

DECISIONS TO DISSOLVE, MERGE OIFC SUSPENDED

The CMA has issued a decision to suspend the decisions of Oman Investment and Finance Company (OIFC)'s general assembly's extraordinary meeting, held on 21 June 2023, that approved the merger of OIFC with Dhofar International Development and Investment Holding Company through annexation. **>B1**



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KHOULA HOSPITAL DOCTORS SUCCEEDED IN URGENT SURGICAL INTERVENTION

A medical team at Khoula Hospital attended to an urgent surgical intervention for an injured woman suffering from a complex fracture and a ruptured spinal cord following a traffic accident. The patient's condition required an urgent surgery on Saturday night. During the surgery, the patient's fracture was fixed, and other fractures were treated. **>A2**



Founded 1975 · Volume 48 No. 92 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

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WAGES PROTECTION SYSTEM TO SAFEGUARD WORKERS' RIGHTS

The Ministry of Labour has given between 6 and 8 months' time to companies to correct the status of their employees as WPS comes into effect

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The endeavour and efforts by the Sultanate of Oman to safeguard rights of workers have been strengthened by the decision to implement the electronic



Wages Protection System (WPS) in private sector establishments.

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) on Sunday issued a circular giving private sector companies a time frame for the implementation of the WPS.

In an official tweet, the MoL said that "in accordance with the Ministerial Decree No (299/2023), all private sector establishments are mandated to implement the

Wages Protection System."

Effective from 10 July, 2023, these establishments are required to regularise their status in alignment with the WPS and the time frame mentioned varies from eight to six months for different company sizes.

While the decision will be effective from July 10 for all, the time frame for large and medium size companies will be six months

to streamline their status.

Small and micro companies have been provided a time frame of eight months to correct their status with 50 percent of the status correction to be completed within four months.

These regulations underscore the government's commitment to ensuring a just and equitable workplace.

The WPS introduction will ensure the secure and efficient disbursement of wages, allowing private sector employees to receive their salaries directly into their designated bank accounts.

By facilitating timely and accurate payments, the system aligns with the terms outlined in employees' contracts, promoting financial stability and trust between employers and workers.

Under the new regulations, employers are obligated to transfer employees' wages to authorised local banks within a maximum of seven days from the due date. **>A5**

VITAL PROJECT

OMR85million water transmission project in Oman 94% complete

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With an expenditure of OMR85 million, work is underway on the completion of strategic project to enhance water transmission system between the Wilayats of Barka and Sohar.

One of the large and vital projects being implemented by Nama Water Services Company is almost 94 percent complete and is expected to feed all the wilayats of South Al Batinah and North Al Batinah governorates.

After the project becomes operational during the last quarter of 2023, it will enhance the existing water transmission lines from the desalination plant in the Wilayat of Barka and the desalination plant in the Wilayat of Sohar. It involves the extension of pipelines with a total length of approximately 140 km of diameters ranging from 600 to 1800 mm.

In addition, the project includes the construction of water



tanks with a total storage capacity of 88,000 cubic metres, as well as the construction of five water pumping stations.

The scope of work for the project includes the implementation of all civil, mechanical and electrical works and control and monitoring systems, which include the construction of a pumping station with four pumps, each with a capacity of 3970 cubic metres per hour, from the new water pumping station in Barka towards the main reservoirs in the Oman Logistics Zone. **>A5**



**National Museum
hosts 'Fab Tech'
mobile laboratory
camp**

A4

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Programmes to hone skills of students

1 To sharpen the skills of students, summer programme for students for the academic year 2022/2023 began in the wilayats of Muscat Governorate on Sunday. **>A2**

WORLD Protests in France against police

2 Marches took place throughout France to denounce police brutality and racial profiling, as tensions run high after days of rioting engulfed the country. **>A7**

MARKET Oman's oil exports top 128mn barrels

3 Oman's total exports by the end of May 2023 stood at 128.07 million barrels with an average oil barrel price of \$81, according to the NCSI. **>B1**

OFFICIAL HOLIDAY

Countdown begins for a long weekend in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The countdown for a long weekend began on Sunday with the government's announcement of a holiday on the occasion of the Holy Prophet Hijra Anniversary and the advent of the new Hijri year 1445 AH on July 20.

The official holiday for employees of the public and private sectors will be on Thursday. With the Sultanate having a Friday-Saturday weekend, it would give an opportunity for people to enjoy a three-day weekend.

On Sunday, a ministerial decision issued by the Ministry of Labour read: "On the occasion of the Holy Prophet's Hijra Anniversary and the new Hijri year 1445 AH, Thursday, 20 July 2023 has been set as an official holiday for employees of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other legal



entities, as well as establishments of the private sector. The moon sighting of the month of Muharram will be announced by the departments concerned.

Employers may agree on terms to engage employees on the said holiday - if deemed necessary due to the nature of their work - provided they compensate the workers for the holiday."

The Islamic New Year, also known as the Hijri New Year, marks the beginning of a new

lunar year. The first day of the Islamic year is observed by most Muslims on the first day of the month of Muharram.

People recently returned to work at the start of the month after a five-day Eid Al Adha break.

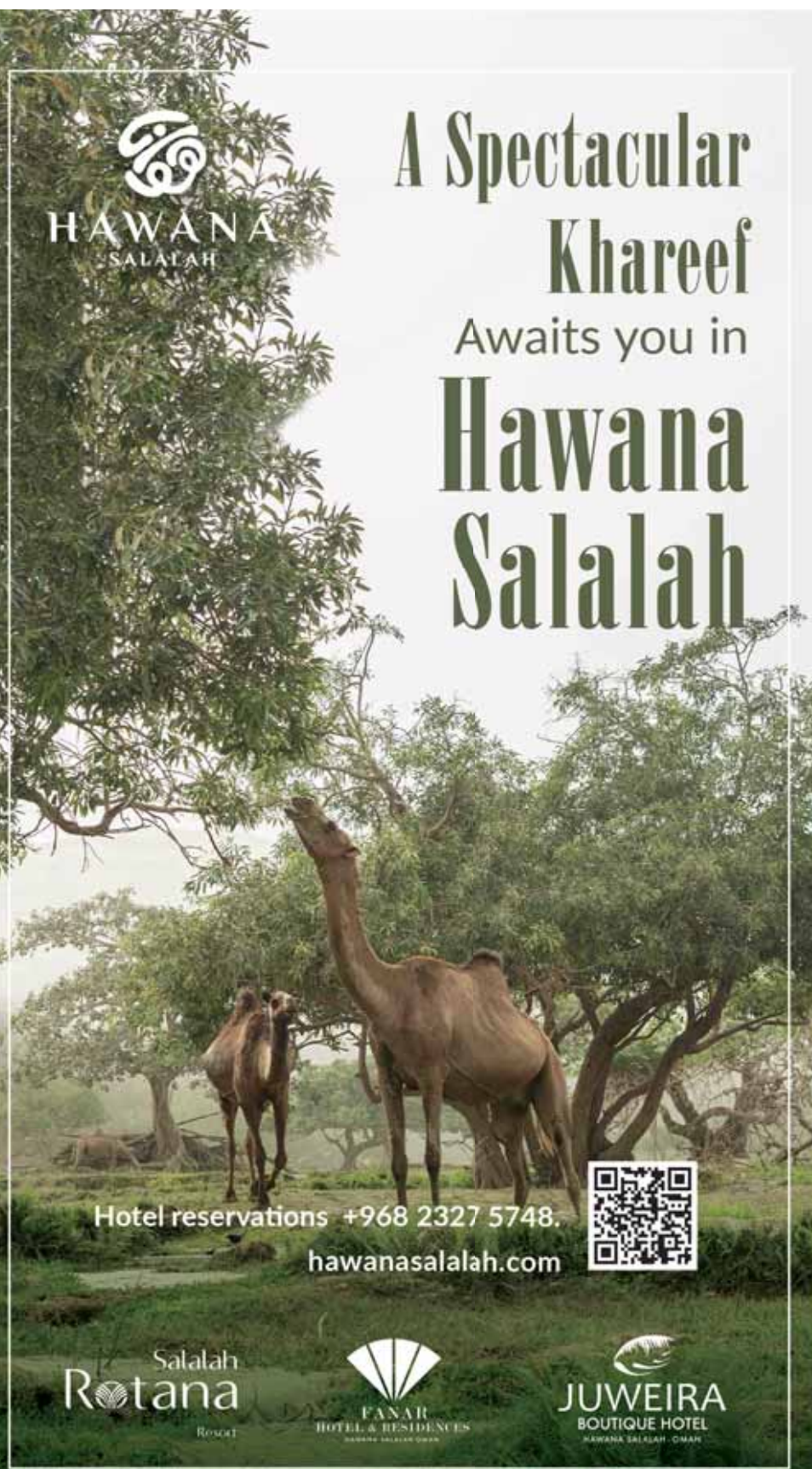
Staycation concept had gained traction during the Eid Al Adha break with hotels and restaurants in the Sultanate recording brisk business.

Oman is blessed with breathtaking natural beauty, interwoven with a kaleidoscope of landscapes that has tourism attractions to suit the tastes of everyone.

With the blistering heat certainly a damper to holiday plans there are enough getaways in the mountains that provide pleasant weather. Salalah's Khareef season is another option for local residents who wish to travel during the long weekend.



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Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:01am

Indian expat to leave Oman after 22 years

Vijay Kumar Handa's love for Oman led him to stay for 22 years, and now, he plans to return to his native town of Noida near Delhi after reshaping the hospitality industry in Oman

Times News Service

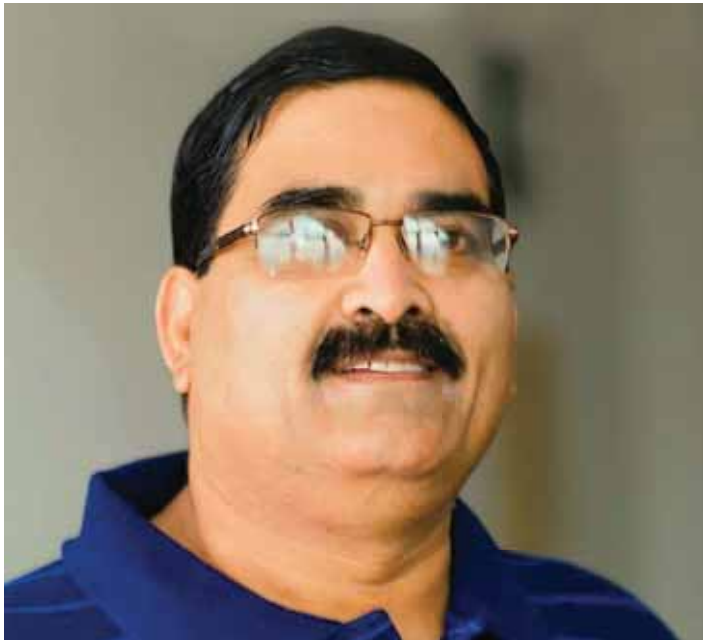
MUSCAT: At 61 years, Indian expatriate Vijay Kumar Handa cannot imagine leaving Oman— his home for more than 20 years —for good.

