



ELECTRIC VEHICLES EXHIBITION KICKS OFF IN SALALAH

The Electric Vehicles Exhibition, organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, kicked off on Tuesday in Salalah, with the aim of raising community awareness of the importance of green mobility and promoting the use of electric vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman. **>A2**



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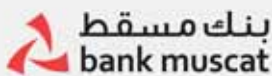
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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Foreign minister meets Nepal PM

1 Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister met with Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal in Kathmandu. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations. **>A3**



OMAN Four killed in Haima road accident

2 Four people were killed and one person sustained minor injuries as a result of a collision between a truck and a vehicle in the Wilayat of Haima, said the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority. **>A2**

SPORTS Djokovic marches into second round

3 Serbian tennis star and defending champion Novak Djokovic marched into the second round of the ongoing US Open tournament, starting off his campaign with a win over Radu Albot. **>B6**

NATIONAL IDENTITY PROJECT SET TO BRING MORE INVESTMENTS IN OMAN

The objectives include expanding FDIs, facilitating access of Omani goods, developing services for the Omani markets and building economic capabilities



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The National Identity Project, which is being developed in different parts of the Sultanate of Oman, is expected to bring more investments to the country. Speaking at a joint community consultations programme in Nizwa, Mohannad Jumaa Al Futaisi, Project Manager of Nazdaher Programme (at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion), outlined the four main strategic objectives of

the National Identity Project. "These include expanding foreign direct investments (FDIs), facilitating access of Omani goods, developing services for the Omani markets and building economic capabilities and talents," he added. Representatives of the National Programme for Investment and Export Development 'Nazdaher' from the Governorates of Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah held

joint community consultations in Nizwa on Tuesday. The round of consultations, the second of its kind, dealt with the unified promotional 'National Identity' project being developed in different parts of the Sultanate of Oman. Salma Ali Al Hashmi, Head of the Technical Team for the National Identity Project, said, "These rounds of consultations aim to extend bridges of communication and encourage the engagement of various segments of society in discussions

with those directly entrusted with the implementation of this national project." Ismail Hamad Al Mahrouqi, Communication Manager at Nazdaher Programme, outlined four visual options for the National Identity Project, namely dialogue, partnership, relations and unity. Oman's National Programme for Investment & Export Development was established to accelerate a new era of inward investment and domestic growth.

Muscat Media Group launches the TOMI Awards: Celebrating Oman's Most Creative Ad Campaigns



In a groundbreaking move to bring the creative talent of Oman into the spotlight, Muscat Media Group (MMG) has announced the launch of The Oman Marketing Initiative Awards (TOMI Awards). For the first time ever, these awards aim to honour the brilliant advertising campaigns that often go unnoticed in Oman's fast-paced media landscape.

Star-studded launch ceremony

The brand and trophy launch ceremony, held at Crown Plaza Muscat on Tuesday, August 27, saw the crème de la crème of Oman's marketing and advertising world in attendance. The event was anchored by youth icon and MMG presenter

Enaam Al Ruwaidhi. Maria Alava, Head of Manzana Events—a sister company of MMG—took the stage to elaborate on the significance of the awards, while ace stand-up comic Abbas Al Lawati added a touch of humour with his creative zingers. With creativity as the driving force behind these awards, TOMI is set to change the way advertising campaigns are viewed in Oman.

"Creativity cuts through the clutter," said Anna Popova, Project Manager of TOMI, during the brand and logo launch. "It's time that our creative talent receives the recognition it deserves. TOMI is here to shine a spotlight on the brilliant, the bold, the campaigns that make you stop and say, 'Now that's clever!'"

The TOMI Awards logo: A celebration of creativity

It's loud, it's colourful, and it screams "Think outside the box!" With its vibrant hues and sharp lines, it's a visual invitation to marketers to abandon the ordinary and embrace their inner mavericks. It's a beacon of fresh ideas, a reminder that the most groundbreaking campaigns come from those who dare to be different.

Transparent Selection Process

The TOMI Awards will maintain a strict code of fairness. Marketers are encouraged to submit their entries without the burden of a participation fee. The process will remain transparent—awards cannot be purchased, ensuring that only

Categories

Best Print Advertising
Best Video Advertising
Best Digital Advertising
Best Out-of-Home Advertising (Static)
Best Digital Out-of-Home Advertising
Best Influencer Marketing
Best Website
Best Explainer Video
Best PR Campaign
Best Event Design
Best Content Marketing
Best On-Ground Activation
Best Brand Identity (Logo)
Best CSR Campaign

the most deserving campaigns stand out. Final nominees will be selected through a combination of public voting and peer voting from industry marketing heads, giving both the community and experts a say in the decision-making. To further solidify the credibility of the awards, a neutral international jury will be invited to deliver the final verdict, with all three voting groups receiving fair weightage.

How to Participate

Marketers looking to register their creative work can do so at www.tomiawards.com. The winners will be revealed in a grand gala event scheduled for November 2024, where the best of Oman's marketing and advertising will be honoured.

Key Dates (2024) - Competitive Process

August 28th: Submission call for creatives
October 1st: Submission deadline
October 13th to October 31st: Voting stage
November 1st to November 14th: Final Nominations & Judging

Key Dates (2024) Award Ceremony Tickets

October 1st to October 31st: Early Bird Ticketing
November 1st to November 14th: Regular Ticketing
Award Ceremony: Last week of November 2024 (Date TBC)
Stay tuned as TOMI Awards gears up to celebrate creativity, innovation, and the campaigns that leave a lasting impact. **See also >A5**

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:13pm
Asr.....3:40pm
Maghrib.....6:34pm
Isha.....7:46pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:30am

Specialists hold meeting in Salalah to prepare for crises and disasters

More than 40 specialists from the Sultanate of Oman and abroad are taking part in the conference

SALALAH: A 3-day international conference organised by the Omani Society of Emergency Medicine (OSEM) in Salalah is exploring the latest scientific and practical developments in dealing with all types of emergency cases. More than 40 specialists from the Sultanate of Oman and abroad are taking part in the conference, hosted by the Directorate General of Health Services in Dhofar Governorate. The conference looks into research on preparing for crises and



disasters, with emphasis on the use of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in streamlining the performance of emergency departments, including the role of nursing in dealing with infectious emergencies. The conference activities in-

clude a health exhibition that showcases outcome of 20 research papers presented by emergency medicine specialists from different countries of the world. This is in addition to a roadshow (organized by institutions supporting the conference) featuring

the latest technologies and devices used in emergency departments. The conference programme also includes six intensive training workshops covering various aspects of emergency medicine, including an introduction to clinical toxicology and a training course on

dealing with paediatric and adult emergencies. Special workshops are dedicated to training on methods of handling critical cases in the field of eye-care, the use of ultrasound devices and the applications of electrocardiogram analysis in critical

cases. The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Said Harib Al Lamki, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs. At the ceremony, the chief guest felicitated the participants and supporters of the conference. -ONA

VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCING

Oman takes part in meeting on food security

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources took part yesterday, via video-conferencing, in the 36th preparatory meeting of the GCC Agricultural Cooperation and Food Security Committee, hosted by the State of Qatar. Oman was represented during the meeting by Dr. Ahmed Nasser

Al Bakri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Agriculture. The meeting discussed a spectrum of topics, namely agricultural systems and policies, as well as the works of the permanent committees for livestock, fisheries and food security.



MEETING: Oman was represented during the meeting by Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al Bakri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Agriculture. - ONA

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Project to establish integrated childhood development centres reviewed



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development yesterday held a meeting to study the progress made in a project to establish 'Integrated Early Childhood Development Centres'. The project aims to provide early childhood services within specific geographical locations in an integrated manner through cooperation among the sectors

concerned. It focuses on means of improving health and educational services offered to children in accordance with internationally approved standards and methodologies. The project covers measures of raising public awareness about the importance of early childhood development, the application of concepts of early intervention and the consolidation of differ-

ent types of intelligence in early childhood. The meeting, held at the ministry's premises in Muscat, was chaired by Dr. Laila Ahmed Al-Najjar, Minister of Social Development. The project is the outcome of cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partner institutions in Oman, including the

ministries of Education, Health, Finance, Labour, Housing and Urban Planning, in addition to Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and Oman Energy Association. The project seeks to expand the segment of beneficiaries of its services, to ensure support to all children, notably children belonging to families with limited income in different governorates. -ONA

CDAA

Four killed, one injured in Haima road accident

Times News Service

Muscat: Four people were killed and one person sustained minor injuries as a result of a collision between a truck and a vehicle in the Wilayat of Haima, Al Wusta Governorate. The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA), said in a statement : "The firefighting teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Department in the Al Wusta Governorate dealt with a fire in a truck and a vehicle as a result of a collision between them in the Wilayat of



Haima. The accident resulted in the death of four people and one person sustaining minor injuries."

CDAA

Two children drown in Ibri wilayat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Two children were drowned in the Wilayat of Ibri, Al Dhahirah Governorate, said the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA). The CDAA said in a statement : "Rescue and ambulance teams from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Department in Al Dhahirah Governorate responded to a report of two children drowning in water pools in the Wilayat of Ibri. They were recovered dead." Authorities have cautioned parents to keep an eye on their children while playing near water pools.

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TRANSPORT MINISTRY

Electric Vehicles Exhibition opens its doors for Dhofar Khareef visitors

SALALAH: The Electric Vehicles Exhibition, organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, kicked off on Tuesday in Salalah, with the aim of raising community awareness of the importance of green mobility and promoting the use of electric vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman. The four-day exhibition will include many events and corners, including: an electric vehicle display area, where visitors will have the opportunity to explore a variety of electric vehicles and learn about the latest technologies and specifications. The exhibition also includes a "kids' arena" to test small elec-

tric cars; in addition to a drawing and colouring circle that allows visitors to participate in drawing artistic paintings that express the concept of green mobility; an interactive theatre to present interactive theatrical performances to raise awareness of the importance of electric vehicles and sustainable mobility, in addition to a special exhibition for sponsoring companies to display their products and services. The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology will organise the Green Mobility Forum in Dhofar on September 19 for highlighting the developments and solutions in the field of sustainable mobility. -ONA





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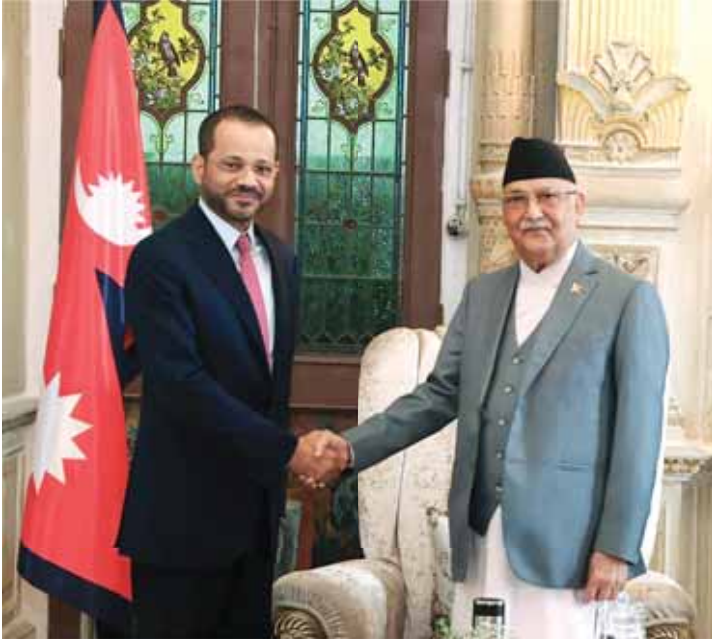
Foreign minister meets Nepal PM

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and highlighted means of tapping new vistas of cooperation

KATHMANDU: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister on Tuesday met with Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal at the capital city of Kathmandu.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and highlighted means of tapping new vistas of cooperation in various fields of interest to the two countries.

They also highlighted opportunities to boost economic and trade cooperation, particularly in the



fields of tourism, mining, agriculture and cultural exchange. Both sides reiterated the importance of exchanging expertise and supporting joint investments.

Promote peace

Further, the two sides underscored the importance of firm mutual cooperation to tackle joint challenges and promote peace and stability in the region and the world.

