summit in Gambia that women's work and girls' access to education are important issues in Afghanistan. According to the resolution released at the summit's conclusion on Sunday, (May 5), the organisation supports the safeguarding and upholding of Afghan residents' human rights, particularly in promoting women's work and education, as per Khaama Press. Notably, this meeting was also attended by Abdul Qahar Balkhi, the Taliban's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson. The OIC has emphasised the need for quick solutions to the educational problems Afghan girls face while urging more interaction with the de facto government. "It stresses the need for more efforts to address challenges related to ethnic groups, terrorism, narcotics, and social aspects for inclusive governance to achieve lasting stability," the Summit's final resolution stated, according to Khaama Press. Previously, Tariq Ali Bakht,



the OIC's representative for Afghan affairs, met with Mawlawi Kabir, the political deputy of the Taliban in Afghanistan, during his latest visit and called for the reopening of schools and universities for girls. He also promised during this meeting that the OIC is ready to support girls' education in Afghanistan. It has been nearly three years since girls have been deprived of formal education in the country, and the Taliban government has so far ignored the concerns of the citizens and the demands of the international community in this regard. As the Taliban solidifies its control over Afghanistan, the humanitarian crisis in the country has worsened. With infrastructure crumbling and essential services disrupted, millions are at risk of starvation and disease. — **ANI**

'India supports a homeland for Palestinians eventually'

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar noted India's practical contribution to the situation, with around 20 ships deployed in the Red Sea to mitigate attacks on shipping, which disrupt trade and increase costs

NEW DELHI: Referring to the conflict in the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine issue, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said that eventually, India supports a homeland for the Palestinians and is public about its stand. While speaking at Gargi College on Vishwa Bandhu Bharat, Jaishankar said, "So you have a very tense, very complicated situation involving Israel, involving the Palestinians, involving many of the Arab countries, the Gulf monarchies, involving Iran. There was an exchange of the Iranians and the Israelis a few days ago, they fired on each other." "Now, look at how a Vishwa Bandhu would approach this situation. We were very clear when Israel was, on October 7, when Ha-



mas attacked Israel that this was terrorism. We took a clear stance on it. When Israel responded, we also took a position that, whenever any military response takes place, it is very important that civilian lives are protected. And if you are displacing civilians, so they are no longer in their homes, you have to give some kind of humanitarian corridor out there. We also have, when Israel and Iran started firing at each other," Jaishankar said. In his address at Gargi College EAM Jaishankar also shared that, on the Prime Minister's instructions, he personally contacted the foreign ministers of the involved parties, expressing regional concerns and urging restraint. "I personally called up the two foreign ministers there on the Prime Minister's instructions

ited. So I give you again, just think how many parties, Israelis, Palestinians, the Arab countries out there, the Iranians, and yet we are able to actually engage all of them," EAM stated. Following this, Jaishankar also mentioned the Russia-Ukraine conflict which started in February 2022, and said, "We had urged students to come home. The vast majority of students stayed and found themselves in the conflict zone. They were in different cultures and different cities." Jaishankar mentioned the continuous efforts to engage with the neighbouring countries to ensure the students' safe evacuation of the student while highlighting the Vishwa Bandhu foreign policy's role. "Here is the challenge that we faced with how to bring students from a conflict zone..Think about what it means in terms of how you achieved this. One was to ensure initially that many people could come as soon as possible..There was shooting, and bombardment going on..You have to get the governments of other countries to cooperate with you. This is what a Vishwa Bandhu foreign policy works like. We had to continuously contact the five countries which were neighbouring there," said Jaishankar. — **ANI**

Port of Salalah | ميناء صلالة

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR 3 MONTHS ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I have the pleasure in presenting the annual report of your company along with the Unaudited consolidated financial results for the first quarter March 31, 2024 (Q1 2024).

Operational Overview

During Q1 2024 the container terminal handled a volume of 878 K TEUs compared to 1056 K TEUs in corresponding period last year, a decrease of -17%. Container terminal throughput decreased in Q1-2024 vs Q1-2023 driven by the Red Sea issue and capacity constraint related to the ongoing upgrade.

The Port of Salalah General Cargo segment has handled 5.763 million tons during Q1 2024 as compared to 5.039 million during Q1 2023, a growth of 14%. The overall general cargo volume increase is due to higher demand in export markets for dry bulk (gypsum and limestone).

In Q1 2024, The Company received its first 4 STS (Ship-To-Shore) cranes for the Container Terminal as part of the ongoing upgrade. The Company's top priority remains to ensure the safety of its employees, contractors, and customers, and to this end, the company continues to invest in technology and infrastructure to minimize the risk.

Financial Overview

The consolidated revenue from operations for 2024 is recorded at RO 17.929 million compared to RO 17.939 million. Consolidated EBITDA is recorded at RO 3.605 million compared to RO 4.118 million. Consolidated Net Profit for Q1 2024 is recorded at RO 846K, as compared to RO 1.169 million during the corresponding period last year.

Employee Development

Our people contribute to the success of the company. In order for the company to stay competitive it needs to remain at the forefront of the industry with continued education on procedures, technologies, and best practices. The company continues to invest in training and development of its workers, with a focus on Omanization and skills development of local talent.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Port of Salalah strongly believes in a CSR program that is aligned with the pillars of sustainability and volunteerism and it is fundamental to our business. Impacting the local Dhofar region and benefiting the larger segments of communities

requiring support are the guiding posts of the company's CSR program.

Outlook

The ongoing disruptions in the Red Sea are having a significant impact on global container transport, and consequently, our operations in Salalah are also being affected. Major customers have adjusted their networks, rerouting eastbound services to Cape of Good Hope or implementing suspension of some services.

Forecasts for the remainder of 2024 indicate a sustained decrease in overall container volume, estimated at -20-25% driven by transshipment volume, as the resolution of the ongoing crisis remains uncertain. However, gate volume is not expected to be impacted except for longer transit times faced by customers and limited space availability. Having said that, mitigation initiatives are underway to minimize the gap created by the decline in transshipment volume which will remain the key focus for the remainder of the year.

The general cargo volume, driven by the dry bulk and liquid bulk sectors, displayed notable resilience in Q1, showcasing a robust year-on-year growth despite rising costs stemming from increased insurance costs. This resilience can be attributed to strong demand in Asia. Forecasts indicate that this strong performance is to be sustained throughout the remainder of the year, defying prevailing challenges.

Conclusion

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the shareholders of the company, I record the sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, for his strategic vision, leadership, and his continued support, without which it would not have been possible to establish and maintain this world-class port. I also thank our customers, investors, and the members of the government we work together.

We place on record our appreciation for the contributions of all our employees, who continue to perform with high distinction. Our consistent growth was possible by their hard work, solidarity, cooperation, and support.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Braik Musallam Al Amri
Chairman of Board of Directors,
Salalah Port Services Co. SAOG
7th May 2024

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED AND PARENT STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF 31ST MARCH 2024