His love for Oman led him to stay for 22 years, and now, he plans to return to his native town of Noida near Delhi after reshaping the hospitality industry in Oman.

"I arrived in Oman on April 5, 2001 on deputation through The Taj Group of Hotels as the Director of Food & Beverage for Sohar Beach Hotel, 4-Star Luxury Resort which was opened in 1992 by The Taj and they managed this property till 2006," he told Times of Oman on Sunday.

A gold medallist and a university topper, Handa has worked in Nepal, India and Oman. "After graduation, I did my post graduation in hotel management and joined The Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi," he said.

With overall experience of around 40 years, he is planning to leave the Sultanate with a very



GOOD ACADEMIC RECORD: A gold medallist and a university topper, Vijay Kumar Handa has worked in Nepal, India and Oman.

heavy heart.

After a long span with The Taj, Vijay moved to The Lemon Tree Hotels, where he was managing a large cluster of hotels. After that he launched a new brand of hotels called the Red Fox Hotels.

He worked with this company for three years and enjoyed opening many new hotels for the company. Handa joined Omran (Oman Tourism Development Company) in 2010 and led a large cluster of hotels as Area General Manager.

He successfully opened the first two Atana Stay Hotels at Al Ashakara and Salalah in 2018.

Today Atana Hotels are a very popular national hotel brand.

He fondly remembers the most successful hotel under his umbrella called the City Hotel Duqm which has been by far the most profitable hotel in the Sultanate for many years even during the Covid times.

"But it was Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve, which is very close to my heart, I enjoyed leading a strong Omani workforce at this reserve. Today this is a destination not to be missed by anyone entering Oman," he said.

Under his leadership, Masirah Island Resort won the best 3 star resort award many times in Oman. This resort offers a wonderful getaway for everyone.

During his long stint of almost 13 years, Vijay was managing operations of Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve, Atana Stay Al Ashakara, Masira Island Resort, City Hotel Duqm, Atana Stay Salalah, Hay Al Shatti Premium Villas & Sohar Beach Hotel.

"But I can say that the best stint of my career was to work with Omran as I enjoyed the professional approach of this company which is bound to deliver great surprises in the hospitality sector

of Oman and have plans to expand outside the country too," he said.

Vijay remembers fondly about Omran leadership, which is not only professional in its approach but maintains a fantastic work life balance.

As per Vijay, many other companies all over the World, need to follow the footsteps of Omran.

Now when it's time for Vijay to depart from Oman, he is not at all feeling comfortable because this country was his true second home.

He understands clearly that life has to move on and every company has its guidelines which needs to be adhered to.

The safest country in the World as Vijay always mentions, he and his family are going to miss Oman and the adorable people of this country so much. "People of this lovely nation make everyone feel at home, make you feel part of their family. This is the only country in the world where a tourist can spend months without spending a single penny too, such is the hospitality of natives of this country for all those who prefer affordable tourism," he said.

But there is always a desire to come back to Oman. "I look forward to coming back to Oman anytime if given any opportunity," he said.

Speaking about his plans going forward, Vijay desires to settle in India and work for society in India and Oman. As per him, it's time to give back to society. "This may be in the form of social service, coaching and guiding youngsters to better their career in the hospitality industry. His dream is to start up a company where he can make it possible at a nominal cost," he said.

His core mission of life, going ahead, is to start a free meal or meals at cost price (no profit, no loss) for everyone who is less privileged.

COMMENTARY



Letting go of your past



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

I AM BEGINNING to think that people with good memory lead a very miserable life. No offence meant but who would like to remember every little detail of the past? We have enough problems dealing with the present without letting the past muddle up our thoughts.

Though I have a lot of respect for people who keep a diary but I would personally not like to take a peek into my past. This is the reason why I would never write my memoirs because the past to me is fast becoming a very distant blur. The problem with the times gone by is that they remind you nothing but the crisis and dilemmas that you would rather forget.

Don't get me wrong. I like history but not my own. Wars that have been won by the heroes of the past make fascinating reading but personal battles scrolled in a diary do not. The greatest lesson we can learn about history books is that nobody bothers to read them twice. Why should you want to recall your school-days and be reminded of a bully who gave you a torrid time?

The past has no good memories even a happy family trip can remind you of the times that you can never get back. Why waste time delving deep in the recess of your memory when you have a lot to accomplish right now? Although experience is the product of the past but it is best forgotten once lessons have been learned. Letting memories linger on is like leaving an injury untreated to remind

you of the fall that you should have avoided. If you look closely, we sometime hesitate making progress when we remember an incident that happened a while ago.

The mistakes of the past and the fear of the future usually are two pivotal reasons that keep us locked within ourselves. If there is no willingness to change then the state of one's mind becomes more receptive to pessimism. When dark moods begin to settle even the usual sparkle of life starts to die down, and, with it goes the real reason to stay alive.

Unfortunately, not all of us have the ability to lift our heads from gloom of the past. It strikes hard when we least suspect it and spreads its darkness to smolder all hopes. Usually, the seemingly strongest people become victims while the weak come through it unscathed. The signs are always there, though at times, may be difficult to dictate the symptoms. We can help if we see a change of routine or a drastic shift of one's disposition. No one would come forward and say, "I'm depressed." It is not that simple because depression is a result of some aspects of the past not dealt successfully.

So should we let our pasts rest in peace? I certainly think so. Clinging to it shrouds our abilities to move on. I know of a man who is now in his late seventies who look fifteen years younger. His secret is simple. He gets rid of anything that is more than five years old in his home, except of course, his family. He never has the time for memorabilia or souvenirs. He says that he never even remember what he had for lunch the day before. Why should he remember about it? He stays thoroughly focused on the present and that what really matters, isn't it?

It remains that you never have any control of the past so steering away from it makes sense. The only thing you need to remember is your wife's birthday and the ATM pin number.

INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION

Ministry's workshop reviews practices, research in line with Oman Vision 2040

MUSCAT: A workshop kicked off on Sunday on the national system for institutional innovation and managing change.

The two-day workshop is organised by the Ministry of Labour. It reviews practices and research in line with Oman Vision 2040.

The workshop is attended by 350 participants and 37 public and private establishments concerned with administrative practices re-

lated to developing government performance.

Artificial intelligence

Through various working papers, the event discusses the matter of institutional innovation, as well as experiences and methods of innovation and change. It also highlights the roles of artificial intelligence (AI) in government work environments. -ONA



MUSCAT GOVERNORATE

Summer programmes being held to sharpen the skills of students

Times News Service

MUSCAT: To sharpen the skills of students and their scientific knowledge, the activities of the summer programme for students for the academic year 2022/2023 began in the wilayats of Muscat Governorate on Sunday under the slogan 'Summer of Vision and Building'.

The programme is organised by the Directorate General of Education in Muscat Governorate, represented by the Department of Vocational Guidance and Student Counselling, with the participation of more than 300 students, and it will continue for two weeks.

The summer programme aims to provide many activities aimed at honing the skills of the participants in various fields to boost their intellectual and scientific knowledge. The most prominent



of which are scientific experiment programmes, sports activities, technical and manual skills workshops, educational lectures, in addition to educational trips.

The activities of the summer programme also include various competitions, including programmes on artificial

intelligence, art formation, programmes in content creation, Arabic calligraphy and handicrafts, in addition to programmes for preparing leaders and the future broadcaster. The activities also include learning the basics of photography, first aid and designing programmes.

FROM JULY 18

Air India cancels flights to Delhi

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Travellers bound for Indian capital New Delhi will be disappointed as Air India announced on Sunday that it will cancel Muscat-Delhi-Muscat

flights on Tuesdays and Sundays, starting on July 18.

Operational reasons

In a circular to all travel agents on Sunday, Air India said that due to operational reasons AI 973/974

will remain cancelled from July 18 to October 23.

Passengers can opt for a full refund or rebook on alternative dates without any penalties and tickets would be reissued without charges.

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MULTIPLE FRACTURES

Khoula hospital doctors attend to urgent need of accident victim

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A medical team at Khoula Hospital attended to an urgent surgical intervention for an injured woman suffering from a complex fracture and a ruptured spinal cord following a traffic accident.

A specialised medical team from Khoula Hospital, in cooperation with the Department of Orthopedics at Sohar Hospital in North Al Batinah Governorate, succeeded in an urgent medical intervention that took 4 hours, for a patient having multiple fractures and a rupture of the spinal cord after she met with a traffic accident.

The patient's condition required an urgent surgery on Saturday night. During the surgery, the patient's fracture was fixed, and other fractures were treated. The operation was successful, and her health condition has stabilised.

Dr. Mohammed bin Nasser bin Al Kindi, senior specialist in orthopedic surgery at Sohar Hospital, said that a 21-year-old woman who was involved in a traffic accident was found to have a fracture in the spine with damage to the spinal cord, in addition to a fracture in the right femur that required urgent intervention.

"The operation was performed by a team consisting of Dr. Sultan Al Kalbani and Dr. Walid Al Kalbani from Khoula Hospital, in cooperation with Dr. Mohammed



Al Kindi and Dr. Kiran Fajr from Sohar Hospital. The operation took about 4 hours,"said Dr. Mohammed Al Kindi.

Dr. Al Kindi stressed that conducting such operations reinforces the decentralisation policy pursued by the Ministry of Health, especially for cases that require urgent intervention.

Additionally, Dr. Mohammed Al Kindi pointed out the importance of having the necessary tools, equipment, and the presence of trained staff to deal with such surgical cases in regional hospitals.

The health system in the Sultanate of Oman aims to ensure the provision of comprehensive, integrated healthcare to the entire population in a fair and accessible manner, by meeting the urgent need through providing services that citizens need, whether in Muscat Governorate or the various governorates, by responding to the call of duty for cases that need urgent intervention.



