



CLASSES SUSPENDED IN NORTH AL SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE

MUSCAT: Due to the rains forecast in Oman from April 23 to 25, 2024, classes will be suspended and converted to distance learning in all schools in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate on Tuesday. For the rest of the northern governorates, the general directors of these governorates are given the authority to evaluate the weather situation and take appropriate decision to ensure the safety of students and the educational staff.



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Innovations of Omani youths shortlisted

1 The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation announced the three finalists to represent Oman at the 35th international, invention, innovation, technology competition and exhibition in Malaysia. **>A5**

SPORTS Maiden FIA WEC podium for Al Harthy

2 Ahmad Al Harthy displayed an impressive performance to help his team clinch a runner-up finish in the second race of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in LMGT3 class. **>A8**

MARKET \$1.6bn pact for Marsa project in Sohar

3 OQ, the global integrated energy group, has announced the final investment decision with TotalEnergies for the construction of the Marsa LNG Bunkering project at Sohar Port, at a cost of \$1.6bn. **>B1**

GAZA DEATH TOLL
as of April 22, 2024

Deaths 34,151
Injured 77,084

HIS MAJESTY'S HISTORIC VISIT TO BOLSTER RELATIONS WITH UAE



The UAE President led the welcoming party for His Majesty the Sultan at the Presidential Airport in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik arrived in Abu Dhabi on Monday on a two-day state visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE President led the welcoming party for His Majesty the Sultan at the Presidential Airport in Abu Dhabi. Sheikh Mohammed wished His Majesty and his accompanying delegating a pleasant stay in the UAE.

His Majesty was also received

by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Presidential Court (Head of the Mission of Honour), Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi and National Security Adviser, Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Tahnoun Al Nahyan,

an, Adviser for Special Affairs at the Presidential Court and Mohammed bin Nakhira Al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to Oman.

When the Royal aircraft entered the UAE airspace, it was joined by a fleet of UAE military aircraft that escorted it in a gesture of warm welcome until it landed at the Presidential Airport in the UAE Capital, Abu Dhabi.

After a short stay at the airport, His Majesty the Sultan, accompanied by the UAE President,

mounted a vehicle that took them over to Qasr Al Watan (Palace of the Nation) in Abu Dhabi where official and popular reception protocols were held.

As the motorcade of the two leaders entered the main gate of the Palace, two sets of cavalymen and cameleers lined the street and a flypast by ceremonial aircraft sketched the Sultanate of Oman's flag on the sky of the ceremony, while the artillery fired a 21-gun salute to His Majesty. **>A2**

LAWS REGULATING MEDIA SECTOR

Dr. Abdullah outlines media strategy in Shura Council

MUSCAT: The Shura Council on Monday hosted Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information, to discuss the ministry's statement.

In the statement, which coincided with the Council's 8th regular session of the 10th Term's first annual convening, the minister outlined the media strategy and policy of the Sultanate of Oman.

The statement touched on the actual outcome of efforts undertaken by the ministry within the context of the 9th Five Year Plan, and the strategic programmes of the ministry during 10th Five Year Plan, the laws regulating the media sector in Oman and the Ministry's efforts in the field of media training.

Dr. Abdullah said that the Omani media receives the support of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik who expressed his conviction in the significant role of the media in the next stage of development.

"This is in addition to the importance of the media in enhancing awareness, shaping discourse, preserving the national identity, safeguarding the great gains of the



modern and renewed renaissance, conveying Oman's judicious voice and portraying its sound image to the countries and peoples of the world" said the minister.

He added that "Omani media is undertaking an enlightenment role, disseminating knowledge and achieving cultural openness with others".

The media in Oman, he explained, lays emphasis on the principle of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression within legal boundaries defined by the Basic Law of the State promulgated by Royal Decree No. 6/2021.

The minister pointed out that Omani media stems from the tenets of the religion of Islam, its

noble values and the Basic Law of the State.

The minister underscored the fact that Omani media seeks to strengthen the national unity, consolidate the values of loyalty to the homeland and allegiance to His Majesty the Sultan.

The Ministry of Information is working on programmes and projects to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040. During the 2023, it worked on several projects, including increasing the number of media products that aim to spread awareness and introduce government performance in society and enhance national identity, heritage and culture.

The minister said: "The Ministry created a group of electronic accounts with the aim of interacting with the public, and the number of its followers reached more than 6 million by the end of 2023. The number of views of the content of the Sultanate's TV channels on the global YouTube platform increased to more than 300 million by the end of 2023.

In particular, the Omani media contributes to the promotion

of the authentic principles, said the minister, noting that various programmes of the Omani media enshrine Omani society's cultural identity and aspire to preserve it.

The minister affirmed that the "media draft law" regulates media practices and that the statute-to-be features aspects of comprehensiveness and innovation that keep pace with the developments taking place in the industry.

It should be noted that the Shura Council has approved the draft media law and referred the bill to the State Council to round up the legislative session.

The draft media law was based on rapid developments that have been taking place in the media domain since the issuance of the laws governing media activities, making it necessary to merge the statutes into one uniform law.

The new bill, once endorsed, will result in the abolition of the laws governing media activities, which are the "Printing and Publishing Law", the "Law on Private Radio and Television Establishments", and the "Law on Censorship of Artistic Works". **-ONA**

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TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:10pm
Asr.....	3:37pm
Maghrib.....	6:36pm
Isha.....	7:50pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:19am

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HM arrives in Abu Dhabi

<FROM A1 Folklore troupes also joined the ceremony, chanting popular songs and poetic verses of welcome to His Majesty the Sultan, while groups of children waved flags in a manifestation of bonds of amity and fraternity.

Upon the arrival of the motorcade at the main reception grounds in the Palace, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed accompanied His Majesty the Sultan to the Dais of Honour, where the Omani Royal Anthem and the UAE National Anthem were played. Then, His Majesty the Sultan and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed inspected the Guard of Honour that gave the salute to His Majesty the Sultan.

After that, a commemorative photo was taken for His Majesty the Sultan and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed. The photo documents the historic visit of His Majesty the Sultan.

Then, His Majesty shook hands with members of the welcoming party.

In his turn, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed shook hands with members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, wishing them a pleasant stay.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan is accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, HH Sayyid Bilal bin Haitham Al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nuamani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Sayyid Dr. Ahmed bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Ambassador of Oman to the UAE. -**ONA**





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IN HONOUR OF HM THE SULTAN, UAE PRESIDENT HOSTS DINNER

In honour of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) hosted an official dinner at Qasr Al Watan (Palace of the Nation) in Abu Dhabi on Monday night, marking His Majesty's visit to the UAE. The dinner was attended by members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, as well as some Sheikhs and senior UAE officials. -ONA





WARM WELCOME

UAE military planes escort Royal jet of HM the Sultan

ABU DHABI: When the Royal aircraft of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik entered the UAE airspace, it was joined by a fleet of UAE military aircraft that escorted it in a gesture of warm welcome until it landed at the Presidential Airport in the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi. -ONA





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HM the Sultan leaves for UAE



The visit, made in response to an invitation by the UAE President, underscores the historic and fraternal relations binding Oman and the UAE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq left here on Monday for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on a two-day state visit, during which he will hold meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates.

The visit, made in response to an invitation by the UAE President, underscores the historical and fraternal relations binding Oman and the UAE.

His Majesty the Sultan was seen off at the Royal Airport by HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Co-operation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, Khalid bin Hilal Al Ma'awali, Chairman of the Shura Council, Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, Nasr bin Hamoud Al Kindi, Secretary General of the Royal Court Affairs, Dr. Madeeha bint Ahmed Al Shibani, Minister of Education, Sheikh Al Fadl bin Mohammed Al Harthy, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Lt.Gen Hassan bin Mohsin Al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, Lt.Gen Said bin Ali Al Hilali, Head of the Internal Security Service, Dr. Mohammed bin

Said Al Ma'amari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Dr. Hilal bin Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces, Maj. Gen Mattar bin Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman, Air Vice Marshal Khamis bin Hammad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman, Rear Admiral Saif bin Nassir Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman and Maj. Gen Musallam bin Mohammed Jaaboub, Commander of the Sultan's Special Force.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan will be accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nuamani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Sayyid Dr. Ahmed bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Ambassador of Oman to the UAE. -ONA



AT HM BEHEST

Sayyid Asa’ad receives President of Algerian National Assembly

MUSCAT: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asa’ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan received in his office on Monday Ibrahim Boughali, President of the People’s National Assembly of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged cordial talks and



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Symposium explores techniques of learning Arabic language

MUSCAT: Represented by the Ministry of Education, the Sultanate of Oman is hosting the 4th edition of the Arabic Language Symposium, in the presence of local and international experts and specialists.

The three-day event explores modern techniques in teaching and learning Arabic language.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Habib Mohammed Al Riyami, Chairman of the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science.

The symposium showcases local and international practical experiences in teaching and



learning Arabic. Its activities include the presentation of working papers, panel discussions and training workshops on successful models in teaching and learning Arabic. -ONA

CONSUMER AUTHORITY

Over 3,000 pieces of sweets for children seized in Al Dakhiliyah

Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 3,000 pieces of children’s sweets containing drawings that violate public morals were seized in Al Dakhiliyah governorate by the Consumer Protection Authority.

The authority in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, specifically the Markets Regulation and Control Section, took action against a commercial establishment in

Nizwa, selling children’s sweets containing drawings that violated public morals. This act was considered a clear violation of the Consumer Protection Law and its executive regulations.