Parent Company				Consolidated				Parent Company				Consolidated			
Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
1,41,255	1,53,526	1,41,439	1,53,685	20,011	18,148	20,072	18,199	59,047	54,328	59,108	54,399	6,980	7,697	7,000	7,720
1,644	1,082	1,644	1,082	416	631	416	631	416	631	416	631	416	631	416	631
546	546	-	-	210	210	-	-	210	210	-	-	210	210	-	-
26,000	49,401	26,000	49,401	19,000	10,000	19,000	10,000	19,000	10,000	19,000	10,000	19,000	10,000	19,000	10,000
1,89,456	2,22,703	1,89,155	2,22,367	85,653	72,866	85,524	72,750	85,653	72,866	85,524	72,750	85,653	72,866	85,524	72,750
8,427	6,294	8,427	6,294	2,420	3,241	2,420	3,241	2,420	3,241	2,420	3,241	2,420	3,241	2,420	3,241
5,738	7,667	5,738	7,667	2,949	2,207	2,949	2,207	2,949	2,207	2,949	2,207	2,949	2,207	2,949	2,207
6,980	15,054	6,980	15,054	5,789	2,685	5,789	2,685	5,789	2,685	5,789	2,685	5,789	2,685	5,789	2,685
4,010	7,522	4,010	7,522	2,893	1,542	2,893	1,542	2,893	1,542	2,893	1,542	2,893	1,542	2,893	1,542
20,601	30,600	20,601	30,600	11,769	7,923	11,769	7,923	11,769	7,923	11,769	7,923	11,769	7,923	11,769	7,923
71,824	13,238	71,824	13,239	5,092	27,625	5,093	27,625	5,092	27,625	5,093	27,625	5,092	27,625	5,093	27,625
1,17,580	80,375	1,17,580	80,376	30,912	45,223	30,913	45,223	30,912	45,223	30,913	45,223	30,912	45,223	30,913	45,223
3,07,036	3,03,078	3,06,735	3,02,743	1,16,565	1,18,089	1,16,437	1,17,973	1,16,565	1,18,089	1,16,437	1,17,973	1,16,565	1,18,089	1,16,437	1,17,973
46,758	46,758	46,758	46,758	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984
7,666	7,666	7,666	7,666	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949
15,584	15,584	15,665	15,665	5,994	5,994	6,025	6,025	5,994	5,994	6,025	6,025	5,994	5,994	6,025	6,025
1,21,217	1,23,033	1,21,578	1,23,337	47,325	46,621	47,438	46,756	47,325	46,621	47,438	46,756	47,325	46,621	47,438	46,756
1,91,225	1,93,041	1,91,667	1,93,426	74,252	73,548	74,396	73,714	74,252	73,548	74,396	73,714	74,252	73,548	74,396	73,714
1,91,225	1,93,041	1,91,667	1,93,426	74,252	73,548	74,396	73,714	74,252	73,548	74,396	73,714	74,252	73,548	74,396	73,714
19,174	17,056	19,241	17,105	6,560	7,374	6,578	7,400	6,560	7,374	6,578	7,400	6,560	7,374	6,578	7,400
11,007	13,377	11,007	13,377	5,145	4,233	5,145	4,233	5,145	4,233	5,145	4,233	5,145	4,233	5,145	4,233
9,848	8,923	9,836	8,910	3,432	3,788	3,427	3,783	3,432	3,788	3,427	3,783	3,432	3,788	3,427	3,783
40,029	39,356	40,084	39,392	15,137	15,395	15,150	15,416	15,137	15,395	15,150	15,416	15,137	15,395	15,150	15,416
5,096	5,540	5,100	5,551	2,131	1,960	2,135	1,962	2,131	1,960	2,135	1,962	2,131	1,960	2,135	1,962
54,671	52,401	53,869	51,634	20,144	21,027	19,855	20,722	20,144	21,027	19,855	20,722	20,144	21,027	19,855	20,722
13,580	9,598	13,580	9,598	3,692	5,223	3,692	5,223	3,692	5,223	3,692	5,223	3,692	5,223	3,692	5,223
2,435	3,142	2,435	3,142	1,209	936	1,209	936	1,209	936	1,209	936	1,209	936	1,209	936
75,782	70,681	74,984	69,925	27,176	29,146	26,891	28,843	27,176	29,146	26,891	28,843	27,176	29,146	26,891	28,843
1,15,811	1,10,037	1,15,068	1,09,317	42,313	44,541	42,041	44,259	42,313	44,541	42,041	44,259	42,313	44,541	42,041	44,259
3,07,036	3,03,078	3,06,735	3,02,743	1,16,565	1,18,089	1,16,437	1,17,973	1,16,565	1,18,089	1,16,437	1,17,973	1,16,565	1,18,089	1,16,437	1,17,973
1.06	1.07	1.07	1.08	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED AND PARENT STATEMENT OF INCOME FOR THE PERIOD 31ST MARCH 2024

Parent Company				Consolidated				Parent Company				Consolidated			
Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023	Mar-2024	Mar-2023
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
46,641	46,616	46,641	46,616	Revenue		17,929	17,939	17,929	17,939			17,929	17,939		
(32,798)	(34,224)	(32,798)	(34,224)	Direct operating costs		(13,162)	(12,615)	(13,162)	(12,615)			(13,162)	(12,615)		
(4,372)	(5,028)	(4,379)	(5,035)	Other operating expenses		(1,933)	(1,680)	(1,936)	(1,683)			(1,936)	(1,683)		
(6,112)	(5,620)	(6,117)	(5,622)	Administration and general expenses		(2,163)	(2,353)	(2,164)	(2,354)			(2,164)	(2,354)		
(142)	(118)	(142)	(118)	Net Impairment reversal on financial assets		(45)	(54)	(45)	(54)			(45)	(54)		
137	202	137	202	Other Income		78	53	78	53			78	53		
3,354	1,828	3,342	1,819	Operating profit		704	1,290	700	1,286			700	1,286		
617	1,142	617	1,142	Finance income		439	237	439	237			439	237		
(373)	(358)	(374)	(359)	Finance costs		(137)	(143)	(138)	(144)			(138)	(144)		
3,598	2,612	3,585	2,602	Profit before tax		1,006	1,384	1,001	1,379			1,001	1,379		
(542)	(404)	(542)	(404)	Income tax		(155)	(209)	(155)	(209)			(155)	(209)		
3,056	2,208	3,043	2,198	Profit for the period		851	1,175	846	1,170			846	1,170		
-	-	-	-	Other comprehensive income for the period, net of tax		-	-	-	-			-	-		
3,056	2,208	3,043	2,198	Total comprehensive income for the period, net of tax		851	1,175	846	1,170			846	1,170		
3,056	2,208	3,043	2,198	Profit attributable to :											
-	-	-	-	Equity holders of the parent		851	1,175	846	1,170			846	1,170		
-	-	-	-	Non-controlling interests		-	-	-	-			-	-		
3,056	2,208	3,043	2,198	Total comprehensive income attributable to :											
-	-	-	-	Equity holders of the parent		851	1,175	846	1,170			846	1,170		
-	-	-	-	Non-controlling interests		-	-	-	-			-	-		
0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	Basic and diluted earnings per share (US \$ / RO)		0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01			0.01	0.01		

Death toll in Gaza from ongoing Israeli aggression exceeds 34,800

Sources added that at least 78,404 others have also been injured in the onslaught. At least 55 people were killed and 2,000 others were injured in Israeli attacks that took place in the last 24 hours, they added

GAZA: The Palestinian death toll from Israel's deadly aggression against the Gaza Strip since October 7th, 2023, has now surged to 34,844, medical sources said on Wednesday.

Sources added that at least 78,404 others have also been injured in the onslaught.

At least 55 people were killed and 2000 others were injured in Israeli attacks that took place in the last 24 hours, they added.

The sources said that many victims are still trapped under rubble and on the roads as rescuers are still unable to reach them.

49 bodies found in three mass graves inside the al-Shifa Medical Complex

Meanwhile, Rescue and ambulance crews recovered the bodies of 49 so far from a third mass grave that was discovered inside the Al-Shifa Medical Complex, west of Gaza City.

By uncovering this new mass grave inside Al-Shifa Hospital, the number of mass graves found inside hospitals has risen to seven mass graves, one in Kamal Adwan Hospital, three graves at Al-Shifa Medical Complex, and three graves at Nasser Medical Complex. Around 520 bodies were recovered from these graves.

According to local sources, rescue and recovery operations are still ongoing.

Commission condemns violent crackdown by Israel on Christian worshipers in Jerusalem

The Islamic-Christian Commis-



sion in Defence of Jerusalem and Holy Sites today condemned the violent crackdown by Israeli occupation authorities on Christian worshippers in Jerusalem.

The Committee decried in a press statement the violent assaults by Israeli police against Christian worshipers attempting to make their way to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for the Saturday of the Holy Fire.

It noted that the heavily armed police sealed off most of the roads and alleyways leading to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in

the Old City of Jerusalem and prevented thousands of foreign pilgrims and Palestinian Christians from the West Bank from reaching Jerusalem to participate in Pascha celebrations.

It slammed this police crackdown on worshipers marks an escalation which forms a part of the Israeli scheme to undermine the presence of Christians, who form an integral part of the indigenous demographic composition and historical and cultural heritage of the city.

It called on the international community and the World Council of Churches to condemn the incessant attacks and assume their responsibilities in terms of defending freedom of worship and confront the Israeli scheme to undermine Christian presence in the city.

OIC condemns escalating Israeli aggression against Gaza

Meanwhile, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Wednesday condemned the escalating Israeli aggression against the blockaded Gaza Strip.

OIC decried expanding the ongoing genocidal Israeli offensive against the war-torn coastal enclave by launching an invasion on the city of Rafah, which is now home to approximately 1.3 million Palestinians.

It considered invading Rafah as constituting a continuation of the crime of genocide against and an attempt to displace the Palestinian people in Gaza in a flagrant violation of all United Nations resolutions and all provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

It decried Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's threats to proceed with and expand the aggression on the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah with or without a ceasefire deal, which affirms his rejection of UN resolutions and efforts to reach a ceasefire.

The 57-state member organization warned of the risk of invading Rafah, which portends a humanitarian catastrophe and may lead to widening the conflict and instability in the region.