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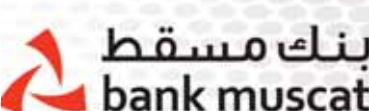
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Mobile laboratory camp to spread culture of innovation, sharpen the skills of students



The National Museum, represented by the Learning Centre, in cooperation with Innotech, is organising the laboratory camp and targeting mainly the school students

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The National Museum is hosting the 'Fab Tech' mobile laboratory camp to spread the culture of manufacturing and the techniques of the Fourth Industrial Revolution among school students.

In an effort to encourage students to innovate, spread the culture of manufacturing, and introduce them to the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution, the National Museum, represented by the Learning Centre, in cooperation with Innotech, is organising the 'Fab Tech' mobile laboratory camp, which targets school students from 10-16 years during the July 9-27 2023.

The laboratory aims to provide students with various skills through a series of workshops in the fields of manufacturing and the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution of pro-

gramming, electronics and 3D printing, and to help them employ them in small projects of their innovation and creativity on the ground, in addition to developing problem-solving skills and creative thinking within the work team.

Enriching their scientific output and preparing them for the requirements of the modern era.

Ms. Amina Al-Abri, Head of the Learning Centre Department, said: "Hosting the camp comes within the comprehensive framework through which various educational activities are planned and developed within the work of the Learning Centre at the National Museum, especially after the success achieved by the laboratory last year in cooperation between the two sides, and this year a broader segment was reached. Among the beneficiaries, about 180 male and female students registered for the event."

For his part, Mohammed Al-Kindi, a trainer in the 'Fab Tech' laboratory, indicated that the laboratory contains a 3D printer specialised in additive manufacturing techniques, as well as innovation boxes, programming kits, and other tools and supplies that contribute greatly to moulding students ideas into realistic models, such as Wood engraving machine and laser cutting machine.

The laboratory also includes a mini-laboratory that simulates major factories and laboratories to introduce students to ways to take security and safety measures by wearing protective helmets and other protective means.

The laboratory is also fully equipped to provide workshops on the basics of electricity and the correct methods of connecting electrical circuits.

It is worth noting that the 'Fab Tech' Mobile Laboratory is the first mobile manufacturing laboratory of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman. It is an educational initiative that aims to spread the culture of manufacturing and the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution in programming, electronics, design and 3D printing among academics, students and engineers. It is offered by Innotech under the umbrella of the Social Investment Programme of BP Oman.



FOOD SECURITY

'Al-Faghour' season aims to boost food security in Oman



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The harvesting of palm trees for the Al Faghour production event was launched on Saturday under the auspices of Sheikh Ali bin Ahmed Al Shamsi, Governor of North Sharqiyah, in the presence of a number of officials of government institutions.

This event focuses on the importance of 'Al-Faghour' season and its contribution to food security. It is aimed at enhancing its marketing and its economic impact in the

Sultanate of Oman, encouraging pioneering experiences and focusing on the specific manufacturing industries of its products.

The first day of the event, which was supervised by the North Sharqiyah Governorate office, in partnership with a number of relevant institutions and sectors, included organising a simulation of the "Al-Tabsil" process, starting with the "Jedad Al-Nakhla" process, up to the production of "Al-Faghour" in what is locally called "Al-Turkba". It is a place

dedicated to cooking Palm fruit "Busoor".

During the simulation process, the attendees got acquainted with the old methods of the 'Al-Tabsil' process and its different stages, from the stage of harvesting the fruits of the "Al-Mabsali palm tree" through cleaning and filtering the "Busoor" and transferring it to "Al-Turkba" to start the process of cooking and boiling it to produce the "Al-Faghour" product and transport it to drying places under the sun.



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Persons with disabilities in Oman being integrated and empowered

They are being taken care of in light of the growing call for attention to them and their contribution to social development

MUSCAT: Persons with disabilities in the Sultanate of Oman, according to the Basic Law of the State, enjoy a number of rights, including 'integration and empowerment', 'care and rehabilitation'.

They are being taken care of in light of the growing call for attention to them and their contribution to social development.

The total national workforce in the Sultanate of Oman of persons with disabilities in the government and private sectors until May 2023 is 2,459, of whom 2,104 are males and 335 are females, whose disabilities range from physical, hearing, visual, intellectual, epilepsy, lack of growth, Down syndrome and autism spectrum.

Numerous experiences in different jobs in the two sectors have proven that this group is able to carry out its job duties, quickly adapt and display its energies, thus



contributing to increasing productivity, and work is also good for them and their families.

Bader Freish Mohamed Al-Yahyai, Assistant Director General of the General Directorate of Persons with Disabilities at the Ministry of Social Development, stressed the commitment of government agencies to allot 2 percent of the jobs for persons with disabilities, urging the private sector to apply this percentage in the employment of this group, indi-

cating that the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is in its final stages, and it has been planned to increase the percentage of employment of this group in the public and private sectors.

He added to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the role of the ministry is to hone the skills of persons with disabilities to integrate them into work in the public and private sectors, and it begins early with the inclusion of children with disabilities at an early age stage after the discovery and diagnosis of disability.

He explained that there are several comprehensive rehabilitation programmes implemented by the Ministry for this category, including special education programmes for developing academic

and cognitive skills, physiotherapy programmes for developing motor abilities, occupational therapy for developing motor skills, developing concentration abilities, visual motor synergy skill programmes, and treatment programmes. For speech disorders, there are rehabilitation programmes for children.

He indicated that the family is an active partner in the implementation of early rehabilitation programmes, and the development of children's skills to integrate them into the early stages of education, so that the child can then join the educational integration projects of the Ministry of Education according to the requirements or type of disability.

He pointed out that there are

cases that can be vocationally rehabilitated in private training institutes, and cases that vary according to the degree of disability (moderate or intellectual disability, autism cases, or moderate physical disability) that are unable to enroll in training or continue university studies, so vocational training is provided to them according to special criteria, including: Protection in training workshops, protection from danger, taking into account the level of security and safety, and training them under the supervision of specialists.

He explained that work is done under the supervision of specialists and provides them with more protection to compete in production, protection from danger and a reduction in working hours.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Ministry to monitor private sector's wage disbursements

<FROM A1 This process is facilitated through the user-friendly salary information file of the WPS, simplifying and expediting wage disbursements.

To ensure effective implementation and compliance, the concerned MoL department will oversee the electronic system, monitoring wage disbursements in the private sector.

Through diligent enforcement of these regulations, this dedicated team aims to guarantee that employees receive their rightful earnings and that employers fulfil

their payment obligations.

Employers are also required to promptly inform the Ministry of any changes to employees' wages, ensuring that the registered wages accurately reflect the actual amounts received.

This measure promotes transparency and accountability, fostering a fair work environment that upholds the rights of all workers.

While the utilisation of the electronic WPS is mandatory, a few exceptions have been made. These exceptions include cases of labour disputes leading to work

cessation, voluntary termination of employment without legal justification, employment of new workers within the initial 30 days, and employees on unpaid leave.

Non-compliance with the newly implemented regulations may result in administrative penalties, implemented by the ministry in a progressive manner. Initially, violators will receive a warning, followed by the suspension of services related to preliminary work permits. Repeated violations may incur an administrative fine of OMR 50, with subsequent offences facing doubled fines.

WATER TRANSMISSION

Nama Water Services works to enhance water security

<FROM A1 Moreover, the project comprises constructing a water transmission line with a diameter of 1,800 mm and a length of 20 km from the water pumping station in Barka to the reservoirs of the Oman Logistics Area, as well as constructing a water transmission line with a diameter of 800 mm and a length of 900 metres linking the existing water transmission line in Barka with the existing Barka reservoir.

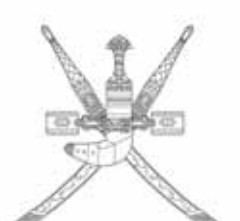
A new water reservoir capacity will be set up (50,000 cubic metres), in addition to a water pumping station with four pumps, each with a capacity of 3,295 cubic metres per hour, to pump water towards the Al Suwaig, Al Musannah and Al Hazm reservoirs.

Furthermore, three pumps,



each with a capacity of 746 cubic metres/hour, will be installed to pump water towards the existing new Barka reservoir feeding the Wilayat of Wadi Al-Ma'awil and Nakhal through the construction of a water transmission line with a diameter of 600 mm and a length of 800 metres from the water pumping station in the Oman Logistics Area.

Nama Water Services works to enhance water security by enhancing water production from the desalination plants and linking them to an integrated transmission system, enhancing interconnection between desalination plants and expanding service through extending water networks to meet the increasing demand for water.



Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby re -announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)
113/2023	Supplying machinery, equipment and raw materials for the protected rehabilitation workshops for females of the Vocational Assessment and Rehabilitation Center at Al Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of supplying electrical, mechanical and industrial machinery and equipment and spare parts and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Tuesday 25-7-2023 02:00 PM	Tuesday 8-8-2023 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Monday 10/7/2023
- ❖ For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website(reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200)

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry "

www.mosd.gov.om

Air raid leaves at least 22 people dead in Sudan

This air raid was one of the deadliest of the clashes between the military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that took place in the capital and other metropolitan areas

KHARTOUM: At least 22 people were killed in an airstrike on a city in Sudan, making it one of the bloodiest attacks to date in the weeks-long conflict between the Sudanese army and a rebel paramilitary organisation, according to media report.

According to a statement from the health ministry, the assault took place on Saturday in a residential area of Omdurman, the city next to the capital Khartoum.

Unknown numbers of individuals were injured in the attack. This air raid was one of the deadliest of the clashes between the military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that took place in the capital and other metropolitan areas. In Khartoum, an airstrike last month claimed the lives of at least 17 individuals, five of whom were children.

The RSF accused the army of assaulting Omdurman's residential districts, where violence has been raging between the opposing factions, and said that the attack left 31 people dead. According to reports, the military tried to cut off a vital supply connection, as per Al Jazeera.

"The RSF vehemently condemn



the deliberate air strikes conducted by the extremist terrorist militia led by (army chief Abdel Fattah) al-Burhan," the group said in a statement.

"This heinous attack, orchestrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) with the support of remnants from the former regime ... has resulted in the tragic loss of more than 31 lives and numerous civilian injuries," it added.

The military did not immediately have a spokesperson available for comment.