The meeting was attended by Issa Saleh Al Shaibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of India and non-resident ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. It was also attended by several officials from both sides. -ONA

Oman, Nepal explore means to boost ties



MEETING: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister met with Arzu Rana Deuba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, in Kathmandu. - ONA

KATHMANDU: The Sultanate of Oman and the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on Tuesday reviewed means of augmenting bilateral relations.

The two countries also reiterated the importance of exploring new cooperation opportunities in various fields.

This came during the meeting of Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister with Arzu Rana Deuba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, which was held in Kathmandu.

Moreover, during the meeting the two side touched on regional and international developments of mutual interest.

They also underscored the importance of cooperation and coordination between the two countries in order to achieve joint objectives, as well as support peace and development in the region and the world at large.

The meeting was attended by Issa Saleh Al Shaibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal and several officials from both sides. -ONA



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MHT concludes Omani Culinary Arts Festival in Salalah - Over 50,000 visitors attend the festival



ON AUGUST 26, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) concluded the 'Omani Culinary Arts Festival,' the first of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman. The Festival took place from August 22 to 26 at Al Haffa Beach in the Wilayat of Salalah, coinciding with the activities of the 2024 Dhofar Kha-reef season.

The Festival's diverse activities, held over five days, attracted a large number of visitors from both within and outside the Sultanate of Oman, totaling more than 50,000. The events included a variety of live cooking demonstrations by some of the most skilled Omani and GCC chefs, such as Lulwa Al-taanak, Nader Al Aisari, Ahmed Al Saadi, Mohammed Issa, Faisal Sa-joor, Umm Ayman, and Khulood. The festival also featured the participation of the Oman Tourism College, photographer Haitham Al Farsi, and several entrepreneurs who took part in panel discussions on innovation in Omani cuisine.

In addition, the Festival included various sections such as the Lit-tle Chef's Corner, traditional mus-ic folklore performances, various competitions, the Farmers Corner, restaurants offering authentic Omani cuisine, and a Souvenir Corner. Over 34 local SMEs partic-ipated in the event. The Minis-try also focused on enhancing local content through contracts, pur-chases, and supply chains.

The Festival aimed to promote and enhance culinary tourism, particularly Omani culinary arts and cuisine, at local, regional, and global levels through forums, festivals, and events specialized in culinary tourism. The Festival is part of the 'Food Tourism and Omani Culinary Arts' programme, which the Ministry is using to introduce Omani cuisine as a means to achieve economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The Programme also seeks to position Omani culinary arts on the cultural tourism map while activating the role of tourism in benefiting local communities, creating business opportunities for SMEs, and providing jobs related to culinary arts.

The programme aims to docu-ment the heritage and history of Omani cuisine and the traditions associated with it, ensuring its preservation and sustainability through the evolution and innova-tion of recipes and menus to suit the evolving tastes of tourists.

The programme emphasises maintaining the essential in-gredients that distinguish these recipes while fostering innova-tion in products related to supply chains to enhance competitive-ness. Additionally, it seeks to ben-efit local communities, develop entrepreneurial opportunities in manufacturing, services, and tour-ism products, and create unique experiences.



IN PICTURES: MUSCAT MEDIA GROUP LAUNCHES TOMI AWARDS



MEETING



Nepal President receives Oman’s Foreign Minister

KATHMANDU: President Ram Chandra Poudel of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on Tuesday received Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi at the Presidential Palace in Kathmandu.

The Minister conveyed the greetings and sincere sentiments of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the President, along with His Majesty’s wishes of further progress and prosperity to the friendly Nepalese people.

He also conveyed His Majesty’s wishes of more development and advancement in relations between the two countries.

For his part, President Ram Chandra asked the Foreign Minister to convey his heartfelt greetings to His Majesty, along with his sincere wishes to His Majesty the Sultan and Omani people.

He hoped that relations between the two friendly countries would continue to grow and flourish.

The meeting dealt with the two countries keenness to develop ties in various fields in a manner that would bring mutual benefits to the two countries and their peoples.

Several issues discussed

It also touched on issues and developments on the regional and international arenas.

The meeting was attended by Issa Saleh Al Shaibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of India, Non-Resident Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, and other officials from both sides. — **ONA**

RED WARRIORS



Oman announces team for World Cup qualifiers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The national football team Czech, Jorslav Celavi, announced on Tuesday the list of the squad for the matches against Iraq and South Korea in the third stage of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup.

The Red Warriors hope to reach the FIFA World Cup as they are drawn in a balanced Group B that includes South Korea, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, and Kuwait.

Oman will begin their campaign in the Asian qualifiers with an away match against Iraq in Basra on September 5, before hosting South Korea in a key game on September 10.

The national team will meet Kuwait on October 10 in Muscat and it will be followed by Jordan clash on October 15 in Amman.

The concluding first leg matches will be against Palestine on November 14 and the second round of matches will begin after Oman host Iraq in Muscat on November 19 before traveling to Seoul to face South Korea on March 20, 2025, and then Kuwait on March 25, 2025.

The final group matches will be against Jordan in Muscat on June 5, 2025, and the concluding game against Palestine in an away match on June 10, 2025.

The team members are: Ibrahim Al Mukhaini, Faiz Al Rashidi, Ibrahim Al Rajhi, Ahmed Al Khamisi, Mohammed Al Musalami, Khalid Al Braiki, Ghanim Al Habashi, Ali Al Busaidi, Ahmed Al Kaabi, Abdul Aziz Al Shamousi, Amjad Al Harthi, Arshad Al Alawi, Harib Al Saadi, Abdullah Fawaz Salaah Al Yahyaie, Zahir Al Aghbari, Jameel Al Yahmadi, Omar Al Maliki, Sultan Al Marzouq, Nasser Al Rawahi, Essam Al-Subhi, Abdulrahman Al-Mushaifri, Muhsen Al-Ghassani, Mohammed Al Ghafri, Mohamed Hamed Al Ghafri.

Belarus explores investments in North Al Batinah

The Belarusian minister and his accompanying delegation held a meeting with Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Busaidi, Wali of Sohar



SOHAR: Alexei Bogdanov, Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade in the Republic of Belarus, on Tuesday visited North Al Batinah Governorate to learn about investment opportunities and major economic projects in North Al Batinah Governorate, including the Wilayat of Sohar.

During the visit, Bogdanov and his accompanying delegation held a meeting with Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Busaidi, Wali of Sohar. The meeting, held at the office of the Governor of North Al Batinah, was attended by businessmen and directors of commercial establishments and ports in the governorate.

During the meeting, the Belarusian minister listened to a detailed account about the current investment projects and future opportunities in the sectors of ports, agriculture, fisheries and mining, in addition to petroleum and converting industries at Sohar Port, the Free Zone and Sohar Industrial City and logistic services provided for those projects.

Bogdanov and his delegation took note of the progress made in the establishment of the railway network connecting the Wilayat of Sohar and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE)—a stretch of 303 kilometres. They also had a close look at salient features of the governorate’s ports in Shinas, Liwa, Sohar and A’Suwaiga and their related commercial and economic activities.

In addition to emphasis on economic diversity and sustainable development, the Belarusian delegation was briefed about the diversity of heritage, environmental, cultural and tourism destinations that abound in North Al Batinah Governorate.

Bogdanov and his accompanying delegation later visited Sohar Port and Free Zone, where they were briefed about major commercial and industrial projects, both in the port and the free zone, in addition to logistic services, container handling, and advanced industrial activities in the sectors of energy, metals and petrochemicals.

The briefing covered investment opportunities and land leasing at Sohar Free Zone, industrial projects, light converting industries, logistics services or other commercial services that can be established in the governorate.

Bogdanov and his delegation also learned about the incentives provided to investors and the business community, as well as the one-stop-shop system that facilitates the finalization of all procedures (clearance, permits, licenses and approvals) in one place. — **ONA**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Training programme to sharpen skills of teachers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Curriculum Development began on Tuesday implementing the training programme of qualifying certified trainers for the e-learning system and digital repository project.

The six-days training programme targets 100 trainees from the Specialised Institute for Professional Training for Teachers, the Information Systems Department at the Directorate-General of Information Technology, supervisors at the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, the Educational Evaluation and Measurement Specialist at the Centre for Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and from training centres, information technology departments, and e-learning specialists in the educational governorates.

The programme is taking place at the Specialised Institute for Professional Training for Teachers.



The programme is presented by trainers Hesham Bassiouni, Technical Support Manager, and Omar Abdel Moneim, Training and Activation Manager at Claser Smart Learning Company.

The programme includes training in skills and competencies related to teachers’ roles in the system, school management, educational supervisor, and e-learning system manager.

The training programme aims to prepare trainers by providing them with a set of skills and competencies that enable them to transfer training, and to provide a set of skills that trainees need through training on transferring experiences related to managing the e-learning system and the digital repository to them so that they are able to manage the system efficiently and to enable them to transfer the impact of training to the rest of the work team in their divisions, each according to his specialisation.

UN chief issues global SOS over fast-rising ocean temperatures

Global average sea levels are rising at rates unprecedented in the past 3,000 years. The ocean is overflowing because of climate change, Guterres said

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a global SOS on Tuesday, saying ocean temperatures were rising in the Pacific Islands at three times the global average rate. “I am in Tonga to issue a global SOS—Save Our Seas—on rising sea levels,” he said at the Pacific Islands Forum.

Fast-rising Pacific ocean
The UN chief said the Pacific Islands were “uniquely exposed” to the impact of rising sea levels. “Global average sea levels are rising at rates unprecedented in the past 3,000 years. The ocean is overflowing because of climate change,” he said. Guterres spoke about the findings of a report that showed the South West Pacific was worst hit by rising sea levels. In the last three decades, some places were affected by more than double the global average.

He said the Pacific islands were only one or two meters above sea level and, therefore, uniquely vulnerable. “Half the infrastructure is within 500 metres of the sea,” he added. A report by the UN climate monitoring body said seas had risen by around 15 centimetres in some parts of the Pacific in the last 30 years. The global average was 9.4 centimetres.

Burning fossil fuels
“The reason is clear: greenhouse gasses—overwhelmingly generated by burning fossil fuels—are cooking our planet. And the sea is taking the heat—literally,” Guterres said. “Rising seas are amplifying the frequency and severity of storm surges and coastal flooding. These floods swamp coastal communi-



ties. Ruin fisheries. Damage crops. Contaminate fresh water. All this puts Pacific Island nations in grave danger,” he said.

Pacific Islands Forum
Eighteen members of the Pacific Islands Forum met in Tonga for a week during the summit to discuss climate change and security. The Pacific Islands Forum comprises of Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Member Australia is one of the world’s biggest exporters of coal. Guterres said the use of fossil fuels must be phased out eventually. When asked about Australia, he said that “the situation in different

countries is different.”

Guterres calls for global support to vulnerable countries
If global emissions are not reduced, Guterres warned that the Pacific Islands can expect an additional sea level rise of 15 cm (5.9 inches) by 2050 and 30 days a year of coastal flooding. “It’s disaster after disaster, and we are losing the capacity to rebuild, to withstand another cyclone or another flood,” Tuvalu Climate Minister Maina Talia said on the sidelines. Guterres called on global leaders to “massively boost climate adaptation investments” in vulnerable countries. “Developed countries must deliver on their [financial] commitments—including the commitment to double adaptation finance to at least \$40 billion a year by

2025,” he said. The Secretary-General warned that a global temperature increase of 2°C could lead to the collapse of major ice sheets, resulting in sea level rises of up to 20 meters over millennia. With current trends pointing towards a 3°C rise, the situation could become even more catastrophic, affecting coastal regions worldwide, reported the UN.