It renewed its call to the international community to take on its responsibilities in terms of obliging Israel to halt its military aggression and crimes across the occupied Palestinian territories and providing international protection to the Palestinian people. — Wafa

UNITED STATES

Trump classified documents trial postponed indefinitely

NEW YORK: The judge presiding over former US President Donald Trump's case, for allegedly mishandling classified documents after leaving office, indefinitely postponed the start of his trial on Tuesday.

Trump had been scheduled to go on trial on May 20 but US District Judge Aileen Cannon said that was not possible because of the number of pre-trial motions before the court.

Cannon, a Trump appointee, did not set a new date for the start of the federal trial and it is unlikely to take place before the presidential election, which will take place in November.

A five-page order

Cannon said in a five-page order that it would be "imprudent" to set a new date.

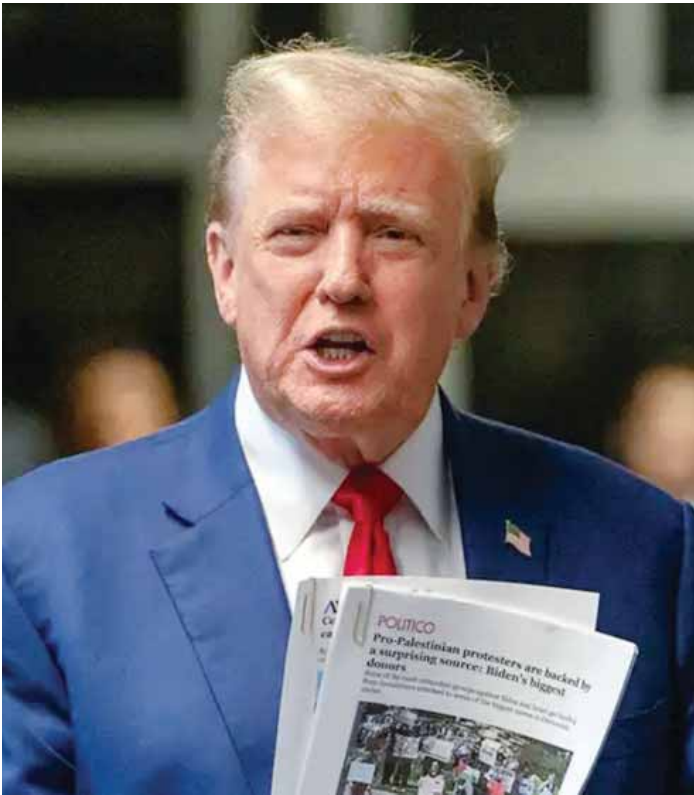
Trump is accused of illegally keeping highly sensitive information after leaving the Oval Office at the beginning of 2021.

In August 2022, the FBI raided his Florida mansion, seizing files classified as top secret.

Trump is also alleged to have made attempts to obstruct the probe.

Trump's attorneys have sought to delay his various criminal cases until after the presidential election, when the 77-year-old could potentially have the federal charges against him dropped if he returns to the White House.

Tuesday's development would appear to be a success for Trump, as he is trying to delay the start of the process as much as possible, with the presidential election just months away.



Trump is currently on trial in New York where he is accused of paying \$130,000 in "hush money" to Stormy Daniels to remain silent about an affair ahead of the 2016 presidential election, an allegation the Republican candidate denies. — DW

INDIA LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

64% turnout in Phase 3 of India polls

NEW DELHI: The voter turnout for the third phase of the Lok Sabha election held on Tuesday in 93 constituencies recorded at 64.4 per cent as per the Election Commission's update until 11:40 pm on Tuesday.

The highest voter turnout of 81.61 per cent was recorded in Assam where four constituencies went to the polls in this phase and the lowest, 57.34 per cent, was recorded in Uttar Pradesh, where 10 constituencies went to the polls.

The numbers are provisional and will be updated by the field-level officers.

The voter turnout in other states that voted on Tuesday in the third phase are Bihar 58.18 per cent, Chhattisgarh 71.06 per cent, Goa 75.20 per cent, Gujarat 58.98 per cent, Karnataka 70.41 per cent, Madhya Pradesh 66.05 per cent, Maharashtra 61.44 per cent and West Bengal 75.79 per cent, as per the latest ECI data.

Polling concluded at 6 pm, but voters were seen standing in the queue for longer hours after the scheduled time at many polling stations, the ECI said.

— ANI

Pre-Qualification Announcement

Request for Pre - Qualification For Main Construction Works of a Veterinary Vaccine Facility in Sohar, Sultanate of Oman

National Veterinary Vaccines Company is seeking to Pre - qualify capable First and Excellent Grade Contractors for the Main Construction Works of a Veterinary Vaccine Facility in Sohar, Sultanate of Oman

Qualification No.	PDQ-001-MAY-2024
Last Date for Collection Pre-Qualification	16 MAY 2024
Last Date for Clarifications	19 MAY 2024
Last Date for Submissions	26 MAY 2024

First and Excellent Grade Contractors with relevant experience in executing similar complex projects within the same domain are invited to send their expression of interest to Musaab.alrahbi@nvvco.om to receive the pre For inquiries, Please contact us by email or phone:

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SPORTS

Seeb crowned champions

With a 1-0 win over Bahla on Tuesday, the Muscat-based club claimed the coveted Omantel League title for the third time with two games remaining

MUSCAT: Favourites Seeb clinched their third domestic top-flight title on Tuesday night as they edged past Bahla 1-0 in the 2023-24 Omantel League at the Nizwa Sports Complex.

The victory helped Seeb reach a total of 51 points with two games remaining to take an unassailable 11-point lead with second-placed Al Nahda trailing at 40 points and three games in hand. Victory in all three games for Al Nahda would have only earned them nine more points.

Seeb had been a dominant force this season and of the 20 matches they played so far, they achieved victories in 16 games, drew three and just lost one match in the ongoing season.

This is Seeb's third Omantel League title after their triumphs in 2019/20 and 2021/22.

Besides the three league titles, the club founded in 1972 and headed by His Highness Sayyid Melek bin Tarik Al Said, have won the His Majesty's Cup crown four times including in 2021/22. It was the same season when Seeb climbed the pinnacle of success as they became the first club in Oman to lift the coveted AFC Cup title.

The club's honours board also include Oman Professional League Cup [2007] and three times Oman Super Cup in 2001, 2022 and 2023.

Speaking to *Times of Oman*, af-



ter the title win, Seeb's vice-chairman Yousuf Al Wahaibi said, "This is a result of team's dedication and hard work of support staff.

"We owe our success to our club president HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said and HH Sayyid Melek bin Tarik Al Said for their constant encouragement and support. We are also proud to have won the national title in volleyball this season."

He added: "This Omantel League title success is much sweeter as we missed out a chance to compete for the HM' Cup title this season."

On Tuesday, at the Nizwa Sports Complex, Seeb dominated the proceedings against the hosts Bahla from the word go and managed to break the deadlock soon after the kickoff.

With Brazilian coach Jorvan Viera at helm for past year, Seeb has relied on an attacking style and Abdulrahman Al Mushaifri found the back of the net in the sixth minute of the first half to put the team ahead. Seeb went into the interval with a slender lead.

In the second half, Bahla tried to find the equaliser but a stubborn Seeb defence stood firm to ensure the win and secure the title.

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by July 2024 reaching \$82.89, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.10 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$84.08. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,757.53 points, down by 0.44 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.24 per cent at 447.29 points. Oman Education & Training, up 6.88 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Beverages, down 9.91 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman team explores Singapore experience in entrepreneurship

During the meeting, the two sides discussed standard mechanisms to achieve the goals of the government and related bodies entrusted with supporting SMEs



SINGAPORE: A delegation from Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) currently visiting the Republic of Singapore was briefed yesterday about the Singaporean experience in the fields of entrepreneurship and food security. The briefing took place during the Omani delegation's meeting with officials of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Support institution affiliated to the Singa-

porean Ministry of Commerce. During the meeting, the two sides discussed standard mechanisms to achieve the goals of the government and related bodies entrusted with supporting SMEs. The delegation then visited the Vidacity Company, which specializes in the agricultural sector. The Omani team learned about the experiments, activities and programmes conducted by the company.