It was difficult, according to two Omdurman residents, to identify the perpetrators of the attack. They claimed that RSF personnel in the area have been routinely attacked by army planes, and that the paramilitary group has retaliated by using drones and anti-aircraft weapons.

According to Abdel-Rahman, a local who only spoke by his first name, the army was targeting the RSF at the time of the raid early on

Saturday, and the RSF used civilian homes as shields while launching anti-aircraft rounds at the invading jets, reported Al Jazeera.

The western portion of Omdurman is a crucial supply route for the RSF to bring reinforcements in from Darfur, its power base, which has caused fighting to concentrate there in recent days.

The nation's state broadcasting facility in eastern Omdurman has likewise been the target of attacks. Khartoum's south and east were also the targets of other overnight strikes.

According to the health ministry, violence that started on April 15 has claimed at least 1,133 lives. Over 2.9 million people have been displaced, with approximately 7,00,000 of them escaping to nearby nations.

The nation of East Africa, which is located between the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and the Red Sea, is in danger of devolving into a larger civil war as a result of the conflict,

enlisting both domestic and foreign parties, as per Al Jazeera.

The conflict erupted after months of escalating tensions between the military and the RSF.

According to relief organisations, the violence has also resulted in "alarming numbers" of rapes and kidnappings of women and girls.

Numerous cease-fire agreements mediated by Saudi and American mediators between the warring parties failed to put an end to the country's violence.

Since the military overthrew Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok's transitional administration and imposed a state of emergency in September 2021—a move that political opponents dubbed a "coup"—Sudan has been without a functioning government.

Elections were supposed to mark the conclusion of the transitional era, which began in August 2019 following the ouster of former President Omar al-Bashir, Al Jazeera reported. — ANI



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
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ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

Deepika Deshwal becomes first Indian girl to address UN thrice

NEW YORK : Law officer Deepika Deshwal has become the first and the youngest Indian girl to deliver an address at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Also a PhD scholar, Deshwal has already etched her name in the Guinness Book of World Records for her selfless public service during the dark days of the Covid-19 pandemic and striving to safeguard and uphold women's rights. She was invited by the United Nations for the third time to deliver a speech on women's rights and human rights.

Her body of work and contribution to public welfare and health even in the face of a pandemic got her the rare privilege of addressing the United Nations for the third time.

Deshwal had earlier delivered two speeches at the UN focussing on human rights and women's rights. Her speeches garnered wholesome praise from delegates representing over 150 countries. The august environs of the UN echoed with applause as her powerful words resonated with everyone in attendance.



Deshwal has consistently worked towards supporting and empowering marginalised people. Her efforts towards safeguarding public health even during the testing times of the pandemic were particularly commendable.

Officials from the United Nations lauded her efforts, underlining the importance of having such compassionate and driven youth in every corner of the world to ensure the protection of human rights. — ANI

Full story at timesofoman.com/world

FACT CHECK

Why do we believe in fake news and misinformation?

BRISTOL: Whether it's the war in Ukraine, the coronavirus pandemic or gender issues, more and more fake news have been circulating on the internet in recent years, especially on emotional and controversial topics. Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish fact from fiction.

But not for everyone: Some internet users are more likely to accept misinformation and fake news as true information than others. In this DW fact check, we look at why that is.

Cognitive distortions fool us

A term that comes up again and again in this context is "cognitive bias." It describes faulty tendencies in human thinking from which we find it difficult to free ourselves.

Among other things, our views, and our preconceived worldview, also called "partisanship" or "confirmation bias" in some specialist articles, play a major role in why we fall for fake news.

Cognitive psychologist Stephan Lewandowsky from Bristol University explains the phenomenon: "If I hear something I want to hear because it is in line with my political opinions, yes, then I'll believe it even more."

Say negative things

So we are always biased. For example, those who are convinced that Germany is taking in too many refugees are more inclined to believe news stories that report on local authorities being overburdened or generally say negative things about this group.

Another important "cognitive bias" is that we often simply trust our intuition. It seems unnecessary to us — and is probably too much of a nuisance — to check something again before we internalize it, comment on it, and forward it. Thus, many users only read the headline of articles, but not the actual text.

The Science Post and NPR, for example, tested this by posting misleading headlines. Readers only learned that the whole thing was an experiment if they clicked on the links — which most of them did not do.



Negative content triggers us the most

The "bandwagon effect" also misleads us: According to this phenomenon, people have a tendency to follow the opinions or behaviors of others rather than forming their own opinion. In relation to fake news, this means that we are more likely to believe information if others do so as well.

When we see a social media post with lots of shares and likes, we tend to trust swarm intelligence just like everyone else. As already mentioned most of them share and like without taking a closer look at the content.

Our memory is also not very

helpful when it comes to correctly storing what we have seen or read, also described as "persistence of inaccuracy." We often do not recall whether something was true or false.

It is not uncommon for people to claim that a false piece of information was true, even if it was later corrected, for example in the form of a fact check.

Apart from these biases, fake news works so well because we are guided more by emotions than we realize. The fact that false news spreads six times faster than true information is due precisely to this emotionality, Lewandowsky says. "Fake news tends to create outrage

in the receiver, the recipient of the message. And we know that people, whether you like it or not, are engaging with outrage, provoking information... That makes it more likely for them to go viral."

The question of personal benefit study conducted by the University of Würzburg last year, in which 600 participants were asked to assess the truth of various statements, also revealed that dark personality traits and so-called post-factual epistemic beliefs make us more susceptible to fake news.

"To find out about respondents' beliefs about knowledge and facts, we asked them: 'Do you trust your intuition when you encounter in-

formation? How much value do you place on evidence? Do you believe there is such a thing as independent facts at all?'" the study's lead author, psychologist Jan Philipp Rudloff, told DW.

The evaluation revealed that the participants found it more difficult to distinguish true statements from false ones the more they relied on their gut feeling and the less they believed in the existence of facts.

"And then we also looked at the 'dark factor of personality,' sort of the core of all dark personality traits, such as narcissism or psychopathy," Rudloff said. "They're called dark because those are related to behaviors that we don't socially approve of."

For people with a strong dark personality factor, he said, their own advantage is the most important thing. Everything else — and that could be the truth in some circumstances — becomes subordinate to that.

"The question then is not whether a piece of information is true or not, but whether it benefits them, plays into their cards, serves as justification." Dark personality traits and a problematic understanding of knowledge and facts often go hand in hand, according to Rudloff, and usually manifest themselves at a young age.

The desire for attention and approval

Joe Walther, director of the Center for Information Technology and Society at the University of California, points to another important aspect that promotes the spread of fake news. He sees liking, commenting and spreading information on the internet primarily as a social interaction: "I think people often engage in social media (behaviour) in order to feel like they're participating and to be recognised for it."

"So if I send you a crazy story that research has found that short people are more susceptible to fake news than tall people, I doubt such a thing is true, but I think you would appreciate that I sent you that crazy, funny thing and I think people use social media in order to be liked by others, in order to get

attention, to be recognized, validated," he said.

At the same time, this example helps to illustrate that users don't share fake news necessarily because they fall for it. Rather, they simply want to entertain and amuse themselves and others. Or they share content precisely because they do NOT believe it to be true.

What can we do to become more resilient?

The reasons why we believe fake news are complex. Among other things, they have to do with our personality and our attitude toward knowledge and facts. Fake news is also an appealing vehicle for networking with others and enjoying attention and approval.

The question is: How do we become more resilient? The first step is to become aware of how susceptible we are to manipulation and to be aware that we can never be entirely objective. Jan Rudloff advocates providing students with more meta-level knowledge regarding facts and science.

"Ultimately, in science, it is always the case that you can only find a consensus, a kind of agreement among as many experts as possible. But as new information comes in, what was previously considered fact or consensus can shift."

This is very complex, he said, and it gives some people the impression that facts are arbitrarily determined by politicians and scientists. An example of that is the claim made during the corona pandemic that children would not spread COVID-19 as much — and then it turned out they did.

An approach that goes in a similar direction is the so-called prebunking. With information about fake news and disinformation at their disposal, users can be sensitised even before they encounter it.

One idea of that would be to provide an information campaign ahead of an election where a lot of fake news is expected to manipulate voters. — DW



Fresh protests in France against police violence

Marches took place throughout France to denounce police brutality and racial profiling, as tensions run high after days of rioting engulfed the country

PARIS: More than 2,000 people gathered in central Paris for a memorial rally despite a court ban. The march commemorates the 2016 death of Adama Traore, a Black man, in police custody. Marches took place throughout France to denounce police brutality and racial profiling, as tensions run high after days of rioting engulfed the country. Around 5,900 people took to the streets around the country, the French Interior Ministry said. France has been grappling with unrest sparked by the police kill-

ing of a 17-year-old of Algerian origin at a traffic stop on June 27. Meanwhile, France's Foreign Ministry rejected accusations of structural racism made by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). **Sister, lawmakers condemn ban** A court had ruled that the chance of unrest was too high to allow Saturday's march in the French capital to go ahead. On Twitter, Traore's older sister, Assa, criticised the decision. "The government has decided to add fuel to the fire (and) not to respect the death of my little brother," she said. **Right to exist** She said she attended the rally on Saturday afternoon to tell "the whole world that our dead have the right to exist, even in death." "They authorise marches by neo-Nazis but they don't allow us to march. France cannot give us moral lessons. Its police is racist and violent," she said. Police said that a legal case had been opened against Assa Traore for organising the event. Among those present at the banned march were lawmaker Jean-Luc Melenchon, of the left-wing Unbowed party, and Sandrine Rousseau, of the EELV Green Party. "Public liberties are losing ground little by little," Rousseau said. "From prohibition to repression ... the leader is taking France to a regime we have already seen. Danger. Danger," Melenchon tweeted. **Foreign Ministry rejects UN racism allegations** The Foreign Ministry responded to accusations of structural racism in France's police force made by CERD. CERD issued a statement on Friday on the situation in France in which it denounced excessive force and racial profiling used by police. "Any measures of ethnic profiling by the forces of law and order are prohibited in France as they violate the constitutional principle of equality," the ministry said. Responding to reports that French police had wielded excessive force, the ministry said that the use of force by law enforcement is "subject to the principles of absolute necessity and proportionality and is strictly monitored and controlled."

