



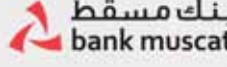
HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREETES KING OF THAILAND

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to King Vajiralongkorn. His Majesty also wished the people of Thailand further progress, prosperity and stability. — **ONA**



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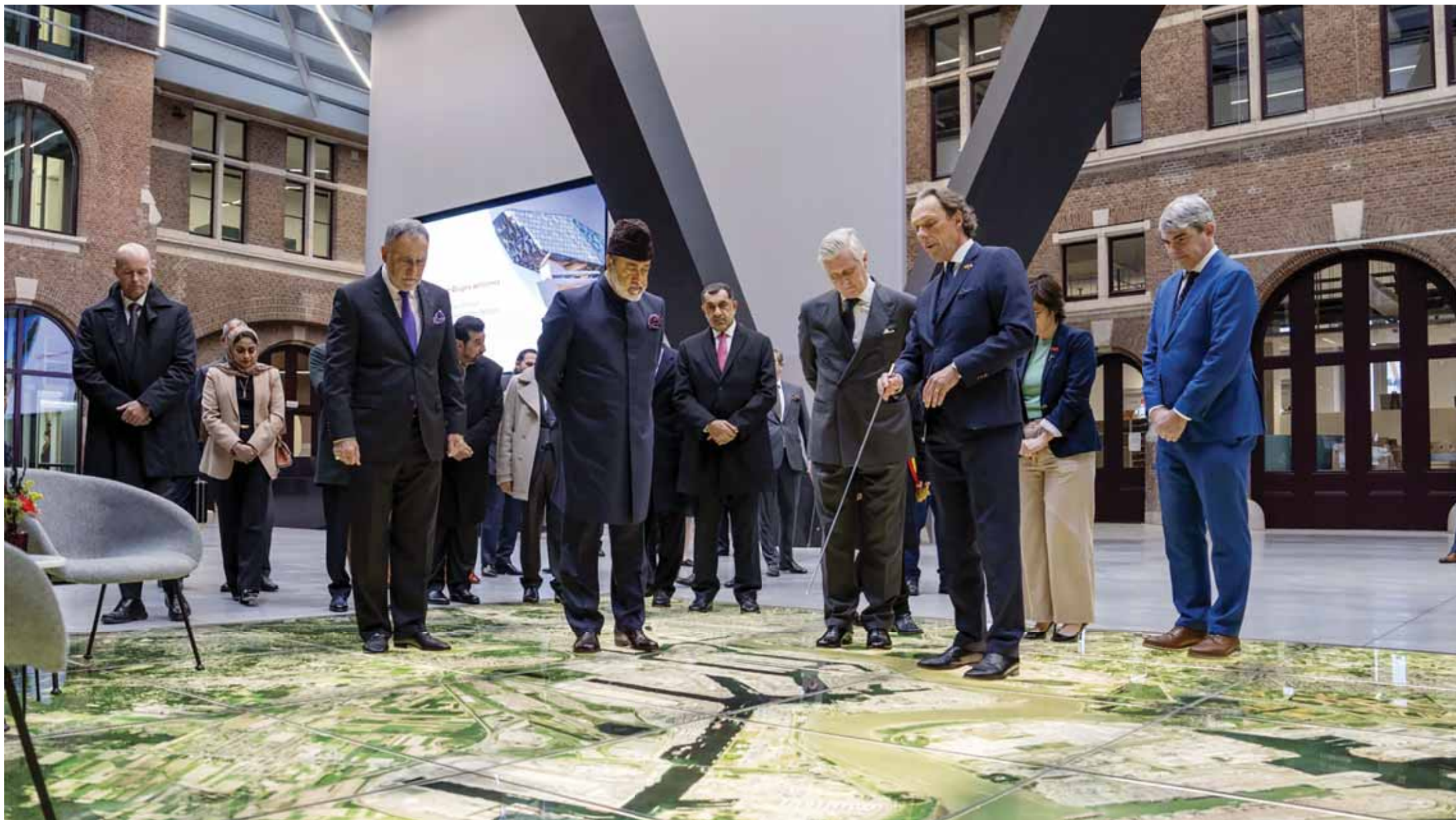
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OMAN, BELGIUM TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL COOPERATION IN KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS



The visit highlights the strong and longstanding ties between the two nations

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium affirmed their intention to boost bilateral cooperation in key economic sectors including maritime activities and cooperation between ports, energy transformation and green hydrogen production. This was stated in a joint communiqué issued on the occasion of

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's state visit to Belgium. It reads as follows: "On December 2-4 2024, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman undertook a State Visit to the Kingdom of Belgium at the invitation of His Majesty the King of the Belgians, marking a significant milestone in the en-

during friendship and cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium. The visit highlights the strong and longstanding ties between the two nations, rooted in mutual respect, shared values, and a commitment to peace and prosperity, as affirmed during the official visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen to the Sultanate of Oman in February 2022.

The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium underscore their intention to strengthen bilateral cooperation across key economic sectors. Acknowledging the potential for growth, both countries continue exploration for

opportunities for collaboration in fields such as maritime activities and cooperation between ports, energy transition and green hydrogen, trade, and service industries, as well as life sciences, technological innovation and aerospace.

The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium look forward to enhancing bilateral cooperation on investments and the creation of joint investment opportunities. Both countries are currently negotiating with the intention to reach a mutually profitable extension of the Port of Duqm concession, to further anchor their economies ties. They pledge to facilitate dialogue, promote investor-friendly

policies and explore avenues for growth across the aforementioned key mutually beneficial sectors.

In the spirit of advancing knowledge and innovation, the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium are committed to deepening academic cooperation and fostering greater cultural exchange. Both nations recognise the value of collaborative research, mutually beneficial exchange programmes and joint initiatives that will build stronger ties between their people.

The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium reaffirmed their dedication to fostering peace and stability in the conflict zones

in the world. Recognising the critical importance of dialogue and diplomacy, both nations expressed a shared commitment to constructive engagement in addressing regional and international challenges.

The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium look forward to build upon this fruitful relationship, united in their commitment to a peaceful, prosperous, sustainable and interconnected future for all.

The Sultanate of Oman wishes to convey warm thanks to the Kingdom of Belgium for their matchless hospitality.

This statement serves as a testament to the strong partnership Oman and Belgium." — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Scientific Rocket launch postponed

1 The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the National Space Services Company (NASCOM) have postponed the launch of the experimental scientific rocket 'Duqm-1'. **>A7**



OMAN Information minister receives top official

2 Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information, received Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, DG of the GCC Joint Programme Production Institution. **>A7**

SPORTS India retain Jr Asia Cup hockey title

3 Arajjeet Singh Hundal's masterclass secured India a 5-3 win over Pakistan for their fifth overall title in the Men's Junior Asia Cup at the Hockey Oman Arena in Al Amerat on Wednesday. **>A8**

OMAN VISION 2040

Amplifying children's voices to address global challenges

MUSCAT: UNICEF Oman, in collaboration with government counterparts, business partners, and community leaders, activated a vibrant "Listen to the Future" campaign across the Sultanate of Oman. The campaign highlighted children's voices and showcased Oman's commitment to their rights, aligning with Oman Vision 2040.

This comes within the framework of celebrating the World Children's Day (WCD) and the 35th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC35). In line with this year's theme that emphasized the importance of amplifying children's voices to address pressing global challenges and ensure a brighter future for every child.

To this extent, UNICEF Oman organised a series of roundtable discussions across Oman. These discussions brought together students from South Al Batinah Governorate and Al Dakhiliyah



Governorate and different decision-makers such as Dr. Hilal Al-Sabti, the Minister of Health and Dr. Rashid Al Balushi, the Chairman of Oman Human Rights Commission, to foster meaningful dialogue on children's rights and the challenges they face.

The roundtable discussions were hosted by Yahya Badr Al Mawali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah, and Sheikh Saleh Dhiyab Al Rubaiey, Wali of Nizwa.

The "Listen to the Future" campaign saw a remarkable collaboration among UN agencies, community leaders, and social media influencers, who united to spread a shared message of support for Oman's children during the period starting November 20th which also coincide with Oman's national day festive season.

"As we celebrate World Children's Day and the 35th anniversary of the Convention on the

Rights of the Child, we reaffirm our commitment to working with the Government of Oman, partners, and the community to protect, empower, and elevate the voices of every child" stated by UNICEF Oman's Representative, Sumaira Chowdhury. UNICEF Oman's representative added that, "Together, we are building a future that aligns with Oman Vision 2040, ensuring that children are at the heart of the nation's development."

On his turn, Hamad Al-Alawi, an 8th-grade student at Abul Rahman bin Auf School in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate reflected on the significance of this year's World Children's Day theme, saying "This slogan deeply resonated with me, as it highlights the critical importance of hearing students' perspectives on issues that impact us and collaboratively discussing ways to address these concerns from our viewpoint". — **ONA**



Dhuhr.....	12:02pm
Asr.....	3:05pm
Maghrib.....	5:25pm
Isha.....	6:40pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:15am

HM the Sultan leaves Belgium



BRUSSELS: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik left the Kingdom of Belgium yesterday evening after a three-day state visit.