The delegation also visited the headquarters of the Singaporean "Oceans group", which specializes in food industries, transport, marketing and financial services. The two sides discussed scopes for expanding benefits from the company's expertise and investments in the Sultanate of Oman in the food security sector. The Omani delegation also conferred with representatives of other Singaporean companies. - OMA



OIL PRICES



Oil slips on rising US stockpiles, cautious supply expectations

LONDON: Oil prices fell in early Asian trade on Wednesday as industry data showed a pile up in both crude and fuel inventories in the US, a sign of weak demand, and cautious supply expectations emerged ahead of an OPEC+ policy meeting next month. Brent crude oil futures fell 30 cents, or 0.36 per cent, to \$82.86

a barrel by 0348 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures fell 25 cents, or 0.32 per cent, to \$78.13 a barrel, Reuters reported. Both benchmarks fell marginally in the previous session on signs of easing supply tightness and weaker global oil demand from an EIA forecast report on Tuesday. - OMA

WATER DESALINATION, BUILDING MATERIALS AND PLASTICS

Samail Industrial City signs three investment pacts worth over OMR8mn



MUSCAT: Samail Industrial City, an affiliate of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madaayn), signed three new investment contracts to localise projects in the fields of water desalination, building materials and plastics, with a total investment value exceeding OMR8 million. The three projects will cover a total area of approximately 50,000 sqm. The new projects aim to generate job opportunities for national cadres and supply both local and international markets with top-notch

products manufactured utilising cutting-edge technologies, thereby boosting the national economy. The first agreement was signed with Tasnee Metal Company to set up a project for manufacturing water treatment and desalination equipment on a plot covering 10,045 sqm with an investment of OMR4,850,000. The second contract was signed with Prism Global Company, to establish a project focusing on the manufacturing of gypsum, cement and adhesives on a 19,865 sqm



area and with an investment of OMR1,800,000. Further, the third agreement with Future for Plastic Industries involves establishing a project for

manufacturing plastic and rubber products. With an investment of OMR1,400,000, this project will be located on a land area of 20,000 sqm. - OMA

PROMOTES BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

Thai Trade Show showcases quality products at attractive prices

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The fifth Thai Trade Exhibition kicked off with splendour in Muscat on Tuesday with Ek-attThitaram, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Royal Thai Embassy in Muscat, giving welcome remarks at the opening ceremony. The exhibition, highlighting genuine Thai products and services for traders and customers in Oman to explore, is open to the public from May 7 - 11 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) in Muscat. The premier event was inaugurated by Ek-attThitaram in the presence of esteemed guests from both Thailand and Oman. Among those in attendance were OCEC Chief Executive Officer Eng. Said Al Shanfari, along with Subhawee Suwaprichapas and Chotirat Komaratat, the Second Secretary and counsellor, respectively, at the Thai Embassy. The exhibition showcases the offerings of as many as 90 Thai exhibitors, encompassing a wide range of products and services.



Open to both traders and the general public, the event provides a unique opportunity for attendees to immerse themselves in Thai culture and discover high-quality goods at attractive prices. This event not only promotes bilateral trade relations but also enriches the local community by offering a diverse and engaging shopping experience. Moreover, visitors will have the

chance to receive complimentary free medical check-ups. In addition, attendees can explore a diverse selection of top-tier products spanning multiple categories. From beauty and wellness, fashion and accessories, to lifestyle and home goods, and even food and beverages, there's a wide array to discover. Beauty and wellness offerings include oud oil, cosmetics, spa essentials, and wellness products,

while fashion and accessories feature clothing, footwear, bags, and accessories. Lifestyle and home products encompass decorative items, while the food and beverage segment offers dried fruits, ready-to-eat snacks, food ingredients, and beverages. Additionally, this year's premier trade show includes the participation of hospitals and healthcare service providers, adding further value to the event.

The Thai Trade Exhibition Oman 2024, organised by Vega Intertrade & Exhibition and co-organised by the Federation of Thai Industries, enjoys robust backing from key supporters. Notable contributors include the Oman International Exhibition Centre, along with healthcare institutions such as Oasis Healing Asia Co., BPK 9 International Hospital, and TPP Healthcare International Co. Additionally, prominent participants like Oud EBA, Jintana, Nature Best Food, Neo Corporate Public Company Ltd, Inter Rungreang Group Co., and Hatai Gems & Jewellery play pivotal roles in enhancing the exhibition's offerings and success. The exhibition provides an essential meeting point for buyers from the Sultanate and the wider Middle East region to interact with Thai exporters, wholesalers, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), all conveniently gathered in one location. Additionally, the event facilitates business-to-business meetings, aiming to enhance the trading ties between the two countries.

Moreover, visitors to the premier exhibition can indulge in a unique shopping experience, offering great bargains, while also enjoying authentic cultural performances from Thailand. Additionally, Omani participants will have the opportunity to forge valuable connections with Thai businesses across various industries. The Thai trade exhibition forms part of a series of trade shows across various GCC countries since 2016, dedicated to showcasing premium Thai products and services while fostering trade partnerships in the Middle East. The event will run from 10 am to 1 pm and from 4 pm to 10 pm, except Friday, when doors will open from 4 pm to 10 pm. Registration is complimentary for all buyers and visitors, with free parking available at the venue. The Thai Trade Exhibition is a series of trade fairs that have been taking place in various GCC countries since 2016. It features quality Thai products and services and aims to find trade partners in the Middle East.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman Education & Training, up 6.88 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Beverages, down 9.91 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,757.53 points, down by 0.44 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.24 per cent at 447.29 points. Oman Education & Training, up 6.88 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Beverages, down 9.91 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Galfar Engineering were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 851 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.65 million, with more than 13.22 million shares changing hands. Out of 51 traded securities, 11 advanced, 16 declined, and 24 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR160,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR86,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR74,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,692.28 points, down 0.19 per cent. Prices of Oman United Insurance, United Finance, Al Madina Investments, Taageer

Finance, National Bank Oman were up by 4.17 per cent, 1.70 per cent, 1.49 per cent, 0.95 per cent, 0.37 per cent respectively. Prices of Sohar International Bank, Al Madina Takaful, Oman & Emirates Investment, Bank Muscat were down by 1.47 per cent, 1.22 per cent, 1.19 per cent, 0.38 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,890.95 points, up 0.15 per cent. Prices of Oman Flour Mills were up by 3.51 per cent respectively. Prices of Dhofar Beverages, Raysut Cement, Oman Cement, Voltamp Energy were down by 9.91 per cent, 2.46 per cent, 1.35 per cent, 0.34 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.52 per cent before closing at 1,815.50 points. Prices of Oman Education & Training, SMN Power Holding, Al Batinah Power were up by 6.88 per cent, 3.05 per cent, 1.32 per cent respectively. Prices of Sembcorp Salalah, Oman National Engineering, Oman Telecom, Abraj Energy, Renaissance Services were down by 3.70 per cent, 1.75 per cent, 1.13 per cent, 1.00 per cent, 0.53 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,779.05	4,757.53	4,757.53	4,778.59	-21.06	-0.44
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,717.84	7,692.28	7,692.28	7,707.29	-15.01	-0.19
Industry Index	5,902.66	5,873.22	5,880.95	5,882.32	8.62	0.15
Services Index	1,827.11	1,815.50	1,815.50	1,824.93	-9.44	-0.52
MSX Shariah Index	449.01	447.29	447.29	448.37	-1.08	-0.24
MSX TRI INDEX	6,631.12	6,601.27	6,601.27	6,630.49	-29.23	-0.44
FINANCIAL TRI IDX	8,748.85	8,719.88	8,719.88	8,736.89	-17.01	-0.19
SERVICES TRI IDX	2,111.19	2,097.77	2,097.77	2,108.67	-10.90	-0.52
INDUSTRIAL TRI IDX	6,810.27	6,776.30	6,796.75	6,786.80	9.95	0.15
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,068.20	1,068.20	1,068.20	1,068.20	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
13,222,445	2,652,098	851	24,367,325,665	11	16	24	51

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

SEC. NAME

VOLUME

TURNOVER

TRADES

OPEN PRICE

HIGH

LOW

CLOSE PR.

PREV. CLOSE

DIFF. RD.

DIFF. %

LAST PD.

LAST BD.

LAST OFR.