Uzbekistan polls likely to extend Mirziyoyev's rule

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan is holding a presidential election on Sunday that is likely to secure President Shavkat Mirziyoyev another term in office. Polling stations opened in the capital city of Tashkent at 8 a.m. local time and will close at 8 p.m. **Improving economy and education** Mirziyoyev has sought to present himself as a reformer leading a "New Uzbekistan." Since coming into office in 2016 following the death of Karimov, he has steered the tightly controlled former Soviet republic away from isolation. Mirziyoyev has implemented a number of reforms, including opening up foreign trade, lifting foreign exchange controls, and introducing some political liberalisation. The president's reelection campaign has focused on improving the economy and education system, with a goal of doubling the country's gross domestic product to \$160 billion (€146 billion) in the near future. "These are my first elections. I will be voting for Shavkat Mirziyoyev because I want there to be more opportunities for young people and places to study," 18-year-old Milana Yuldasheva told the AFP news agency. Meanwhile, 64-year-old Abduali Nurmatov said he hoped the president would solve "problems with gas and electricity" that his town suffered during the last winter. **No real opposition** Human rights organisations say that although there have been some improvements since the end of Karimov's rule, there is still a long way to go, and authorities have shown no sign of allowing a real opposition to emerge. The three presidential candidates officially running against Mirziyoyev in Sunday's polls are largely unknown. According to Uzbek political expert Farkhod Talipov, there's little doubt that the incumbent will win. "All the other candidates are completely unknown and unpopular," he told AFP. "Their candidacies are just an artificial way of showing a political struggle that does not exist." The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) described the election campaign as "low-key, mirroring lack of opposition to the incumbent." — DW



سلطنة عُمان
وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in Al Khuwair invites for the Following Projects:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MTCT/HQ/134/2023	REPAIR WORKS OF EXISTING TRACK ROAD TO NADAN VILLAGE (WILAYAT BAHJA) (AL DAKHLIAH GOVERNORATE)	9-7-2023	16-7-2023	20-8-2023	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (FIRST CLASS)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE
MTCT/HQ/39/2021 (Recall)	THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR SUPPORTING SPECIALIZED PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS IN COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	9-7-2023	20-7-2023	22-8-2023	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (ALL GRADES)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE
MTCT/HQ/129/2023 (Recall)	FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES FOR HARBOUR AND JETTIES	10-7-2023	20-7-2023	22-8-2023	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (FIRST CLASS)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Secretariat General of Tencer Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
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SPORTS

England win thriller to keep Ashes series alive

Hosts' batters clinch three-wicket victory in a dramatic run chase on the fourth day of third Test at Headingley

LEEDS: England kept their Ashes hopes alive by beating Australia by three wickets in another Headingley thriller on Sunday. Harry Brook hit a superb 75 but it was left to bowlers Chris Woakes and Mark Wood to drag the hosts over the line in pursuit of 251 on the fourth day of the third Test. Brook's mature knock took them to within 21 of victory, after talisman Ben Stokes fell for 13 following lunch with 90 still needed. Brook put on 59 with Woakes before top-edging a cut off Mitchell Starc, who almost won the series for Australia with a vicious 5-78. That wicket brought Wood to the crease amid gripping tension and he hit Pat Cummins for six and thrashed Starc for four to spark jubilant scenes in the stands. With four needed, Wood was dropped by Australia wicketkeeper Alex Carey and Woakes, who finished unbeaten on 32, slashed the winning runs. England's make the series 2-1 to Australia with two Tests to play later this month, setting up a grandstand finale that could yet match the iconic contest in 2005. The win only came after an-



other titanic Ashes tussle, as Starc threatened to bowl Australia to victory and their first series win in England since 2001. The left-arm first removed Ben Duckett and the elevated No.3 Moeen Ali to start the day, before breathing life back in the contest after lunch. When England looked in control with 90 runs needed and six wickets in hand, Starc strangled their miracle man Stokes down legside on 13, having him caught behind. Two overs later it was Jonny Bairstow who chopped on against Starc, as the English veteran's underwhelming series continued. Another 80 runs were required, with four wickets in hand.



the offside to finish off the chase. But still, the hero was local man Brook, who grew up 25km down the road in nearby Ilkley. On a day when he brought up the record for the fastest man to 1,000 Test runs in terms of balls faced, Brook held his composure with some old-fashioned cricket. He covered supremely and put the pressure back on Scott Boland when the usually economical Victorian seamer veered on line and length. His innings left Australia needing the kind of miracle with the ball that Stokes had conjured up with the bat at Headingley in 2019. Earlier on Saturday, rain had kept the players off the field for the



Oman go down to Sudan, semis hopes dashed

Times News Service **MUSCAT:** Oman Olympic team's hopes for a semi-final berth in the ongoing 13th Pan Arab Games were dashed on Saturday night after their 2-0 defeat to Sudan. Playing in their concluding Group A fixture, Oman, coached by Akram Habreesh, went into the match with their confidence high after their 1-0 win over Lebanon to collect their first full points in the tournament that features U23 players. Playing at the Mohamed Hamlaoui Stadium in the Algerian city of Constantine, Sudan led 1-0 at the interval. Oman's loss meant exit from the competition after the team had done well to hold Algeria to a goalless draw in their opening match and followed it up with a win over Lebanon. Oman finished with four points to end third in the group that was topped by hosts Algeria with seven points. Sudan collected six to take second spot and advance to the semi-finals. Algeria will meet Saudi Arabia in the semi-finals after the latter finished second in Group B, which was topped by Syria. Both Saudi Arabia and Syria garnered five points each after three games but Syria had a better goal difference. Saudis have fielded their U19 team in the tournament. The semi-finals will be played on July 11 and the final on July 14.

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Al Harthy seals front row start at 6 Hours of Monza

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Racing with TF Sport's Ahmad Al Harthy produced an excellent qualifying performance at Monza in Italy on Saturday to secure a front row start in the fifth round of the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season. Aiming for a third successive GTE Am podium with teammates, Michael Dinan and Charlie Eastwood in Sunday's WEC 6 Hours of Monza, the squad will have a challenge to match the top speed of the rival Ferraris and Porsches. Al Harthy's stand-out qualifying in the grid-determining run brought a lot of positivity ahead of the race. The Oman Racing entry was 11th fastest in the two free practice (FP) sessions on Friday, and improved to ninth in third free practice on Saturday morning. Al Harthy took the reins of the No.25 Aston Martin Vantage for the subsequent 15-minute qualifying session and after the first flying laps were in the book the Omani was fourth on the timesheets, an initial effort of 1m51.848s. He then shot onto GTE Am pole with an excellent lap of 1m48.545 seconds, half a second clear of his closest challenger, and it proved a timely attempt as well with the session halted by a red flag stoppage mere moments later.



Qualifying resumed with just under eight minutes left on the clock and the Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS supported racer set about trying to improve yet further on a new set of Michelin tyres. On his first lap of the re-start Al Harthy circulated in 1m49.244 seconds, before then delivering a session best of 1m48.058 seconds on his penultimate run – moving him back up to second fastest and within 0.4 seconds of pole, where he would stay. Al Harthy said: "I'm delighted with qualifying. It was the absolute best we could achieve as a package

here at Monza. From FP1 we knew we didn't have the strongest package around this circuit, so to get P2 in qualifying is amazing. I'm really happy with my performance and equally happy with all the team work which has been put in for us to achieve this together. "We worked a lot to find the best qualifying set-up and with the session being interrupted with the red flag, it was a good strategy to take on new tyres then and go for it again. Thankfully we got a front row start, but it's going to be much, much tougher in the race. The speed of the Porsches and Ferraris is very, very strong so we will focus on our normal strategy and do the best we can."

WIMBLEDON

Alcaraz battles into last 16

LONDON: World No.1 Carlos Alcaraz withstood a second-set fightback from his Chilean opponent and world No.25 Nicolas Jarry, winning 6-3, 6-7, 6-3, 7-5 on Saturday to reach the fourth round at Wimbledon for the second consecutive year. Jarry saved 9 out of 14 break-points and fired 48 winners, including 15 aces, but the 27-year-old also committed 46 unforced errors to suffer his second defeat against Alcaraz. The top seed next faces 2021 Wimbledon finalist Matteo Berrettini in the last 16. Berrettini was playing for the fifth consecutive day on Saturday after his first-round victory over Lorenzo Sonego lasted from Tuesday to Thursday before he claimed a straight-set triumph over Alex de Minaur on Friday. Holger Rune saved two match points and later recovered from 6-2 and 8-5 in a final-set tie-break to defeat Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in a full-set thriller. The sixth seed won five points in a row to clinch the roller-coaster victory 6-3, 4-6, 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8) to reach the fourth round at Wimbledon for the first time. Third-seeded Daniil Medvedev came from one set down to see off Hungarian Marton Fucsovics 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 to set a round-of-16 clash against 21-year-old Czech Jiri Lehecka, who defeated 16th seed Tommy Paul 6-2, 7-6(2), 6-7(5), 6-7(9), 6-2 in the third round. Greek fifth seed Stefanos



Tsitsipas, who knocked home favourite Andy Murray on Friday, continued his run for a maiden major title, beating Laslo Djere in straight sets 6-4, 7-6, 6-4. **Pegula reaches first quarter-final** American fourth seed Jessica Pegula reached her first Wimbledon quarter-final with a dominant display against Ukrainian Lesia Tsurenko on Sunday. Pegula won 6-1 6-3 victory over the world No.60. Earlier on Saturday, world No.2 Aryna Sabalenka, playing her second match in as many days, booked a place in the last 16 after cruising past 40th-ranked Anna Blinkova 6-2, 6-3 on Saturday. Next for the second seed is world No. 22 Ekaterina Alexandrova, who advanced to her first

Slam round of 16 after defeating Dalma Galfi 6-0, 6-4. Two-time champion Petra Kvitova managed to reach the fourth round at Wimbledon for the first time since 2020 by dispatching Natalija Stevanovic 6-3, 7-5 in the opening match on No.2 Court. Coming to Wimbledon with her 31st WTA Tour title in Berlin two weeks ago, Kvitova will play with last year's runner-up Ons Jabeur for a place in the quarterfinals. The Tunisian took full advantage of a weather delay that came halfway through her deciding set to defeat former US Open winner Bianca Andreescu 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 to progress. Defending champion Elena Rybakina eased past Katie Boulter 6-1, 6-1 in 57 minutes to set her next-round clash against No.13 seed Beatriz Haddad Maia. - *Agencies*

UNBEATEN IN TOURNAMENT

Sri Lanka crowned ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier champions



HARARE: Former champions Sri Lanka sealed the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier crown with a comfortable 128-run victory over the Netherlands in the final in Harare on Sunday. Having set the Dutch 234 to win, the Lions picked up five wickets inside the opening powerplay before cleaning up the tail to bowl Netherlands out for just 105. Both sides had already sealed qualification for this autumn's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India but Sri Lanka rounded off their time in Zimbabwe in style, retaining their unbeaten status

and taking home the trophy. Maheesh Theekshana (4/31) and Dilshan Madushanka (3/18) were Sri Lanka's stars with the ball as they dismissed the Netherlands for just 105. The Lions survived a middle order wobble to post 233 and the Dutch chase faltered early as they slipped from 25 without loss to 49 for six. Sri Lanka duly took control and though Max O'Dowd (33) and Logan van Beek (20*) stemmed the tide for a while, it was always an uphill battle and the Netherlands fell 128 runs short of their target.