His Majesty was seen off at Brussels Military Airport by Vice Admiral Jan De Beurme, Representative of the King in the Kingdom of Belgium, Tinne Van der Straeten, Minister of Energy, some Belgian officials and members of the Omani embassy in Belgium.

Upon his departure, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a cable of thanks to King Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians and his spouse Queen Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine, Queen of the Belgians.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality.

His Majesty lauded the outcomes of his meeting with the King, as it was an opportunity to discuss the friendship relations between the two countries and means of boosting them in various spheres to serve interests of the



Omani and Belgian peoples.

His Majesty the Sultan wished the King and the Queen good health, well-being and success to achieve further aspirations of progress and prosperity for the Belgian people.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan was accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation that comprised HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al

Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Mursihidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Eng. Salim bin Nassir Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Rua bint Issa Al Zadjali, Ambassador of Oman to Belgium. -ONA

PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

His Majesty visits Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel



WALLONIA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, accompanied by King Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians and his spouse Queen Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine, Queen of the Belgians, yesterday visited Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in the Wallonia region.

The Chapel is a prestigious international centre responsible for the artistic education of young musicians.

Upon the arrival of the motorcade of His Majesty the Sultan and the King, they were received by the Governor of the Walloon Region and the Mayor of Namur city.

His Majesty was briefed on the Music Chapel and its roles in disseminating the artistic culture. Then, His Majesty listened to a number of musical pieces that were played.

After that, a private luncheon was held at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in honour of His Majesty the Sultan and the accompanying delegation, in the presence of the King and Queen of the Belgians. After that, His Majesty the Sultan presented a musical instrument as a gift for the center. -ONA

HYDROM AND BELGIAN HYDROGEN COUNCIL

Oman, Belgium strengthen green hydrogen partnership with new landmark agreement

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's state visit to Belgium, the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further strengthen their collaboration in green hydrogen. The MOU, signed between Hydrom Oman (Hydrom) and the Belgian Hydrogen Council (BHC), sets the stage for enhanced cooperation across the hydrogen value chain, reflecting the shared commitment of both nations to advance the global hydrogen economy.

The signing ceremony brought together business leaders, policymakers, and industry representatives from both nations to underscore joint efforts to align policies, promote knowledge exchange and technological advancements, as well as explore opportunities across hydrogen production, infrastructure, transportation, and utilisation.

"This MoU represents a defining moment in the partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium, advancing our shared ambition to shape the future of the global hydrogen economy," said Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals and Chairman of Hydrom. "Oman's potential capacity as a hub for green hydrogen production, combined with



Belgium's role as a promising hydrogen-based industrial hub and strategic connection point to European markets, will strengthen energy security and create a seamless hydrogen supply chain. Together, we aim to accelerate the world's transition to clean energy by fostering innovation and building the infrastructure needed to connect producers and markets worldwide."

The MoU builds on 46 years of strong bilateral relations between Oman and Belgium, underpinned by key milestones in the green energy sector. These include the signing in 2023 of a 47-year Project Development Agreement between Hydrom and the Hyport Duqm project, an international alliance between Oman's OQ Al-

ternative Energy and Belgium's DEME, aimed at producing and exporting green hydrogen. This was further supported by the 2023 declaration of intent between the Ministry of Energy and Minerals in the Sultanate of Oman and the Ministry of Energy in the Kingdom of Belgium to advance hydrogen certification and trade frameworks.

Tom Hautekiet, Chairman of the Belgian Hydrogen Council, remarked, "This agreement represents a significant step forward in strengthening our cooperation with Oman, a key partner in the global hydrogen supply chain. By leveraging Oman's competitive renewable energy resources and Belgium's strategic position as a hydrogen hub for Europe, we

are creating a powerful platform for innovation, investment, and growth in the hydrogen economy. Together, we aim to build a sustainable energy future, unlocking new opportunities for our industries, researchers, and policymakers."

The first joint milestone under the MoU will focus on key areas of collaboration including knowledge sharing, technology development, and infrastructure planning for hydrogen production, shipping, and terminal facilities. It will also expand on pathways to broader cooperation with other European countries as a part of the MoU promise to address legislative challenges and explore new opportunities for research and development.

Under the visionary leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Oman continues to strengthen its position as a pioneer in hydrogen innovation. His Majesty's engagement with business leaders during the signing highlights the Sultanate's commitment to fostering international partnerships that drive sustainable development and advance technological progress. Hydrom's role as the national orchestrator of Oman's green hydrogen strategy is central to this vision, enabling transformative projects and infrastructural development that position the nation as the global hydrogen hub of tomorrow.

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His Majesty the Sultan visits Belgian Port of Antwerp

During the visit, His Majesty was briefed on the importance of the port, its strategic location and future plans

ANTWERP: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, accompanied by King Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians, visited the building of the Port of Antwerp yesterday, as part of His Majesty's state visit to the Kingdom of Belgium. Upon his arrival at the facility, His Majesty the Sultan was received by the Governor and Mayor of Antwerp, the CEO of the port and some Belgian officials.

During the visit, His Majesty was briefed on the importance of the port, its strategic location and future plans.

The meeting touched on areas of cooperation in the sectors of renewable energy, green hydrogen and liquefied natural gas transportation, as well as ways of consolidating partnership in the ports and logistics sector.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan and the King signed the Visitors Book.

After that, a photo was taken for His Majesty the Sultan, the King, the official delegation from both sides, and a number of officials and CEOs.

At the end of the visit, the administration of Antwerp Port presented His Majesty the Sultan with a commemorative gift. On his turn, His Majesty presented them with a ship model as a commemorative gift. -ONA





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Media should focus on issues of common concern of GCC states

MUSCAT: Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information, received in his office on Wednesday Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Director General of the GCC Joint Programme Production Institution (GCCJPPI), who is currently visiting Oman.

The meeting dealt with various areas of cooperation in developing media programmes that highlight issues of common concern to GCC states.

The meeting was attended by Mohammed Said Al Balushi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, and other officials from the Ministry of Information.

During the visit, Sheikh Mubarak Al Sabah toured Oman News Agency (ONA), the News Centre, the Digital Studios Complex and the Directorate General



of Electronic Media.

Al Sabah listened to a briefing about news content provided by departments of the Ministry of Information.

He took note of the departments' advanced technical apparatus and programmes that keep pace with the requirements of modern media.

These include "Ayn" platform, visual and audio materials that have been produced over decades by the Ministry of Information, represented by Radio Sultanate of Oman and Oman TV--and their role in enhancing the media message. — ONA

JOINT STATEMENT

Duqm 1 rocket launch delayed due to adverse weather

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the National Space Services Company (NASCOM) have postponed the launch of the experimental scientific rocket 'Duqm-1' – scheduled for yesterday – due to unfavourable weather conditions.

Scientific rocket

The ministry and the company explained in a joint statement that the rocket will be launched when weather conditions improve, given that the process of launching experimental scientific rockets requires precise calculations of weather conditions, including windspeed and its suitability for the size and velocity of the rocket during the launch operation.

The statement affirmed that there would be no direct media coverage of the launch of Duqm-1 rocket, since it is the first experimental launch.

The statement advised members of the public to undertake precautionary measures during the target time, urging all fishermen and seafarers to sailing or be in the area of rocket launch. — ONA



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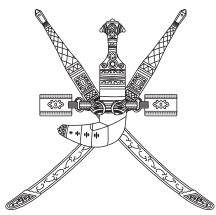
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SPORTS

India retain Jr Asia Cup title

Araijeet Singh Hundal's four-goal masterclass secured holders a 5-3 win over Pakistan for their fifth overall title in the Men's Junior Asia Cup at Hockey Oman Arena

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Araijeet Singh Hundal delivered a sensational performance, scoring four goals to lead India to a 5-3 victory over arch-rivals Pakistan in a thrilling final of the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) Men's Junior Asia Cup 2024 at the Hockey Oman Arena in Al Amerat on Wednesday. This was India's fifth title in the continental tournament, having previously won the crown in



2004, 2008, 2015 and 2023. In a repeat of last year's final that went in India's favour by a slender 2-1 margin in Salalah, India's asserted their dominance as they led 3-2 at the half-time. The match began at a frenetic pace, with Pakistan taking an early lead in the 3rd minute through Hannan Shahid's field goal. However, Hundal equalised

almost immediately in the 4th minute, converting India's first penalty corner to level the score. Both teams displayed aggressive play, fighting fiercely for possession. India took control in the second quarter. Hundal struck again in the 18th minute with another expertly converted penalty corner, giving India the lead. Moments later,