During routine inspection of shops and commercial centres in the governorate, law enforcement officers seized 3,571 items from a commercial establishment. These goods were confiscated, legal action was taken, and an ad-

ministrative fine was imposed on the violating institution. When questioned why the owner of the establishment was selling these products, he claimed ignorance regarding their prohibition.

This incident highlights the importance for business owners to maintain regular communication with the relevant authorities for their awareness, and stay updated on new regulatory decisions in the markets.

ASPIDES

RNO commander meets with EU military official

MUSCAT: Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received at Al Murtafa’a Garrison on Monday Rear Admiral Vasileios Gryparis, Operation Commander of the European Union’s Naval Mission (ASPIDES), and the military delegation accompanying him.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views and discussed a set of matters of common interest, particularly in maritime areas.

The meeting was attended by some senior Royal Navy of Oman officers.



THREE FINALISTS

Innovations of Omani youths shortlisted for ITEX Malaysia 2024



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation on Monday announced the three finalists to represent the Sultanate of Oman at the 35th international, invention, innovation, technology competition and exhibition in Malaysia (ITEX 2024) scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur from 16 to 18 May 2024.

First place was won by Imad Abdullah Bait Obaydoun (for his innovation titled “water treatment using the electrochemical method”), second place went to Mazin Rashid Al Badi (for his innovation titled “Doctor Robot”), while Tasnim Mohammed Al

Daoudi won third place (for her innovation titled “Dilution of heavy oil using hydrogen injection technology”).

Nisreen Yahya Al Balushi, Assistant Director of the Department of Research and Innovation Capacity Building, said that ITEX constitutes Inventions and Innovations Market par excellence.

She added that the exhibition is an international platform to attract and explore new inventions and innovations from more than 20 countries in Asia and Europe. The event will showcase more than 1,000 inventions in different categories, she explained.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Sharqiyah Desalination Company SAOG (the "Company"), I am pleased to present the unaudited Financial Statements of the Company for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Operational Highlights

The Sur Independent Water Plant (the "Plant") has produced volumes of water amounting to 8,278,112 m3 compared to 8,153,266 m3 in the same period (1st January to 31st March) of the last year, which is an increase of 1.53% due to higher dispatch instructions. However, the contractual arrangement with the O&M contractor protects the company's profitability even with any reduction in the water dispatch.

The average scheduled plant availability for the quarter reached 98%. This consistently high availability is the result of a strict maintenance program followed and implemented by the operation & maintenance team, as well as improved coordination with OWWSC. The Company continues to maintain its excellent reputation as a provider of potable water to the Sharqiyah region.

On March 07, 2024, the Plant successfully completed the Annual Performance Test for the contractual year 16 (CY16). The demonstrated water capacity during the test was equal to 5493.25 m3/h (100% of the Guaranteed Water Capacity).

The Solar Farm project was set in commercial operation on 16 April 2023 and contributes to reducing our carbon footprint. The Project is designed to save around 32 Millions kWh per year corresponding to a saving of 27,200 Metric Tons CO2 Equivalent (equal to 6,000 gasoline-powered passenger vehicles driven for one year).

Financial Information

Revenue was RO 3.1 million compared to RO 2.9 million for the same period of previous year which has increased by 6.7% (RO 197K). This is mainly due to 1) higher water output, electricity consumption and the change in the electricity tariff from CRT to flat.

The cost of sales has increased by 12.9% as compared to the same period of previous year (RO 246K) mainly due to higher water output, electricity consumption with new per unit tariff rate and the change in the O&M fixed tariff.

Current period profit after tax reached RO 121 K which represents 3.9 % of the revenue. The net cash flow generated during the period (1st January to 31st March) was 2.04 MOMR compared to 1.8 MOMR in the same period 2023.

Internal Control and Corporate Governance

The Management of the Company believes in a strong internal control system, overseen by our Internal Auditor in compliance with regulators prescribed by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and The International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF).

The Company has in place high standards of corporate governance, which are compliant with the Code of Corporate Governance promulgated by the Capital Market Authority.

Acknowledgements

As Chairman of the Board, I would like to thank our shareholders, not only for their confidence, but also for their continued support and for the expertise they bring to the Company.

The Board of Directors expresses its gratitude to OPWP, OWWSC, the Authority for Public Services Regulation, Muscat Clearing and Depository, the Financial Services Authority and the Government of Oman for their tremendous support in regulating and developing the water sector, and for their assistance, which comforts the smooth functioning of our operations.

Finally, we would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Turki bin Taimour for his wise leadership; we pray to Almighty to shower him with blessings, keep him in good health and give him a long life.

Thank you and kind regards,

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31ST MARCH 2024

	Unaudited 31 Mar 2024 RO	Unaudited 31 Mar 2023 RO	Audited 31 Dec 2023 RO
Assets			
Property and equipment	348,889	545,950	380,316
Intangible assets	113,567	-	118,728
Finance lease receivable	50,538,001	54,464,692	51,555,627
Right-of-use assets	4,734,286	81,448	4,833,558
Total non-current assets	55,734,743	55,092,090	56,888,229
Trade and other receivables	1,652,559	1,599,057	1,495,964
Amount due from related parties	52,709	110,507	251,417
Finance lease receivable	3,948,318	3,631,391	3,858,811
Cash and cash equivalents	2,039,024	1,846,661	1,764,895
Total current assets	7,692,610	7,187,616	7,371,087
Total assets	63,427,353	62,279,706	64,259,316
Equity and liabilities			
Equity			
Share capital	9,780,216	9,780,216	9,780,216
Legal reserve	2,687,331	2,625,419	2,675,133
Retained earnings	2,852,206	3,762,033	4,209,456
Cumulative changes in fair values	(657,084)	(417,916)	(394,988)
Total equity	14,662,669	15,749,752	16,269,817
Liabilities			
Derivative financial instruments	647,782	425,373	389,396
Long term loan	33,407,391	36,627,016	33,385,049
Deferred tax liability	3,490,753	3,389,783	3,514,036
Deferred revenue	259,355	271,222	262,421
Employees' end of service benefit	104,042	105,627	101,962
Lease liabilities	4,590,002	35,449	4,590,002
Total non-current liabilities	42,499,325	40,854,470	42,242,866
Derivative financial instruments	125,255	66,291	75,294
Trade and other payables	1,567,344	1,318,673	991,918
Long term loan	3,306,261	3,171,443	3,306,261
Amount due to related parties	1,019,621	1,062,103	1,049,515
Lease liabilities	235,011	46,113	312,038
Deferred revenue	11,867	10,881	11,607
Total current liabilities	6,265,359	5,675,484	5,746,633
Total liabilities	48,764,684	46,529,954	47,989,499
Total equity and liabilities	63,427,353	62,279,706	64,259,316

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024

	Unaudited 31 Mar 2024 RO	Unaudited 31 Mar 2023 RO
Revenue	3,144,332	2,946,618
Cost of sales	(2,159,987)	(1,913,262)
Gross Profit	984,345	1,033,356
Administrative and general expenses	(187,770)	(191,912)
Finance expenses	(815,817)	(746,261)
Finance Income	164,191	120,128
Profit before tax	144,949	215,311
Taxation	(22,969)	(32,854)
Profit for the period	121,980	182,457
Other comprehensive income, net of tax		
Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:		
Fair value adjustment on derivatives	(308,348)	82,749
Deferred tax on fair value adjustment	46,252	(12,412)
Other comprehensive income for the period, net of tax	(262,096)	70,337
Total comprehensive income for the period	(140,116)	252,794
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.001	0.002

Mr Denis Le-Maout
Chairman

Internal Control and Corporate Governance

The Management of the Company believes in a strong internal control system, overseen by our Internal Auditor in compliance with regulations prescribed by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and The International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF).

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Thank you and kind regards,

Mr Denis Le-Maout

Chairman

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Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
(PRE/23/210) Re-Call	Construction of Remedial Measures For Revetment Failure Along Al Bahri Road In Muttrah Area Phase 1	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/040 Re-Call	Roads Paving at A'Seeb	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/050 Re-Call	Consultancy Services for Outdoor advertising and commercial signboards	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/072	Design & Construction of Internal Roads in Commercial Area at Al Mabela South	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/090	Supply of Heavy Vehicles for Muscat Municipality Fleet	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/091	Supply of Photograph Devices	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/095	RFP for Application Support for Oracle EBS CRM	02/05/2024	13/05/2024
PRE/24/098	Supply of Scanners for MM	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/099	Renewal of AMC for MM External Infrastructure	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/101	Renewal of AMC for Database Administration Support for MM	02/05/2024	13/05/2024
PRE/24/102	Supply & Installation of Flag Poles	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/103	Supply of Building Materials	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/109	Design & Construction of Balance Internal Roads in Boshier & Muttrah	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/117	Protection Works at Wadi Al Ghadeer in Al khuwair	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/118	Consultancy Services for Master Plan for Development of the commercial Area in Qurum	12/05/2024	02/06/2024

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Ahmed provides the silver lining for Oman at GCC Youth Games



Ahmed, competing in the U18 rapid chess individual event, picked up a silver to raise Oman's overall medals tally to 39

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Ahmed Al Rahbi provided the only silver lining of the day when he claimed the only medal for Oman at the ongoing inaugural GCC Youth Games in the UAE on Monday.

Ahmed, competing in the U18 rapid chess individual event, picked up a silver to raise Oman's overall medals tally to 39.

His silver also concluded Oman's campaign in the chess event with the national team collecting a total of four medals. The other three medals were won in the team events with Oman girls claiming a silver and a bronze in the U14 and U18 events respectively and the boys' taking a bronze in the U18 team category.