Having been put into bat, Sri Lanka were 44 for two early. But Kusal Mendis (43) and Sahan Arachchige (57) wrested back control of the contest for Sri Lanka, taking their side past 100 in the 20th over before Mendis fell lbw to Saqib Zulfiqar (2/59). Arachchige and new batter Charith Asalanka (36) kept the scoreboard moving until both departed in consecutive overs. When captain Dasun Shanaka became Logan van Beek's first victim and Dhananjaya de Silva fell for a single, Sri Lanka were 190 for seven – having been 180 for three

– but vital knocks from Wanindu Hasaranga (29) and Theekshana (13) hauled them to a competitive 233 all out. Both sides will now switch their focus to India, where Netherlands will take the Q1 place in the ICC World Cup draw, and Sri Lanka Q2. **Brief scores:** Sri Lanka 233 all out in 47.5 overs (Sahan Arachchige 57, Kusal Mendis 43; Vikramjit Singh 2/12, Logan van Beek 2/40) beat Netherlands 105 all out in 23.3 overs (Max O'Dowd 33, Logan van Beek 20*; Maheesh Theekshana 4/31, Dilshan Madushanka 3/18).

30 YEARS IN BUSINESS

This year sees Al Maha Petroleum Marketing Company celebrating 30 years of its business excellence. Established in 1993, Al Maha is Oman's pioneering distributor of petroleum products and has since been a strategic partner in developing and supporting Oman's infrastructure sector.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,788.72 points, down by 0.03 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.02 per cent at 480.69 points. Barka Water & Power Company, up 8.89 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman's oil exports top 128mn barrels

Crude oil production increased by 0.7 per cent during the same period to stand at 125.75mn barrels



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's total exports by the end of May 2023 stood at 128.07 million barrels with an average oil barrel price of \$81, according to the preliminary data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Oil exports constituted 80 per cent of the total oil production which stood at 160,144,300 barrels. Crude oil production increased by 0.7 per cent during the same period to stand at 125,757,600 barrels. The production of condensates also rose by 5.6 per cent till the end of May 2023 compared to the corresponding period in 2022 to stand at 34,386,700 barrels.

The average daily production of oil stood at 1,060,600 barrels till the end of May 2023. China topped the list of countries importing Oman's oil with total exports standing at 117,120,500 barrels, followed by Japan with 4,783,500 barrels. India came next with 2,716,200 barrels. Exports to other countries stood at 3.450 million barrels. Meanwhile, gas production

(including imports) in Oman registered a growth of 3.9 per cent to reach 21,833.1 million cubic metres by the end of May 2023 compared to 21,004.9 million cubic metres during the corresponding period in 2022. Consumption of natural gas at industrial projects constituted 60.2 per cent till the end of May 2023. Consumption of gas for industrial projects stood at 13,163.1

million cubic metres. Gas consumption for the following uses stood as the following: 5,580.5 million cubic metres at oil fields, 2,977.7 million cubic metres at energy plants and 111.8 million cubic metres at industrial areas. Non-associated production of gas (including imports) stood at 17,469.9 million cubic metres. Associated gas production reached 4,369.1 million cubic metres. -ONA

PARTNERSHIP

Al Mouj Marina announces new boat financing partnership with United Finance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Marina signed an agreement with United Finance for Oman's leading finance and leasing services company to provide financing solutions for boat purchases at Al Mouj Muscat's Gold Anchor marina. The new partnership will make the process of boat ownership more straightforward. Al Mouj Marina is one of Al Mouj Muscat's prime leisure attractions and this latest initiative adds to the variety of bespoke boat ownership services already in place such as helping to find the right boat, arranging certification and insurance and providing advice and direction on general maintenance as well as water safety. Through the new arrangement, anyone looking to buy a boat can benefit from United Finance's attractive borrowing rates and the convenience of a single point of contact in place to help streamline the process towards securing finance. Nasser bin Masoud Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: "Al Mouj Marina is a world-class amenity enjoyed by residents, visitors and tourists all year round and for boat owners and lovers of the ocean it is where life can be lived



and enjoyed at its very best. "Al Mouj Muscat is proud of this new partnership which demonstrates our ongoing commitment to providing services our community will value and is another way of opening up our marina to more people so they may embrace the opportunity to sail in crystal clear water off the shores of our beautiful country." The agreement comes at a time when 33 more berths have been added to the world-class harbour which can accommodate vessels of between 10 and 40 meters in length and where moorings include several benefits from 24-hour assistance and security to

ample car parking and boat fuelling station, changing rooms and shower facilities and an excellent on-water lounge. United Finance was established in 1997 and commenting on the new collaboration, its CEO Nasser Salim Said al Rashdi says: "We are pleased to be working with Al Mouj Marina and as a non-banking financier, we are always looking to broaden our offer to customers which includes making financing and loans readily available to a wider group of people and to support different types of purchases. It is particularly gratifying to know that through this new service, we will be helping sailing enthusiasts

buy the boat they have probably always dreamed of." Al Mouj Muscat is a dynamic and diverse luxury lifestyle community, a joint venture between Majid Al Futtaim Properties, Omran and Tannia. Set along 6km of beautiful coastline, it offers a superb mix of apartments, townhouses, villas and sea-facing mansions that are home to 8,000 residents from 85 nationalities. Every year it attracts 4.9 million visitors and tourists to its coastal setting, boulevard-style retail and dining experiences, luxury hotels, a 400-berth marina as well as its multi-award-winning golf course.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Global economic outlook improving, albeit to a low growth recovery

PARIS: The global economy has begun to improve, but the recovery will be weak, according to the OECD's latest Economic Outlook. The Economic Outlook projects a moderation of global GDP growth from 3.3 percent in 2022 to 2.7 percent in 2023, followed by a pick-up to 2.9 percent in 2024. Lower energy prices are easing the strain on household budgets, business and consumer sentiment are recovering, albeit from low levels, and the re-opening of China has provided a boost to global activity. Headline inflation in the OECD is projected to decline from 9.4 percent in 2022 to 6.6 percent in 2023 and 4.3 percent in 2024. The decline in inflation is due to tighter monetary policy taking effect, lower energy and food prices and reduced supply bottlenecks. GDP growth in the United States is projected to be 1.6 percent in 2023, before slowing to 1.0 percent



in 2024 in response to tight monetary and financial conditions. In the euro area, declining headline inflation will help to boost real incomes and contribute to a pick-up in GDP growth from 0.9 percent in 2023 to 1.5 percent in 2024. China is expected to see strong increases in GDP growth in 2023 (with 5.4

percent) and 2024 (with 5.1 percent), due to the lifting of the government's zero-COVID policy. "This projected recovery, while almost unchanged from our interim projections in March, maintains the slightly more optimistic outlook that had been predicted and which we are now seeing materialise," OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said. "Policymakers must get inflation durably down to target and unwind broad fiscal support by better targeting fiscal measures. While continuing to respond to the immediate economic challenges, it remains important to prioritise structural reforms to boost productivity, including by promoting competition, reviving investment, increasing female workforce participation and alleviating supply constraints, while securing the green and digital transformations of our economies."

2022 ANNUAL CYBERSECURITY REPORT

Over 12 million cyber threats blocked in Oman: Report

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Trend Micro Incorporated, a global leader in cybersecurity, announced the findings of its annual cybersecurity report, which revealed a significant 55 per cent increase in global threat detections and a massive 242 per cent surge in blocked malicious files in 2022. Titled "Rethinking Tactics", the report highlights concerning trends that have significant implications for the future of digital security. It emphasised that threat actors indiscriminately targeted both consumers and organisations across all sectors, making 2022 a challenging year for cybersecurity professionals. In Oman, in particular, Trend Micro solutions detected and blocked over 3 million (3,284,958) email threats and prevented 2.5 million (2,524,312) malicious URL victim attacks, and 20,488

URL hosts. In addition, 4.8 million (4,895,508) malware attacks were identified and stopped. "Technology continues to rapidly evolve, presenting both opportunities and challenges for businesses. With the increasing complexity of the digital landscape come a growing number of cyber threats that can compromise operations and data. To stay ahead of these risks, organisations need to take a proactive approach to cybersecurity and invest in the latest threat intelligence solutions," said Assad Arabi, Managing Director, Gulf and Emerging Markets at Trend Micro. "By understanding their vulnerabilities and implementing a comprehensive, multi-layered security strategy, businesses can effectively mitigate risks and future-proof their digital infrastructure. At Trend Micro, we're committed to equipping Oman-based companies with the tools and expertise they need

to navigate the ever-changing cybersecurity landscape and achieve their digital transformation goals in line with Oman Vision 2040." Furthermore, the report highlighted an increase in failed patches adding extra time and money to corporate remediation efforts and exposing organisations to unnecessary cyber risks. Also, Webshells were the top-detected malware of the year, surging 103 per cent on 2021 figures, while ransomware groups rebranded and diversified, with LockBit and BlackCat being the top ransomware families of 2022. To address the current attack surface, Trend Micro advises organisations to take a proactive approach by conducting thorough assessments and securing their digital infrastructure. As part of its commitment to enhancing cybersecurity in Oman, the company aims to support the country's efforts and stay at the forefront of the fight against cyber threats.