Dilraj Singh extended the advantage with a field goal, making it 3-1. Pakistan responded just before halftime, with Sufyan Khan reducing the deficit by converting a penalty corner in the final seconds of the quarter. The third quarter saw Pakistan mounting a comeback. Sufyan struck again in the 39th minute, scoring his second penalty corner

to bring the match level at 3-3. Despite Pakistan's momentum, India's defence stood strong, preventing further breakthroughs. The final quarter belonged to Hundal. In the 47th minute, he regained the lead for India with a brilliant deflection, making it 4-3. He then completed his incredible performance in the 54th minute, converting another penalty cor-

ner to secure a decisive 5-3 victory for India. In the end, Hundal's clinical finishing proved too much for Pakistan. The victory showcased India's mental resilience, under coach P R Sreejesh, as they overcame early pressure and a determined opponent to clinch the title. Hockey India celebrated the Indian junior hockey team's remarkable victory on social media with posts highlighting the team's dominance, skill, and resilience. Their message on X (formerly Twitter) read, "Team India lifts the Men's Junior Asia Cup 2024 trophy with an epic 5-3 triumph over Pakistan! Another golden chapter written!" They praised the team for keeping the crown in India and Araijeet Singh Hundal's exceptional four-goal performance. Earlier in the day, Japan secured third place by defeating Malaysia 2-1 in the bronze-medal match. In the other classification matches, Bangladesh beat China 6-3 for fifth place while Thailand edged past South Korea 3-2 in a shootout after the teams were locked in a 2-2 stalemate. Host Oman had secured ninth place with a 3-2 shootout win over Chinese Taipei on Tuesday after they were tied 1-1.

PAKISTAN TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA

Babar, Naseem return for South Africa Tests; Afridi left out

LAHORE: Fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi has been left out of Pakistan's squad for the two-Test series in South Africa in December and January. Afridi, who was released from Pakistan's Test side after their defeat in the first Test against England in October, remains part of the white-ball squads for the tour. Babar Azam and Naseem Shah, who were released alongside Afridi after that first Test, return to the Test squad. Afridi's absence specifically from the Tests, though, appears to signal a point in his career where the red-ball format has become less of a priority than it has before. Since returning from a knee injury he picked up during a Test in Sri Lanka in July 2022, Afridi has played just a handful of Tests, and been ineffective while doing so; in six games, he has 17 wickets



at an average of 45.47. His omission from these Tests makes it exceedingly unlikely he will win his place back for Pakistan's home Test series against West Indies in January, following which Pakistan have no Test matches at all till October 2025. There's also a return for seamer Mohammad Abbas, who last played Test cricket for Pakistan in 2021. Abbas, whose metronomic accuracy and ability to seam the ball initially saw him come into the

Pakistan side when they played their home Tests in the UAE, is the only fast bowler in the squad who was also in the side for Pakistan's last Test tour to SA in 2018-19. Pakistan play three T20Is and three ODIs between December 10 and 22, and two Tests in Centurion and Cape Town beginning on December 26 and January 7. **Pakistan squads for South Africa tour:** Tests: Shan Masood (capt), Saud Shakeel (vice-capt), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Babar

Azam, Haseebullah (wk), Kamran Ghulam, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha. **ODIs:** Rizwan (capt, wk), Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar, Haris Rauf, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem, Ayub, Salman Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Mueqem, Tayyab Tahir, Usman Khan (wk).

T20Is: Rizwan (capt, wk), Abrar, Babar, Rauf, Jahandad Khan, Abbas, Hasnain, Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousuf, Ayub, Salman Ali, Afridi, Mueqem, Usman Khan (wk). **Klaasen to lead SA against Pakistan in T20Is** Meanwhile, in the absence of Aiden Markram, who is currently involved in the Test series against Sri Lanka, Heinrich Klaasen will lead South Africa in their home T20I series against Pakistan.

Apart from Markram, several other all-format players - such as Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Kagiso Rabada and Tristan Stubbs - will miss the Pakistan T20Is, with the second Test against Sri Lanka concluding on December 9. These players will, however, be a part of the ODI series against Pakistan. That apart, Anrich Nortje and Tabraiz Shamsi have returned to the T20I side for the first time since the T20 World Cup in June. All-rounder George Linde has also been named in the squad. **South Africa T20I squad:** Heinrich Klaasen (capt), Ottneil Baartman, Matthew Breetzke, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Patrick Kruger, George Linde, Kwena Maphaka, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Ngqaba Peter, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Andile Simelane, Rassie van der Dussen. - Agencies

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Scheme Period: 3rd November 2024 to 1st January 2025
Reliable International Automotive LLC. C.R. No. 1707183, Wattayah: 24579846/47; Al Mawelah: 99473174; Barka: 93201347; Nizwa: 99874368; Sohar: 92837722; Sur: 25546190/93204360; Rustaq: 92869449; Salalah: 23211460/99884217. Saturday Showroom Timing: Muscat, Al Mawelah, Barka, Sohar & Salalah from 9.00 AM to 1.00 PM

Service - *50,000Kms / 5 yrs (OR) 100,000Kms / 10 yrs (whichever is earlier) on select Gasoline models & 105,000Kms / 5 yrs on EV Models. Registration on all models / Model years. © Standard offer of 1 yr. comprehensive Insurance on selected models. Insurance applicable would be given to the extent of a private vehicle only, if applicable, additional premium as per insurance norm would have to be paid by the buyer. For models where Insurance is offered as a benefit, additional cash gift can be availed by customer in lieu of Insurance. Insurance benefit is NOT applicable on 24MY Cerato & Sorento PE and 25MY Picanto, Carnival, Sportage 2.0 RVC models. All EV customers will be offered an assured gift of iPhone 15 (256 GB). All the above benefits not applicable on Ministry, Bulk Fleet, Corporate and RAC deals. Vehicles may also include some Dealer Installed Accessories. Pictures & Colors are indicative. For further details, please visit your nearest Kia showroom.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

Oman Crude (February Delivery 2025) rose \$1.49 to reach \$73.35 per barrel, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). Average price of Oman Crude (December Delivery) has stabilised at \$74.82 per barrel, \$1.33 per barrel higher than November delivery. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSM INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,577.64 points, up by 0.09% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.93% at 425.66 points. Majan Glass, up 50.00%, was the top gainer while, Sharqiyah Desalination, down 7.41%, was the top loser. **>B2**

OQBI sets final share offering price, completes bookbuilding

The final Offer Price is set at the top end of the price range of 106 baisas to 111 baisas , reflecting strong demand from local, regional and institutional investors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ Base Industries (SFZ) SAOG (under transformation), Oman's only integrated producer of methanol, ammonia, and LPG products, announced that it has successfully completed bookbuilding and has priced its IPO shares at the final Offer Price of 111 baisas per share.

The final Offer Price is set at the top end of the price range of 106 baisas to 111 baisas , reflect-



ing strong demand from local, regional and institutional investors, including binding commitments from four anchor investors to subscribe for an aggregate of 30% of the Offering at the final Offer Price, high quality investor participation and limited price sensitivity in the order book.

The anchor investors include Falcon Investments LLC, a subsidiary of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the Kuwait-based Gulf

Investment Corporation (GIC), the Saudi Omani Investment Company, a wholly owned entity of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, and the Omani Social Protection Fund. The IPO raised a total of OMR188 million.

Aggregate demand for the IPO was OMR387 million with OMR236 million from institutional investors under the Category I offer OMR95 million from retail investors under the Category II of-

fer. Anchors category raised over OMR56 million.

Khalid Khalfan Al Asmi, Chief Executive Officer at OQBI, said: "We are pleased that investors have acknowledged the strength of our business and our clear strategy for growth. This strong endorsement both in Oman and internationally reinforces us in the next stage of our journey, as a listed company on the MSX."

Ali Al Lawati, Chairman at

OQBI, added: "The successful completion of the bookbuilding process and the strong demand emphasise the confidence investors have in OQBI's strategic vision and growth potential. This milestone marks a significant step forward in OQBI's mission to drive sustainable growth in an evolving market. We are excited to embark on our journey as a publicly listed company, further committed to delivering excellence and innova-

tion in the industries we serve."

The Company's Category I and Category II offerings were subscribed 4.2x and 1.3x, respectively, with limited order inflation and significant support and participation by a wide range of high quality local, regional and international investors orders.

Oman-based Investors in the Category I offering will be allocated 19.95% of their demand, with a discretionary allocation for international investors. Investors in the Category II offering (small retail) will be allocated 100% of their demand up to 30,000 shares and then 29.269% of their demand above this level. Investors in Category II offering (large retail) will be allocated 72.817% of their demand.

A total of 1.69 billion ordinary shares, representing 49% of OQBI's issued share capital, were offered to investors.

OQ (OQ) will retain the remaining 51% of the Company's share capital immediately following completion of the IPO.

Upon listing, OQBI is expected to have a market capitalisation of OMR384 million.

OQBI shares are expected to commence trading on the MSX on or around 15 December 2024 under the symbol "OQBI" and ISIN OM0000009908.

OMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



Omani trade team explores Saudi experience in entrepreneurship

Times News Service

RIYADH: During the visit of the Omani trade delegation from the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the delegation familiarised itself with the Saudi experience in entrepreneurship through a series of field visits. One notable visit was to the Abdul Mohsen Al-Hokair Group in Riyadh, where the delegation learned about the group's entrepreneurial journey since its inception, as well as the key sectors in which it operates.

The visit included extensive discussions on the investment opportunities available between the two countries in agriculture, industry, food security, and more.

Both sides also addressed economic challenges and explored ways to overcome them to achieve their collective aspirations.

The Omani side presented the investment opportunities available in North Al Batinah Governorate and discussed the operating factories in Sohar Port and the free zone, along with the incentives offered by the Sultanate of Oman to investors.

Engineer Said bin Ali Al-Abri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in North Al Batinah and head of the delegation, stated that these visits hold significant importance in enhancing mutual knowledge among businesspeople.

He added that the aim is to discuss ways to strengthen commercial, investment, and industrial co-

operation, in addition to exploring available investment opportunities in the Kingdom.

Al-Abri noted that these visits contribute to building strong trade relations that benefit all parties involved. There was a clear desire from both sides to establish joint business partnerships, reflecting their commitment to increasing the volume of trade exchange between the two countries. He emphasized the importance of leveraging these meetings to open new avenues for cooperation and experience sharing, ultimately contributing to sustainable development.

The delegation also visited the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh, where they were received by His Excellency Khalid bin Ali bin Salem Al-Sunaidi, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs.

The meeting reviewed the efforts and activities of the GCC General Secretariat, discussed its objectives, and addressed the economic, commercial, and investment aspects among member states. The discussions included ways to enhance commercial and economic relationships among the member states.

The meeting also featured presentations on the activities of various sectors in trade and economics. Additionally, discussions took place between Omani businesspeople and representatives of the GCC General Secretariat regarding food security, real estate, investment, and various economic sectors.

NEW CONTAINER DEPOT

Times News Service

MUSCAT: SOHAR Port and Freezone is pleased to announce the inauguration of Allied Ondock Container Services, alongside the signing of an expansion agreement valued at approximately \$2.6 million.

The new container depot initially covers 3 hectares, with the contract for this development signed in June 2023. Whilst the company inaugurated the first plot, at the same time it has signed a contract for an expansion of an additional 2 hectares. This development aims to enhance operational efficiency and capacity, meeting the rising demand for advanced container depot services in the region.

Allied Ondock, a subsidiary of the Singapore-based Allied Container Group, aims to optimise logistics operations by offering a range of services, including container depot, repair, inspection, and washing/cleaning facilities. The additional plot will expand the company's warehousing capacity. Allied Ondock will facilitate the transfer of containers from Hutchison Ports Sohar, unloading cargo in their warehouse before returning the empty containers for further dispatch.

This initiative addresses the



rising demand for container depot services in the region, supporting over 20 shipping lines that call weekly.

The collaboration strengthens SOHAR Port's integrated logistics capabilities, reinforcing its position as a leading global logistics hub.

The inauguration of Allied Ondock's operations marks a transformative step for Oman's economy," said Emile Hoogsteden, Chief Executive Officer of SOHAR Port.

"By enhancing our logistics capabilities, we are not only connecting businesses to global markets but positioning Oman as a key player in international trade. This partnership will drive economic diversification, strengthen our role as a vital logistics hub, and ultimately benefit the wider

community, supporting Oman's Vision 2040."

This initiative complements SOHAR Port's impressive growth, with container volumes increasing by 21% in Q3 2024 compared to Q3 2023. This growth is further supported by the introduction of an innovative land-bridge solution that strengthens the port's global logistics capabilities.

The integration of Allied Containers' advanced technologies and expertise is expected to significantly enhance SOHAR Port's operational capacity, reduce turnaround times, and elevate service excellence.

"This strategic partnership allows us to introduce our advanced container handling solutions to a key logistics hub in the Middle East," said Lim Kian

Chin, Owner of Allied Ondock Container Services Group.

"By enhancing our services at SOHAR Port, we are not only contributing to its growth but also providing a competitive edge for its tenants. This superior service will empower shipping lines at SOHAR to optimize their operations and improve efficiency."

By leveraging the strategic location of the port and the global network of Allied Ondock Group's services, this agreement represents a significant addition to our offerings, enhancing our position as a competitive and integrated logistics hub. Moreover, the presence of an expert service operator at SOHAR Port will strengthen its advantages and streamline container handling operations.

CONFERENCE

Volume of GCC-Jordanian investments estimated at about \$62 billion in 2023

DEAD SEA: The sessions and discussions of the first GCC-Jordanian Investment Conference, held on Wednesday at the Dead Sea in Jordan.

The event focused on the importance of enhancing opportunities for investment partnership and economic integration between GCC states and Jordan.

High-value industries

The meeting laid emphasis on areas of information and communications technology and high-value industries and services. It also reviewed success stories and promising investment opportunities on both sides.

Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of



Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Chairman of the GCC Federation of Chambers, said in a speech that the conference reflects the two sides' keenness on maintaining steady growth in economic relations, notably after the signing of economic partnership agreements to liberalise the exchange

of trade in goods and services.

Al Rawas pointed out that the volume of GCC-Jordanian investments was estimated at about \$62 billion in 2023. The investments covered the sectors of tourism, food security, education, health, industry and converting industries, he said.

Al Rawas added that commercial exchange is estimated at about \$9.7 billion, with the most important GCC exports figuring in petroleum and mineral products.

He explained that Jordanian exports focus on pharmaceutical and food products. - **ONA**

MARKET



MSM index ends higher

Majan Glass, up 50.00%, was the top gainer while, Sharqiyah Desalination, down 7.41%, was the top loser at the end of the session

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,577.64 points, up by 0.09% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.93% at 425.66 points. Majan Glass, up 50.00%, was the top gainer while, Sharqiyah Desalination, down 7.41%, was the top loser. Shares of OQEP were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 750 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.45 million, with more than 18.9 million shares changing hands. Out of 45 traded securities, 12 advanced, 17 declined, and 16 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR242,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR197,000, followed by domestic investors for OMR45,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,677.14 points, down 0.14%. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Madina Takaful, OMINVEST

were up by 6.00%, 1.24%, 0.29% respectively. Prices of United Finance, Bank Nizwa, Oman Arab Bank were down by 1.72%, 1.03%, 0.69% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,309.57 points, up 0.36%. Prices of Majan Glass, Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Cables Industry, Voltamp Energy were up by 50.00%, 9.38%, 1.89%, 1.28% respectively. Prices of Raysut Cement, A'Saffa Foods, Galfar Engineering, Oman Cement were down by 2.73%, 2.09%, 1.06%, 0.79% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.01% before closing at 1,737.81 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Muscat Desalination, Oman Telecom, Renaissance Services were up by 3.82%, 3.03%, 1.19%, 0.26% respectively.

Prices of Sharqiyah Desalination, Al Batinah Power, Oman National Engineering, Al Suwadi Power, National Gas were down by 7.41%, 2.99%, 1.68%, 1.49%, 1.24% respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,587.64	4,573.47	4,577.64	4,573.49	4.16	0.09
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,696.48	7,671.50	7,677.14	7,687.73	-10.60	-0.14
Industry Index	5,321.83	5,289.27	5,309.57	5,290.74	18.82	0.36
Services Index	1,743.67	1,736.85	1,737.81	1,737.65	0.16	0.01
MSX Shariah Index	425.66	423.51	425.66	421.72	3.94	0.93
MSX TR INDEX	6,419.93	6,400.09	6,405.93	6,400.12	5.81	0.09
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,743.99	8,715.62	8,722.02	8,734.06	-12.04	-0.14
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,140.13	6,102.56	6,125.98	6,104.26	21.72	0.36
SERVICES TR IDX	2,075.78	2,067.66	2,068.80	2,068.62	0.18	0.01
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,067.21	1,067.21	1,067.21	1,067.21	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
18,903,918	3,450,556	750	27,423,599,497	12	17	16	45