Ruqaya Al Balushi, manager of Oman's chess delegation, was over all "satisfied" with the teams' results. "We have young Omani players and they have done very well by claiming a total of four medals."

There were disappointments in the other games for Oman on Monday. Oman lost to Qatar 25-16,



25-23, 25-15 for their third successive defeat in the volleyball event to end their medal hopes in Dubai. Oman had previously lost to UAE and Kuwait.

The handball team lost to Kuwait 36-28 at Al Bataeh Cultural Club hall in Sharjah.

Opening ceremony on Tuesday

The official opening ceremony of the first GCC Youth Games will be held at the Dubai Opera on Tuesday.

Oman delegation will be headed by HH Sayyid Azzan bin Kais Al Said, Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) vice-president, and includes Taha Al Kishry, OOC secretary general, Qais Al Zakwani, Lujaina bint Mohsin Haider Darwish, OOC members, Sanaa Al Busaidi, chairperson of the Oman Committee for Women's Sports and Gender Equality, and Kazim Al Balushi, chef-de-mission.

The opening ceremony is expected to be attended by 1,500 people. The ceremony will be 40 minutes long and will feature a variety of performances that highlight the themes of sustainability, unity, and youth.

The opening ceremony will be a creative celebration of the Gulf region's culture and heritage. It will feature a variety of performances, including traditional dances, music, and acrobatics. The ceremony will also use cutting-edge technology to create a visually stunning experience.

One of the key themes of the opening ceremony will be sustainability. The ceremony will use sustainable materials and practices, such as recycled materials and LED lighting. The goal is to create a beautiful and environmentally friendly event.

The opening ceremony will also be a celebration of the unity of the Gulf region. The ceremony will feature performances from all six GCC countries, and it will highlight the shared values and traditions of the region.

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University of Nizwa organises inaugural ELT Conference



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The University of Nizwa recently organised its first Annual English Language Teaching (ELT) Conference.

The event was inaugurated under the patronage of Abdullah Mohammed Al Sarmi, a State Council Member.

The conference began with a collaboration between the University Foundation institution, Cambridge University Press and Assessment, the Department of Foreign Languages, and the Al-Khalil bin Ahmed Center for Arabic and Humanities Studies at the University of Nizwa.

It was also part of this year's cultural season activities, and its main aim was to highlight the importance of promoting education and learning through innovative techniques and modern technologies.

The conference began with a speech by Dr Ahmed Al Rawahi, Director of the University Foundation Institute.

He emphasised the power of e-learning as a tool in English language education that offers unprecedented opportunities to reach learners across geographical boundaries and diverse backgrounds.

Throughout the conference, participants explored innovative strategies, best practices, and emerging technologies that are shaping the future of online language learning.

Karen Ryan, a learning assessment consultant at GCC, Cambridge University Press, expressed her delight in being Cambridge Press the conference's main sponsor. She highlighted Cambridge Press's commitment to society, assessment solutions, and the learning experience of students using The Unlock.

Ryan's reflections emphasised Cambridge Press's dedication to providing quality education.

Dr Serge and Dr Cécile Gabarre, who are associate professors at the University of Nizwa, delivered a plenary presentation on the topic of "A systematic literature review of mobile-assisted language learning for ELT in Oman."

The conference also featured a plenary presentation by Prof. Ali Al Issa from Sultan Qaboos University. Prof. Issa shared his thoughts on teaching the English language and the challenges faced by both teachers and students. He discussed the importance of creating an engaging learning environment and the need to adapt teaching methods to cater to different learning styles.

As a part of the conference proceedings, a Postgraduate Poster Exhibition was inaugurated.

IN JAIPUR, INDIA

Former ISG student Carrisaa Bopanna crowned Miss Teen Universe India



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Carrisaa Bopanna, a former student of Indian School Ghubra (ISG), captivated the hearts of thousands as she was recently crowned Miss Teen Universe India at the 2024 edition of Miss Teen Diva held in Jaipur, India. The event, featuring participants from across the country, saw Carrisaa and three others bestowed with crowns, each exuding effortless elegance and poise on the ramp.

Joining Carrisaa in the winner's circle were Kaziah Mejo, Tanishqa Sharma, and Kavin Rao.

Carrisaa will represent India at Miss Teen Universe, while Kaziah, Tanishqa, and Kavin will represent the country in Miss Teen International, Miss Teen Earth, and Miss Teen Grand, respectively.

Organised by Glamanand International India, the annual beauty pageant selects representatives to compete in various international pageants, including Miss Universe. Before the selection of

the top 15 out of 29 participants, the event featured a talent round alongside other highlights such as a makeup session, gala dinner, and sashing ceremony.

Acknowledging her journey from Oman to the apex of India's beauty pageant scene, Carrisaa expressed gratitude to her parents and ISG teachers for their unwavering support and guidance.

Currently pursuing fashion design at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in Bengaluru, Carrisaa plans to uti-



lise her platform to champion social causes, particularly education and the empowerment of young girls.

In her remarks to *Times of Oman*, she said: "I would like to express my deep gratitude to my family, mentors, and supporters for their unwavering encouragement and belief in my abilities."

"I will now use this success as Miss Teen Universe India to take up social causes that are close to my heart, including promoting education and empowering young



girls to achieve their aspirations."

In addition to her advocacy for fashion, Carrisaa is committed to promoting menstrual health and hygiene. "I plan to educate women and young girls about menstruation and hygiene through workshops, seminars, and outreach programmes," she added.

Looking ahead, Carrisaa eagerly anticipates representing India on the global stage at the upcoming Miss Teen Universe pageant.

Her mother, Shakuntala, was full of pride and emotion on the

achievement of Carrisaa.

She said: "Carrisaa's remarkable journey from Oman to the Miss Teen Universe India platform is a reward to her multifaceted personality and her global outlook. From dressing up her dolls to sketching her own designs, she has always been drawn to the world of style and creativity. Her journey to Miss Teen Universe India is a reward for her relentless pursuit of excellence and her unwavering dedication to her craft."

SIPRI REPORT

Total global military spending for first time surpasses \$2 trillion

STOCKHOLM: Total global military expenditure increased by 0.7 per cent in real terms in 2021, to reach \$2,113 billion.

The five largest spenders in 2021 were the United States, China, India, the United Kingdom and Russia, together accounting for 62 per cent of expenditure, according to new data on global military spending published today by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Military spending is up in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Oceania and North and South America. It's the first time since 2009 that annual spending has increased in all geographical regions examined by SIPRI at once. With a budget increase of 105%, the Democratic Republic of the Congo stood out as the country with the single largest increase in military spending in 2023 by percentage. Researchers attributed this boost to the protracted conflict between the government and non-state armed groups.

Xiao Liang, a researcher in SIPRI's military expenditure and arms production program, told DW that "what might be surprising is how large the increases are in the rest of the world, especially in Latin America and Africa."

Liang said the governments of Mexico and El Salvador were using the military for internal affairs such as combating organised crime and gang violence. Ecuador and Brazil are showing similarly concerning trends, he added. "The increase itself is not too surprising, but it's the scale and scope of the increase," Liang said. "For the global trend, if the current conflicts and tensions continue, we will probably see more increase in the coming years." Ukraine has remained a conflict hot spot since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in



early 2022. At 5.9% in 2023, Liang said, Russia's military spending in relation to its gross domestic product (GDP) reached its highest point since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

By comparison, Ukraine's military spending was 37% of its GDP. "So the war is burdening Ukraine much more than Russia," Liang said. The bare numbers highlight that the fight between Russia and Ukraine is imbalanced, but Western support has helped Ukraine level the playing field, preliminary SIPRI reports indicated.

"From the spending trend last year, all but three countries in NATO increased their spending," Liang said. "And also we've seen the most number of countries, in 11 out of 31 members in NATO, that met or exceeded the 2% GDP target, which is the highest since the end of the Cold War. We expect to see more countries reaching their targets in the next few years. Now also, with Finland and Sweden joining NATO, I think the spending by NATO countries as a whole will keep rising."

"We are clearly seeing that trend because, if you look at spending, it has been rising for 29 consecutive years," Liang said. "That's the longest streak recorded by a single country. It's mostly actually increasing set alongside the pace of its economic growth, regardless of fluctuations in geopolitical tensions or global crisis such as the war in Ukraine or COVID." — DW

Palestinian civilians killed in ongoing Israeli bombardment in Gaza

A number of civilians were killed and others were injured in an Israeli raid that targeted Al-Taqwa Mosque in Bureij Camp in the central Gaza Strip



GAZA: A number of Palestinian civilians were Monday dawn killed and injured when Israeli bombing operations targeted various areas in the center and south of the Gaza Strip, as the Israeli aggression against Palestinians enters its 199th day.

Wafa correspondents said that an Israeli artillery shelling targeted the east of Al-Maghazi camp in the central Gaza Strip, as an Israeli raid targeted the southeastern area of Khan Yunis in the south of the Strip. A number of citizens were killed and others were injured in an Israeli raid that targeted Al-Taqwa Mosque in Bureij Camp in the central Gaza Strip, while an Israeli raid targeted the north of Nuseirat Camp in the central Gaza Strip, and another targeted the entrance to the Bureij Camp in the central Gaza Strip.

Additionally, a number of civilians were injured as a result of an Israeli bombing that targeted the vicinity of Al-Sawarha cemetery in Nuseirat camp, and as a result of targeting a house in Al-Brook

area in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

Israeli bombing

The Israeli bombing also targeted Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood, south of Gaza City, and Al-Mawasi area, west of the city of Khan Yunis, south of the Gaza Strip.