PREV. VALUE

MARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	15,730	3,833	6	0.251	0.251	0.249	0.250	0.240	0.010	4,167	0.250	0.248	-0.250	0.100	25,000,000
OM0000004348	SMN POWER HOLDING	3,080	1,038	2	0.335	0.338	0.335	0.338	0.328	0.010	3,049	0.338	0.332	-0.341	0.100	67,476,833
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	400	24	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.001	1,695	0.060	0.000	-0.060	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	46,501	12,658	7	0.270	0.274	0.270	0.271	0.270	0.001	0,370	0.271	0.252	-0.271	0.100	440,631,462
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	3,600	3,600	4	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.000	0.000	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.000	250,657,035	
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	6,800	1,224	2	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.000	39,600,000	
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	1,560	466	1	0.299	0.299	0.299	0.299	0.299	0.000	0.299	0.270	0.298	-0.100	37,244,490	
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	13,422	3,100	5	0.236	0.236	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.000	0.000	0.235	0.231	-0.236	0.100	14,383,004
OM0000002440	AL SHARGHA INVESTMENT HO.	15,000	1,155	1	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.078	0.084	0.100	6,830,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	125,000	8,625	3	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.069	0.063	0.069	0.100	13,800,000	
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	65,980	19,672	12	0.299	0.299	0.298	0.298	0.299	-0.001	0,334	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.100	193,981,381
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,928,956	502,681	79	0.262	0.262	0.260	0.261	0.262	-0.001	0,382	0.261	0.261	-0.261	0.100	1,959,189,633
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	137,700	51,638	5	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.377	-0.002	0,531	0.375	0.360	-0.375	0.100	88,653,750
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	333,320	350,346	97	1.054	1.055	1.050	1.050	1.062	-0.012	1,130	1.050	1.050	1.050	0.100	787,500,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMBRATES HO.	526,656	44,236	33	0.084	0.085	0.083	0.083	0.084	-0.001	1,190	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.100	10,115,625
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	113,399	9,671	8	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.082	-0.001	1,220	0.081	0.080	-0.082	0.100	14,175,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	9,424	3,484	4	0.370	0.370	0.365	0.365	0.370	-0.005	1,351	0.365	0.365	0.370	0.100	120,768,539
OM0000003396	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	2,911,583	392,360	61	0.138	0.138	0.133	0.134	0.136	-0.002	-1471	0.133	0.133	0.134	0.100	747,351,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	28,400	3,348	5	0.114	0.114	0.112	0.112	0.114	-0.002	-1754	0.112	0.112	0.114	0.100	16,800,000
Total	19	6,299,491	1,413,320	336												

Parallel Market

OM0000002580	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INV.	5,000	2,565	1	0.513	0.513	0.513	0.513	0.480	0.033	6.875	0.513	0.000	0.528	0.100	35,910,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	20,357	9,326	5	0.445	0.472	0.445	0.472	0.456	0.016	3,509	0.472	0.431	-0.470	0.100	74,340,000
OM0000001982	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	29,100	1,983	4	0.068	0.069	0.066	0.068	0.067	0.001	1,483	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.100	3,780,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	87,806	5,208	7	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.076	0.001	1,316	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.100	51,966,332
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	11,453	1,203	5	0.105	0.106	0.105	0.106	0.105	0.001	0,952	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	28,735,593
OM0000001096	DHOFAR INSURANCE	20,000	4,100	3	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.000	0.000	0.205	0.205	0.210	0.100	22,378,798
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	55,714	2,730	4	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.048	0.053	0.100	15,034,170
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	60,100	145,442	16	2.420	2.420	2.420	2.420	2.420	0.000	0.000	2.420	2.420	2.450	0.100	217,074,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	57,995	5,087	10	0.087	0.088	0.087	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.087	0.088	0.100	18,128,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	271,000	43,902	1	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.000	0.000	0.162	0.160	0.165	0.100	380,644,509
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	50,000	9,250	1	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.000	0.000	0.185	0.160	0.185	0.100	94,661,206
OM0000003321	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	3,246,758	549,785	106	0.169	0.171	0.168	0.168	0.168	0.000	0.000	0.168	0.167	0.168	0.100	34,101,723
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	194,800	15,431	8	0.100	0.100	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	9,780	1,271	1	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.000	0.130	0.100	13,594,500
OM0000004833	AL SUWAI POWER	350,208	27,317	28	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.100	35,723,695
OM0000002680	OMAN ARAB BANK	1,201	156	2	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.130	0.143	0.100	217,023,300
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	247,936	14,876	17	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.100	87,756,088
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	5,000	390	1	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.078	0.084	0.100	12,132,931
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	8,554	498	1	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.073	0.077	0.100	37,303,565
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,009,598	144,624	131	0.142	0.144	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.142	0.147	0.100	614,948,597
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	43,500	13,267	17	0.305	0.305	0.304	0.304	0.305	-0.001	-0.328	0.304	0.290	0.304	0.100	48,640,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	114,713	33,021	52	0.291	0.294	0.287	0.294	0.295	-0.001	-0.339	0.294	0.287	0.294	0.100	23,932,409
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REEF	90,587	10,697	6	0.119	0.119	0.117	0.117	0.118	-0.001	-0.847	0.117	0.109	0.117	0.100	38,448,115
OM0000008894	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	433,566	130,617	36	0.330	0.330	0.298	0.298	0.301	-0.003	-0.967	0.298	0.298	0.300	0.100	229,519,609
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	382,045	46,287	49	0.123	0.123	0.118	0.119	0.122	-0.003	-2,459	0.119	0.117	0.119	0.100	23,800,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	5,800	603	2	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.108	-0.004	-3,704	0.104	0.105	0.000	0.100	99,275,483
OM0000001251	DHOFAR BEVERAGES	101	100	2	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.209	0.232	-0.023	-9,914	0.209	0.000	0.209	0.100	4,180,000
Total	27	6,790,881	1,222,564	508												



LIFESTYLE



WORLD’S OCEANS SUFFER FROM RECORD-BREAKING YEAR OF HEAT

Fuelled by climate change, the world’s oceans have broken temperature records every single day over the past year (2023).

Nearly 50 days have smashed existing highs for the time of year by the largest margin in the satellite era.

Planet-warming gases are mostly to blame, but the natural weather event El Niño has also helped warm the seas.

The super-heated oceans have hit marine life hard and driven a new wave of coral bleaching.

This analysis is based on data from the EU’s Copernicus Climate Service, BBC news reported.

Copernicus also confirmed that last month was the warmest April 2024 on record in terms of global air temperatures, extending that sequence of month-specific records to 11 in a row.

For many decades, the world’s oceans have been the Earth’s ‘get-out-of-jail card’ when it comes to climate change.

Not only do they absorb around a quarter of the carbon dioxide that humans produce, they also soak up around 90% of the excess heat.

But over the past year (2023), the oceans have displayed the most concerning evidence yet that they are struggling to cope, with the sea surface particularly feeling the heat.

From March 2023, the average surface temperature of the global oceans started to shoot further and further above the long-term norm, hitting a new record high in August.

Recent months have brought no respite, with the sea surface reaching a new global average daily high of 21.09C in February and March this year (2024), according to Copernicus data.

Not only has every single day since 4 May 2023 broken the daily record for the time of year, but on some days the margin has been huge.

Around 47 days smashed the record for that day of the year by at least 0.3C, according to BBC analysis of Copernicus data.

Never before in the satellite era had the margin of record been this big.

The biggest record-breaking days were 23 August 2023, 3 January 2024 and 5 January 2024, when the previous high was beaten by around 0.34C.

This human-driven ocean warming is having considerable impacts on global sea life and may even be shifting the seasonal cycle of sea temperatures, according to a recent study.

Perhaps the most significant consequence of the recent warmth has been the mass bleaching of coral globally.

These key ocean nurseries turn white and die because the waters they live in grow too hot. They are a critical element in the ocean ecosystem, home to around a quarter of all marine species.

Unusually warm seas may also have taken a direct toll on one of the most beloved ocean-going creatures in the coldest continent, the emperor penguin.

One important factor that’s made the last year more impactful in seas all over the world has been the El Niño weather phenomenon, adding to human-driven emissions of warming gases.

El Niño sees warmer waters come to the surface of the Pacific. As a result, it tends to push up the global average.

El Niño kicked into gear in June 2023 - after a prolonged period of cooler La Niña conditions - and reached a peak in December, although it has since been fading away.

But other ocean basins that aren’t usually affected by El Niño have also experienced record marine heatwaves - leaving scientists trying to work out exactly what is going on.

This heat is still persisting in many ocean basins, including the tropical Atlantic.

Warmer seas give tropical storms extra energy, and this could help to fuel a potentially damaging hurricane/cyclone/typhoon season.

As well as these short-term impacts, researchers warn there will be long-term consequences that society will have to adapt to.

For example, ice-sheet melting and deep-ocean warming are likely to continue to fuel sea-level rise in the centuries to come.

-ONA

SPORTS

Borussia Dortmund beat PSG to reach Champions League final

Borussia Dortmund are heading back to the final of European football’s premier club competition after the Bundesliga side overcame Kylian Mbappe and Paris Saint-Germain.

PARIS: Borussia Dortmund produced a fine away performance to beat Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) in Paris and reach their first Champions League final since 2013 on Tuesday.