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (BD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BD	LAST OFF.	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	164,645	13,340	6	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.001	1.235	0.082	0.080	0.082	0.100	14,350,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	240,620	225,469	46	0.930	0.942	0.930	0.935	0.924	0.011	1.190	0.935	0.935	0.936	0.100	701,250,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	76,054	26,007	21	0.342	0.342	0.341	0.342	0.341	0.001	0.293	0.342	0.341	0.342	0.100	228,580,976
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	77,155	29,334	18	0.380	0.387	0.380	0.387	0.386	0.001	0.259	0.387	0.380	0.385	0.100	91,490,087
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	12,056	3,352	3	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.000	0.000	0.278	0.279	0.298	0.100	452,013,680
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	103,813	7,299	9	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.100	3,653,125
OM0000002168	ALANWAR CERAMIC	19,910	1,973	5	0.100	0.100	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.098	0.100	21,790,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	1,000	298	1	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.000	0.298	0.286	0.294	0.100	37,219,592
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	665,900	169,429	17	0.255	0.255	0.253	0.255	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.253	0.253	0.253	0.100	1,914,131,251
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	530,531	43,039	22	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	16,400,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,381,747	185,246	39	0.134	0.135	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.100	886,711,336
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	32,800	8,036	2	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.100	159,481,396
OM0000004735	SEMBOORIP SALALAH	98,928	6,548	8	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.100	90,684,335
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,229,308	163,403	59	0.133	0.134	0.132	0.133	0.133	0.000	0.000	0.133	0.133	0.134	0.100	575,972,981
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	72,495	20,225	21	0.280	0.280	0.278	0.278	0.279	-0.001	-0.358	0.278	0.277	0.278	0.100	214,115,600
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	2,325	886	4	0.381	0.382	0.379	0.379	0.382	-0.003	-0.785	0.379	0.370	0.382	0.100	125,400,757
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	325,265	21,477	21	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.066	0.070	0.100	47,150,818
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	9,500	1,112	3	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.119	-0.002	-1.681	0.117	0.117	0.119	0.100	17,550,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	32,800	8,036	2	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.100	159,481,396
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	10,000	570	2	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.100	20,398,256
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	20,000	7,500	2	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.383	-0.008	-2.089	0.375	0.375	0.383	0.100	45,000,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	546,619	35,669	43	0.068	0.066	0.065	0.065	0.067	-0.002	-2.985	0.065	0.065	0.068	0.100	43,867,883
Total	21	5,590,671	970,200	352												
Parallel Market																
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	3,625	504	4	0.140	0.140	0.132	0.140	0.138	0.002	9.375	0.140	0.132	0.140	0.100	7,700,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	89,602	4,572	5	0.051	0.053	0.051	0.053	0.050	0.003	6.000	0.053	0.045	0.051	0.100	4,505,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	1,823,983	639,677	71	0.346	0.355	0.346	0.353	0.340	0.013	3.824	0.353	0.351	0.370	0.100	70,471,367
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	5,133	343	5	0.067	0.068	0.066	0.068	0.066	0.002	3.030	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.100	10,577,427
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	20,904	54,748	14	2.650	2.700	2.650	2.700	2.650	0.050	1.887	2.700	2.600	2.710	0.100	242,190,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	418	164	3	0.390	0.395	0.390	0.395	0.390	0.005	1.282	0.395	0.390	0.395	0.100	32,154,086
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	15,291	6,845	5	0.448	0.448	0.440	0.448	0.448	0.000	0.000	0.440	0.440	0.448	0.100	70,560,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	124,000	8,308	14	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.100	14,216,060
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	79,097	4,588	8	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.054	0.058	0.100	84,830,885
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	215,796	15,106	6	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.100	35,604,191
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	100	104	1	1.043	1.043	1.043	1.043	1.045	-0.002	-0.191	1.043	0.000	1.042	0.100	71,967,000
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	2,413,599	845,305	174	0.351	0.351	0.350	0.351	0.351	0.000	0.285	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.100	800,000,000
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	46,464	8,738	8	0.146	0.146	0.144	0.144	0.145	-0.001	-0.690	0.144	0.144	0.145	0.100	240,395,040
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	172,850	54,454	22	0.319	0.320	0.311	0.312	0.315	-0.003	-0.952	0.312	0.312	0.312	0.100	49,920,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	152,228	14,763	12	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.096	0.097	-0.001	-1.031	0.096	0.096	0.097	0.100	21,747,491
OM0000003521	GALPAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	108,163	10,164	7	0.094	0.094	0.093	0.093	0.094	-0.001	-1.064	0.093	0.093	0.094	0.100	18,877,739
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	104,500	8,318	15	0.081	0.081	0.079	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.235	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.100	6,800,000
OM0000000906	JALALI REIT	7,859,900	798,646	4	0.100	0.102	0.104	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.100	177,000,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIAH DESALINATION	4,000	500	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.135	-0.010	-7.407	0.135	0.000	0.135	0.100	12,225,270
Total	19	13,029,853	2,473,846	379												

Bangladesh script first win in West Indies since 2009

Jaker's 91 helped the visitors set a target of 287 before Taijul ran through West Indies with a five-for to finish the Test series 1-1

KINGSTON: Bangladesh marked a historic triumph in the Caribbean, securing their first Test victory in the West Indies in 15 years with a commanding 101-run win in Jamaica on Tuesday.

The victory helped them end the two-match series 1-1, showcasing a spirited comeback after a heavy defeat in Antigua. It was a cathartic moment for the visitors, who had endured five consecutive Test losses earlier this year.

The triumph also etched a milestone for Bangladesh, who have now clinched three away Test wins in 2024, their highest tally in a single calendar year.

The win was engineered by left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who deliv-



ered a masterful spell in the fourth innings, taking 5 for 50 to bowl the West Indies out for 185. This marked Taijul's 15th five-wicket haul and his first in the Caribbean.

Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud and Rana took the other five wickets. Rana took his maiden Test five-wicket haul in the second innings, helping bowl West Indies out for 146.

The match began ominously for Bangladesh as they were skittled out for 164 in the first innings, with West Indies pacer Jayden Seales wreaking havoc, claiming 5 for 4

in a fiery spell. However, Bangladesh's response in the second innings was emphatic, led by debutant Jaker Ali's counterattacking 91. His innings, studded with five sixes and eight fours, shifted the momentum, especially during a thrilling fourth-morning session.

Jaker's assault on the West Indies bowling was not without drama. After being struck on the helmet by Alzarri Joseph early in his innings, Jaker shook off the blow to launch a remarkable counterattack. He notched up his third

consecutive fifty in as many Tests, becoming only the second Bangladeshi to achieve this feat. His innings, characterised by audacious strokeplay, propelled Bangladesh to a formidable lead of 211.

Defending the target, Taijul struck early, removing Mikyle Louis with a sharp turner that was smartly caught at short leg. The West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite tried to anchor the innings, countering with a stylish six over long-on and several crisp boundaries. However, Taijul dis-



missed him with a delivery that turned sharply, inducing an edge brilliantly caught at slip.

The rest of the West Indies batting faltered under the pressure of disciplined Bangladeshi bowling. Nahid Rana, who had earlier claimed a maiden five-wicket haul in the first innings, cleaned up the tail with a scorching yorker to end Shamar Joseph's resistance and seal the win. Taskin Ahmed and Hasan Mahmud combined for five wickets across the innings.

West Indies had their mo-

ments, with Tevin Hodge standing tall with a defiant 50. His stylish strokeplay briefly threatened to wrest control, but his dismissal to a delivery that kept low was the beginning of the end for the hosts.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 164 (Shadman 64, Seales 4-5, Shamar 3-49) and 268 (Jaker 91, Shadman 46, Mehidy 42, Roach 3-36) beat West Indies 146 (Carty 40, Brathwaite 39, Rana 5-61, Mahmud 2-19) and 185 (Hodge 55, Brathwaite 43, Taijul 5-50, Mahmud 2-20) by 101 runs. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Raphinha hits double as Barca end winless run



MALLORCA: Raphinha inspired Barcelona to a thumping 5-1 victory at Mallorca as they ended a three-game winless run on Tuesday.

The Brazil international found the net twice at the Estadi Mallorca Son Moix in the second half as Hansi Flick's men moved four points clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga.

With the sides level at the break, Raphinha's crucial first goal came in the 56th minute from the penalty spot after the returning Lamine Yamal was fouled in the box.

Teenager Yamal then found his captain with a sublime cross using the outside of his foot 18 minutes later, which Raphinha slotted in for his 11th league goal of the season.

Second-half substitutes Fr-enkie De Jong and Pau Victor put the gloss on the victory with two goals in five minutes as Barcelona bounced back from Sunday's defeat to Las Palmas in style.

With top scorer Robert Lewandowski on the bench, Flick's decision to start Torres paid off after the former Manchester City forward gave the visitors a 12th-minute lead following a terrible defensive mix-up.

The hosts pegged the La Liga leaders back on the stroke of half-time after Samu Costa freed Pablo Maffeo beyond Barcelona's offside trap and the right-back slipped in Vedat Muriqi to level. Next up for Barcelona is a trip to Real Betis on Saturday, while Mallorca visit Celta Vigo. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

New boss Van Nistelrooy makes perfect start with Leicester City

LONDON: Jamie Vardy helped hand Ruud van Nistelrooy the perfect start as new Leicester City boss - and pushed Julien Lopetegui closer to the brink at West Ham with a 3-1 win on Tuesday.

Striker Vardy pounced after just 98 seconds in Van Nistelrooy's first game in charge, before Bilal El Khannouss and Patson Daka struck to seal victory for the hosts.