Local sources said that Israeli aircraft launched two raids tonight on the southern areas of Gaza City and on Al-Tuffah neighbourhood. Health sources in the Gaza Strip reported that the number of martyrs in Israeli raids on two homes in Rafah had risen to 26, including 16 children and 6 women.

A number of citizens were killed and others were injured, most of them children, as a result of an occupation raid that targeted a house west of Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip.

Local sources reported that occupation warplanes bombed a house for Al-Nuwairi family in

Nuseirat camp, leading to the killing of seven citizens.

Local health authorities confirmed that the Palestinian death toll from the Israeli onslaught since October 7 has risen to 34,097 reported fatalities, with an additional 76,980 individuals sustaining injuries. The majority of the victims are women and children.

283 bodies from mass graves retrieved in Khan Younis

Meanwhile, Palestinian civil defence and ambulance crews on Monday have uncovered three mass graves, with 283 bodies found, inside the Nasser Medical Complex in Gaza's Khan Younis, south of the city.

Rescue and ambulance crews on Monday recovered the bodies of 73 martyrs from a mass grave at Nasser Medical Hospital, bringing the total number of civilians whose bodies have been found so

far to 283 persons. Additionally, the majority of the bodies belonged to civilians from different ages and that the occupation forces killed them during their storming of the complex and buried them collectively inside it.

According to security sources, the majority of martyrs who had been buried in mass graves were women and children.

The occupation forces deliberately razed dozens of bodies and buried them before withdrawing from any area in the Gaza Strip.

In the meantime, sources indicated that hundreds of civilians have been reported missing in the city of Khan Younis.

Earlier on Sunday, the Civil Defense in Gaza announced that it had recovered the bodies of 210 martyrs who had been buried in a mass grave by the Israeli occupation forces inside the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis.

— Wafa

ON EARTH DAY

Prime Minister Modi reaffirms India's commitment to environment protection

NEW DELHI: On Earth Day Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated India's commitment to environmental protection. PM talked about "Mission Life", a lifestyle change for environment protection.

"On Earth Day, we reaffirm our commitment to nurture nature so that our planet can have a better future" PM tweeted on X

Every year on April 22, Earth Day serves as a global reminder of our responsibility to protect the planet by bringing attention to challenges such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. It demands a change in direction toward a sustainable future, urging individuals and businesses alike to take proactive steps.

Businesses are at the forefront of driving innovative sustainability measures. Their adoption of pioneering practices to reduce carbon footprints and embrace eco-friendly solutions plays a crucial role in fostering a more environmentally conscious plane.

Vehicular emissions are a major cause of air pollution in urban areas.

Various research suggests, they contribute 20-30 per cent of PM 2.5 at breathing level, and 8 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions in India come from the transport sector. In Delhi, vehicular emissions exceed 30 per cent.



Worldwide the transport sector accounts for a quarter of total emissions, out of which road transport accounts for three-quarters of transport emissions.

Passenger vehicles are the largest chunk of this, releasing about 45 per cent of CO2.

Sustainable transport options such as shared rides are a better solution for urban cities. Sriram Kannan, Founder & CEO, Routematic says "We are leveraging AI and ML as a sustainability game-changer. Our AI-powered route planning, real-time vehicle tracking, intelligent scheduling and robust predictive analytics

all contribute towards ensuring eco-friendly routes, reducing emissions and costs. Additionally, our strategic investments in electric vehicles further demonstrate our commitment to a sustainable future."

Logistic Industry can also play a major role in environment protection. Research by the World Economic Forum, WEF indicates that sustainable warehouses can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent and save energy expenses by 30 per cent.

This underscores the potential for the warehousing sector to become a focal point for sustainability, contributing to a more eco-friendly and resilient supply chain.

Industries can curtail their ecological footprints by material reuse and recycling, renewable energy sources such as solar power, energy-efficient lighting, and implementing waste management.

Abhijit Verma, Founder & Managing Director, Avinya Industrial & Logistic Parks says "With sustainability as the cornerstone of our operations, we are dedicated to leading this journey, demonstrating that responsible business practices can drive economic growth of our country while safeguarding our planet for future generations." — ANI

SHORT-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILES

North Korea fires missiles into ocean

SEOUL: South Korea's military reported the launch of what they suspected to be several short-range ballistic missiles by North Korea on Monday. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the projectiles landed in waters to the east. The projectiles appeared to have landed outside Japan's exclusive economic zone area, Japan's NHK broadcaster reported.

North Korea has been increasing its weapons testing as ten-

sions with the South and the US remain high. Pyongyang is prohibited by UN resolutions from launching or testing ballistic missiles of any range.

On Saturday, the North Korean military announced that it had tested a "super-large" cruise missile warhead and a new anti-aircraft missile on Friday.

Leader Kim Jong Un has repeatedly stated his aim to build up a nuclear arsenal to ward off its

"enemies," namely the US, South Korea and Japan.

The head of the US Space Command, General Stephen Whiting, was in South Korea on Monday to discuss surveillance of the North's satellite programme.

Earlier this year, Pyongyang ended outreach programmes that aimed to improve relations on the peninsula and threatened war over "even 0.001 mm" of territorial infringement. — DW

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SPORTS

NEW OGA BOARD ELECTED

Sayyid Azzan elected as chairman of Oman Golf Association



MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Azzan bin Kais Tarik Al Said was on Sunday elected unanimously as the new chairman of the Oman Golf Association (OGA) for a four-year term (2024-28) at the general assembly of the sports association. Sayyid Azzan succeeds long-time chairman Mundhir Al Barwani, who was the chairman of the OGA since its formation. The other elected OGA board members are Faiz Mohammed Riaz as vice-chairman, Ahmed Al Jhdhamy as general secretary and Nikhil Sampat as treasurer. The board members comprise Ghalib Al Busaidi, Mubarak Hill and Jumana Al Ghadani.

Speaking after his election as OGA chairman, Sayyid Azzan, who is also the vice-chairman of the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), said: "We will continue to work for the development and modernisation of the federation's work. We will try our best to enhance the spread of golf in the Sultanate of Oman. We will focus on bringing more men and women in different age-groups to play the game and add more clubs as members." He added: "We will work hard to raise the level of our national team players so that they can bring laurels for the country at regional events."

Maiden FIA WEC podium for Al Harthy and team

The trio of Al Harthy, Rossi and Martin claims second place in LMGT3 class for BMW and Team WRT at Imola circuit

MUSCAT: Oman's Ahmad Al Harthy displayed an impressive performance during his two-hour stint to help his team clinch a runner-up finish in the second race of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in LMGT3 class at the Imola circuit in Italy on Sunday. It was Omani's first podium of 2024 and came at the 6 Hours of Imola in the No.46 BMW M4 GT3 car with his teammates, Valentino Rossi and Maxime Martin. In fact, the team was set for a grandstand finish as Martin battled the sister No.31 Team WRT car for supremacy during the final couple of hours with both BMWs staying on slick tyres as rain showers arrived. Team WRT ensured a famous one-two result, an unfortunate drive-through penalty late on – linked to a Full Course Yellow period – meaning it was the No.46 trio who ended up in second place at the flag. Martin was little more than 20 seconds adrift of the No.31 at the finish, having lost more than half a minute with the penalty. Al Harthy, who qualified third on the LMGT3 grid, was tasked with driving the first couple of hours of the six-hour contest on Sunday in front of almost 74,000 spectators. Making a great start to the race, the Omani was able to quickly



thy said: "It was an unbelievable race. I had a perfect start. There was an incident on Turn One and I was in the right place so managed to move up from P3 to P2. We kept pushing for the entire one hour and 45 minutes in the car, we maximised everything we could to increase the distance between me and third, and try and keep first as close as possible. "The team did an excellent job. They made unbelievable calls. Valentino and Maxime both did amazing in the car, and obviously the pit-stops were smooth – and then the rain arrived, We were the only LMGT3 cars to stay out on slicks throughout, it was a huge call by the team and it was the right call as well to take a BMW one-two and with us on the podium for the first time this season." Al Harthy added: "It's an amazing feeling to have my first podium with WRT and BMW in FIA WEC and hopefully this will push us on to more great results." Al Harthy will next be seen in action in round three of the FIA World Endurance Championship at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium on May 11.

move into second in class thankfully avoiding lap one chaos which brought out the Safety Car. When the action resumed, Al Harthy settled and at the conclusion of the first hour the BMW racer maintained second place, only 1.6 seconds shy of the Porsche. During his second hour of driving after the initial round of pit-stops, Al Harthy ensured the No.46 BMW stayed in contention for the win. Home hero Rossi took over from Al Harthy at the second pit-stop and when the order settled the Italian was third. Rossi was little more than 10 seconds shy of the lead as the race hit mid-dis-

tance and during his second stint. With just under two hours to run Martin was able to take the lead of LMGT3, before slipping back to second in class behind the No.31 Team WRT car. As the sixth and final hour began, Martin was 8.3 seconds behind the sister BMW and with just 35 minutes to go he was almost attached to its bumper. Hopes of victory, though, were dashed in the last half hour when Martin had to make an unscheduled pit-stop for the penalty. Ultimately finishing the race in a richly deserved second position, the No.46 car was less than 23 seconds shy of victory. Speaking after the race, Al Har-