Dortmund held a 1-0 advantage following the first leg of the semi-final and doubled their lead when Mats Hummels was left unmarked five yards out to head in from Julian Brandt’s left-wing corner in the 50th minute of the match that proved decisive as the German side booked a spot in the final with an aggregate 2-0 margin.

That goal came just after PSG’s Warren Zaire-Emery wasted a glorious chance as he volleyed against the post from close range early in the second half.

PSG hit the upright twice in the opening match in Germany and, after falling 2-0 behind on aggregate, again struck the post through Nuno Mendes.

The hosts thought they had been given a penalty and a potential lifeline when Italian referee Daniele Orsato pointed to the spot, only to instantly change his mind and rule that Hummels’ foul on Ousmane Dembele had been just



outside the area. PSG have never been European champions, losing in the 2020 final, and Dortmund produced an excellent defensive display to frustrate the French title winners.

Kylian Mbappe, in his last European match for PSG before joining Real Madrid in the summer, had an effort deflected on to the crossbar, before Vitorinha fired against the bar too - the sixth time overall his side had hit the frame of the goal in the tie.

The final will be at Wembley on Saturday, June 1 and could be an all-German affair, just as it was in May 2013 when Bayern Munich beat Dortmund 2-1 in London.

Bayern and Real are in the second 2024 semi-final and the first leg ended 2-2 in Germany, with the second leg in Spain later on Wednesday.

Dortmund are aiming to become European champions for the second time in their history after they defeated Juventus 3-1 in the 1997 final.

A huge display showing the Champions League trophy was produced behind one of the goals at Parc des Princes before the game.

Dortmund have had a disappointing season domestically as they sit fifth, 24 points behind champions Bayer Leverkusen

with two Bundesliga matches remaining.

At the start of the European campaign, no-one could have expected Dortmund to be in the final after they were drawn in a tough group that consisted of PSG, AC Milan and Newcastle.

But Edin Terzic’s side finished top, before they got past PSV Eindhoven in the last 16 and then eliminated Atletico Madrid in the quarter-finals.

And even after an excellent 1-0 home win over PSG on 30 April, thanks to Nicolas Fullkrug’s goal, many people expected the French side to overpower them in the second leg.

However, Dortmund’s side, which included hard-working England winger Jadon Sancho, on loan from Manchester United after being frozen out by boss Erik ten Hag, produced a superb team effort at Parc des Princes.

In a wonderful, boisterous atmosphere, Dortmund were excellent in stopping the dangerous Mbappe scoring - the forward often up against two or three opponents - with the central defensive partnership of Hummels and Nico Schlotterbeck in fine form.

Mbappe had a volley saved by goalkeeper Gregor Kobel and only a superb sliding challenge

from Hummels stopped Mbappe from finishing from Fabian Ruiz’s pull-back.

PSG hit the woodwork four times in the second half but despite sustained late pressure, with Mbappe having a shot saved and Marquinhos heading narrowly wide, could not find the breakthrough as Dortmund reached the final.

Dortmund head coach Terzic said before the second leg of their Champions League semifinal that if football games were decided on the favourites, his side wouldn’t even have made it to this stage.

“There is always a team that makes the quarterfinal that people don’t expect to be there and we wanted to be that team this year,” Terzic said.

“I will drink more than one glass [of red wine] tonight,” said Borussia Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke.

“To make the final, where it all started in 2013, hats off,” Marco Reus told Amazon afterward. “It’s crazy that we’re in the final. No one thought it was possible.”

In both games, luck was on Dortmund’s side, and composure was not on PSG’s. When Reus was asked about the woodwork being on their side, he simply replied, “Who cares? No one will ask about that in the morning. They’ll only see our name in the final.”

The club’s last run to the Champions League final in 2013, one they lost to Bayern Munich in London, was due in part to the emergence of Kevin Grosskreutz, the fan-turned-player. Now, with Terzic, it’s the fan-turned-coach. The connections in this club remain at its core.

“That’s why we do it,” said Terzic, watching the clips of his team celebrating with fans and friends afterward.

“We wanted it last year in our own stadium, but the pictures looked different. Tonight, we were able to give some of that back to our fans today.” - Agencies

2024 PARIS GAMES

Olympic flame arrives in Marseille



MARSEILLE: The Olympic torch has reached Marseille amid an “unprecedented level of security”, 79 days before the opening ceremony of the Paris Games.

A three-masted ship brought the torch to the Mediterranean coastal city in southern France from Greece’s ancient Olympia, where the flame was lit on 11 April.

The torch will be brought to shore after a six-hour parade, featuring more than 1,000 boats, in front of President Emmanuel Macron and an estimated crowd of 150,000 people.

Officials said 6,000 law enforcement officers, canine units and elite forces snipers will be on patrol.

“Life goes on in Marseille but in great security conditions,” said interior minister Gerald Darmanin. “It’s an unprecedented level

of security.”

France raised its security threat level last October after a teacher was killed in a knife attack, while there are concerns that wars in Ukraine and Gaza could increase the threat.

The president of the Paris 2024 organising committee Tony Estanguet, said Marseille was the “obvious choice” to host the boat parade given it is France’s oldest city and was founded by Greeks..

On Thursday, the torch will begin its journey to Paris with former Marseille footballers Jean-Pierre Papin, Didier Drogba and Basile Boli among the torch bearers. More than 10,000 people will take part in the 7,500-mile torch relay, which will also visit French overseas territories, before the flame reaches the capital city and is installed near the Louvre, in the Jardin des Tuileries.

IPL 2024

Delhi keep playoffs hope alive

New Delhi: Kuldeep Yadav’s game-changing 17th over combined with Mukesh Kumar taking key wickets at the crucial points kept Delhi Capitals (DC) alive in their hunt for a spot in the playoffs following their 20-run win over Rajasthan Royals (RR) on Tuesday at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

Kuldeep in his 17th over conceded just four runs and picked two wickets which helped DC take advantage in the final moments of the game.

DC scored 53 runs in the final three overs while the Royals managed only 20 runs which played a key role in their defeat and at the same time kept DC’s hopes alive.

Chasing 222, Royals’ Jos Buttler came in as an impact substitute for the visitors and failed to make much of an impact along with Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Jaiswal found the fence on the first ball of the first over but Khaleel Ahmed struck on the next ball to dismiss the young opener.

The World Cup-bound opener’s dismissal introduced Rajasthan skipper Sanju Samson who went all guns blazing. Buttler found two boundaries and tonked a maximum before Axar breached through his defence and dislodged his stumps in the final over of the powerplay. RR ended the powerplay with a score of 67/2.

The Royals skipper went on to forge a 36-run stand with Riyan Parag (27) and then a 59-run stand with Shubham Dubey.

Khaleel bowled four consecu-



tive wides in the 14th over which helped RR maintain the asking rate. Samson (86) seemed well poised to hit the three-digit mark but Mukesh Kumar dismissed the set batter with Shai Hope taking a sharp catch at the boundary.

With four overs left and Royals 52 runs behind, Shubham struck a six and a four in the first two balls off Khaleel to take the visitors close to the target. Khaleel once again had the last laugh with a short ball to dismiss Shubham (25).

Debutant Donovan Ferreira’s moment to shine was stolen away by Kuldeep Yadav in a game-changing 18th over. The ‘China-man’ spinner struck back in the same over by claiming Ravichandran Ashwin’s wicket.

The Royals needed Rovman Powell’s big hitting at the death and he delivered with a towering six off Rasikh Dar Salam when the visitors needed 35 runs in 9 deliveries. With 29 runs needed in

6 deliveries, Boult took a single to put Powell on strike and make the equation 28 runs in 5 balls.

Mukesh put the final nail in the coffin with a curving yorker making Powell (13) lose his shape and dislodge the balls off the stumps.

Earlier in the innings, after being put to bat first by the Royals, Delhi had a fine start with Jake Fraser McGurk once again taking the aggressor role and reducing Abhishek Porel to a mere spectator at the non-striker’s end.

The Australian shifted to another gear in the third over by Trent Boult, first launching him for a lofted straight drive for six and two fine boundaries in the first three balls of the over. After winning this mini-battle against the New Zealander, McGurk absolutely demolished Avesh Khan in the next over, hitting him for four boundaries and two massive sixes over long-off and deep mid-wicket, a boundary on every ball.

DC reached the 50-run mark in just 3.5 overs. On the next ball, McGurk reached his own fifty with seven fours and three sixes. However, he gave away his wicket at a high full toss by Ravichandran Ashwin. In the next over, Shai Hope was run out for just one run by Sandeep Sharma. At the end of the powerplay in six overs, DC were 78/2, with Axar Patel (5*) and Porel (22*) unbeaten.