Limit temperature rise
Guterres stressed the need to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C, requiring a 43% reduction in emissions by 2030. He urged governments to submit updated climate action plans by 2025 and to swiftly phase out fossil fuels while boosting renewable energy and ending deforestation. The UN reported that he also called for increased financial support for vulnerable countries and urged wealthy nations to fulfil their climate finance commitments, including doubling adaptation funding to \$40 billion annually by 2025. Looking ahead to the UN climate conference, Guterres emphasized the need for innovative financing and equitable transition strategies. He highlighted the importance of establishing early warning systems for all by 2027 and enhancing data capabilities for better adaptation and coastal planning. The UN’s climate summit approved a “loss and damage” fund last year to help poorer nations affected by climate disasters. However, attracting significant funds from wealthier nations remains a challenge. — Agencies

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POLITICAL DEADLOCK

Anger after Macron rejects France left-wing government

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday dismissed the idea of naming a left-wing government to end the country’s political deadlock, in a move that sparked anger among the country’s leftist alliance. Macron said that having a left-wing government would threaten “institutional stability,” in comments that riled the New Popular Front (NFP). The left-wing alliance is made up of the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI), the Socialists, the Communists and the Greens. The NFP secured the most seats in the country’s parliamentary election earlier this summer. Green Party leader Marine Tondelier said Macron’s announcement was a disgrace, adding that he was ignoring the election results. France Unbowed’s parliamentary group leader Mathilde Panot even threatened Macron with impeachment. **Snap election that left more questions than answers** Legislative ballots were held in France on June 30 and July 7 after Macron called a snap election that delivered a hung parliament. The election saw the 577-seat National Assembly divided between the NFP alliance with over

190 seats, followed by Macron’s centrist group at around 160 and far-right French leader Marine Le Pen’s National Rally at 140. The NFP says it has the right to form a government but centrist and right-wing parties have vowed to vote it down in any confidence vote. Macron argued that he could not choose a prime minister who would then receive a vote of no confidence in parliament. “My responsibility is that the country is not blocked nor weakened,” Macron said in a presidential statement late on Monday, calling on “all political leaders to rise to the occasion by demonstrating a spirit of responsibility.” **LFI blasts ‘anti-democratic coup’** The LFI reacted with fury, with its national coordinator Manuel Bompard calling Macron’s remarks an “unacceptable anti-democratic coup.” LFI leader Jean-Luc Melenchon called for a “firm and strong response” by the public and politicians, including a “motion of impeachment” against the president. Communist party leader Fabien Roussel called for a “grand popular mobilization” and ruled out a fresh round of talks. — DW

SEDITION CHARGES

Malaysia charges ex-PM Muhyiddin over alleged royal insult

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has brought sedition charges against opposition leader and former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin for allegedly insulting the country’s former king in a political speech on August 15. Muhyiddin, who governed the country between 2020 and 2021 and leads Malaysia’s conservative, Malay-centric opposition bloc, has pleaded not guilty to the charges. Remarks seen as denigrating the country’s largely ceremonial and highly revered royalty can be prosecuted under a Sedition Act stemming from the colonial era. Under Malaysia’s unique form of monarchy, nine sultans take turns on the royal throne every five years. Muhyiddin is already facing corruption and money laundering charges in a separate case filed against him last year that the 77-year-old has called politically motivated. Prosecutors say Muhyiddin questioned why former King Al-Sultan Abdullah had not invited him to be sworn in as the country’s premier after a 2022 general election that resulted in a hung parliament, despite his claiming to have the backing of enough lawmakers. — DW

NASA’S KENNEDY SPACE CENTRE

Polaris Dawn: Another small step to Mars?

FLORIDA: In the early hours of August 27, 2024, the Polaris Dawn mission was delayed due to an apparent helium leak in ground equipment at the launch site, Complex 39A at NASA’s Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. A new launch date was set for Wednesday, August 28, at the original time of 3:38 a.m. US Eastern Time [9:38 a.m. Central European Summer Time/CEST]. If it succeeds, Polaris Dawn will be the first non-government mission to perform a spacewalk. But not only that — it’ll do that about 700 kilometres (435 miles) above Earth. The highest ever. To compare: the International Space Station (ISS) orbits Earth at about 400 kilometres, where the radiation is less intense. It will also orbit Earth through regions of a highly-charged belt of radiation. There are two of these “Van Allen Belts”, an inner and an outer one. Astronauts tend to avoid the hazardous Van Allen Belts, but they will have to travel through them if humans want to fly to Mars and survive. This privately-funded mission could be a first step toward that goal. The four astronauts on the Polaris Dawn mission will test new spacesuits, designed by Elon Musk’s company, SpaceX, to see how well they protect them against the Van Allen Belt radiation. SpaceX is also providing the spacecraft — a Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon capsule for the crew — to

reach an altitude beyond the current record of 1,373 kilometres, set by NASA’s Gemini 11 mission in 1966. The Polaris Dawn crew consists of Jared Isaacman, Mission Commander, Scott Poteet, Mission Pilot, Sarah Gillis, Mission Specialist, Anna Menon, Mission

Specialist and Medical Officer. Polaris Dawn, the first of a three-part programme, is Isaacman’s idea. Isaacman is a billionaire entrepreneur, who made his money in digital payments and military defense. He previously financed and flew

on SpaceX’s Inspiration4 mission, the first civilian mission to orbit Earth.

Why are the Van Allen Belts dangerous for humans?
The Van Allen Belts consist of charged particles locked in place by Earth’s magnetosphere, which includes its magnetic field. Earth’s magnetosphere traps high-energy radiation particles and protects our planet from solar storms and other threats to daily life from space. While the outer belt holds high-energy particles from the sun, the inner belt is formed by cosmic rays that interact with Earth’s atmosphere. They were discovered by American physicist James Van Allen in 1958. The Van Allen Belts range from about 680 kilometres above

Earth’s surface to what some estimates suggest is about 40,000 kilometres from the surface of the planet. And there’s a gap between the first and second belt. The inner “proton” zone is centered at about 3,000 kilometers from Earth’s surface and the outer “electron” zone is centered about 15-20,000 kilometres from Earth’s surface. The Polaris Dawn spacewalk will expose the crew to higher levels of radiation than on the ISS. They hope to collect data on the effects of that radiation as a key scientific experiment. In 2025, NASA plans to send astronauts beyond the Van Allen Belts to land on the south pole of the moon, and eventually on to Mars. Any data provided by Polaris Dawn will feed into those future missions. **Planned health research on Polaris Dawn** Polaris intends to use data from the mission to create research Biobanks to study the effects of space travel on human biology. It will investigate the effects of space travel on eyesight and brain structure — a major health risk in space, known as Spaceflight Associated Neuro-ocular Syndrome (SANS). The team also hopes to contribute to studies into decompression sickness (DCS), another health risk during spaceflight. DCS occurs when nitrogen gas bubbles (or gas emboli) damage human tissue. — DW

UN’s top aid agency warns that situation in Gaza is ‘catastrophic’

Hundreds of thousands of people are being forced to move every day from one place to another, seeking safe shelter

GAZA: Two officials from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have reiterated that the situation in the Gaza Strip is “catastrophic” and that the space in which people are confined in the Strip is “very small” amid more evacuation orders for areas across Gaza over the past two weeks.

This came in a statement given to journalists at the United Nations headquarters in New York by Louise Wateridge, UNRWA spokesperson in Gaza, and Wisam Rose, UNRWA’s first deputy field director, who were speaking via video from Deir al-Balah in



central Gaza.

Hundreds of thousands of people are being forced to move every day from one place to another, seeking safe shelter, Wateridge said.

“What we are seeing now is families, mothers and children dragging their belongings..most people are being forcibly moved, there is very limited access to any kind of vehicle for this kind of displacement now, and people simply dont know where to go,” she added.

She pointed out that in the humanitarian zone declared by the Israeli entity in Khan Younis and Al-Mawasi, “you can barely see the sand on the ground, the area is crowded, adding that there are tanks in areas that were previously known as safe areas, and this is just further evidence that the Gaza Strip is not a safe place, people have nowhere to go, there is no way to find safety, and access to humanitarian resources is very limited, because humanitarian operations are also being displaced under these evacuation orders.

For his part, the first deputy field director of UNRWA said that the recent series of evacuation orders reduced the humanitarian area declared by the Israeli entity to only 11 percent of the entire Gaza Strip.

“There’s actually sand dunes.. congested areas, where people are crowded together and doing whatever they can to survive,” he added, explaining that people there “face impossible choices,” not knowing what to do or whether to stay or leave.

He warned of the “perfect

storm” that creates the environment in which polio can spread, referring to “malnourished children, a devastated health sector, very poor water and sanitation services and conditions, people living in garbage and pools of sewage, feeling stressed and anxious and their immune systems are weakened.”

The UN official confirmed that they are now directing their efforts to make the polio vaccination campaign, which will start next Saturday and targets some 640,000 children, succeed, with 40 percent of these children receiving the vaccines from UNRWA, which is a major player in the campaign.

Children, women killed by Israeli bombing of Gaza

Dozens of Palestinian civilians, including children and women, were killed and others were injured on Tuesday, in the ongoing occupation aggression on the Gaza Strip for the 326th day.

Medical sources reported that four slain people were recovered after the occupation forces bombed a residential apartment owned by Zeno family in Tuffah neighbourhood east of Gaza City.

Medical crews and civil defense also retrieved bodies of six people,

including a girl and three women from Al-Safadi and Al-Naasan families, after a missile attack targeted a residential apartment for Al-Naasan family in Taj (2) building on Yarmouk Street in Gaza City.

Seven citizens, including children and women, were killed after the occupation aircraft targeted a residential apartment in Hadeel tower in Maghazi camp in the central Gaza Strip.

The occupation artillery targeted the eastern areas of the city of Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip with a number of shells.

Four citizens were killed and others were injured when the occupation bombed a house belonging to Ziada family in the Khan Yunis camp, south of the Gaza Strip.

Artillery shelling also targeted several areas east of Khan Yunis, coinciding with warplanes launching two airstrikes.

Occupation aircraft blew up residential buildings northwest of Rafah.

The occupation army continues to fire heavy and random bullets towards the Shakoush area and the tents of the displaced in the Mawasi area of Rafah, and the Israeli military vehicles are breaking with limits into west of the city. – Wafa

CITY OF KREFELD

World’s oldest sloth dies in German zoo

KREFELD: A sloth in the German city of Krefeld, who was considered to be the oldest sloth in the world, has died at the age of 54.

The two-toed sloth was named Jan and lived at the zoo in the western city of Krefeld, near Düsseldorf. In a statement on Tuesday, the Krefeld zoo announced that he had passed last week.

“It was very difficult for his keepers to say goodbye to him, as some of them had known and cared for him for over 25 years,” the statement read. The sloth was born in the wild in 1969. He had spent time in Hamburg’s Hagenbeck Zoo in 1986 and spent the rest of his life, 38 years, in Krefeld. – dw

SIEMENS HEALTHINEERS

India develops indigenous Monkey Pox detection RT-PCR kit

NEW DELHI: The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced its second public health emergency of International concern due to Monkey Pox. The new strain of this virus (Clad-1) is considered to be more transmissible and has higher mortality rates.

Now, India has developed its own home-grown indigenous RT-PCR testing kit to fight against Mpox, which has been approved by Central Protection Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

IMDX Monkey Pox Detection RT-PCR Assay by Siemens Healthineers has received manufacturing approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). This is a significant achievement for our “Make in India” initiative and a



critical advancement in the fight against the Monkey Pox public health emergency.

“IMDX Monkeypox Detection RT-PCR Assay will be manufactured at our molecular diagnostics manufacturing unit in Vadodara, which has a manufacturing capacity of 1 million reactions per year. The factory is all set to make

the kits available,” said Siemens Healthcare Private Ltd.

“The IMDX Monkey Pox Detection RT-PCR Assay is a groundbreaking molecular diagnostic test that targets two distinct regions in the viral genome, spanning both clade I and clade II variants of the virus. This ensures thorough detection across various viral strains, providing comprehensive results. Notably, this assay is platform-agnostic and seamlessly fits into existing lab workflows with standard PCR setups, eliminating the need for new instruments. The ability to use existing COVID testing infrastructure would enhance efficiency.” It went further.

Hariharan Subramanian, Managing Director, Siemens Healthcare Private Limited, said that the urgency for precise and accurate diagnostics couldn’t be more crucial than now.

“By providing India with advanced assay kits tailored to combat Monkeypox, we are taking a proactive stance in battling this disease and prioritising prompt and precise detection that can truly make a difference in saving

lives. These kits are a testament to our focus on improving ‘Access to Care’ and these assay kits are a significant step towards that goal,” he said.

According to Siemens Healthcare Private Ltd, the test results will be available in 40 minutes.