The Foxes moved up to 15th in the Premier League, two points behind the Hammers, but lived dangerously and needed goalkeeper Mads Hermansen to frustrate the visitors with a string of fine saves.

Niclas Fullkrug nodded home a consolation for the visitors in stoppage time.

But the pressure will remain on boss Lopetegui as he struggles to find a solution for success with the Hammers. Van Nistelrooy, who was appointed on Friday to replace Steve Cooper, has said he was not a romantic manager who will put style in front of results.

But the King Power Stadium will soon fall in love with the Dutchman if he continues to bring out the Foxes' fighting spirit. They relied on a gritty display against the Hammers, but also owed much to the wastefulness of the visitors.

Danny Ings hit the post with a close-range header, Jarrod Bowen spurned several chances, while Leicester defender Conor Coady cleared off the line from Crysencio Summerville.

After Vardy's second-minute opener - although the Foxes needed to wait over two minutes for the video assistant referee (VAR) to rule the striker onside after he raced on to El Khannouss' ball - keeper Lukasz Fabianski denied the veteran forward again, before the Hammers took control.

After Ings hit the woodwork, Bowen was twice denied by the excellent Hermansen.

The Hammers thought they had levelled after the break when Hermansen punched the ball into his

own net as he tried to deal with a hanging ball, but Tomas Soucek was ruled to have fouled the goalkeeper in the build-up.

Almost immediately, Leicester broke and grabbed a crucial second in the 61st minute when Moroccan El Khannouss found the corner from Kasey McAteer's pass for his first league goal.

Fabianski's fine save stopped Wilfred Ndidi from adding a third, before Coady kept out Summer-ville's bundled effort to keep his side in control.

Bobby de Cordova-Reid had another late Foxes strike ruled out for offside by VAR, but Daka wrapped up a dream night for Van Nistelrooy when he broke away in the 90th minute and rifled high into the net.

Fullkrug's headed finish from Summerville's corner was his first Hammers goal, but mattered little to the outcome as his side slipped to a disappointing seventh defeat in 14 league games. - Agencies



GERMAN CUP

Holders Bayer Leverkusen knock out 10-man Bayern Munich



MUNICH: Nathan Tella was on target as German Cup holders Bayer Leverkusen booked their place in the quarter-finals after edging out rivals Bayern Munich 1-0 at Allianz Arena on Tuesday.

The hosts were reduced to 10 men in the 17th minute when veteran keeper Manuel Neuer was sent off after he rushed out of his goal and collided with the on-rushing Jeremie Frimpong.

Despite the advantage of the extra man, Bayer Leverkusen had

to wait until the 69th minute to take the lead through former Burnley and Southampton attacker Tella.

A sumptuous cross into the box from Alex Grimaldo was met first time by Tella and he flew in beyond Bayern's substitute keeper Daniel Peretz. Vincent Kompany's side, who were without injured top scorer Harry Kane, had their chances, though.

Defender Dayot Upamecano came agonisingly close to level-

ling, but his header towards the far post drifted wide. Kingsley Coman rose highest to meet Joshua Kim-mich's corner, but could not direct his header on target, while Kim Min-jae also headed weakly wide on the stroke of half-time.

Xabi Alonso has still yet to lose in the German Cup after winning his eighth successive match in the competition as Bayer Leverkusen boss, while 20-time winners Bayern Munich have not won the trophy since 2020. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Man City manager Guardiola rejects rift rumours with De Bruyne

LONDON: Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola has dismissed talk of a rift with star midfielder Kevin de Bruyne and says he is "desperate" to have the Belgian back to his best.

De Bruyne has only started four Premier League games in another campaign blighted by injury.

However, he has featured for just 72 minutes across five substitute appearances since returning from an eight-week absence with an abdominal issue last month.

There was just 12 minutes left at Anfield on Sunday when Guardiola introduced De Bruyne into the 2-0 defeat by Liverpool.

De Bruyne still had the visitors' best chance, when he was denied by Caoimhin Kelleher.

In a discussion on Sky Sports after the game, pundits Jamie Carragher and Gary Neville both questioned Guardiola's use of De Bruyne in a run of six defeats and a draw in seven matches.

Carragher said: "Something is going on with De Bruyne. Something isn't right between those two."

Neville agreed and said Guardiola's treatment of the playmaker was "unusual, bizarre, strange".

Guardiola did not mention the pair directly but, before the Pre-



mier League encounter with Nottingham Forest, said there was no issue with De Bruyne.

"People say I've got a problem

with Kevin," he said. "Do you think I like to not play with Kevin? I don't want Kevin to play? The guy who has the most talent in the final

third. I don't want it? I have a personal problem with him after nine years together?"

"He's delivered to me the biggest success to this club. I'm desperate to have his best."

"But he's been five months injured and two months injured. He's 33 years old. He needs time to find his best."

De Bruyne was out from August to the beginning of January last season after suffering a recurrence of a hamstring issue that forced him to be replaced in the first half of the 2023 Champions League final victory over Inter Milan.

His contract expires next sum-

mer and De Bruyne has confirmed talks are yet to take place over an extension, as he prioritises his return to fitness.

"I'd love to have Kevin in his prime, at 26 or 27," said Guardiola. "He would love it too."

"But he is not 26 or 27 anymore. He had injuries in the past, important and long ones, and he is a guy who needs to be physically fit for his space and energy."

The City boss added: "It's normal, it's nature. He played a lot of games for 10 or 11 seasons. I know he is desperate to help us, he gives glimpses of brilliance that only he can have." - Agencies

ROUND-UP

MENOG 24 forum opens in Muscat

The event brought together leading experts and policymakers, and to discuss advancements in Internet infrastructure, exchange insights, and foster collaboration across the Middle East

MUSCAT: The Middle East Network Operators' Group and Peering Forum (MENOG 24) opening ceremony took place yesterday, at the Grand Millennium Hotel in Muscat, Oman.



Hosted by AWASR, a leading Omani telecommunications provider specialising in high-speed fibre-optic broadband services, the event brought together leading experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss advancements in Internet infrastructure, exchange insights, and foster collaboration across the Middle East. Eng. Adnan Al Alawi, CEO of AWASR, stated: "We were honoured to host the opening ceremony of MENOG 24 in Muscat. This

event provides an important platform for addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the internet in the Middle East. By fostering collaboration between experts, policymakers, and stakeholders, we can build a future-proof internet that supports the region's digital transformation journey." Eugen Comendant, CCO of AWASR, added: "AWASR is committed to driving digital innovation in Oman and the broader Middle East. By hosting MENOG

24, we aim to contribute to the development of a robust and resilient internet ecosystem that empowers individuals and businesses alike." Organised by the RIPE NCC, the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia, MENOG 24 serves as a vital platform to explore the latest developments in Internet technology and best practices. The agenda includes sessions focused on IPv6 adoption, routing security, network innovation

and measurements, and emerging challenges in the region's Internet landscape. Oman has been very active in implementing digital transformation initiatives, notably through the National Programme for Digital Economy. This programme aims to cultivate a robust digital economy by establishing secure, advanced infrastructure that facilitates a digital government harmonised with economic and social development plans, aligning with Oman Vision 2040. The RIPE NCC's active involvement in the Middle East has been instrumental in advancing the adoption of critical technologies such as IPv6 and RPKI. By working closely with governments, network operators, regulators, and academic institutions, the RIPE NCC tailors its support to the unique needs of the region. This year, for example, RIPE NCC's efforts have been recognised at high-profile events, such as the Council of Arab Information and Communications Technology. MENOG 24 features technical workshops, interactive panel discussions, and networking opportunities designed to empower participants with actionable insights

and technical expertise. The event is open to network engineers, policymakers, academics, and anyone interested in advancing Internet technologies in the region. As the Middle East continues to embrace digital transformation, MENOG 24 is an essential gathering for addressing challenges, sharing best practices, and building a future-proof Internet. Founded in 2012, AWASR is a privately held Omani telecommunications company specialising in high-speed fibre-optic broadband services. Committed to employing the latest technologies, AWASR offers a range of Internet plans with varying speeds and features, serving both residential and corporate sectors. The company is headquartered in Muscat, Oman. The RIPE NCC is the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. As such, we allocate and register Internet number resources to Internet service providers and other organisations. We are a not-for-profit organisation that works to support the RIPE community and the development of the Internet in general.