IPL 2024

Sai Kishore, Tewatia steer GT to victory



TODAY'S MATCH
Chennai Super Kings vs Lucknow Super Giants
Chennai, 6pm

MULLANPUR: An outstanding show from the spinners, led by R Sai Kishore (4/33), and a crucial finishing act from Rahul Tewatia (36* off 18), helped Gujarat Titans (GT) pull off a nervy yet crucial win over Punjab Kings (PBKS) in the IPL 2024 at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in Mullanpur on Sunday. The spinners, Sai Kishore (4/33), Rashid Khan (1/15) and Noor Ahmad (2/20) sparked a collapse after Punjab Kings had got off to a strong start with the openers adding 52 from 5.2 overs. Mohit Sharma too bowled a crucial spell of 2/32 as GT bowled PBKS out for 142. Shubman Gill's composed 35 (29) set the platform for Titans before Tewatia powered GT past the finish line after the team stuttered in the run-chase with a mini-collapse in the middle. Chasing 143, Titans lost Wriddhiman Saha in the fourth over as he mistimed his pull to mid-wicket off Arshdeep Singh. Gill and Sai Sudharsan then steadied the ship with a steady 41-run stand off 36 balls. Gill (35 off 29) was out going for a big one but mistimed his

loft to long off in the 10th over, off Liam Livingstone. Livingstone was at it again in his next over as he cleaned up David Miller to jolt Titans. Azmatullah Omarzai and Sudharsan could only add 20 runs as Curran made Sudharsan (31 off 34) chop one onto the stumps in the 15th over. The visitors lost another one in the next over as Omarzai nicked one to the keeper. With 38 needed off 24, Tewatia released the pressure valve with two fours off Brar and then three fours off Rabada in the next over. Shahrukh Khan too joined in with a six in the Rabada over to accumulate 20 runs off the 18th over. But with five runs needed from 12, Titans lost Shahrukh to Harshal and five balls later, Rashid Khan was caught at mid-wicket. But Tewatia made sure GT crossed the finish line as he clipped the first ball of the final over for four to fine leg with one needed off six balls and helped them win by three wickets. He remained unbeaten on 36 off 18 balls with seven fours. Earlier, Punjab Kings got off to a breezy start courtesy of Prabhsimran Singh, who went berserk

in the second over, smacking a three fours and a six off Sandeep Sharma, taking 21 runs in the over. Prabhsimran and Curran added 52 for the opening wicket before Mohit Sharma provided the breakthrough, having Prabhsimran caught behind in the sixth over. GT then sparked a massive collapse as PBKS lost wickets in quick succession courtesy of fantastic reviews from Shubman Gill and Co. Noor Ahmad and Rashid Khan trapped Rilee Rossouw and Sam Curran LBW, respectively. And then Noor had Livingstone caught at slip off a beauty. R Sai Kishore joined the wicket-taking party as he cleaned up Jitesh Sharma. He provided two more huge breakthroughs, dismissing the in-form Ashutosh Sharma and Shashank Singh in his next two overs to reduce PBKS to 99/7 in the 16th over. Harpreet Brar revived PBKS innings with a crucial late surge of 29 (12) to help the home side post 142. **Brief scores:** Punjab Kings 142 (Prabhsimran Singh 35, Harpreet Brar 29; Sai Kishore 4-33) lost to Gujarat Titans 146/7 in 19.1 overs (Rahul Tewatia 36*, Shubman Gill 35; Harshal Patel 3-15). (With inputs from ESPNewsinfo.com)

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INSOMNIA
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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by June 2024 reaching \$86.84, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.13 from the price of Friday, which was \$87.97. - ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,697.87 points, down by 0.13 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.25 per cent at 442.57 points. Oman Education & Training, up 9.88 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Cables Industry, down 7.17 per cent, was the top loser.

\$1.6bn investment agreement signed for Marsa project in Sohar

The upstream component entails the production of 150 million cubic feet per day of gas from Block 10 which will be subsequently transported through OQGN's gas network to Sohar Port

MUSCAT: OQ, the global integrated energy group, has announced the final investment decision with TotalEnergies for the construction of the Marsa LNG Bunkering project at Sohar Port, at a total cost of \$1.6 billion, with TotalEnergies contributing 80 percent and OQ 20 percent via their incorporated joint venture Marsa Liquefied Natural Gas.

The project integrates upstream and downstream business segments. The upstream component entails the production of 150 million cubic feet per day of gas from Block 10 which will be subsequently transported through OQGN's gas network to Sohar Port.

The downstream component involves the construction of an LNG plant with a capacity of one million tonnes per year, along with a re-



newable energy power plant with a capacity of 300 MW of PV solar power to provide the total annual energy needs of the LNG plant.

The Marsa LNG Bunkering project will achieve two remarkable milestones in the region; a plant with emissions of less than 3 kg of carbon dioxide for every oil equivalent barrel, and building the first-of-its-kind LNG bunkering facility in the Middle East. The ceremony also witnessed the signing of the Fiscal Protocol among the Government of the Sultanate of Oman represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Marsa Liquefied Natural Gas (a joint venture between OQ and Total), TotalEnergies EP Oman Development BV, and Almuzn Liquefied Natural Gas LLC (a fully owned subsidiary of OQ) in the presence of Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Mulham Bashir Al Jarf, Chairman of OQ Board of Directors and Patrick Pouyanné, Chairman and CEO of TotalEnergies.

The Marsa LNG project reflects OQ's commitment to strategically contributing to the development of

Oman's energy sector for creating long-term sustainable value. This global collaboration is a testament to OQ's consistent steps and unified goals towards supporting economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to diversifying OQ's investments in a new energy area, i.e. LNG bunkering facility for ship fuelling.

The signing of this fiscal protocol and the announcement of the final investment decision signal OQ's strategy to chart a sustainable future for the energy sector. The project is also expected to contribute to the enhancement of In-Country Value (ICV).

The Marsa LNG plant will be 100 percent electrically driven, positioning it as the lowest GHG intensity LNG plant ever built worldwide by setting a standard with such a GHG efficiency. The full electrical design of the plant and the integration of the solar farm will eliminate more than 200 kt/y of CO₂e over the lifetime of the project, compared to a fuel gas-based design.

The goal of the Marsa LNG project is to serve as the first LNG

bunkering hub in the Middle East, showcasing an available and competitive alternative marine fuel to reduce the shipping industry's carbon footprint. Compared to conventional marine fuel, LNG helps to cut GHG emissions by up to 23 percent, sulphur emissions by 99 percent, fine particle emissions by 99 percent and nitrogen oxide emissions by up to 85 percent.

Eng. Salim Al Aufi, Minister of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, commented: "The Marsa LNG project is one of the many initiatives that reflect Oman's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The most outstanding aspect of this project is that it is fully electric and 100 percent powered by solar energy. I congratulate TotalEnergies and OQ on conceptualising this amazing project that will go a long way in reducing carbon emissions in general and the shipping industry's carbon footprint. Furthermore, this project marks a significant milestone as the first LNG bunkering project in the Middle East and Africa, utilising the strategic and growing business of the Sohar Port."

Mulham Basheer Al Jarf, OQ Chairman, said: "We are pleased to partner with TotalEnergies in the Marsa LNG project which will serve as the region's first LNG bunkering hub. The project will be fully powered by solar energy from a dedicated 300 MWp PV solar plant developed by OQ Alternative Energy and TotalEnergies. Moreover, the project will contribute to OQ Trading's position as a key player in the LNG markets. OQ Gas Network will also provide the necessary gas transportation services to the project." - ONA

Oman LNG signs 10-year gas supply pact with TotalEnergies



MUSCAT: Oman LNG announced the signing of a Sales and Purchase Agreement (SPA) with TotalEnergies.

The pact encapsulates the offtake of 0.8 million metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of LNG from Oman LNG for 10 years starting from 2025.

Such a step aims to leverage the growing partnership between Oman LNG and TotalEnergies, where it reflects the former's effort to extend support to the local economy through the delivery of reliable energy from Oman to customers worldwide.

Hamed Mohammed Al Nu'amani, CEO of Oman LNG, said: "The Sales and Purchase Agreement strengthens TotalEnergies presence in Oman as a result of growing collaboration over the years which is now

translated to a term deal. This deal enhances the collaboration with TotalEnergies as a global LNG portfolio player and Oman LNG's distinguished shareholder."

"We are pleased to further strengthen our partnership with Oman LNG through this Sales and Purchase Agreement. It represents a significant step towards increasing our LNG portfolio and aligns with our commitment to meet global demand for flexible, affordable energy. This deal is part of a wider cooperation with Oman, a country in which we are committed to contributing to economic growth through diverse and ambitious energy projects," said Julien Pouget, Senior Vice President Middle East & North Africa, Exploration & Production at TotalEnergies. - ONA

SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL EVENT

Oman Petroleum & Energy Show paves the way for affordable, sustainable and clean energy



MUSCAT: Under the distinguished patronage of the Ministry of Energy & Minerals, Oman Petroleum & Energy Show (OPES) 2024, officially commenced yesterday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event was inaugurated by Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, drawing the presence of eminent figures from various ministries, authorities, esteemed delegates, and luminaries representing the spectrum of energy stakeholders.

Organised by CONNECT (Oman Exhibitions Organising Company LLC) and the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), in partnership with the host organisation, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO),

OPES will run until 24 April 2024 and is geared at elevating the discourse surrounding Oman's energy future. The notable participation of global and the Sultanate's industry titans underscores OPES's commitment to nurturing dialogue, fostering innovation, and propelling progress within the realms of oil, gas, and energy. OPES leads in cultivating a robust energy ecosystem with a keen focus on decarbonisation, and in promoting accessible, sustainable, and reliable energy solutions.