“With results available in just 40 minutes, significantly faster than traditional methods (which take 1-2 hours), the assay helps reduce the turnaround time for reporting, leading to quicker responses. Clinically validated by ICMR-National Institute of Virology, Pune, the assay boasts an impressive 100 per cent sensitivity and specificity. IMDX Monkeypox RTPCR Assay kits adhere to Indian statutory guidelines and comply with the highest global standards,” it said. – ANI

NORTH OF PORT SUDAN

Sudan dam bursts in heavy rains; 30 dead, thousands impacted

KHARTOUM: A dam that burst in eastern Sudan amid heavy rains led to the destruction of about 20 villages and at least 30 deaths, local authorities said on Monday.

The Arbaat Dam, which lies 40 kilometres (roughly 25 miles) north of Port Sudan, suffered severe damage during torrential rains. It was the main source of water for the city, which has a port and airport. Aid deliveries to Sudan are for the most part sent there.

“The area is unrecognizable. The electricity and water pipes are destroyed,” Omar Eissa Haroun, head of the water authority for Red Sea state, said in a message to his staff.

Hundreds in need of aid

A UN report released early on Tuesday said a government delegation at the site reported the homes of about 50,000 people had been affected by the incident, and they were in need of water, food and shelter.

“The city is threatened with thirst in the coming days,” the Sudanese Environmentalists Association said in a statement.

An emergency worker said around 150-200 people were missing, comparing it to the disaster in Libya’s Derna city last year where storms had caused several dams to burst, killing thousands.

A reporter from Reuters news agency saw the burial of a man, with people covering his grave with driftwood to prevent it from being washed away.

The dam had been affected due to earlier than usual rains, with silt building for the past few days, said officials.

It had burst on Sunday.

Rains and subsequent flooding have killed at least 132 this year, Sudan’s health ministry said Monday.



Sudan crisis

Infrastructure across Sudan has also been facing neglect and deterioration due to the ongoing fighting between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Forces paramilitary which began in April 2023.

According to the UN, both parties to the conflict are obstructing access for aid convoys.

The UN estimates that at least 100 people die of hunger every day in Sudan, with at least 30% of children acutely malnourished.

The fighting has displaced more than 10 million people in the country and others have fled across the borders.

The devastation wreaked by the war has now been compounded by heavy rains and flooding that have destroyed houses and roads, forcing additional tens of thousands to flee. – dw

Roque departure to Betis highlights failure of Barcelona transfers

It also shows why the club presided over by Joan Laporta appears to have little coherent plan other than going ‘low cost’

MADRID: The departure of teenage Brazilian forward Vitor Roque on loan to Betis on Monday highlights the failure of FC Barcelona’s dealings in the transfer market over the past 12 months.

It also shows why the club presided over by Joan Laporta appears to have little coherent plan other than going ‘low cost’ when it comes to strengthening their first team squad.

Roque arrived in the middle of last season as an apparent attempt by Barca to match Real Madrid’s success with Vinicius Jr and Rodrygo, both of whom arrived young and developed into world-class players.



Roque cost 30 million euros, but neither Xavi Hernandez, nor Hansi Flick counted on him for the first team squad, and Barca’s desperate financial conditions means they can’t keep him as they need to free up his wages.

So instead of staying and developing slowly at the club as Vinicius

and Rodrygo did at Real Madrid, Roque has joined Betis, where he may sink or swim, but if he does well, Betis have the option to sign him permanently.

Fair play limits

Financial fair play limits are at their heart of all their recent de-

cisions in the transfer market. A quick look at the arrivals in the summer of 2023 show that.

Barca signed Oriol Romeu from Girona for less than five million euros, bringing the experienced midfielder back to where he began his career.

Central defender Inigo Martin-

ez arrived on a free transfer from Athletic Club Bilbao, and Ilkay Gundogan also arrived on a free transfer from Manchester City.

Joao Cancelo arrived on loan from Manchester City and Joao Felix was another loan signing from Atletico Madrid.

12 months later and Martinez is

the only one of those players still at Barcelona. Romeu returned to Girona after losing his form, Roque has joined Betis, and Gundogan returned to Manchester City, with Barcelona desperate to get one of last season’s best players off the books to help lower their wage bill.

Joao Felix’s loan ended and there was little interest in his return after a campaign of more ‘downs’ than ‘ups’.

Senegalese defender Mika Faye also arrived a year ago, spent a season with the B-team and has now joined Rennes.

Spain international Dani Olmo has arrived, but has so far not played a minute as the club still hasn’t lowered their wage bill enough to include him in the squad. Olmo cut an irritated looking figure in the stands for Saturday’s game at home to Athletic Club Bilbao.

The transfer window closes on August 31 and with just Olmo’s arrival to date and Gundogan, Joao Felix, Cancelo and Romeu all leaving, Barca’s squad looks thinner than ever.

They may bring in another signing, but it’s obvious that the last 12 months have seen the club move backwards and a lot is going to depend on youngsters right now.

ENGLISH FOOTBALLER

Sancho’s United future in doubt amid Rashford’s struggles

NEW DELHI [INDIA]: English footballer Jadon Sancho has found himself sidelined at Manchester United, particularly when compared to the underwhelming performances of his compatriot Marcus Rashford.

United manager Erik ten Hag had previously praised Sancho’s talent, stating before the team’s pre-season match against Rangers in July, “This club needs good players, and one thing is for sure: Jadon is a terribly good player,” as quoted by Goal.com.

“I hope that the click still comes and that he will contribute to our success,” Ten Hag said earlier.

Ten Hag also claimed to have “drawn a line” under his differences with Sancho, who had been loaned back to Borussia Dortmund (BVB) after a public spat with the Dutchman at the start of the 2023-24 season.

During his time with BVB, Sancho reminded everyone of his capabilities, seemingly warranting a fresh start at Old Trafford, where he remains contracted until 2026.

Despite this, Sancho has yet to be effectively integrated into the United lineup. The 24-year-old was absent from the bench for United’s opening Premier League games against Fulham and Brighton, raising questions about his future at the club.

The team narrowly defeated Fulham, but their 2-1 loss against Brighton underscored the need for added quality in attack.

Sancho’s £73 million transfer from Dortmund in 2021 has yet to yield the expected results, and his current situation is far from ideal. Rashford’s continued selection despite lacklustre performances, marked by missed chances and minimal impact in



recent matches, makes Sancho’s absence even more glaring.

The decision to start Rashford on the left wing in the Community Shield final against Manchester City, where Rashford squandered key opportunities before being replaced by Sancho too late to make a difference, has compounded the sense of injustice.

Sancho’s penalty miss in the subsequent shootout, while defended by Ten Hag, only added to the perception of his diminishing role.

Though Ten Hag defended Sancho’s penalty miss, stating, “I had no doubts about him. He’s a very good penalty-taker and today he missed, but that’s part of the game. I am sure in the future he will take penalties.”

Sancho’s ear infection, which kept him out of the season opener against Fulham, further complicated his situation, despite his readiness for selection.

Sancho’s continued exclusion, even as he travelled with the team to Brighton, reflects Ten Hag’s unclear stance on the player. **-ANI**

WOMEN’S T20 WORLD CUP

Selection surprises as England announce squad for T20 World Cup

LONDON [UK]: England have rewarded strong individual performances from their recent domestic competition when revealing their squad for the upcoming ICC Women’s T20 World Cup on Tuesday.

The inaugural Women’s T20 World Cup champions announced their 15-player group for October’s tournament on Monday, with regular skipper Heather Knight once again named captain for the ninth edition of the event, as per the ICC.

England put their faith in players that performed well during the recent Hundred competition, with the likes of spinner Linsey Smith, pacer Lauren Bell, all-rounder Dani Gibson and keeper-batter Bess Heath all winning places in the final squad.

It means experienced opener Tammy Beaumont misses out on selection despite a return of 164 runs during the recent edition of The Hundred, with seamer Kate Cross and young quick Lauren Filer also notable absentees.



England are drawn in Group B at this year’s T20 World Cup alongside Bangladesh, Scotland, South Africa and the West Indies, as per the ICC.

England skipper Heather Knight was excited ahead of the T20 World Cup challenge.

“World Cups are always special events to be involved in as a player and I’m really excited by the squad

we have selected to take over to the UAE. It’s an honour to lead the team into another World Cup. We’re looking forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead,” Knight said as quoted by ICC.

Head coach Jon Lewis said, “I feel the 15 players selected give us a really well-balanced squad in terms of experience, youth and most importantly the skills to cope

and excel in the conditions we feel we will be faced with in the UAE.”

England Women’s squad for ICC T20 World Cup: Heather Knight (c), Danni Wyatt, Sophia Dunkley, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Alice Capsey, Amy Jones (wk), Sophie Ecclestone, Charlie Dean, Sarah Glenn, Lauren Bell, Maia Bouchier, Linsey Smith, Freya Kemp, Dani Gibson, Bess Heath. **-ANI**

MOMENTOUS OCCASION

Oman has now three world ranking golfers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Golf Association celebrated the inclusion of Mohammed bin Saif Al Busaidi in the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR), making him the third Omani player on the list after Azzan bin Mohammed Al Rumhy and Ahmed Khalil Al-Wahaibi.

Faiz bin Mohammed Riaz met with the player and congratulated

him on this achievement.

He wished them continued progress and improvement in their performance to develop their abilities and encouraged their advancement and achievements.

Mohammed bin Saif Al Busaidi had won the tournament held at La Vie Golf Club last weekend, which led to his inclusion in the World Amateur Golf Rankings.



ONE OF THE BEST

Can’t think of a better finisher, white-ball players than him: Anderson hails Virat Kohli

LONDON [UK]: Former England pace legend James Anderson termed star India batter Virat Kohli as “one of the best” players while chasing runs and finishing games, especially noting his prowess in white-ball cricket.

Anderson was speaking on the Tailenders Podcast recently.

Speaking on the podcast, Virat said, “I do not know if there is been a better batter in the history of the game batting second and chasing down scores than Virat Kohli. His record at chasing is absolutely phenomenal. The number of hundreds he has scored in the second innings, chasing down scores is ridiculous.”

Anderson noted that Virat’s chasing abilities are great due to the amount of self-belief he has.

“It is no surprise that when he gets in that situation, with his mentality, it is just like it is meant to be. His self-belief is so high,” added Anderson.

On being asked if Virat is the greatest white-ball batter ever, Anderson said that while Michael Bevan of Australia would pull off fine finishes for Australia in the 1990s and early 2000s, the centuries scored by Virat during successful chases make him the “greatest finisher” besides one of the best white-ball batters ever.

“I cannot say that. I was thinking more in terms of just chasing. [As for the best white-ball batter ever,] Michael Bevan from Australia comes to my mind, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s - he was just phenomenal coming in at



number six and doing that job,” he said.

“Kohli batting at number 3 gets those hundreds while Bevan was renowned for getting his 50s, 60s

and being at the end, while Kohli gets the big score, to get his teams over the line. I honestly can’t think of a better finisher and greater white-ball players than him [Koh-

li],” he added.

The duo has enjoyed a dominant and a much-talked about rivalry against each other. They have faced each other in 36 innings in Test cricket, with Virat scoring 305 runs at an average of 43.57 and getting out to him seven times, including four times during the 2014 tour, where Virat could score just 134 in 10 innings at an average of 13.40, with best score of 39.

However, Virat upped his game in English conditions big time during the 2018 tour, topping the run-charts with 593 runs in five matches at an average of 59.30, with two centuries and three fifties and best score of 149.

Virat is considered as one of the greatest white-ball batters of all time. He made his ODI debut in

2008 against Sri Lanka. Following this he has scored 13906 runs after playing 295 matches and 283 innings at a strike rate of 93.54, with 50 centuries and 72 fifties. He is the third-highest ODI run-getter ever.

He is also the second-highest run-getter in T20Is, scoring 4,188 runs at an average of 48.69, with a strike rate of over 137, with a century and 38 fifties.

His records while chasing are phenomenal, scoring 7,852 runs in 162 ODI matches at an average of 64.36, with 27 centuries and 40 fifties. In 53 T20Is and 48 innings, while chasing, he has scored 2,013 runs at an average of 67.10, with a strike rate of 136.47 and 20 fifties. His best score was 94”. **-ANI**

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by October 2024 reaching \$79.22, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 52 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$78.70. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,691.12 points, down by 0.13% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.60% at 441.88 points. Aman REIT, up 6.67%, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, down 8.33%, was the top loser.