Porel then helped DC reach the 100-run mark in 8.2 overs. Ashwin then removed Axar for 15.

Porel reached his half-century in 28 balls, with five fours and three sixes. Porel’s knock was cut short by Ashwin as he was caught by Sandeep Sharma.

The left-hander scored 65 in 36 balls, with seven fours and three sixes. Skipper Pant was dismissed for just 15 in 13 balls by Chahal. In the death overs, Tristan Stubbs and Gulbadin Naib shared a 45-run stand was over as DC ended their innings at 221/8.

Brief scores: Delhi Capitals: 221/8 (Abhishek Porel 63, Jake Fraser McGurk 50, R Ashwin 3/24) beat Rajasthan Royals 201/8 (Sanju Samson 86, Riyan Parag 27; Kuldeep Yadav 2-25).

TODAY'S MATCH

Punjab Kings

vs

Royal Challengers Bengaluru

Dharamshala, 6pm

ARGENTINE FOOTBALL LEGEND

Maradona’s ‘stolen’ Golden Ball to be auctioned off in France on June 6

LONDON: Diego Maradona’s “stolen” Golden Ball trophy, awarded for being named the best player at the 1986 World Cup, has been found and will be auctioned off in France on 6 June.

The Aguttes auction house announced on Tuesday that the item had resurfaced and they expect it to be sold for “millions”. Maradona, who died in 2020, won the award after leading Argentina to World Cup victory in Mexico.

“There are a lot of stories and legends, like it was stolen by the mafia to make gold,” the Aguttes auction house sport expert Francois Thierry told *BBC Sport*. “We did all the necessary checks and called the police about it.

“We have had the ball for about one year. We did a lot of research about it since there are a lot of details in terms of manufacturer comments until we could say it was a good one.”

The Golden Ball was bought by the anonymous seller in 2016 at an auction in France. However, he was unaware what item he had purchased. “He bought it with many other things, at the beginning he did not know it was something important,” Thierry added.

“In the case he bought there were a lot of trophies. He then searched on the internet and found it could be the Golden Ball.

“He tried to call Maradona and

FIFA, but had no luck.”

The 1986 World Cup arguably is best remembered for Maradona’s two goals against England in the quarter-finals. Maradona outjumped England keeper Peter Shilton to punch his first goal into the net with a raised fist, which was later described by the Argentine as being scored by the “Hand of God”.

His second was voted as the “Goal of the Century” in a Fifa poll, Maradona dribbling from his own

half past five English players to score. Both the jersey he wore that day, along with the ball from the match, have previously been sold at auction for millions.

“The trophy symbolises the pinnacle of his career and he is the player of the century,” Thierry said. “We can see there were some results from before when his jersey against England in 1986 being sold for I think £9m and the ball of the game went for £2m, so we expect millions.”



Bank Muscat recognised for its contributions to sustainability, ESG

The Sustainability Award in the ESG category at the Oman Sustainability Week Award was organised to recognise the institutions that play a pioneering role in implementing sustainability and ESG practices

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, announced that it has recently received the Sustainability Award in the ESG category at the Oman Sustainability Week Award ceremony held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

The event was hosted under the patronage of Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, who handed over the award to Hamza Abbas Al Ajmi, Deputy General Manager, Credit, Bank Muscat, with the presence of a number of senior officials and executives from various public and private sectors. The event was organised to recognise the institutions that play a pioneering role in implementing



sustainability and ESG practices.

The Oman Sustainability Week represents a national platform aiming to highlight Bank Muscat's role in the field of sustainability and the Sultanate's commitment to implementing innovative strategies and sustainable practices conducive to the development of the nation, as strategised in Oman Vision 2040 and in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Oman Sustainability Week came in existence to raise public awareness on sustainability. It also represents a medium to enhance corporate responsibility for implementing strategic plans and embarking on sustainable and ESG practices which contribute to national development and sustainable economic growth.

Speaking on this achievement,

Hamza bin Abbas Al Ajmi, Deputy General Manager, Credit, Bank Muscat, said, "We are delighted to receive the Sustainability Award at the glittering OSW Awards ceremony, which reaffirms Bank Muscat's strategy of promoting sustainability through its endeavours of utilising and investing in renewable energy to expand sustainable projects as an integral pillar for creating national sus-

tainable economy. The bank has undertaken many initiatives to promote sustainability, including the development of its ecofriendly green finance product. The launch of this product came with the aim to allow customers to install solar panels on their rooftops and use solar energy for a large part of their household energy requirements. Bank Muscat is committed to implementing recent technologies to

reduce water and electricity consumption rates, reduce gas emissions that lead to global warming, and decrease paper waste. Furthermore, the Bank takes pride in having successfully installed solar panels in Al Koudh Meethaq branch to be the first branch in the Sultanate utilising and relying on renewable energy."

Throughout its journey of over 40 years, Bank Muscat has been showing strong and excellent presence in the fields of sustainability as well as corporate social responsibility (CSR). In this regard, the Bank has been setting strategic plans to further enhance its pioneering role in CSR and running a number of sustainable initiatives that aim to serve the community. Examples of the bank's sustainable initiatives comprise the annual Green Sports Programme that has so far benefitted 183 teams with over 50,000 team members across the Sultanate, the Tadamun Programme set to support social welfare and low-income families and which has served until today 206 families out of a total of 2000 families since its launch in 2013, and the Al Wathbah SME Academy which equips the Omani entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to support their businesses.

It is a matter of great pride that the Bank also implements a strategic plan to take advantage of the potential opportunities to enhance the Sultanate of Oman's economic growth in line with the Oman's Vision 2040. As the leading financial institution in the country, the bank constantly upholds its dedication to sustainability and community service through the ongoing launch of sustainable programmes and initiatives.

Oman United Insurance Company recognised as Top Insurance brand

MUSCAT: Oman United Insurance Company emerged as the Top Insurance brand at the Top Omani Brands Awards ceremony recently held at the Sheraton Hotel.

The annual corporate event serves as a beacon of recognition, while celebrating the resilience, innovation and excellence of Oman's most impactful brands.

Sayyid Nasser bin Salim Al Bussaidi, Chief Management Executive of OUI, dedicated the accolade to the company's highly motivated, professional and results-oriented team. Their collective determination to exceed expectations and uphold the highest standards of professionalism and service helped clinch the award in the company's favour. N. Sivakumar, Deputy CEO, accompanied by Sanjay Jha, General Manager, received the honour at the award ceremony.

With a commitment to delivering unparalleled service and comprehensive insurance solutions, Oman United Insurance has established itself as a trusted leader in the insurance industry. This accolade reaffirms the company's dedication to excellence in service delivery and its unwavering focus on meeting the evolving needs of its customers.

Being recognised as the Top Insurance brand underscores the



company's relentless pursuit of quality, integrity and customer satisfaction. As Oman's premier insurance provider, Oman United Insurance Company continues to set benchmarks for excellence, driving innovation and shaping the future of the insurance landscape in Oman.

As Oman United Insurance Company basks in the glow of this prestigious accolade, it remains committed to its mission of protecting and empowering individuals, businesses and communities across the Sultanate, cementing its legacy as a true champion of the insurance industry.

Gulf College celebrates 23rd cohort's graduation

MUSCAT: Gulf College marked the graduation of its 23rd cohort on April 30, celebrating 547 new graduates who have successfully completed master's, bachelor's with honours, and diploma programmes in higher education.

This year's ceremony highlighted the academic achievements across various fields, including Accounting and Finance, Business Economics, Marketing Management, and several specialisations in Computer Science such as Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics, and Mobile Computing, under the academic partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK through franchise and validation arrangements.

The event took place under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Namir bin Majid bin Taimur Al Said and featured key attendees such as Prof. David Brooksbank, Head of the Business School at Cardiff Metropolitan University, alongside an esteemed delegation. Distinguished guests included Dr. Issa bin Sabeel Al Balushi, Chairman of the Board, Prof. Taqi Al Abdwani, Deputy Chair, and Dr. Reema bint Mansour Al Zadjali, Dean of the College, who, together with faculty members, celebrated this milestone.



The ceremony commenced with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, setting a reflective tone for the evening. Dr. Reema bint Mansour Al Zadjali, Dean of the College, delivered a heartfelt speech congratulating the graduates and underscoring their readiness to contribute to Oman's future development and realization of the "Oman 2040" vision.

Prof. David Brooksbank, from Cardiff Metropolitan University, addressed the gathering, highlighting the enduring partnership between the institutions and its role in enriching academic stand-

ards and fostering global competencies among students.