CMA STATEMENT



Oman's Capital Market Authority suspends OIFC's merger decision

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has issued a decision to suspend the decisions of Oman Investment and Finance Company (OIFC)'s general assembly's extraordinary meeting, held on 21 June 2023, that approved the merger of OIFC with Dhofar International Development and Investment Holding Company through annexation. CMA's decision stemmed from an objection plea filed to the Authority by a number of shareholders who own more than 5 per cent of the company's shares. Accordingly, CMA issued Decision No. 46/2023 today to suspend the decisions of OIFC general assembly's move which was annulled after shareholders who objected to the decision secured the required legal percentage of shares. The objecting shareholders acted in accordance with the provisions of Article 174 (first clause) of the Commercial Companies Law. The clause reads as follows: "The competent authority may – at the request of shareholders who own not less than 5% of a company's shares – issue a decision to suspend the company's general assembly decisions deemed detriment to the interests of the objecting shareholders or acting in favour of a certain segment of shareholders or generating a special benefit to members of the board of directors or others—as long as the reasons furnished for such an appeal prove to be serious." The CMA hereby affirms that it is keen on protecting the interests of small shareholders of the companies under its supervision. CMA notes that the laws and regulations regulating the capital market mandate the protection of all parties dealing in the stock exchange, specifically small shareholders. The laws seek to provide a safe investment environment to ex-

ercise all powers and rights that support shareholders' investment interests. The CMA issued decision No. 46/2023 on July 9, 2023, on the suspension of the resolutions of the extraordinary general meeting to dissolve and merge Oman Investment and Finance Company SAOG; which was issued after achieving the required legal percentage of shareholders who objected against the decisions and after examining the requests and assessing the reasons for such objection. In accordance with the provisions of article 174/1 of the Commercial Companies law which stipulates that "the concerned body may, upon request of shareholders who own a percentage of at least five per cent of the shares of the company, issue a decision for suspension of the resolutions adopted by the general meeting of the company which are detrimental to such shareholders or adopted in favour of certain category of shareholders, or for providing a special benefit for the members of the board of directors, or others, if it is convinced that the reasons of the request are genuine." Following the decision of suspension, any interested person shall institute a case for invalidation of the resolutions of the extraordinary general meeting of Oman Investment and Finance Company before the competent court, in accordance with Article (174/paragraph 3) of the Commercial Companies Law, "any interested person may institute a case for invalidation of the resolutions provided for in the first paragraph of this Article before the competent court, and notify the concerned body with a copy thereof within five working days of the date of issuance of a decision suspending execution of the resolutions of the general meeting, failing which the suspension will be considered null and void."

— Times News Service with inputs from ONA

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Barka Water & Power Company, up 8.89 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 10, was the top loser at the end of Sunday's trading session



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,788.72 points, down by 0.03 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.02 per cent at 480.69 points. Barka Water & Power Company, up 8.89 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Dhofar were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 629 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR3.12 million, with more than 12.94 million shares changing hands. Out of 45 traded securities, 12 advanced, 13 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR174,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR124,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR50,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,852.09 points, down 0.51 per cent. Prices of Global Financial

Investments, and Bank Nizwa were up by 1.61 per cent, and 1.05 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Finance, Ahli Bank, Takaful Oman, Al Anwar Investment, and Al Madina Takaful were up by 4.92 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 1.82 per cent, 1.22 per cent, and 1.15 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 6,168.54 points, down 0.04 per cent. Prices of Voltamp Energy, A'Saffa Foods, and Gulf International Chemicals were up by 4.76 per cent, 1.96 per cent and 1.16 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 2.26 per cent respectively. Services Index was up by 0.26 per cent before closing at 1,696.18 points. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Oman Telecom, Ooredoo, SMN Power Holding, and Sembcorp Salalah were up by 8.89 per cent, 2.06 per cent, 1.64 per cent, 1.18 per cent and 1.06 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Al Batinah Power, and Renaissance Services were up by 6.06 per cent, 3.45 per cent, and 1.56 per cent respectively. – United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

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EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,791.95	4,761.13	4,788.72	4,790.15	-1.42	-0.03
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,896.99	7,812.67	7,852.09	7,892.48	-40.40	-0.51
Industry Index	6,172.57	6,159.15	6,168.54	6,170.75	-2.22	-0.04
Services Index	1,697.94	1,690.64	1,696.18	1,691.74	4.44	0.26
MSX Shariah Index	481.28	479.95	480.69	480.79	-0.10	-0.02
MSX TR INDEX	6,302.06	6,261.52	6,297.81	6,299.68	-1.87	-0.03
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,617.07	8,525.06	8,568.07	8,612.15	-44.08	-0.51
SERVICES TR IDX	1,866.58	1,858.56	1,864.64	1,859.76	4.88	0.26
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,593.84	6,579.50	6,589.53	6,591.90	-2.37	-0.04

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
12,945,517	3,124,901	629	23,863,142,925	12	13	20	45

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JULY 9

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST DR	LAST OFFER	PRN VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	1,027,424	1,007,893	54	0.970	0.990	0.970	0.990	0.970	0.020	2.062	0.990	0.990	0.990	0.100	742,500,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,002,829	371,534	54	0.366	0.372	0.366	0.372	0.366	0.006	1.639	0.372	0.372	0.372	0.100	242,151,254
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	22,500	1,405	2	0.062	0.063	0.062	0.063	0.062	0.001	1.613	0.063	0.060	0.060	0.100	12,600,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	227,835	19,654	23	0.085	0.087	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.001	1.176	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.100	17,168,662
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	51,600	3,947	9	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.076	0.077	0.100	9,262,500
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	31,700	11,417	12	0.360	0.365	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.000	0.000	0.360	0.365	0.360	0.100	119,114,176
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	1,000	75	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.072	0.082	0.100	6,750,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	2,168,310	375,118	13	0.173	0.173	0.173	0.173	0.173	0.000	0.000	0.173	0.173	0.173	0.100	518,368,798
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	892,200	96,358	24	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	495,728,727
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,147,880	819,700	62	0.277	0.280	0.277	0.279	0.280	-0.001	-0.357	0.279	0.279	0.279	0.100	1,002,894,284,780
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	125,200	47,926	4	0.382	0.382	0.378	0.382	0.384	-0.002	-0.521	0.378	0.370	0.378	0.100	255,315,593
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	216,236	62,231	18	0.282	0.288	0.282	0.286	0.288	-0.002	-0.694	0.286	0.287	0.288	0.100	485,020,658
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	32,000	2,757	3	0.086	0.087	0.086	0.086	0.087	-0.001	-1.149	0.086	0.083	0.087	0.100	15,050,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	6,648	2,507	3	0.375	0.382	0.375	0.378	0.384	-0.006	-1.563	0.378	0.378	0.382	0.100	89,362,980
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	59,143	15,405	13	0.261	0.262	0.259	0.259	0.265	-0.006	-2.264	0.259	0.259	0.265	0.100	56,980,000
Total	15	7,012,505	2,337,825	295												
Parallel Market																
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	20,595	1,009	2	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.045	0.004	8.889	0.049	0.046	0.049	0.100	7,840,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	330,976	35,152	22	0.105	0.110	0.105	0.110	0.105	0.005	4.762	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.100	8,954,303
OM0000008447	OMAN RETT FUND	744,599	69,238	18	0.093	0.093	0.088	0.093	0.091	0.002	2.198	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.100	43,820,334
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	234,324	72,397	18	0.306	0.312	0.306	0.312	0.306	0.006	1.961	0.312	0.312	0.311	0.100	37,440,000
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	22,000	1,914	3	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.086	0.001	1.163	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.100	1,827,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	370,100	35,424	10	0.095	0.098	0.095	0.095	0.094	0.001	1.064	0.095	0.094	0.101	0.100	90,684,331
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	641,598	61,572	32	0.098	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.001	1.053	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.100	214,747,491
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	200	700	2	3.500	3.500	3.500	3.500	3.500	0.000	0.000	3.500	3.400	3.500	1.000	10,500,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	515,478	99,026	46	0.192	0.194	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.100	38,000,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	291,048	14,637	14	0.050	0.052	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.051	0.100	4,250,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	910,950	164,057	44	0.180	0.184	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.000	0.180	0.181	0.183	0.100	36,537,560
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	241,019	6,810	8	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.027	0.029	0.100	20,717,784
OM0000005953	PHOENIX POWER	288,116	17,696	14	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.065	0.066	0.100	96,531,696
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	75,025	10,052	3	0.134	0.134	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.000	0.000	0.133	0.133	0.134	0.100	10,044,426
OM0000008909	THE PEARL REEF	8,000	973	2	0.122	0.122	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.000	0.000	0.121	0.120	0.122	0.100	53,397,198
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	109,009	33,785	23	0.308	0.311	0.308	0.310	0.310	0.000	0.000	0.310	0.310	0.314	0.100	238,762,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	205,260	16,648	17	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.080	0.082	0.100	16,688,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	62,380	3,369	2	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.055	-0.001	-1.818	0.054	0.052	0.054	0.100	13,500,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	599,929	114,129	24	0.190	0.195	0.190	0.195	0.200	-0.005	-2.500	0.195	0.190	0.196	0.100	380,183,206
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	70,500	2,044	5	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	0.029	-0.001	-3.448	0.028	0.028	0.029	0.100	18,896,848
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	149,500	8,671	9	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.061	-0.003	-4.918	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.100	17,814,487
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	20,000	1,860	2	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.099	-0.006	-6.061	0.093	0.093	0.098	0.100	14,466,187
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	5,000	271	2	0.060	0.060	0.054	0.054	0.060	-0.006	-10.000	0.054	0.054	0.059	0.100	12,000,960
Total	23	5,895,606	771,435	322												

DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Bank Muscat offers range of fund transfer options that are easy, fast and safe

MUSCAT: In line with its customer-centric vision, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, is always keen to provide the latest features and services for an excellent banking experience and enable the completion of banking transactions from anywhere and anytime. The bank is continuously working on updating its digital platforms, as it allows customers to easily transfer money whether through Mobile Banking, Internet banking or the BM Remit App. Also, the Bank customers can benefit from money transfer services within the Sultanate through a wide network of more than 820 ATMs and CDMs across the Sultanate of Oman, knowing that fund transfers within the bank are completely free of charge. In addition to transferring funds within Bank Muscat, customers can also transfer funds to accounts at other banks in Oman as well as



in selected international currencies to about 70 countries around the world quickly and securely via the SWIFT network. Additionally, customers can make Speed Trans-

fers to bank accounts in India, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Egypt and Bangladesh. The facility is also provided to make transfers to mobile wallets in Bangladesh as well as 16 Pakistan mobile wallet service providers, which certainly enhances customer experience in transferring funds easily and conveniently. To further enhance the banking experience for customers, Bank Muscat also provides the facility to carry out Fund Transfers and Payments using Mobile Payments. To do this, customers can just enter the mobile number, Alias or scan the QR code of the recipient. Payments to merchants can be made by scanning a dynamic QR code from a POS device or a static code available with the merchant. Electronic banking services provide greater convenience to customers as it ensures that recipients can receive payments promptly and securely in their accounts, thereby

greatly enhancing the level of security since no management of currency notes is required. The bank's BM Remit app which is available in multiple language options such as Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam, Tamil and English, enhances the experience of customers who can easily transact using their preferred language. The app offers Speed Transfer Services and a lot of other features such as easy access to the available balance in Current and Savings accounts, downloading mini statements or statements of accounts for a selected period as well as mobile top-up services. The constant upgrades to the bank's digital platforms are in line with global trends and meet customer aspirations. With the number of active users of Bank Muscat's online platforms rising to over 1.6 million, the bank continues to work on further enhancing the customer experience.