Oman’s real estate deals value rises by 6.4% to reach OMR1.7bn

The traded value of sales contracts reached OMR631.3 million till the end of July 2024, and the number of sale contracts went up by 0.5 per cent to 38,627, compared to 38,440 in the same period of 2023

MUSCAT: The traded value of real estate property in the Sultanate of Oman rose by 6.4 per cent to OMR1.73 billion till the end of July 2024 compared to OMR1.62

billion during the corresponding period in 2023, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). According to preliminary statistics issued by NCSI, fees collected for all legal transactions amounted to OMR38.2 million till the end of July 2024, constituting a decrease of 0.4 per cent compared to the corresponding period in 2023. The traded value of sales contracts reached OMR631.3 million till the end of July 2024, and the number of sale contracts went up by 0.5 per cent to 38,627, compared to 38,440 in the same period of 2023. The traded value of mortgage contracts increased by 8.9 per cent till the end of July 2024 to OMR1,090.7 million. Meanwhile, the number of mortgage contracts fell by 15.9 per cent to 11,799 contracts from 14,029 contracts in the same period of 2023. The number of properties issued by the end of July 2024 fell by 5.2 per cent to 130,647, whereas the number of properties issued to citizens of GCC countries went up by 14.1 per cent to 857. - **ONA**



FINANCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY



FSA issues warning to Omani Qatari Insurance Company

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Financial Services Authority has issued administrative decision No. E/6/2024 warning the Omani Qatari Insurance Company for delaying disclosure of its financial statements forthwith being approved by the board of directors and breaching the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in preparing the financial statements, whereby violating Articles 279 and 282 of the Executive Regulation of the Capital Market Law issued vide decision No. 1/2009.

Article 279 obligates the issuers to prepare unaudited quarterly financial statements for the first, second and fourth quarters of the financial year and discloses them immediately after being approved by the board of directors

within not more than 30 days from the end of the respective quarter. Article 282 obligates the issuers to prepare their financial statement in accordance with the Standards of the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) and include all information and data that show the financial position of the company and its performance during the accounting period.

FSA is keen to oblige all issuers to disclose their periodical financial statements in accordance with the international accounting standards as a means to monitor their financial position and to ensure compliance with all legal and technical requirements to ensure timely and accurate provision of the periodical statements of the issuers of securities to all the participants of the stock exchange.

UAE BASED INVESTMENT COMPANY

Hodler and Gewan to set up \$500mn Digital Energy Infrastructure Fund

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Hodler Investments (Hodler), a UAE based investment company, headquartered in the Dubai Silicon Oasis, which includes in its portfolio energy, AI, and digital asset mining startups such as PermianChain, Brox Equity and others, has announced its ongoing plans for a \$500 million Digital Energy Infrastructure (DEI) Fund to be established as a closed-ended exempt fund, subject to compliance and regulatory approvals.

The DEI Fund has already secured soft commitments from lead investors and in-kind contributions in addition to offtake partners seeking energy and connectivity for A.I. and digital asset mining operations.

The DEI Fund will offer professional investors and clients the opportunity to invest in utility-like income generating assets and distributed energy infrastructure for compute applications that adopt innovative methods for carbon capture, storage & utilisation. The DEI Fund's investment mandate covers the entire digital energy value chain including sectors such as clean energy, power generation (IPPs), data mining (ASICs, GPUs, etc...) for blockchain, Decentralized Physical Infrastructure (DePIN), AI, cloud, and other compute cluster applications with a focus on achieving zero-emissions across the majority of the Fund's portfolio.

Additionally, the DEI Fund will allocate capital investments towards vertical technology startups operating platforms and software that add value to the Fund's portfolio. The Fund will seek to acquire



early to growth stage modern software technology companies that are active in digital infrastructure and software applications that support the development and growth of financial technology (FinTech), decentralised finance (DeFi), web3, blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI).

Hodler has appointed and engaged Ento Capital Management, a well-established asset manager in DIFC regulated by DFSA with a Sharia-compliant window for ethical investing, to advise on, structure, establish and manage the DEI Fund.

Mohamed El Masri, Managing Director, Hodler Investments said, “The Digital Energy Infrastructure Fund is a testament of our commitment to our mission, centered around the development of critical energy infrastructure for the advancement of the digital economy globally. We are proud to be leading this mission out of the UAE, building on the nation's strategy to develop a digital economy while encompassing sustainability at the core. We are committed to contributing to energy security and reducing energy poverty.”

It is estimated that global spend-



ing on construction of new data centres is expected to surpass \$49 billion by 2030 (source: McKinsey & Company). With over \$1 trillion funding gap in renewable energy, it is believed to be an opportune time to lay the groundwork to power the advancement of compute infrastructure for a vibrant digital economy.

Ahmed Ebrahim, Managing Director, Hodler Investments, said, “We are confident in our initiative to unlock natural wealth for all stakeholders including communities. The Digital Energy Infrastructure Fund is capitalising on an existing pipeline of deals and projects that have been vetted by our qualified team of professionals backed by almost a decade of industry expertise and long-standing relationships with institutional stakeholders across the Middle East, Asia and North America”.

The DEI Fund aims to utilise technologies such as blockchain, A.I., digital asset mining and other solutions combined with energy resources to strengthen the feasibility for sustainable energy infrastructure to meet the growing compute power demands while contributing to power grid stability for more equitable energy systems globally.

The utilities sector has seen an exponential growth in energy demand from modern compute applications. Data center electricity

consumption stood at around 240-340 TWh (source: EIA). Alaa Al Ali, Founder & Group CEO, Gewan Holding notes, “Our decision to be part of the Digital Energy Infrastructure Fund stems from our belief that the digital economies of the future cannot grow without globally distributed sustainable energy infrastructure. We are confident in our stakeholders and our collective effort to build sovereign digital energy infrastructure. We see the Fund as an effective vehicle to support the UAE's Digital Economy Strategy.”

Currently the DEI fund is expected to have a size of between \$250 million and \$500 million, including in-kind commitments with a value not exceeding the total capital commitments.

The Fund's capital commitments will be focused on providing Limited Partners exposure to, an existing energy envelope with offtake commitments and deal-flow from a portfolio of companies with high growth potential and proven business models.

Hodler has secured over \$300 million in exclusive deal-flow across the Middle East, North America, Australia, Asia and Africa.

Amer Al Osh, Chief Development Officer, Gewan Holding added, we are pleased to be working closely with the team at Hodler to establish a compliant structure subject to regulatory approval. Given recent advancements in UAE regulations around digital assets and more specifically the recent landmark steps by the UAE's financial jurisdictions to enact favorable laws for digital assets and AI sectors, we see improved investor sentiment for this type of asset class.

ON SEPTEMBER 7

Glinks to host largest annual education fair in Muscat

MUSCAT: Glinks International is set to hold ‘The Glinks International Education Fair’, the largest annual education fair on Saturday, September 7 at the Royal Tulip Hotel Muscat, Al Marafah Street that will see officials from more than 10 global education institutions, discussing enrolment process and scholarship opportunities with students in the Kingdom of Oman, who would be seeking admission in universities in Canada, Italy, USA, UAE, New Zealand, and beyond.

The fair will feature representatives from renowned institutions such as Brock University, Clark University, Columbia College, Grenfell Campus - Memorial Uni-

versity, Huron University, North Island College, POLIMI Graduate School of Management, Queen's University, SP Jain School of Global Management, St Francis Xavier University, University of New Brunswick, University of Otago, New Zealand, and University of Waterloo.

Stellar opportunity

From 3pm to 7pm, prospective undergraduate and master's students, as well as career professionals looking to advance their careers, will have a stellar opportunity to explore a world of academic opportunities.

The Glinks International Education Fair, themed “The Global

The Glinks International Education Fair, themed “The Global Study Movement,” is designed to be the ultimate platform for students and professionals seeking to broaden their horizons and gain insights into international education

Study Movement,” is designed to be the ultimate platform for students and professionals seeking to broaden their horizons and gain insights into international educa-

tion. With the tagline – The One Stop education fair -- the Omani students will get a chance to explore important study destinations across Canada, New Zealand,

USA, and beyond for the September 2025 intake.

Prabheet Singh, CEO of Glinks International, shares his enthusiasm: “We are thrilled to host the Glinks International Education Fair, which represents a significant milestone in our mission to provide unparalleled education consultancy services. This event will bring together representatives from top educational institutions worldwide, offering attendees a unique opportunity to connect and engage with them directly. Our goal is to empower students and professionals to make informed decisions about their future education and careers.

The Glinks International Edu-

cation Fair promotes the benefits of studying in a diverse environment, enhancing job prospects through international education. Attendees will gain insights from renowned educators, explore hands-on learning programmes, and receive comprehensive guidance on studying abroad, including access to top universities and personalized support from experienced Glinks counselors.

To join us for the fair, scan the barcode in the above image and register for free. And in case of any inquiries, please contact the Glinks office at the following number: +968 94949634. Register for FREE here: <https://www.glinks-group.com/fairs-landing/muscat/>

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Aman REIT, up 6.67%, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, down 8.33%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,691.12 points, down by 0.13% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.60% at 441.88 points. Aman REIT, up 6.67%, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, down 8.33%, was the top loser. Shares of Galfar Engineering were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 952 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 3.38 million, with more than 18.2 million shares changing hands. Out of 50 traded securities, 18 advanced, 14 declined, and 18 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 692K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 607K, followed by foreign investors for RO 85K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,615.45 points, up 0.14%. Prices of United Finance, Global Financial Investments, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Madina Takaful, and Oman Arab Bank were up by 3.57%, 2.67%, 1.35%, 1.30%, and 0.69% respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, OMINVEST, Al Omaniya Financial Services, and Bank Muscat were down by 8.16%, 1.49%, 0.60%, and 0.39% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,864.26 points, up 0.04%. Prices of Oman Flour Mills, Gulf International Chemicals, and Oman Cement were up by 3.96%, 1.43%, and 0.50% respectively. Prices of Construction Materials, Galfar Engineering, and A'Saffa Foods were down by 8.16%, 3.65%, and 0.77% respectively. Services Index was down by 0.23% before closing at 1,821.09 points. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Musandam Power, Al Batinah Power, Al Suwadi Power, and National Gas were up by 4.17%, 2.77%, 1.35%, 1.33%, and 0.96% respectively. Prices of Majan College, Al Maha Marketing, Sembcorp Salalah, OQ Gas Networks, and Renaissance Services were down by 8.18%, 3.74%, 0.95%, 0.69%, and 0.25% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev . Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,701.94	4,689.36	4,691.12	4,697.27	-6.15	-0.13
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,624.29	7,606.68	7,615.45	7,604.74	10.71	0.14
Industry Index	5,864.26	5,804.80	5,864.26	5,861.83	2.43	0.04
Services Index	1,833.03	1,819.90	1,821.09	1,825.35	-4.26	-0.23
MSX Shariah Index	446.04	441.88	441.88	444.54	-2.66	-0.60
MSX TR INDEX	6,534.96	6,517.47	6,519.91	6,528.46	-8.55	-0.13
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,661.98	8,641.97	8,651.94	8,639.77	12.17	0.14
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,765.97	6,697.36	6,765.97	6,763.16	2.80	0.04
SERVICES TR IDX	2,133.01	2,117.73	2,119.12	2,124.08	-4.96	-0.23
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
18,209,751	3,377,574	952	24,466,649,713	18	14	18	50