Reflecting on the occasion, Salim Al Aufi stated, "This significant national event reflects the diligent efforts undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in the realm of sustainable energy, and the

balance between promoting economic development and preserving the environment. It also presents a favourable opportunity to embrace the latest developments in the fields of petroleum and energy to harness them in relevant sectors. The exhibition serves as a vital platform for knowledge exchange, fostering innovation, and building fruitful collaborations to enhance local expertise. Moreover, it strengthens the resilience of the national economy by pushing the boundaries of innovation and excellence, and steering the future of energy towards new horizons of growth, sustainable development, and reducing carbon emissions to achieve carbon neutrality goals."

Commenting on the signifi-

cance of the event, Steve Phimister, Managing Director, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), said, "We are excited to host the prestigious Oman Petroleum and Energy Show (OPES) 2024, where participants will share their innovation and sustainable practices that redefine industry standards. This significant occasion offers an open platform to connect with fellow leaders and professionals, a place to push the boundaries of excellence and sustainability. For PDO, OPES is more than just a meeting ground; it's a spotlight on the future of energy, where our purpose comes alive - Building a Sustainable and Low-Carbon Future to Maximise Value for Oman."

Boasting an impressive line-up of



over 300 participating companies from 24 countries, OPES has set the stage for a dynamic exchange of ideas and innovations. Anticipating over 15,000 visitors this year, the event promises a bustling atmosphere conducive to networking and collaboration. Furthermore, attendees can gain insights from more than 200 expert speakers and 900 conference delegates, ensuring an enriching experience for all involved. OPES is open to visitors from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm between 22nd to 24th April, Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Visitors can expect to experience the latest technologies at OPES 2024. Gold Sponsor SLB is introducing two advanced artificial lift systems: The Reda™ Agile™ compact wide-range electric submersible pump (ESP) system and the rod-less Reda PowerEdge™ energy-efficient wide-range electric submersible progressing cavity pump (ESPCP) system. Their breakthrough designs deliver enhanced reliability and efficiency with a reduced footprint to operators.

A key highlight of the event is the SPE Conference, centred on 'Affordable, Sustainable, and Clean Energy'. Organised by the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), it offers a platform for discussions on innovations, technologies, and industry best practices.

With a distinguished faculty of experts, the conference includes technical ePoster sessions promoting knowledge sharing and an engaging project showcase. In addition, OPES Talks, a free-to-attend, CPD-accredited workshop tailored to industry professionals, serves as a comprehensive showcase of cutting-edge technologies and solutions within the oil, gas, and energy sectors. Covering a diverse range of topics, from the latest digital advancements to pioneering developments in energy transition, these insights empower attendees to leverage emerging technologies for enhanced business operations, fostering adaptability and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market landscape.

Furthermore, the National Young Professionals Forum, designed to provide participants with invaluable information on trending industry topics, aims to facilitate discussions on innovative ideas and spearhead initiatives aimed at bolstering competitiveness, connectivity, and leadership.

With its comprehensive agenda, diverse range of exhibitors, and commitment to advancing the energy landscape, OPES 2024 is poised to set new benchmarks in the oil, gas, and energy sectors.

For more information, visit www.omanpetroleumandenergy-show.com.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman Education & Training, up 9.88 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Cables Industry, down 7.17 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,697.87 points, down by 0.13 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.25 per cent at 442.57 points. Oman Education & Training, up 9.88 per cent, was the top gainer while, Oman Cables Industry, down 7.17 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Oman Cables Industry were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 741 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.12 million, with more than 12.95 million shares changing hands. Out of 53 traded securities, 13 advanced, 22 declined, and 18 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR293,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR245,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR48,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,624.86 points, up 0.05%. Prices of Global Financial Investments, Oman United Insurance, Al Madina Takaful, Bank Nizwa, Sohar International Bank were up by

2.86 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 1.22 per cent, 1.02 per cent, 0.82 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Finance, Taageer Finance, Bank Dhofar, National Bank Oman were down by 1.96 per cent, 1.87 per cent, 1.25 per cent, 1.18 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,707.46 points, down 1.1 per cent. Prices of Al Hassan Engineering, Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Cement were up by 4.55 per cent, 1.96 per cent, 0.54 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Cables Industry, Voltamp Energy, Raysut Cement, Al Anwar Ceramics, Galfar Engineering were down by 7.17 per cent, 2.57 per cent, 2.40 per cent, 1.66 per cent, 1.42 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.59 per cent before closing at 1,828.79 points. Prices of Oman Education & Training, Barka Water & Power Company, Ooredoo, Oman Telecom were up by 9.88 per cent, 1.43 per cent, 1.01 per cent, 0.19 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Oil Marketing, Dhofar Generating, Renaissance Services, National Gas, Sharqiyah Desalination were down by 4.44 per cent, 3.61 per cent, 2.67 per cent, 2.35 per cent, 2.26 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

REGULAR MARKET

Parallel Market



LIFESTYLE

HEALTH-HARMING
HEAT STRESS

DRIVING
IN EUROPE

Europe is increasingly facing bouts of heat so intense that the human body cannot cope, as climate change continues to raise temperatures, the EU's Copernicus climate monitoring service and the World Meteorological Organization said.

In a report on Europe's climate, Copernicus and the WMO noted last year's extreme conditions, including a July heatwave which pushed 41% of southern Europe into strong, very strong or extreme heat stress, the biggest area of Europe under such conditions in any day on record.

Extreme heat poses particular health

risks to outdoor workers, the elderly, and people with existing conditions like cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.

Parts of Italy recorded 7 percent more deaths than normal last July.

Heat stress measures the impact that the environment has on the human body, combining factors like temperature, humidity and the body's response, to establish a "feels like" temperature.

Parts of Spain, France, Italy and Greece experienced up to ten days of extreme heat stress in 2023, defined as a "feels like" temperature of more than 46 degrees Celsius, at which point immediate action must be taken to avoid heat stroke and other health

issues.

Deaths related to heat have increased by around 30% in Europe in the last 20 years, the report said.

The EU's environment agency urged governments last month to prepare healthcare systems for climate change and called for EU rules to protect outdoor workers from extreme heat.

Last year was the world's hottest since records began. Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent.

Greenhouse gas emissions were the biggest cause of last year's exceptional heat, the report said.

The heat fuelled extreme weather including flooding, since the warmer

atmosphere can hold more moisture, causing heavier downpours when it is released.

Floods in Slovenia last year (2023) affected 1.5 million people.

Greece suffered the EU's biggest wildfire on record which, at 960 square km, was twice the size of Athens.

Alpine glaciers lost 10 percent of their remaining volume during 2022 and 2023.

"Some of the events of 2023 took the scientific community by surprise because of their intensity, their speed of onset, extent and duration," said Carlo Buontempo, director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service. -ONA

SPORTS

Bellingham stars as Real edge Barca in El Clasico thriller

The win helps Real to move 11 points clear at the top of Spanish La Liga

MADRID: Jude Bellingham scored a late winner as Real Madrid beat Barcelona 3-2 to move 11 points clear at the top of La Liga after an enthralling El Clasico on Sunday.

Bellingham smashed into the roof of the net as the clock ticked into stoppage time as Real twice came from behind at the Bernabeu.

Andres Christensen scored the opener for Barcelona but a Vinicius Jr penalty had the game level at half-time. Fermin Lopez made it 2-1 to Barca before Lucas Vazquez equalised again.

The victory puts Real firmly on track to reclaim the title with just six games left to play this season.

It looked set to be a positive night for Barcelona when Christensen rose above Toni Kroos to meet Raphinha's corner after just six minutes.

But those celebrations were short lived as referee Cesar Soto Grado pointed to the penalty spot when Pau Cubarsi fouled Vazquez in the area, handing Vinicius the



opportunity to score his 13th La Liga goal of the campaign.

Lamine Yamal thought he had restored Barcelona's lead when he flicked a corner towards goal and goalkeeper Andriy Lunin, who was behind the line, clawed it away.

Barcelona were adamant the ball had crossed the line but, as La Liga does not have goalline tech-



nology, the video assistant referee decided that was not the case.

A tense second half came to life in the 69th minute with Lopez turning in from close range after Lunin parried a cross into his path.

However, Carlo Ancelotti's Real drew level for a second time just four minutes later with Vazquez emerging unmarked at the far post to meet Vinicius' cross.

The win extends Real's unbeaten record across all competitions to 28 matches - winning 22 and drawing six - with their last loss at home coming against Villarreal on 8 April 2023.

since Dutchman Ruud van Nistelrooy in 2007.

The 103m euros (£88.5m) that Real handed over to Borussia Dortmund to sign Bellingham in the summer is looking like more of a bargain with each week that passes and he certainly does not look out of place with Zinedine Zidane's iconic number five on his back.

With 17 goals in La Liga this term, Bellingham is the second highest scorer in the division - just one behind Girona's Artem Dovbyk - and he continues to dazzle as Real look to end the season with a La Liga and Champions League double.

'It's a disgrace' - Xavi

Barcelona coach Xavi was furious after VAR officials could not prove that Yamal's effort had crossed the line.

"It's a disgrace," said Xavi, complaining that the goalline technology used in other top flights including the Premier League is not available in La Liga.

"If we want to be the best league in the world we have to advance in this sense, you have to put in the technology."

Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen agreed with his coach. "It's shameful for football, I don't have the words," said the German international.

"There's so much money in this world and there's no money for what's most important." - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Liverpool reignite title bid

LONDON: Liverpool put a frustrating fortnight behind them to reignite their Premier League title bid with a welcome 3-1 win at Fulham on Sunday.

Trent Alexander-Arnold, making a first league start in more than two months following a knee injury, curled a fabulous first-half free-kick into the top corner to put them ahead.

Timothy Castagne steered Fulham level before the break but Ryan Gravenberch's perfectly-measured 20-yard effort flew in off the post to restore the Reds' advantage.