SPACIOUS DESIGN WITH INNOVATIVE FEATURES



Make your journeys memorable with spacious Ford Expedition

MUSCAT: The Ford Expedition is an ideal SUV for adventurers combining spacious design with innovative features to make every journey enjoyable. With seating for up to 8 passengers, this SUV offers generous room for both people and cargo, making it perfect for weekend trips and long drives. The unique sliding second-row seat provides easy access to the third row without having to remove a child safety seat. Meanwhile, passengers in the third row enjoy ample legroom and reclining seats, adding comfort to longer journeys. The Ford Expedition is a powerhouse when it comes to towing, leading its class with impressive capabilities. The Trailer Tow Class IV system makes hauling effortless, whether it's for a boat, trailer, or additional cargo. Plus,

with an available power lift-gate, loading and unloading gear is easier than ever. At the heart of the Expedition is a robust 3.5-litre EcoBoost® engine, offering up to 380 horsepower and 637Nm of torque. Coupled with a 10-speed automatic transmission, the Expedition delivers smooth, powerful performance on highways or rugged trails—all while maintaining best-in-class fuel efficiency. Ford has built the Expedition with a focus on safety and ease of use. Features like Collision Avoidance Detection and the Blind Spot Information System add an extra layer of security, while the Control Trac with Electronic Limited Slip Differential provides superior handling on rough terrain. Inside, the Expedition is equipped with cutting-edge tech-

nology. SYNC® 4 with a 12-inch LCD touchscreen keeps you connected, while multiple USB ports, a 220-volt power outlet, and wireless charging ensure devices stay powered throughout the trip. With Tri-zone Electronic Temperature Control and the Panoramic Vista Roof, every passenger can enjoy customized comfort and spectacular views. Those interested in experiencing the Ford Expedition can visit their nearest Ford showroom. In Oman, Ford vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co. LLC. Please log on to www.fordoman.com, or www.facebook.com/FordOman or www.youtube.com/FordOman or www.instagram.com/fordoman for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.

HOSTED BY UTAS

Zubair EDC Participates in Entrepreneurship Forum

MUSCAT: The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC), a social initiative of The Zubair Corporation, recently participated in the Entrepreneurship Forum hosted by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Shinas. Organised in collaboration with the Department of Small and Medium Enterprises Development in North Al Batinah Governorate, the three-day forum carried the theme 'Innovation for a Sustainable Future' and featured various initiatives aimed at empowering entrepreneurs. The event was inaugurated under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Hamdan Al Hajri, Wali of Shinas, and attended by Dr. Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Balushi, Assistant President of UTAS Shinas, alongside prominent officials from multiple sectors. The forum's objectives included fostering awareness of entrepreneurship's significance, equipping participants with essential skills through workshops, and nurturing creativity, innovation, and a competitive spirit among students. Zubair EDC's participation underscored its commitment to collaborating with educational institutions to develop the youth sector and inspire innovation, aligning with Oman Vision 2040's goals of advancing entrepreneurship and youth development. Hilal Al Siyabi, Head of Business Services Support at The Zubair Corporation, remarked "Since its inception over a decade



ago, Zubair EDC has consistently engaged with educational institutions across Oman, delivering workshops and offering expert guidance to support student entrepreneurs and their innovative business ventures." Echoing this sentiment, Iman Al Rubaie, Lecturer at UTAS Shinas, noted: "The partnership with Zubair EDC has enriched our Entrepreneurship Forum, providing attendees with valuable insights and fostering collaboration between academia and the business

sector. Initiatives like this play a pivotal role in empowering young minds to achieve their professional aspirations." The forum also featured the Entrepreneurs Exhibition, showcasing projects by business owners, student entrepreneurs, artisans, and home-based ventures, along with contributions from entities supporting entrepreneurship. The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC), a growth initiative under The Zubair Corporation, was established in 2014. The centre highlights the important role of enterprise development in an increasingly diversified economy. The centre provides and inspiring, supportive, and professional environment for young Omani entrepreneurs and enterprises of all sizes to accelerate sustainable businesses.

STATE AUDIT INSTITUTION

SAI seminar focuses on importance of protecting public funds

MUSCAT: State Audit Institution (SAI) implemented an awareness seminar entitled "Protecting Public Fund and Promoting Integrity... Institutional Roles and Community Partnership" on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 in Nizwa, Al Dakhiliya Governorate. The seminar was patronised by His Excellency Sheikh Hilal bin Said Al Hajri, Governor of Al-Dakhiliya, in the presence of His Excellency Ahmed bin Salem Al Rujabi, SAI Deputy Chairman of Audit of Government Units, a number of honoured members of the State Council, Their Excellencies members of the Shura Council and Walis, officials of the units of the State's administrative apparatus, CEOs of government-owned companies in the Governorate, and a number of SAI specialists. The seminar opened with a speech by Yousif Al Naabi, Director of Department for Financial & Administrative Audit in Al-Dhakhiliya & Al-Wusta Governorates. In his address, he emphasised that the seminar aligns with the State Audit Institution's commitment to fostering institutional partnerships.



These seminars aim to highlight the importance of protecting public funds and promoting integrity, as outlined in the State Audit Institution Law issued by Royal Decree No. 111/2011, the Law on the Protection of Public Fund and Avoidance of Conflict of Interest issued by the Royal Decree No. 112/2011, and other related legislations. He underscored the critical role of institutional partnerships in managing resources efficiently and effectively, enabling entities to fulfill their mandates and

achieve their objectives with excellence. Furthermore, he stressed SAI's dedication to raising public awareness of laws and procedures related to public funds and public office. Through its media and outreach efforts, SAI aims to promote the values of integrity, combat corruption, and encourage collaboration in protecting public funds, targeting all segments of society. Following that, the seminar's themes were presented by Shabeeb Al-Busaidi, Director General of Legal Works at SAI, who reviewed the

laws regulating SAI's work. He also explained the methodology followed by SAI in implementing its objectives and responsibilities, and the mechanism of auditing, as well as the procedures followed when detecting observations and irregularities, referring to the reports issued by SAI, and highlighting SAI main role in protecting public fund, promoting integrity and combating corruption. Al-Busaidi also Pointed out the measures taken by State Audit Institution upon the Sultanate of



Oman's accession to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the subsequent measures that contributed to highlighting the Sultanate of Oman's efforts in various related fields. Then, Dr. Mubarak Al-Rahbi, Director of Audit of Economic Affairs Sector, reviewed the societal roles in protecting public fund as well as the channels provided by SAI to submit complaints and reports, and the mechanism followed in examining them, in addition to reviewing the audit impact and the

added value according to what was contained in the Community Brief of SAI's work results included in its 2023 Annual Report. The most prominent observations detected in the scope of auditing government tenders and auctions were also addressed. The seminar concluded with an enriching panel discussion, with the participation of State Audit Institution specialists, during which the views of the attendees were heard and their inquiries were answered.

Today, Vodafone's retail network in Oman includes 75 Stores and eStores – all of which are self-service and digital spaces where customers can complete tasks such as obtaining their SIM, subscribing to new packages, paying bills or managing plans – in addition to more than 4,000 sales channels across Oman.

Speaking on the event, Mr. Mohammed Al Obaidani, Chief Executive Officer of Middle East Global Events, remarked, "Sohar International's continued support as the Official Bank Sponsor

With the vision to become a world-class Omani services company that helps customers, community and people to prosper and grow, Sohar International operates with a purpose to help people 'win' by delivering responsive banking for their ever-changing world, complementing their growth and prosperity with international standard service delivery. The Bank seeks to redefine banking in Oman through transformational developments centred on the principles of More Velocity, making everything simple and fast; More Value, ensuring relevance and connectivity to customers' world; and More Vision, liberating stakeholders through talented leadership. www.soharinternational.com

A promotional poster for the TOMI Awards Gala Night. The background is black with a subtle starry pattern. On the left, the letters 'T' and 'M' are large and colorful (green and blue respectively), with a large pink circle representing the 'O'. Below them, the word 'AWARDS' is in bold blue, and 'THE OMAN MARKETING IMPACT' is in white. On the right, the text 'Join us at the TOMI Awards' is in white, followed by 'GALA NIGHT' in large white letters. Below this, the date 'WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2024' and venue 'VENUE: CROWNE PLAZA, QURUM' are listed. The time 'Time : 7pm - 10pm' is also shown. A section titled 'Reserve your spot today' features two ticket options: 'Individual Seat' for OMR 100 ONLY and 'Table for 6 Guests' for OMR 500 ONLY. A note states: 'Please note: Awards must be collected in person at the Gala Awards Night.' Contact information for bookings and inquiries is provided, listing Anand, Kalpesh, Muna, and Neha with their email addresses and phone numbers. At the bottom, it says 'JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION & RECOGNITION!'. A vertical strip of colorful geometric patterns runs along the right edge.