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 27

REGULAR MARKET

SEC	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PAV VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM00000002374	UNITED FINANCE	17,170	996	1	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.056	0.002	3.571	0.058	0.057	0.059	0.100	20,655,383
OM00000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	25,512	6,633	2	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.253	0.007	2.767	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.100	18,301,400
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	861,430	65,954	42	0.075	0.077	0.075	0.077	0.075	0.002	2.667	0.077	0.077	0.078	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	256,500	19,237	21	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.100	6,750,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	739,845	55,488	23	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	50,616,557
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	352,644	26,570	19	0.075	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.075	0.001	1.333	0.076	0.074	0.078	0.100	54,294,882
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	156,111	12,177	11	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.001	1.299	0.078	0.077	0.078	0.100	13,650,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	10,750	4,300	6	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.398	0.002	0.503	0.400	0.399	0.410	0.100	132,349,084
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	314,841	94,364	27	0.299	0.300	0.299	0.300	0.299	0.001	0.334	0.300	0.298	0.300	0.100	231,060,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	13,800	3,450	6	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.250	0.249	0.250	0.100	25,000,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	104,925	104,925	9	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.100	750,000,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	833,133	112,108	33	0.135	0.135	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.000	0.000	0.134	0.134	0.135	0.100	747,351,000
OM0000003968	QOURED	1,008,500	298,421	8	0.285	0.285	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.000	0.000	0.284	0.280	0.285	0.100	154,888,161
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	55,759	22,250	33	0.400	0.400	0.398	0.399	0.400	-0.001	-0.250	0.399	0.398	0.399	0.100	94,327,390
OM0000000296	BANK MUSCAT	1,698,227	441,491	38	0.260	0.260	0.259	0.259	0.260	-0.001	-0.385	0.259	0.259	0.259	0.100	1,944,156,839
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,074,478	155,655	195	0.144	0.145	0.144	0.144	0.145	-0.001	-0.690	0.144	0.144	0.152	0.100	623,609,844
OM0000002804	ASAFA FOODS	35,887	13,816	10	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.388	-0.003	-0.773	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.100	46,200,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	20,000	2,080	4	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.105	-0.001	-0.952	0.104	0.103	0.105	0.100	99,275,483
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	1,894,115	625,328	37	0.335	0.335	0.330	0.330	0.335	-0.005	-1.493	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.100	220,560,591
Total	19	9,473,627	2,053,244	525												

Parallel Market

OM00000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	220	21	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.090	0.006	6.667	0.096	0.090	0.096	0.100	19,200,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	31,000	7,730	7	0.247	0.250	0.247	0.250	0.240	0.010	4.167	0.250	0.235	0.250	0.100	40,000,000
OM0000003100	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	32,000	15,376	5	0.480	0.499	0.480	0.499	0.480	0.019	3.958	0.499	0.000	0.498	0.100	78,592,500
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	500	36	1	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.001	1.429	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.100	1,491,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	233,285	24,623	20	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.962	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	8,925,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	20,000	2,920	4	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.145	0.001	0.690	0.146	0.141	0.148	0.100	243,733,860
OM0000004772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	600	45	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.082	0.100	15,914,500
OM0000002039	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	5,000	510	1	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.100	1,672,199
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	47	7	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.150	0.165	0.100	352,448,620
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	809	271	4	0.333	0.354	0.333	0.354	0.354	0.000	0.000	0.354	0.333	0.354	0.100	28,816,574
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	100,340	10,536	9	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	234,880,068
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	81,100	4,681	4	0.058	0.058	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.052	0.061	0.100	83,368,283
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REEF	129,816	15,168	9	0.117	0.117	0.116	0.117	0.117	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.100	59,448,115
OM0000008669	JARAL REEF	60,000	6,060	5	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	0.105	0.100	17,574,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	215,000	35,475	4	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.166	-0.001	-0.602	0.165	0.000	0.166	0.100	52,043,805
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	987,948	64,217	34	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.066	-0.001	-1.515	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.100	31,904,365
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	5,884,459	781,568	265	0.137	0.137	0.130	0.132	0.137	-0.005	-3.650	0.132	0.131	0.149	0.100	26,794,211
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	3,390	3,598	4	1.070	1.070	1.030	1.030	1.070	0.040	3.738	1.030	1.030	1.070	0.100	17,070,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	8,250	381	4	0.045	0.047	0.045	0.045	0.049	-0.004	-8.163	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.100	2,812,500
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	3,100	140	1	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.049	-0.004	-8.163	0.045	0.045	0.049	0.100	11,250,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	10,550	1,110	9	0.110	0.110	0.099	0.101	0.110	-0.009	-8.182	0.101	0.102	0.113	0.100	6,090,000
Total	21	7,807,414	974,473	393												

REPORT

Indian residential real estate market records 20.1% surge

NEW DELHI: The Indian residential real estate market achieved its best-ever performance in FY24, with the pan-India absorption rate surging by approximately 20.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in terms of area absorbed, according to a report by JM Financial.

This surge in demand was accompanied by an 11.5 per cent YoY

increase in supply, yet inventory levels in major cities fell to a record low of 12 months, indicating a tight market driven by sustained demand. The sector recorded an average YoY price increase of 9.0 per cent, reflecting a combination of price escalations and a favourable product mix.

This contributed to an overall market growth of approximately

29 per cent during the fiscal year. Pre-sales for listed companies, particularly Tier 1 developers, saw a staggering 39.5 per cent YoY increase, highlighting their continued market share gains and the growing preference for branded and high-end products.

Bengaluru's residential market was among the top performers,

continuing its robust growth trajectory since FY21. In FY24, the city recorded a YoY sales increase of 18.1 per cent, with 102.7 million square feet (MSF) absorbed against 95.9 MSF launched.

The National Capital Region experienced a slight decline in residential sales in 4QFY24, with absorption down by 10.2 per cent YoY. —ANI

COLLABORATION

Zubair EDC partners with MEC to evaluate student incubator projects





EATING PROCESSED MEATS RAISES TYPE 2 DIABETES RISK



Two slices of ham a day are enough to raise type 2 diabetes risk by 15%, according to a new study. Meanwhile high-fat diets could increase the numbers of a toxic molecule known to cause the disease

Diet is well known to impact the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, but a new study has found that eating lots of processed meats carries a particularly high risk of causing the disease.

Eating the equivalent of just two slices of ham a day was associated with a 15% greater chance of developing the disease, according to a study published in Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology.

The study of nearly 2 million people across 20 countries investigated diabetes risks associated with eating unprocessed red meat, processed meat and poultry.

When age, sex and body mass were accounted for, the research found 50g of processed meat a day was enough to increase the risk of type 2 diabetes by 15%.

The equivalent of eating a 100g steak daily raised risk by 10%, but associations with poultry consumption and the disease were less clear, according to the researchers from Cambridge University who conducted the study.

What causes type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is a condition in which

the level of sugar (glucose) in the blood becomes too high. It's caused by the body developing a resistance to a hormone called insulin, which normally lowers blood sugar.

Type 2 diabetes often develops due to being overweight or inactive, but can also be related to genetics.

Health authorities around the world recommend healthy diet and exercise, avoiding smoking and controlling blood pressure and fat levels to reduce the chances of develop type 2 diabetes.

Nick Wareham, Cambridge of University, UK, a senior author on the study, said their study shows that meat consumption has a particularly large impact on diabetes risks which is independent from obesity or body mass index.

Reducing consumption of processed meats could reduce risk of developing type 2 diabetes, he said.

"Maybe the way to think about it is also to flip it around and say how much you need to reduce your meat intake to reduce your risk by 10%," he said.

That's to say: reducing one's consumption of processed meat by at least two slices of ham per day in turn reduces the chance of getting type 2 diabetes.

"If everybody ate a little bit less, risk would go down, and obviously there are planetary benefits to that as well," said Wareham.

Meaty data from some places, not others

537 million people around the world have been diagnosed with diabetes, according to data from the International Diabetes Federation (IDF). Around 90% of diabetics have type 2 diabetes.

Estimates by the IDF and other health monitors show the prevalence of type 2 diabetes is on the rise globally. Three times more people now have diabetes compared to 25 years ago.

Fast developing regions like Africa are projected to have sizeable increases in type 2 diabetes, however the quality of data available to understand how this change is taking place is patchy.

"We already had strong evidence of this relationship, but this study adds another layer with additional studies and geographic coverage," says one of the study's co-authors and a leading metabolic disease researcher from Harvard University, US, Walter Willet.

"This is most important for the higher

income countries that are consuming the most meat, but it is also important for most low-income countries because they are currently increasing their intakes of red meat," he said.

Sabrina Schlesinger at the German Diabetes Centre, who was not involved in the study, noted the use of 20 countries in the data improved the "generalizability" of the research.

"The findings of this study provide convincing evidence that supports the need for a shift in dietary patterns, especially in modern Western diets, which are characterized by high intake of processed and red meat," Schlesinger said.

"Remarkably, the study suggests that simply replacing processed meats with other types of meat (like unprocessed red meat or poultry) may not be sufficient. A broader shift towards plant-based diets could be more beneficial for health outcomes," she said.

Metabolic mechanisms linked to fatty diet

Processed and red meats are usually high in saturated fats. While consumption of these fats are known to cause a range of health issues, scientists haven't

been entirely sure why.

A separate study has identified a new role of molecules called ceramides acting in the gut which could be contributing to type 2 diabetes risks.

Diets high in saturated fats provide the material needed to create a metabolically toxic variant known as C16.

These toxic C16 molecules were known to be made by the liver. But the new study shows the gastrointestinal tract (the gut) also makes them.

"We've identified a second organ that can make it, and actually makes it in response to what's coming in with the fat consumption," said the study's lead researcher Sarah Turpin-Nolan, from Monash University in Australia.

"If drug companies are trying to make something to treat metabolic disease and type 2 diabetes, if their drug can hit the liver and the gut, they will have a better effect overall," added Turpin-Nolan.

Scientists are yet to establish how C16 and metabolic processes lead to type 2 diabetes. Knowing more could help understand why diets rich in processed meats carry a particularly high risk of causing type 2 diabetes. -nw

SPORTS

Novak Djokovic marches into second round of US Open

Djokovic scored a win over Albot by beating him in straight sets 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 in two hours and seven minutes

WASHINGTON: Serbian tennis star and defending champion Novak Djokovic marched into the second round of the ongoing US Open tournament, starting off his campaign with a win over Radu Albot on Monday.

Stepping on the hard court for the first time since the Indian Wells competition back in March and his first tournament after a historic Paris Olympics gold, Djokovic scored a win over Albot by 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 in two hours and seven minutes, as per ATP.

Despite this victory and its margin, Djokovic did not seem to be at his best and cleanest. 10 double faults, putting 47 per cent of first serves into play and 40 unforced errors describe how at times the multi-time grand slam champion was sloppy.

He tied with the Swedish legend Roger Federer with the most wins at the competition with 89 and is now second to Jimmy Connors.

Djokovic is chasing a 25th major title to break his tie with Australian legend Margaret Court and in



the second round, his next challenge will be the compatriot Laslo Djere, who beat German Jan-Lennard Struff in five sets.

Sitting at 99 career titles, the number two ATP Rankings star is also chasing a century of titles.

Djokovic, having first won the US Open back in 2011, has improved his record to 30 wins and seven losses this season. He has won a total of four US Open titles. Throughout his Grand Slam career, Djokovic has an enviable record of 62-1 against players outside the Top 100 and at the US Open, he is 41-0 against players outside the top 50.

On the other hand, Albot's win-

loss record worsened to 107 wins and 147 losses in his career. This was his 10th US Open main-draw appearance after earning a qualification for the third time.

Albot had momentum for very little time in the second set, breaking back at 2-all and led 40/0 on serve, but Djokovic responded back with some penetrating returns to win five successive points and reclaim his lead.

China's Olympic gold medalist Zheng Qinwen rallied from one set down to achieve a 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 win over Amanda Anisimova of the United States in the women's singles first round at the U.S. Open on Monday.

"It's a very difficult match for the first round. She's a tough opponent to face, but I'm glad at the end I found a way to be through the match and win this match," Zheng said.

"I had this experience already, so this time when I had success in the Olympic Games, to come to the next tournament, I say, everything starts at zero. You are not the Olympic champion. Just be humble and try to work, fight every single match, because if you don't fight, you have a big chance to lose," she added.

Wang Yafan advances
China's Wang Yafan advanced to



the second round after her opponent Maria Sakkari exited early due to an injury after the first set. However, the other two Chinese women's singles players on Monday faced first-round exits: Wang Xiyu lost to Diane Parry of France 7-6(2), 7-6(5), and Yuan Yue was defeated by Russia's Erika Andreeva 6-3, 7-6(7).

Defending women's champion Coco Gauff powered into the second round with a 6-2, 6-0 win over Varvara Gracheva from France.

"It is definitely a lot of pressure in this tournament but I'm just enjoying it," said Gauff.

In the men's singles, China's 19-year-old Shang Juncheng

earned his first U.S. Open win over Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan, 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, in a match that lasted three hours and 34 minutes.