Diogo Jota sealed the points with an accurate low finish past Bernd Leno from Cody Gakpo's through ball and the margin of victory could arguably have been greater.

Regardless, it was an accomplished and largely trouble-free display from Liverpool that will reassure boss Jurgen Klopp they could yet end his nine-year reign with a second Premier League crown.

Dropped points in a draw at Manchester United and a shock Anfield defeat by Crystal Palace - with a disappointing Europa League exit to Atalanta sandwiched in between - had threatened to derail hopes of further trophies to add to the Carabao Cup they have already collected this season.

But victory at Craven Cottage lifts Liverpool back up to second in the table, level on points with leaders Arsenal - but behind the Gunners on goal difference - and a point above third-placed Man City, who have a game in hand.

"For 80 minutes we played a really good game," manager Klopp told BBC Match of the Day.



"I didn't like the last 10 minutes of the first half and they got the goal. But that's all right because I loved the second half.

"We want to stay in that race, that's clear. Arsenal won yesterday, Manchester City will win their game in hand, so we have to win games and that's what we'll try [to do]."

Reds pass tricky test on Thames

Klopp's trademark post-match fist-pumping celebration with the travelling supporters seemed to have even more oomph than usual after his side navigated a tricky test they simply could not afford to fail.

Fulham have claimed a string of notable scalps at the Cottage this season, upsetting Arsenal there in December, while European hopefuls Tottenham, Brighton and West Ham have all been soundly beaten too.

Fulham, safely ensconced in 12th place in the table, had little by way of response as Liverpool eased off the gas in the closing stages, perhaps with Wednesday night's Merseyside derby at Everton in mind.

Other results: Everton 2 Nottingham Forest 0, Aston Villa 3 Bournemouth 1, Crystal Palace 5 West Ham United 2. - Agencies

FA CUP: SEMI-FINAL VS COVENTRY

Man Utd reach FA Cup final despite blowing 3-0 lead

LONDON: Manchester United scraped into the FA Cup final on penalties despite throwing away a three-goal lead against Championship side Coventry in an epic semi-final at Wembley on Sunday.

In a very modern-day thriller, United came out on top 4-2 in a penalty shootout they were losing at one stage.

A quite remarkable contest only got that far because Victor Torp's effort in injury time in extra time was ruled out for offside by video assistant referee Peter Banks.

But after Bradley Collins saved United's first kick, from Casemiro, Andre Onana denied Callum O'Hare, then unsettled Ben Sheaf with some verbal jousting - and the Coventry captain missed - allowing Rasmus Hojlund to win it.

What the watching United co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe made of it would be interesting to know. Thirty-four years ago, Mark Robins' goalscoring heroics in the FA Cup kept Sir Alex Ferguson in a job. Who knows what damage Robins' Coventry side have done to Erik ten Hag's chances of keeping his?

United thought they were cruising to a repeat of last season's final with neighbours Manchester City when they led 3-0 thanks to goals from Scott McTominay, Harry Maguire and Bruno Fernandes.

But in front of Ratcliffe, who had completed the London Marathon earlier in the day, co-chairmen Joel and Avram Glazer and new technical director Jason Wilcox, United imploded and Coventry took full advantage.

After Ellis Simms and O'Hare reduced the deficit, Haji Wright kept his nerve in stoppage time to score from the spot and send the game into extra time.

For a brief moment, Torp allowed delirious Coventry fans to believe their team were coming back next month to try to emulate the Sky Blue heroes of their 1987 triumph over Tottenham.

It was not to be. But when it was all over, it was the Championship players who were taking the acclaim of their fans as Ten Hag



and his players rather sheepishly made their way to the dressing rooms. It is only the second time in the competition's history that the same two teams have reached successive finals.

Blackburn Rovers beat Queen's Park at Kennington Oval in 1884 and 1885.

The win keeps Ten Hag's hopes of lifting silverware in both his seasons as United manager.

This was a day Coventry fans will remember forever, not far behind the epic 1987 final victory. - Agencies

TENNIS

Ruud earns easy win over Tsitsipas in final; Rybakina lifts crown

BARCELONA: Casper Ruud won his first title of 2024 as he beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets to win the Barcelona Open on Sunday.

Norwegian third seed Ruud defeated the Greek fifth seed 7-5, 6-3 to claim the biggest title of his career.

It is the first time the 25-year-old, who is ranked sixth in the world, has won an ATP 500-ranked event.

"For me it means a lot, this is my biggest title that I ever won," said Ruud.

"It's something I've chased for a long time already. I've never won a 500 before or a 1000. I've been to a few finals but always came

up a little bit short."

Ruud, a three-time Grand Slam runner-up, was broken early by the 25-year-old Tsitsipas but broke back in the sixth game, before going on to convert one of two set points at 6-5.

He then opened up a 4-1 lead in the second set after Tsitsipas hit a forehand into the net to concede a break, before seeing out victory in 91 minutes to end the Greek's 10-match winning streak.

The win also avenged Ruud's defeat by Tsitsipas in last week's Monte Carlo Open final.

lsewhere, Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff earned a straight sets win over American Taylor Fritz to



win the BMW Open in Munich.

Fourth seed and home favourite Struff beat the third seed 7-5, 6-3 to secure a maiden ATP Tour title at the clay-court ATP 250 event.

At the Bucharest Open, Hungary's Marton Fucsovics beat Mari-



ano Navone of Argentina 6-4, 7-5 for his second ATP Tour title.

Rybakina beats Kostyuk

In Stuttgart, Germany, world No.4 Elena Rybakina claimed her third title of the year, beating Marta Ko-

styuk 6-2, 6-2 to win the Stuttgart Open on Sunday.

The 24-year-old from Kazakhstan broke the Ukrainian to love in the opening game and cruised through the first set.

Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, started the second set with a break and there was no way back for Kostyuk.

The victory for Rybakina comes after titles in Brisbane in January and in Abu Dhabi the following month.

She had booked her place in the final with an impressive win over world No.1 and two-time defending champion Iga Swiatek on Saturday.

Kostyuk's only chance of a

comeback came in the second set when she forced break three points when 3-2 down, but she failed to take advantage and looked frustrated and close to tears.

"I want to congratulate Marta of course, it's been a great tournament, great matches you played here, you're playing really amazing and hopefully we'll play many more finals," said Rybakina.

Elsewhere, American Sloane Stephens beat unseeded Magda Linette of Poland 6-1, 2-6, 6-2 to win the WTA Open de Rouen in France. It was an eighth career singles title for the 2017 US Open winner - and her first since February 2022. - Agencies

Bank Muscat inaugurates lighting project for Tadhmun Sports and Cultural Team in Rustaq

This project allows team members to practice evening sports, which will help in developing their skills while contributing to strengthening the infrastructure of Omani sports

MUSCAT: As part of the Green Sports Programme from Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, the bank participated in the celebration of the opening of the Tadhmun Sports and Cultural Team Lighting Project in Rustaq, South Batinah Governorate, under the patronage of Dr Hamad bin Saif Bin Ali al Hammami, permanent representative of the Sultanate of Oman to Unesco, in the presence of Adnan bin Ahmed Al Balushi, Assistant Regional Manager of Bank Muscat branches, South Batinah Governorate, Yousuf bin Ali bin Khalfan Al Hatemi, Head of the Tadhmun Sports and Cultural Team, and a number of guests and team members.

During the ceremony, the bank representative delivered a speech, expressing delightedness of the inauguration of the lighting system in Tadhmun team's play yard which comes within the Green Sports Programme, one of the sustainable social responsibility pro-



grammes of Bank Muscat. "The initiative aims to supporting Omani youth and contributing to the development of local teams spread across governorates.

"This project allows team members to practice evening sports, which will help developing their skills while contributing to strengthening the infrastructure

of Omani sports," he stressed.

Yousuf bin Ali Al Hatemi, Head of the Tadhmun Sports and Cultural Team, expressed gratitude to Bank Muscat for its support provided to the local sports teams in Oman, adding that Green Sports programme represents an example to follow in the field of supporting youth talents and contrib-

uting to the development of local playgrounds, which are strategic locations for organising various sports and community events and activities.

Al Hatmi confirmed that the lightening system installed for Tadhmun team is considered a qualitative leap that will allow the team to organize various events

and activities during the evening period, as well as to organize various sports and cultural competitions. This will also enable them to develop their talents.

At the beginning of the year, Bank Muscat announced the launch of the 13th edition of the Green Sports programme for 2024. A number of 20 sports team

SOLIDARITY



Omantel board approves allocation of OMR150,000 to support families affected by rain depression

MUSCAT: As part of its efforts and social responsibility strategy, the Board of Directors of Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel) has decided to donate OMR150,000 to help families affected by the "Al Mateer" depression that hit a number of governorates of the Sultanate of Oman last week.

This support will be distributed to the affected families in coordination with the Ministry of Social Development and the Governor Offices in the affected governorates.

Commenting on this initiative, Talal bin Said Al Maamari,

CEO of Omantel, said: "Al Mater rain depression has impacted families in various governorates of the Sultanate. We believe that it is our duty as a national company to show our solidarity with the community and contribute to supporting efforts aimed at helping these families to recover from the damages caused by the depression, in cooperation with the concerned government entities".

This support comes in addition to the amount allocated for community service of OMR 750,000 approved by Omantel General Assembly at its annual meeting held on March 30, 2024.

ENTERTAINMENT SHOW

Muscat Star Night Season 2 to be held on May 2

MUSCAT: The highly anticipated Muscat Star Night Season 2 is back by popular demand, presented by the renowned We Are Family group in Muscat. Following the incredible success of Season 1, the group has received constant requests from their loyal followers, and they are thrilled to announce the return of this spectacular event.