Join us at the TOMI Awards

GALA NIGHT

WEDNESDAY **11** DECEMBER 2024
VENUE: CROWNE PLAZA, QURUM

Time : 7pm - 10pm

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For bookings and inquiries, contact:

Anand - anand@mmg.om | +968 99219268

Kalpesh - kalpesh@mmg.om or +968 95511335

Muna - muna@mmg.om or +968 93993334

Neha - neha@mmg.om or +968 77188254

**JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF
CELEBRATION & RECOGNITION!**

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat opens its first branch in Al Jabal Al Akhdar

The new branch is designed to elevate the banking experience by integrating modern safety, security, and technological solutions

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, inaugurated its first branch in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. The opening of the new branch came in line with the Bank's strategic initiative to expand its branch network and enable customers to benefit from the banking services and facilities offered, wherever they are. The new branch is designed to elevate the banking experience by integrating modern safety, secu-

rity, and technological solutions. This inauguration underscores the Bank's commitment to providing high-quality services in a comfortable environment, allowing customers to process their transactions efficiently and securely. Al Jabal Al Akhdar branch will be an addition to the 20 branches already operating in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. Bank Muscat currently takes immense pride in its expansive network of branches reaching a total of 186. Furthermore, the Bank owns more than 900 ATMs, CDMs, and multi-use machines distributed across the Sultanate. Strategically located amidst key commercial hubs, Al Jabal Al Akhdar branch offers a comprehensive range of banking services tailored to meet diverse customer needs, including a variety of personal, housing, and auto financing options, as well as the ability to request debit, credit, and prepaid cards, and open accounts, benefit from safety deposit lockers, as well as, financial services via ATMs, CDMs, including withdrawals, check deposits and bill payments. Besides, the branch caters to the needs of people with disabilities, offering accessible facilities and self-service banking devices.



On this occasion, a number of customers in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar commended this step taken by the Bank, considering that the new branch will represent a vital addition to enhance customer accessibility to banking services. Ahmed Hamed Al Nabhani, Municipal Council Member in Al Jabal Al Akhdar, said: "The opening of Al Jabal Al Akhdar branch is regarded as a crucial step towards improving banking services for the community. Al Jabal Al Akhdar has grown in prominence due to its economic and commercial ac-

tivity and ability to attract investment, since the Wilayat is a popular tourist destination for visitors from all over the world duo to its unique tourist resorts and moderate climate." On his part, Faisal Musabeh Al Saqri, a customer, said: "We appreciate this initiative from Bank Muscat. This new branch will help customers save time and effort while enjoying the various banking services provided. Bank Muscat has a large network of branches that cater to the needs of customers across Oman. Al Jabal Al Akhdar is undergoing continual

growth, with new tourist facilities being developed to keep up with its growing popularity year after year. The local community and visitors will now be able to benefit from the financing options and excellent service that will definitely be offered by this new branch." Speaking on the inauguration, Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager, Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "We are pleased to celebrate the inauguration of the Bank's first branch in Al Jabal Al Akhdar. The Bank's expansion strategy is a vital component of our commitment to enhancing customer accessibility to banking services and financial inclusion. The inauguration of Al Jabal Al Akhdar branch not only strengthen our presence in a key tourist destination but also demonstrates our dedication to supporting local communities and businesses. By providing tailored banking services, we aim to empower our customers and foster economic growth in the area." Commenting on the importance of the new branch, Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager - Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, said: "The Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar is considered a popular tourist destination throughout the year. Recently, it also garnered

the attention of numerous investors from both public and private sectors. This increasing attention is expected to support many development projects to benefit the local community. Bank Muscat recognizes the need to provide banking services and facilities that meet the needs of individual and institutional customers. The Bank is committed to developing its services and launching innovative products to keep pace with the latest global trends in the sector. I would like to take this opportunity to invite our valued customers to visit the new branch and benefit from the services offered." Bank Muscat's branches across Oman offer specialised services to facilitate customers' needs, including financing products like personal finance, "Baituna" housing finance, "Sayyarati" auto finance; cards services, and account opening services among others. The Bank is also working to strengthen its leadership position in electronic banking services and facilities via digital channels, such as mobile and Internet banking. Customers are increasingly using these channels to conduct a variety of transactions such as bill payment, local and international money transfers, and requests for new products and services.

PREFERRED MODEL

Mitsubishi ASX empowers Omani female OTaxi driver

MUSCAT: An inspiring Omani female driver has chosen the Mitsubishi ASX as her trusted vehicle brand. As the first female taxi driver to operate a Mitsubishi ASX, R A is distinguished by her pioneering spirit and exemplary choice of vehicle. She states, "The Mitsubishi ASX is my preferred model, known for its reliability, ample legroom, high-performance engine, fuel efficiency, and generous cargo space, making it ideal for my professional needs." The Mitsubishi ASX seamlessly combines CUV versatility, enhanced safety features, attractive styling, and exceptional value into one affordable package. Available from General Automotive Company (GAC), the official Mitsubishi distributor in Oman. Unmatched Versatility and Features make the Mitsubishi ASX a standout in the lineup, offering class-leading features, a powerful yet fuel-efficient engine, a proven four-wheel-drive system, and advanced technologies, all wrapped in a bold new design. This competitive and affordably priced vehicle is perfect for those seeking both style and perfor-



mance. Sleek and Sporty Design the ASX showcases Mitsubishi's Dynamic Shield design, featuring a new front bumper, hood, and fenders for a bold, rugged look. Sophisticated LED headlights, a redesigned rear bumper fascia, and T-shaped rear combination taillights enhance its sporty aesthetic, ensuring the ASX stands out from the crowd. State-of-the-Art Interior and Technology Inside, the ASX is equipped with high-quality materials, a second-generation 8.0-inch Smartphone-link Display Audio (SDA) unit, a rear-view camera, LED headlights with LED Daytime running lights, and

an electronically controlled 4WD system. The 2.0L MiVEC DOHC four-cylinder engine delivers 148 horsepower at 6,000 rpm and 145 pound-feet of torque at 4,200 rpm. Paired with Mitsubishi's INVECS-III CVT, the ASX offers a balanced combination of power output, fuel efficiency, and environmental performance, along with enhanced acceleration and smooth-shifting feel. For more information on the ASX, call 24500500, SMS/WhatsApp 93800925, or visit GAC's Mitsubishi showrooms in Athai-bah, Barka, Sohar, Nizwa, Ibbi, Sur, Jalan Bani Buali and Salalah or follow 'MitsubishiMotorsOman' on Instagram to learn more.

FUNDING

National Finance partners with Sheida Industries to boost Oman's first solar panel making project

MUSCAT: Demonstrating an unwavering commitment to advancing the nation's sustainability objectives, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman's leading finance company, extends crucial backing to Sheida Industries, playing a pivotal role in supporting the country's first solar panel manufacturing initiative. The funding facilitates Sheida Industries in procuring raw materials essential for the production of solar panels. This move underscores National Finance's dedication to fostering progress within Oman's renewable energy sector, in alignment with the aspirations set forth in Oman Vision 2040 and the nation's Net Zero 2050 ambitions. As the nation's pioneering solar panel manufacturer, Sheida Industries — a 100% Omani-owned enterprise — proudly operates a cutting-edge manufacturing facility in the Sohar Industrial Area, spanning 11,250 square meters. Through its focused efforts to drive the country's transition to sustainable energy and reduce de-



Oman's sustainability journey. We take great pride in partnering with Sheida Industries as they lead the way in the nation's renewable energy transition. Through our support, we aim to empower them to sustain the production of high-quality solar panels, in alignment with the government's vision for a cleaner, more sustainable energy future." Equipped with a sound strategy to accomplish Net Zero 2050, the Sultanate of Oman's government has set an ambitious target of generating 30% of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2030, supported by large-scale solar initiatives such as the Manah I & II Solar IPPs (500 MW each) and the Ibbi III Solar IPP (500 MW), among others. With the backing of National Finance, Sheida Industries is well-positioned to meet the increasing demand for solar panels, a demand that is expected to grow substantially as these national projects advance.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/roundup

PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE

NBO empowers Omani youth with 2024 internship programme

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has successfully completed its 2024 Internship Programme, offering more than 500 students the opportunity to gain practical work experience in a dynamic corporate environment. This initiative aligns with NBO's commitment to unlock opportunities for Omani youth, while contributing to their professional growth and developing their future workforce. With significant participation from higher education students, the program lasted for 1-3 months

and offered participants the chance to apply classroom-gained knowledge in real-world situations while learning from experienced professionals. Commenting on the programme's success, Ali Moosa Al Abri, General Manager & Chief Human Resources Officer at NBO, said: "At NBO, we are committed to nurture and develop local skillsets and talents by providing valuable learning opportunities through our internship programme. We also aim to empower younger Omanis with practical experience

that complements their academic studies and equips them with the necessary skills they needed to thrive in the future job market. Our goal is to contribute to the growth of Oman's economy by fostering a highly skilled and capable workforce." This year's programme emphasised inclusivity, with 75% of the interns being female. Interns were placed across the country, with 53% of opportunities in Muscat and 47% in other governorates, ensuring that students from various locations could benefit. Over

100 students received training at NBO's Head Office, while others gained experience at branches throughout the Sultanate. NBO's Internship Program reflects its dedication to serve the community and empowering Omani youth. By nurturing the next generation of leaders, the bank plays a pivotal role in contributing to Oman's vision for a sustainable and diversified economy. For more information on NBO's initiatives and opportunities, please visit the NBO website or contact the NBO Call Centre at 24770000.





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