"Very happy and tired. Very tired. Interesting match against Alex. He has everything, he throws anything at you, some second-serve bombs, also drop shots, underarm serves, anything," Shang said. "You really have to focus the whole match, and I'm glad I did all the way till the end. It was just a good win, and hopefully I can continue," Shang added.

Another Chinese player, Bu Yunchaokete, lost to Norway's Casper Ruud 7-6(2), 6-2, 6-2. **ANI**

SWEDISH FOOTBALL MANAGER

FIFA President Infantino pays tribute to ex-England coach Eriksson

GENEVA: FIFA President Gianni Infantino on Monday paid homage to former England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson who passed away at 76.

The Swedish football manager, who coached England from 2001 to 2006, died on Monday after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

"I am deeply saddened to learn of Sven-Goran Eriksson's passing," Infantino said on social media. "As a coach, Sven-Goran was both a great innovator and a true ambassador of our beautiful game, winning domestic competitions in three different European countries together with two successes at continental level with IFK Goteborg and Lazio."

"A global influence, his career also included coaching national teams from four different continents with time spent in charge of England, Mexico, Cote d'Ivoire and the Philippines," Infantino added.

"As a football person, he always led with enthusiasm and with a smile. On behalf of FIFA and our global community, I send my condolences to Sven-Goran's family and friends at this difficult time.



RIP"

Eriksson made history in 2001 when he replaced Kevin Keegan to become the first foreign coach to take charge of the England team and he led them to two World Cup finals stages, in 2002 and 2006, with a historic 5-1 win away to Germany in September 2001, helping make him a very popular figure.

The 76-year-old Swede also coached in China for approximately five years. In 2013, he came to Chinese Super League to coach Guangzhou R&F. In 2015, he became the head coach of Shanghai SIPG Club, and in 2017, he also coached for a period of time in Shenzhen. **Xinhua**

FORMER PAKISTAN BATTER

Mohsin Naqvi has absolutely no idea about cricket: Ahmad Shahzad

NEW DELHI : In a scathing attack on the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi, former Pakistan batter Ahmad Shahzad has questioned Naqvi's understanding of the game.

The criticism came in the wake of Pakistan's surprising 10-wicket defeat to Bangladesh in the first Test at Rawalpindi, marking Pakistan's first-ever loss to their Asian rivals in Test cricket.

Shahzad, known for his outspoken nature, took to his social media platform, X (formerly Twitter), to express his disappointment.

He slammed Naqvi, stating that the PCB chief lacked the cricketing insight needed to lead Pakistan's cricket revival.

"This is what happens if you don't make changes in time. You got scared and you did not make decisions," Shahzad wrote.

"I was told that Mohsin Naqvi was a brave, resolute, and shrewd man with extreme power when he became the PCB chief. It was being said that if anyone could change the PCB, it would be Naqvi. But we have not seen it yet, and whatever he has done so far, this much is clear that Mohsin Naqvi has absolutely no idea about cricket," Shahzad said.

Naqvi, who assumed the role of PCB chairman earlier this year, had promised significant changes



to improve Pakistan's cricket fortunes following their disappointing performance in the 2024 T20 World Cup. Despite these assurances and several changes within the team and management, Pakistan's struggles have only deepened, culminating in the historic defeat against Bangladesh.

Shahzad pointed out that Naqvi's earlier promise to overhaul Pakistan cricket after the T20 World Cup loss to India had not been fulfilled.

"When you lost to India in the T20 World Cup 2024, to keep peo-

ple quiet, you said that you will do a surgery on Pakistan cricket. But you failed to do it. You lied to people just like others in the past. What did you think? That you would buy time? That after you beat Bangladesh in the Test series, people will go a little quiet and then you will implement your changes, but that did not happen," Shahzad noted.

The defeat to Bangladesh has intensified pressure on the Pakistani side, as they have now lost four consecutive Test matches, including a 3-0 series defeat against Aus-

tralia earlier this year.

The last time Pakistan won a Test match at home was in early 2021 against South Africa. The recent string of poor performances in both red and white-ball formats has left fans and critics alike questioning the direction of Pakistan cricket.

Shahzad further criticized the long-standing influence of certain individuals in Pakistan cricket.

"The people that have been running Pakistan cricket for the last 12-15 years, they are still calling the shots. It has culminated in Bangladesh beating Pakistan for the first time in a Test match. I have never seen this in my life" he remarked.

As Pakistan prepares for the second Test against Bangladesh, starting on August 30 at the same venue, they face immense pressure to turn their fortunes around and avoid an unprecedented Test series defeat to Bangladesh.

With the spotlight firmly on Naqvi and the PCB, the coming days will be crucial in determining the future course of Pakistan cricket.

Recapping the first match of the series, the Rawalpindi Test had a damp start due to a delayed beginning caused by a wet outfield, but by the fifth day, it had transformed into an action-packed thriller. **ANI**

MAIDEN VISIT

Omani racer Ahmad Al Harthy relishing brand new challenge in USA

MUSCAT: Oman's Ahmad Al Harthy returns to race action this weekend during round six of the FIA World Endurance Championship, the event marking another fresh test for the Team WRT driver with his maiden visit to the Circuit of the Americas in the USA.

Badged as the 'Lone Star Le Mans', the six-hour race at COTA in Austin, Texas, will be contested on Sunday, 1 September, and Al Harthy and his esteemed teammates in the No.46 BMW M4 LMGT3 entry, Valentino Rossi and Maxime Martin, are determined to deliver a serious points haul.

Going into the ante-penultimate event of the FIA WEC campaign, the trio hold sixth in the LMGT3 driver standings after a season

which has certainly experienced ups and downs – the highlight thus far being a fantastic second place at Imola in Italy during round two.

Two unfortunate non-scoring events, at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium and Le Mans in France, have tempered the team-mates' challenge in LMGT3 but ahead of this coming weekend's race in North America they are only nine points shy of the top four in the championship.

Last time out at Interlagos in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Al Harthy, Martin and Rossi combined to deliver a richly deserved return to the points with a very creditable top five result from 12th on the class grid in a sun-baked six-hour contest.

The desire, of course, is to make an overdue return to the LMGT3



podium but in a category as hugely competitive as the FIA World Endurance Championship that is much easier said than done, with

an entry packed with the world's most high profile teams and professional endurance racers.

As is always the case, OQ, Oman

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel, Experience Oman and BMW Oman supported Al Harthy will be keenly focused on developing the very best race set-up during the practice sessions in Austin. From there, he will be determined to progress to the top 10 Hyperpole qualifying shoot-out after only just missing out in Brazil by a mere tenth of a second.

Ahmad Al Harthy said: "I really cannot wait to get on track at COTA for the first time this week, it's going to be another amazing first for me in my career and I'm looking forward to learning this incredible circuit and making the best preparations we can for qualifying and the race. I'm excited to be racing in the USA for the first time, and proudly promoting Oman

as we do that – hopefully with a strong result.

"It's been a good season generally in FIA WEC, our first together with Vale and Maxime with WRT, with just a few things working against us, especially Spa and Le Mans. Overall I'm happy with my performances, it's incredible working with such a professional team as WRT, and we will all be working hard to deliver the best we can over the last three races – starting at COTA this weekend!"

Following three free practice sessions, two on Friday, 30th August, and one on the morning of Saturday, 31st August, LMGT3 qualifying is scheduled to begin at 15.00 local time on Saturday with the Hyperpole shoot-out taking place directly after.

Hongqi H5: Redefining luxury and elegance in sedan market

Hongqi H5 combines noble heritage with modern sophistication, highlighted by its iconic waterfall-type front grille

MUSCAT: The new Hongqi H5 is setting a new standard in luxury and elegance for the sedan segment. With its striking design, advanced technology, and superior comfort, the Hongqi H5 is poised to redefine the driving experience for discerning customers in Oman and beyond.

Hongqi H5 combines noble heritage with modern sophistication, highlighted by its iconic water-



fall-type front grille. This design element not only enhances the vehicle's aesthetic appeal but also serves as a testament to Hongqi's commitment to crafting vehicles that embody luxury and class.

Engineered for both comfort and performance, the Hongqi H5 features a multi-link independent suspension system that ensures a smooth and safe ride. The vehicle is equipped with a 1.8L Turbo-

charged Direct Injection Engine coupled with a 48V Boost Recuperation System (Mild Hybrid), delivering a perfect balance of power and fuel efficiency.

The Hongqi H5 also boasts a panoramic sunroof, providing passengers with a connection to nature and allowing gentle breezes to enhance their journey. Inside, the state-of-the-art touchscreen infotainment system places entertain-

ment and information at the driver's fingertips, while front 4 airbags and dual-side air curtains ensure maximum safety for all occupants.

A key feature of the Hongqi H5 is its Adaptive Cruise Control system, which automatically calculates the distance and speed of the vehicle ahead, ensuring a safe following distance. This advanced technology offers drivers an effortless and secure driving experience, making long journeys more enjoyable.

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, remarked, "The Hongqi H5 represents a new era of luxury and innovation in the sedan market. With its sophisticated design, cutting-edge technology, and unwavering commitment to safety, the Hongqi H5 is set to redefine what it means to drive a luxury vehicle in Oman. We are proud to bring this exceptional vehicle to our customers and are confident it will exceed their expectations in every way."

The Hongqi H5 is now available at Hongqi showroom in Aziaba. Experience the ultimate in luxury and performance with the Hongqi H5 — where elegance meets innovation.

8TH EDITION



ISMMUN 2024 serves as academic simulation of UN

MUSCAT: The eighth edition of the Indian School Muscat Model United Nations Conference (ISMMUN - 2024) took place on August 22 and 24. This year's event brought together over 750 delegates, along with 45 DAIS members and 4 Secretariat Members, for a two-day immersive experience of debate, diplomacy, and problem-solving.

ISMMUN serves as an academic simulation of the United Nations, where students step into the shoes of diplomats from different countries to tackle real-world issues. The conference encourages young minds to think critically, develop negotiation skills, and engage in meaningful discussions.

The opening ceremony set the tone for the conference, with Imran Khan, Treasurer of the School Management Committee, delivering a speech that underscored the importance of unity and mutual respect in addressing global challenges. Rakesh Joshi, the Principal, also shared his thoughts, praising the delegates for their enthusiasm and

dedication to promoting peace and cooperation on a global scale. The Secretary-General, AmanTandon, officially opened the conference, highlighting the power of diverse perspectives in creating innovative solutions.

The heart of ISMMUN 2024 lay within its 20 committees, UNHRC, UNW, UNODC, UNSC, DISEC, SPECPOL, WHO, UNICEF, AIPPM, ECOSOC, ICJ, UNTC, LAS, FAO, CWoN, UEFA, CCC, PRESS CORPS, JJK, and SPIDER-MAN. From the UNHRC to SPIDER-MAN, each committee offered a unique platform for delegates to express their views and propose resolutions on topics ranging from media representation to combating societal prejudices. Delegates in committees like DISEC and SPECPOL engaged in rigorous discussions about global security, while those in WHO and UNICEF focused on health and humanitarian issues. The innovative addition of committees like JJK and SPIDER-MAN added a creative twist, encouraging participants to think outside the box.

MODERN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

MCBS celebrates success with thriving week-long open day for prospective students



MUSCAT: The Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) concluded a highly successful week-long Open Day event, held from August 21 to 27.

The event, tailored specifically for General Education Diploma graduates, attracted many attendees eager to explore their future academic paths.

Throughout the week-long event, participants had the opportunity to delve into the diverse range of programs offered at MCBS. Faculty members from all academic departments were present to provide detailed information and help students understand the various programs available. Additionally, attendees had the chance to connect directly with faculty and current students, gaining valuable insights into academic life at MCBS.

Many prospective students



showed great enthusiasm in sharing and enquiring about their fields of interest with the organisers and faculty members.

This event exemplified MCBS's commitment to supporting newly graduated students by offering them a special opportunity to explore potential courses and make informed decisions about their educational journey.

The event's highlights also included comprehensive campus tours, led by the college's student ambassadors, providing a first-hand look at the state-of-the-art facilities. Participants explored different centres and facilities on campus, such as the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre, the Sustainability Centre, and the Recreation and Dining Hall area. Many expressed how welcoming and accommodating the college campus is and felt secure enrolling

their children in such a safe and vibrant environment.