Graduate representative, Salwa Al Kindi, delivered a poignant speech reflecting on the graduates' journey and their commitment to serving Oman. Poet Saeed Al Kharousi added to the patriotic fervour with a poem that celebrated both the graduates and the college's leadership.

His Highness, along with the Cardiff Metropolitan University delegation, honoured the top-performing students and presented diplomas to the graduates, highlighting their achievements.

MCBS discusses knowledge for shaping future of its research endeavours

MUSCAT: The Research Town Hall at MCBS, which took place on May 6, was a pivotal gathering for scholars, researchers, and students alike. Hosted at the seminar room at MCBS, the event served as an open forum where the MCBS community came together to discuss important issues, share their ideas, and delve into the forefront of knowledge for shaping the future of MCBS's research endeavours.

As the event unfolded, an overview of the Research Town Hall's objectives and significance was presented, emphasizing the crucial role of collaborative research endeavours in shaping academic landscapes. Following the welcome address, the Dean took the podium to deliver an inspiring address, articulating the college's steadfast commitment to research



excellence. Participants acquired valuable insights into MCBS's vision and strategic initiatives geared towards fostering a dynamic research culture, underscoring the dedication to pushing the boundaries of knowledge.

Renowned expert Dr. Reza Farzipoor Saen, programme coordinator of MSc of operation and supply chain management at SQU, graced the stage with a compelling keynote address titled "Navigating the frontiers: What it takes to publish in Scopus Journals." Attendees gleaned invaluable insights and practical strategies to enhance the visibility and impact of their research on a global scale, navigating the complex terrain of academic publishing with confidence.

The Exhibition-Presentation segment showcased the forefront of research innovation at MCBS, with some of the faculty members presenting their pioneering projects funded by both institutional and external funds. Additionally, students captivated audiences with presentations of their outstanding final-year projects from the Department of Business and Economics and the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, highlighting their research contributions.

The Associate Dean of postgrad-



uate studies and research presented the current state of research at MCBS for postgraduate studies and research and delivered an overview of the Research at MCBS: Present and Future presentation. Attendees gained insights into major achievements, ongoing projects, and future trajectories, illuminating MCBS's commitment to advancing scholarly inquiry and innovation.

As the event ended, the Dean delivered concluding remarks, reflecting on the day's discourse and insights. Exciting announcements regarding new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and incentives were unveiled, underscoring the institution's dedication to fostering a culture of research excellence. Participants engaged in a stimulating Q&A session, fostering further dialogue and collaboration.

ROUND-UP

BankDhofar organises Omani Women’s Leadership forum to empower women across sectors

The forum served as a platform to celebrate the significant contributions of Omani women across various sectors and discuss avenues for growth and empowerment

MUSCAT: BankDhofar hosted the Omani Women's Leadership Forum under the esteemed patronage of Al Sayyida Maani bint Abdullah Al Busaideyah, Director General of Family Development and President of the Child Protection Committee at the Ministry of Social Development. The event took place at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel - Ritz Carlton, Muscat.

The forum served as a platform to celebrate the significant contributions of Omani women across various sectors and discuss avenues for growth and empowerment. With women holding key leadership positions, including Chief Executive Officers and Chairpersons of Boards of Directors, they have emerged as leaders of economic prosperity and inclusivity in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Khalid bin Salem Al Hamdani, Chief Human Resources Officer at BankDhofar, emphasized the crucial role of women leaders in society and their alignment with the national goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040. He highlighted that forums such as these serve as an opportunity for knowledge exchange and collaboration among leaders and followers to understand, learn and enhance their presence in diverse sectors.

The forum addressed key themes, including the importance



Hind Al-Sabbagh, AGM and Head of Priority Banking and Dr. Fatin Al-Zadjali, Head of learning & development at BankDhofar shared valuable perspectives on women's role and the importance of curating financial products based on their specific needs, while Iman Al Amri, Head of customer feedback shared insights on the importance of impactful communications and collaborations.

The Omani Women's Leadership Forum, organized by BankDhofar, endorses the commitment to build diversity and inclusion, reflecting its dedication to supporting women and reflecting on building a specialized ecosystem for their empowerment.

BankDhofar supports government initiatives and directions that are in line with Oman Vision 2040, especially in the employment field and digital transformation, as the bank contributed to providing job opportunities for citizens, and was able to employ more than 250 Omani Talents in recent months, which contributed to raising the Omanisation rate to 92%.

of women's participation in the financial and business sectors, the importance of diversity and inclusion at workplace, and strategies for empowering women to transform their dreams to impactful projects, and the need for communication and media support.

Renowned speakers at the event included global influencer Céline Schillinger, author of 'Dare to Unlead', founder and CEO at We need Social, business leader Ibtisam Al Khaifi, and acclaimed educator Dr. Nada Al Ajmi, among others. Their insights and experiences high-

lighted the importance of women's participation in leadership, entrepreneurship and development that will help to drive the desired socio-economic progress. Ibtisam Al-Wahaibiyya as well is one of the most prominent speakers at the forum as she holds a doctorate

in communications and management. Dr. Adhraa Al-Ma'awiyah, Head of the Planning and Quality Assurance Department at the German University of Technology, she presented a set of proposals that would help Omani women to start their businesses.

THREE NEW CREDIT CARDS

Continuing to offer value-added products to its customers, Sohar Islamic introduces new Sharia-compliant credit cards

MUSCAT: Expanding its card portfolio to offer convenient payment solutions, Sohar Islamic, Sohar International's Islamic Window, has unveiled three new credit cards in the Signature, Platinum, and Gold categories.

These Sharia-compliant cards combine exceptional benefits in travel, wellness, and lifestyle, catering to the growing desire for exclusive services, elevated experiences, and unique products. With the newly launched propositions, customers can now enjoy flexible spending management and secure payments through the convenient contactless tap and go feature. Furthermore, customers have the option to link their new Sohar Islamic credit cards to Samsung Wallet, enabling seamless digital transactions through Samsung Pay across a range of Samsung smart devices.

Commenting on the launch of the new credit cards, Abdul Wahid Al Murshidi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Sohar International said, "As a customer-centric bank, Sohar

Islamic is deeply inclined toward introducing innovative propositions that add value to the lives of its customers. Our specially curated new Sharia-compliant credit cards will go beyond empowering our customers with more financial flexibility and freedom – cardholders will also benefit from a seamless user experience, enhanced security, and abundant rewards."

With these credit cards, cardholders can take advantage of multiple payment options based on their financial preferences. They can either pay in full or opt for partial or minimum payments. Meanwhile, the generous rewards program ensures that the bank's credit cardholders also enjoy attractive benefits such as loyalty points and exclusive discounts at partner merchants. With this, the bank places increased emphasis on parameters that are most valued.

Abdul Wahid Al Murshidi added, "At Sohar Islamic, we constantly strive to offer customers tailor-made solutions and custom-



built experiences when it comes to their banking services. The three credit cards represent a full range of options for our customers giving them the liberty to choose one that best fits their lifestyle needs."

Sohar Islamic has seamlessly integrated the new credit cards with the Sohar Islamic user-friendly mobile banking app. This integration allows customers to conveniently manage their card

activities, make payments, and track their rewards from wherever they are. Furthermore, Sohar Islamic has also equipped the cards with advanced security features as customer data protection and upholding the highest standards of security in transactions remain a top priority for the bank.

In terms of benefits, while Sohar Islamic's Gold credit card offers Visa Global Emergency Assistance Services, Travel Assistance, and the freedom to choose from a network of 1.9 million ATMs, the Signature credit card comes with advantages such as complimentary access to over 1000 airport lounges globally, Travel Insurance, and Visa Signature Concierge. The Platinum credit card, apart from Global Emergency Assistance and Premium Insurance benefits, also offers cardholders complimentary 2,000 reward points, cash back rewards, and an extended warranty for specific purchases.

Sohar Islamic will continue to introduce market-leading prod-

ucts and services that, apart from addressing the dynamic needs of individuals, also contribute to the growth of the Islamic finance industry as a whole while also ensuring that the new credit cards strongly adhere to the principles of Islamic banking.

With the vision to become a world-class Omani services company that helps customers, community and people to prosper and grow, Sohar International operates with a purpose to help people 'win' by delivering responsive banking for their ever-changing world, complementing their growth and prosperity with international standard service delivery.

The Bank seeks to redefine banking in Oman through transformational developments centred on the principles of More Velocity, making everything simple and fast; More Value, ensuring relevance and connectivity to customers' world; and More Vision, liberating stakeholders through talented leadership.



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