We Are Family group, which started with 2 families and has now grown to include 60 families, has been actively involved in numerous charitable events and activities over the years. The group has been instrumental in providing opportunities to young talents in all their events, especially school kids, to give them the best stage exposure.

The event, taking place on May 2 at the Majan Heights Hall in Wadi Al Kabir, will feature an incredible lineup of some of the biggest stars in the industry. Ramesh Pisharody, a well-known Indian stand-up comedian, impressionist, television presenter, actor, and film director, will be gracing the stage with his observational comedy.



Joining him will be Sayanora Philip, a talented playback singer in the Malayalam and Tamil film industry, and Vipin Xavier, another prominent playback singer known for hit songs like "Toofan" from KGF 2. Accompanying them will be the versatile actress and excellent dancer, Malavika Menon, and the popular Indian television presenter and radio jockey, Lakshmi Nakshathra.

Adding to the excitement, the audience can also look forward to the hilarious antics of Mahesh



Kunjumon, a popular mimicry artist known for his spot dubbing and Comedy Utsav fame. The event will also feature dance performances from the young talents of We Are Family, as well as a dance performance by DADS dance academy.

The support of sponsors has been crucial in making the event possible, and the We Are Family group is extremely grateful for their contributions. A special thank you goes out to the main sponsor, Makkah hypermarket,

for their unwavering support and dedication to the cause, as well as to Rathish Rajan from Amani TVR group for his constant promotion and assistance with event planning. Additional thanks are extended to sponsors including Bahlseen, Cochin Gold, Unimoni, Craft Holidays, Rizan Gold, and Badr Al Sama for their generous contributions.

In recognition of the support received, a portion of the proceeds from the event will be donated to We Help, a charitable organization in Oman that assists those in need. This contribution will help make a positive impact in the lives of individuals and families who require support.

With tickets selling fast, this is an event not to be missed. Secure your seat for Muscat Star Night Season 2 by booking your tickets now. Contact 9784266 or 96962824 to reserve your spot and be a part of this unforgettable evening on May 2nd. Let's all come together for a night of family entertainment at Muscat Star Night Season 2.

CAMPAIGN

Toyota Veloz available with 'Biggest Excitement' benefits

MUSCAT: The Toyota Veloz is now available with the 'Biggest Excitement' benefits.

Customers looking forward to owning the Veloz can avail a chance to enter the Raffle draw & win Toyota Crown cars and avail exclusive benefits including Service for 3 Years / 30,000 kms (whichever is earlier) and Insurance 1 Year. Apart from that customers can also avail attractive instalments. The campaign is valid up to 1st May 2024 (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. EMI calculated are for base models with 20 percent down payment for 10 years. Loan approval is based on the sole discretion of banks. Terms & Conditions

apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.)

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

The Toyota Veloz is equipped with MacPherson strut-type front suspension, which provides linear and direct driving dynamics, while the rear is equipped with a new



torsion beam suspension system. Drivers can experience three different driving modes with a choice of ECO, Sport, and Power modes to

suit a variety of driving conditions and styles. The vehicle also boasts excellent manoeuvrability, with a 5.0-meter turning radius.

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

Upon entering the vehicle, passengers are welcomed by ambient lighting that complements the overall feel of the spacious cabin, which comes with a range of advanced and practical features. These include a 7-inch col-

our Multi-Information Display (MID), which is complemented by an 8-inch multimedia screen with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™ integration for seamlessly connected journeys.

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

ROUND-UP

BankDhofar offers various savings solutions to customers with competitive interest rates

BankDhofar is one of the leading banks in the region, as it provides integrated banking services to the corporate and the individual customers and works to meet customers’ needs by applying the best international practices in the banking sector



MUSCAT: Bank Dhofar, the leading financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman, provides multiple savings options with the aim of improving customers’ financial plans, which achieves unparalleled lucrative returns on their investments.

Therefore, the bank designed the Recurring Deposit Account as a powerful and flexible savings tool to meet the financial needs

of customers and their future aspirations to achieve competitive returns and sustainable growth for their money.

The Recurring Deposit Account from BankDhofar is characterised by unique benefits for customers from all segments of society, especially for those who are looking for reliable and rewarding financial solutions, as the account allows the commitment to deposit small

amounts of money starting from 0.500 baizas in order to achieve higher returns than a regular account. In addition to the flexibility to pay on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, with an interest rate of up to 5%.

Depending on the deposit structure, customers can commit to an amount starting from 0.500 baiza for a daily plan, 5 Omani Riyals for a weekly plan, and 10 Omani Riyals

for a monthly plan. The interest rate on the Recurring Deposit Account ranges between 4.25% - 5%.

Amjad Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at the bank, said: We at BankDhofar, through the Recurring Deposit Account, try to help customers build a good financial plan to achieve their goals in financing their children’s education, their dream trip, or opening a small or medium business, etc., by

allowing customers deposit a fixed amount of money every month on a regular basis. In addition, account holders have a clear advantage in obtaining competitive interest rates in the market and achieving better returns on their investments.

BankDhofar also offers a different group of deposits that allow customers to enriching their savings experience and giving them an

opportunity to grow their wealth, such as a fixed deposit, especially for individuals who are looking to secure their savings at a competitive interest rate, in addition to the high-yield savings account, which is a suitable option for customers who prefer flexibility and liquidity with get the best returns, as it offers competitive interest of up to 4.25% annually on balances. The bank also provides another saving option for customers in US dollars for those wishing to keep a saving account with dollar currency and grow it at a fixed rate to exceed 50 thousand dollars at a competitive price.

BankDhofar is one of the leading banks in the region, as it provides integrated banking services to the corporate and the individual customers and works to meet customers’ needs by applying the best international practices in the banking sector. The bank also seeks to enrich customers’ banking experience through innovative products and services and dealing with the latest modern technology.

BankDhofar has recently expanded its branches network in different locations in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman to reach a wider range of customers and provide them with the banking services they need.

The number of branches reached 118, and the number of devices (ATM, cash deposit, multi-use devices and multi-service interactive devices) increased by 36% to reach 350 devices.

SIGNIFICANT



Kaldi 850 Coffee opens first drive-thru store in Salalah

SALALAH: Kaldi 850 Coffee announced the much-anticipated opening of its inaugural drive-thru store in Salalah, Dhofar region, Oman. As the first of its kind in the region, the new drive-thru concept aims to cater to the bustling lifestyles of soffee enthusiasts on the go.

Conveniently located at Al Nahda Center, Saada, Salalah. The drive-thru store promises to deliver the same exceptional quality and unparalleled service that patrons have come to expect from Kaldi 850 Coffee. Whether it’s a morning pick-me-up or a midday refuel, customers can now enjoy their favorite brews without having to leave the comfort of their vehicles.

“We are thrilled to introduce our innovative drive-thru concept to the vibrant community of Salalah,” said Paul Biswajit, Country Head of Kaldi 850 Coffee.

“With busy schedules and hectic lifestyles, we understand the importance of convenience without compromising on quality. Our drive-thru store is designed to meet the needs of our customers who are always on the move.”

The opening of the drive-thru store marks a significant milestone for Kaldi 850 Coffee as it continues to expand its footprint across Oman. Committed to sustainability and community engagement, the company aims to provide not only exceptional coffee but also a memorable experience for its customers.

To celebrate the grand opening, Kaldi 850 Coffee invites coffee lovers and enthusiasts to visit the drive-thru store and experience the perfect blend of taste and convenience. Join us as we embark on this exciting journey of redefining the coffee experience in Salalah, one cup at a time.

CULTURAL VISIT

MCBS student gets unique opportunity to explore vibrant tapestry of Chinese culture

MUSCAT: As part of a cultural visit organized by the Chinese Embassy in Oman in collaboration with the Omani Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation, MCBS’s student, Abdullah Al Shaibani, among other students has started his cultural visit programme taking place in China from 18th April to 2nd May 2024. This enriching journey will offer a unique opportunity to explore the vibrant tapestry of Chinese culture, history and traditions.

With an itinerary carefully crafted to maximise cultural exchange, educational enrichment, and personal growth, participating students will embark on a transformative adventure across some of China’s most iconic landmarks and cities. From the bustling streets of Beijing to the serene landscapes of Guilin, each destination will offer a distinct perspective on the rich heritage and contemporary dynamism of China.

The visit’s programme includes visiting several cultural institutions, educational institutions, and touristic sites. There will be an opportunity as well to learn the basics of the Chinese Language and to practice some of the most famous Chinese traditional games with Chinese people in typical Chinese neighborhoods. The purpose is to provide opportunities to engage in a diverse range of activities designed to foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Through this immersive cultural exchange, students will not only deepen their understanding of China but also cultivate invaluable skills in cross-cultural communication, adaptability, and global citizenship. By fostering friendships across borders and embracing diversity, participants will lay the groundwork for a more interconnected and harmonious world.

Dr. Moosa Al Kindi MCBS’s



cultural understanding and empathy is more important than ever. We believe that this cultural visit will not only broaden our students’ horizons but also inspire them to become global citizens committed to building bridges across cultures.”

Upon his arrival to China, our student Abdullah Al Shaibani stated: “I would like to thank the Omani government as well as the Chinese government for this opportunity they gave us, we really enjoy the people here, the cultural diversity, we are learning a lot and we are looking forward for more opportunities”. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to MCBS for taking care of its students and for granting such an opportunity to link its students with the world and its developments. Follow the journey of our student as he explores China’s past, present, and future through our social media channels.



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