The success of the Open Day event highlights MCBS's dedication to providing a welcoming and informative environment for prospective students, ensuring they

are well-prepared to embark on their academic careers. It is also announced that registration for the new semester has begun, and prospective students are encouraged to start registering for the upcoming term.

MILESTONE

Fuso Oman's new showroom in Azaiba marks its inaugural delivery with Canter Euro 5

MUSCAT: General Automotive Company (GAC) the authorised distributor of Fuso in Oman marked a significant milestone with the inaugural delivery of the Made in Japan Fuso Canter 3-Ton Euro 5 Double Cabin Cargo model from its New FUSO Showroom in Azaiba, Muscatto Al Fayafy Trading & Contracting Establishment.

This delivery signals the beginning of a new chapter for Fuso Oman and a strategic partnership between GAC, and Al Fayafy, showcasing the Fuso brand as a key operational asset for small and medium enterprises in Oman.

The delivery of this Made in Japan Fuso Canter Euro 5 to Al Fayafy is a testament to the trust and confidence placed on the Fuso brand by SMEs in Oman. As a fast-growing SME in Oman, Al Fayafy has recognized the exceptional value offered by Fuso commercial vehicles and has chosen the Canter to enhance its operational capabilities and productivity.

Over the years, Fuso has solidified its position as a trusted companion for SMEs, with many emerging companies relying on



Fuso commercial vehicles for their everyday business needs. By consistently providing high-quality, reliable products & services and a nation-wide network covering major Oil and Gas areas across Oman, Fuso is empowering SMEs to overcome challenges and achieve their business goals.

Equipped with advanced technology and safety features, the Made in Japan Fuso Canter Euro

5 is designed to meet the rigorous demands of any industry. Its spacious Double Cabin configuration provides comfortable space for both the driver and passengers, while its strong Japanese build ensures reliable performance even in the harshest working conditions.

The truck's upgraded Euro 5 engine and fuel-efficient technology not only reduces operating costs but also minimizes environmental

impact which is a major achievement. Additionally, the Fuso Canter's robust chassis and suspension system ensure superior handling and load-carrying capacity.

Endearing experience

It is noteworthy that the New Fuso Showroom in Azaiba, Muscat perfectly underscores the brand's commitment to providing businesses with an endearing owner-

ship experience. The showroom offers a modern and welcoming environment where customers across all industry sectors can explore the latest Fuso models, avail themselves of expert advice, and experience the brand's renowned quality and durability.

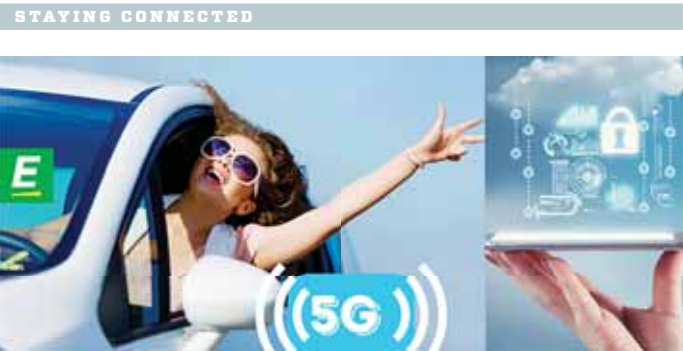
Welcoming Al Fayafy Trading & Contracting Establishment to the Fuso family, Kamil Abdullah Al Balushi, Sales Manager of the New

Showroom, said, "Our new facility in Azaiba is designed to showcase the best of what FUSO has to offer, and the Japanese Canter Euro 5 exemplifies the advanced technology and reliability that FUSO stands for. We are committed to ensuring that our customers receive top-quality products and services that meet their needs."

Abdullah Khamis Al Hasani, proprietor of Al Fayafy Trading & Contracting Est., expressed his enthusiasm about the new acquisition. "The Fuso Canter is more than just a truck; it's a strategic investment for our company's future. Its innovative features and fuel efficiency make it an ideal choice for us, aligning perfectly with our vision for growth and excellence. We are confident that this truck will play a key role in our success ahead, and we look forward to a strong partnership with GAC and the FUSO brand," he stated.

The delivery ceremony was attended by representatives from both GAC and Al Fayafy Trading & Contracting Est., marking the beginning of a strong partnership between the two companies.

ROUND-UP



Europcar Oman introduces unlimited 5G data WiFi units

MUSCAT: In today’s fast-paced world, staying connected is not just a convenience — it’s a necessity. At Europcar Oman, we understand the importance of seamless connectivity, especially during your travels. That’s why we are thrilled to introduce our latest offering: WiFi units with unlimited 5G data, designed to keep you connected from anywhere and at any time.

Seamless connectivity on the go

Whether you’re embarking on a business trip, exploring new destinations, or simply hitting the road for a leisurely drive, staying connected is key to maximizing your experience.

Unlimited 5G data: Powering your adventures

Our WiFi units come equipped with unlimited 5G data, ensuring blazing-fast speeds and reliable connectivity throughout your trip. Whether you need to attend virtual meetings, navigate unfamiliar roads, or simply stay in touch with loved ones, our WiFi

units have got you covered.

Benefits of Europcar’s WiFi units:

Flexibility: Enjoy the freedom to connect multiple devices simultaneously, making it perfect for solo travelers, families, or business groups.

Reliability: With our unlimited 5G data, you can trust in a stable and secure connection, no matter where your travels take you.

Convenience: Say goodbye to hunting for public WiFi spots or dealing with unreliable network coverage. Our WiFi units offer convenience at your fingertips.

Affordability: Experience premium connectivity at an affordable price, adding exceptional value to your travel experience.

The CEO of Europcar Oman and Bahrain, Nitin Sapre, announced, “Our newly launched WiFi units come equipped with limitless 5G data, enabling our clients to travel seamlessly while remaining connected to their dear ones. Ensuring affordability has been a key focus in delivering this convenient service.”

New Kia Sorento fits your budget and needs

Get ready for an errand-packed day or unwind as the night falls; the Sorento drive is pure pleasure, delivering impressive fuel efficiency, the 3.5L V6 engine produces an exceptional 272 horsepower and 33.8 kg/m of torque paired to an 8-speed transmission



33.8 kg/m of torque paired to an 8-speed transmission.

Underscoring Kia’s commitment to innovation, the Sorento is based on Kia’s next-generation powertrain, the Smartstream, which creates a fun, dynamic, and eco-friendly driving experience. Make statements while on the go in an SUV that stands a class apart with its sensual design, bold contours, and Kia’s signature vertical Star-Map DRL graphics that project a futuristic appeal.

Accelerate your journey and build joyful memories with Sorento’s cutting-edge safety features. Designed for elevating experiences, Kia has included the latest features in this SUV which include Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist 2 (FCA 2), Junction Turning, Junction Crossing, Lane-change Oncoming, Direct Oncoming, Driver Steering Assist, Auto Evasive Steering Assist, and Blind-spot Collision-

headroom. Enhance the inside mood with the curved display infotainment system integrated with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. The USB ports spread across all three rows for device charging is an excellent way to keep the family entertained throughout the drive. Other useful features include the power tailgate option for effortless luggage keeping and seamless connectivity features such as the wireless charging tray.

Avoidance Assist among others.

Moving up a notch, Kia’s attentiveness towards safety protocols enables peace of mind. The Safe Exit Assist (SEA) activates when an occupant exits the car after stopping. The system issues alerts in case of a collision risk with an oncoming vehicle. Assessing the risk factor, the Electronic Child Lock button stays locked to prevent the occupant’s exit, thwarting a life-threatening scenario.

The new Kia Sorento balances elegance, performance and power. At your nearest Kia showroom, take a closer look at the Kia Sorento. Get detailed product insights and customer support throughout your buying journey with Kia’s professional sales staff.

Reliable International Automotive, Kia’s distributor in Oman, ensures a rewarding ownership experience.

ESSENTIAL ROLE OF SAVINGS FOR YOUTH

BankDhofar empowers Oman’s future with diverse financial solutions



Ashraf Khalid Al Battashi, Head of products and segmentations in BankDhofar

MUSCAT: Imagine a society where children and young adults are nurtured to develop a strong savings habit from an early age. Over time, these savings can grow into a substantial nest egg, offering exciting opportunities for the individual—whether for investments, further education, purchasing a car, or even providing seed money for a dream home or a business startup. The true success here isn’t just the accumulated wealth, but the valuable lessons and experiences gained along the way, embedding a lifelong culture of financial responsibility.

BankDhofar is playing a pivotal role in shaping a financially secure future for Omani citizens by offer-

ing a diverse range of products tailored to every stage of life. Whether it’s helping children and young adults cultivate strong savings habits or providing robust financial solutions for more significant goals, BankDhofar’s innovative offerings are designed to meet the evolving needs of its customers.

Aligned with the fiscal strategies outlined in the 2040 Vision and bolstered by recent initiatives from the Omani government to foster a savings culture among its citizens, Oman’s banking sector has been a key player in this national effort. This was evident in the sector’s enthusiastic support for the pioneering Social Protection Fund (SPF) initiative introduced by His

Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik last year, which includes, among other things, the Child Benefit Programme. Through this program, the government has pledged to provide monthly financial support to Omani children from birth until the age of 18.

Every Omani child is entitled to have a savings account opened at birth, as it does not only provide financial security but also encourages children, along with their parents, family members, and other well-wishers, to contribute to these savings. Cash gifts from birthdays, Eidiya payments, and other monetary gestures can be deposited directly into the child’s account, offering a far more en-

during benefit than toys or devices that quickly lose their appeal. Indeed, there is no greater gift than a financial contribution that will earn interest and grow into a sum that could have a transformative impact on the child’s future.

Experts agree that by the time children are seven or eight and beginning to understand basic math, they are ready to learn about money—its value, how to save it, and how to plan for the future. Encouraging them to save from an early age lays the foundation for a lifetime of financial security, particularly in today’s era of economic uncertainty and rising debt. As they grow older and grasp the function of a savings account,

BankDhofar is playing a pivotal role in shaping a financially secure future for Omani citizens by offering a diverse range of products tailored to every stage of life. Whether it’s helping children and young adults cultivate strong savings habits or providing robust financial solutions for more significant goals, BankDhofar’s innovative offerings are designed to meet the evolving needs of its customers

they will learn essential money management skills, such as budgeting and setting financial goals. They will begin to take ownership of their finances, watching their savings grow over time. These accounts not only provide a practical platform for children to learn about finance but also empower them to make informed decisions about their financial future.

As children transition into adulthood, their financial needs and responsibilities evolve. A dedicated savings account can help them prepare for more significant financial goals, such as buying their first car or home, or even starting a small business. Today, there are numerous examples of young Omanis who have successfully established their own SMEs. While many have benefited from low-interest loans and other financial support from banks and public institutions, most emphasize the importance of personal savings in providing a crucial initial boost before seeking additional funding.

Thus, while the Omani government deserves praise for encour-

aging the opening of savings accounts for children at birth, it is up to us as a society to build on this initiative and turn it into a national movement. The dual objectives are clear: to help our young people develop a savings habit early on, and to empower future generations to manage their finances wisely and make informed financial choices.

Bank Dhofar offers a diverse range of savings products designed to cater to various financial goals. The ‘Life Cycle Banking,’ approach offer various products to meet customer needs at each life stages. For individuals looking for flexibility, the Savings Account offers a basic platform for managing finances. Additionally, Bank Dhofar provides guaranteed return deposits like Fixed Deposits, Recurring Deposits, and Education and Retirement Savings Plans, ensuring a secure and predictable income stream. These products, coupled with Bank Dhofar’s exceptional customer service and convenient banking channels, make it a popular choice for individuals and families in Oman.





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 18" Dual Tone Alloy Wheels, LED Headlamps, Panoramic Sunroof, 12.3" Infotainment Screens, Leather Seats, Push Button Start, Front & Side Airbags, Keyless Entry, Cruise Control, Hill Descent Control.

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CASH PRICE

OMR 7,050*

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B70
COMFORT MY2025

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 L x W x H (mm): 4810 x 1840 x 1455
 18" Dual Tone Alloy Wheels, LED Headlamps, Panoramic Sunroof, 6 Speakers, Leather Seats, Rear View Camera, Front, Rear & Curtain Airbags, Keyless Entry, Cruise Control, EPB with Auto Hold.

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