DISTRIBUTOR OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Al Maha celebrates 30 years in business

MUSCAT: This year sees Al Maha Petroleum Marketing Company celebrating 30 years of business excellence. Established back in 1993, Al Maha is Oman's pioneering distributor of petroleum products and has since been a strategic partner in developing and supporting the Sultanate of Oman's infrastructure sector. The company maintains a network of service stations throughout Oman. Through capital investment and growth, they have developed services that reach the most inaccessible parts of the Sultanate. On this occasion, the Chief Executive Officer, Eng. Hamed Salim Al Maghdri expressed, "This is an incredible milestone for any company, and I am extremely proud to be celebrating our 30th anniversary. We have dedicated ourselves to 30 years of product innovation and improving our business processes, to ensure that we provide our customers and partners with the most effective solutions and services we can. Over the years Al Maha has gone from strength to strength and we have had several key milestones, which have helped build Al Maha into what it is today. With over 242 filling stations, the company not only has an edge over its competitors in retail sales but also captures commercial sales and other allied sales including aviation fuel and lubricants. In addition, the company also provides services such as convenience stores, auto ser-



vices, smart card services and aircraft refuelling. They are committed to the environment and maintain international safety standards for sustainable operation. "Despite the ever-changing

times, our company has adapted itself to successfully steer its way through any challenges that may arise. We've come a long way and are proud of our achievements. Our continued dedication drive and passion will strengthen the

foundations for our future. "We are looking to the future with plans to increase our market share of business customers. This is especially true of those with the potential to expand into overseas markets," the CEO concluded.

Free home delivery & timely service

ENVIRONMENT CONCERN

REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINT OF LIVESTOCK INDUSTRIES

● Typical meat production uses an extraordinary amount of water, particularly from crops for feed.

● With Bion, 30% of the waste stream is processed into clean water. And, thanks to precise application of organics

You may be wondering how to square your love for T-bone steaks and spareribs with your concern for the environment. The good news? Science is delivering new, game-changing solutions to tackle the environmental footprint of livestock industries.

THE PROBLEM

Approximately 9 million dairy cows, 90 million cattle, and billions of poultry in the United States produce over 100 times more organic waste than humans; but where human waste makes its way to a septic tank or sewage treatment plant, livestock waste is usually spread untreated on the ground as fertilizer.

While this practice has short-term agricultural benefits, it's ultimately a major contributor to a number of environmental and health issues. Phosphorous, nitrogen (mostly as ammonia), pathogens and bacteria from manure run off the soil and pollute waterways. This nutrient runoff fuels increasingly toxic algae blooms in fresh, estuary and coastal salt waters, creating areas where most aquatic species can't survive. What's more, the highly mobile and volatile nitrogen from ammonia in animal waste can become airborne, a difficult and expensive to control problem that poses significant health risks to humans.

Finally, the 1.5 billion tonnes of manure generated in the United States annually also plays a major role in climate change. Manure emits carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, all of which are potent greenhouse gases.

NEW SOLUTIONS

An advanced livestock waste collection, treatment and recycling system from Bion Environmental Technologies Inc. is transforming manure from a liability to an asset. It starts with an innovative barn design that houses the livestock, collects waste, and feeds the treatment system on a continual basis.

This patented technology not only provides comprehensive waste treatment that neutralises pathogens, bacteria and ammonia and minimises greenhouse gas emissions, but also produces superior organic, and climate- and water-smart, fertilizers with a low carbon footprint, as well as generates clean water and renewable natural gas.

Typical meat production uses an extraordinary amount of water, particularly from crops for feed. With Bion, 30% of the waste stream is processed into recycled, clean water. And, thanks to precise application of organic and climate-smart fertilizers produced by the system, the resulting soil is healthier with a better balance of nutrients. In short, more abundant crops are produced, less water is used and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

Along with environmental stewardship and resource efficiency at the forefront of the technology's design, experts have been retained to ensure that animal accommodations, hygiene, care and feeding are all optimised for animal health and welfare.

"Today's consumers want sustainable, transparent and 'better for you' food," says Bill O'Neill, Bion's CEO. "Through innovation, we are bringing real meat to tables that is both sustainable and ethical." -ANI



Today's consumers want sustainable, transparent and 'better for you' food," says Bill O'Neill, Bion's CEO. "Through innovation, we are bringing real meat to tables that is both sustainable and ethical.



SPORTS

Verstappen pips Norris to pole

The qualifying session at the British Grand Prix started wet and progressively dried throughout. Timing the runs, and nailing the lap when it mattered, was key

LONDON: Red Bull's Max Verstappen stole pole position from McLaren's Lando Norris in a gripping and surprising qualifying session at the British Grand Prix on Saturday.

Verstappen dashed the hopes of the British fans in the packed grandstands after Norris went fastest with three drivers still to set their final times.

One of them was Verstappen, who grabbed pole by 0.241 seconds. Norris led a McLaren two-three ahead of team-mate Oscar Piastri, for McLaren's best qualifying for years.

The revived McLarens, sporting an upgrade that had vaulted the car up the grid when Norris alone ran it in Austria last weekend, beat the Ferrari of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz in fourth and fifth and the Mercedes of George Russell and Lewis Hamilton in sixth and seventh.

Williams driver Alex Albon took eighth, ahead of Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso, with Pierre Gasly's Alpine completing the top ten.

The session started wet and progressively dried throughout. Timing the runs, and nailing the



lap when it mattered, was key.

Verstappen's team-mate Sergio Perez fell on the wrong side of the line, knocked out in the first session.

The Mexican will start down in 16th, missing out on the top 10 on the grid for the fifth race in a row as his difficult season continues.

Through the difficult running, Verstappen remained serene. The Dutchman did not top the first session, which was stopped and restarted with three minutes to go with rain spitting and in which Norris went fastest.

And he made his life harder when he broke his front wing leaving the pits, catching it on the wall

opposite the garage, something he was able to make a joke out of later.

But Verstappen was quickest in the second session and again on the first runs in the final top-10 shootout, when he was the only driver on new tyres.

On the final laps, Leclerc and Sainz got to within a few hundredths of a second of Verstappen's time, but it was Norris who finally displaced him, to cheers from the crowd, only for the world champion to dash home hopes.

Norris said: "Pretty insane. My last lap was a good lap. I could hear Zak [Brown, chief executive] on the radio on the in-lap which

was the best thing ever.

"It's always Max. He always ruins everything for everyone."

Piastri's third place was by far the best result of his fledgling F1 career - he is in his first season after McLaren took a chance on the Australian after a stellar junior career.

Ferrari challenged Verstappen for pole in Austria but expected to be a little further from the pace this weekend because their car's main weakness is in fast corners.

Leclerc ended up 0.416secs slower than Verstappen and just 0.012secs ahead of Sainz, with Russell a further 0.007secs adrift, and Hamilton 0.056secs behind him.

INTERVIEW WITH FRANCE FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

Mbappe calls PSG 'divisive'

PARIS: France striker Kylian Mbappe has called his club side Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) "divisive" as doubts intensify over his future at the French champions.

The 24-year-old, whose contract at PSG expires in 2024, made the comments to *France Football* magazine.

PSG's all-time leading scorer has told the club he will not sign a new deal.

"I think that playing for PSG doesn't help much because it's a divisive team, a divisive club," Mbappe is reported as saying.

Paris St-Germain chairman Nasser Al Khelaifi said he would not allow Mbappe to leave on a free transfer when his contract expires next summer.

Mbappe, who has won Ligue 1 five times with PSG since joining from Monaco in 2017, scored 41 goals in all competitions last season as he helped the club clinch an 11th league title.

But they once again failed in their quest for Champions League success as they were knocked out in the last 16 by Bayern Munich.

"We did what we could," said Mbappe. "You have to talk to the people who make the team, who organise the squad, who build this club."



Luis Enrique was appointed head coach last week, replacing Christophe Galtier, and takes over a squad in transition.

PSG have already allowed Ar-

gentina World Cup winner Lionel Messi, 36, to join MLS side Inter Miami, while the future of Brazil forward Neymar, 31, is also in doubt.

2019 BALLON D'OR WINNER

USA women's football legend Rapinoe to hang up her boots

LOS ANGELES: USA forward Megan Rapinoe, one of the most successful players of her generation, will retire at the end of the season, according to a BBC report on Saturday.

The 2019 Ballon d'Or winner made the announcement days before she leaves for her fourth Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

"I did want to do it my own way," the 38-year-old said.

Rapinoe helped USA win the World Cup in 2015 and 2019.

"I feel very grateful that I'm here and that I have the trust of this team and that my body has held up this long."

Two-time World Cup winner Rapinoe will retire at the end of her club side OL Reign's NWSL campaign, with the regular season ending in October and the play-off final on 11 November.

She made the announcement ahead of USA's friendly against Wales. "It is with a really deep sense of peace and gratitude and excitement that I want to share with you guys that this will be my last season, my last World Cup and my last NWSL season," she said.



"I could have never imagined where this beautiful game would have taken me. I feel so honoured to have represented this country and this federation for so many years, it's truly been the greatest thing that I've ever done and is something I'm so grateful for."

In 2019, Rapinoe was named Best FIFA Women's Player and won the World Cup golden boot and golden ball to go with her Ballon d'Or.

She has been capped 199 times and scored 63 goals for USA since making her debut in a friendly against Republic of Ireland in 2006.

She also won an Olympic gold

medal at London 2012.

Rapinoe could add to her achievements this summer, she is part of the USA team bidding to make history by winning a third consecutive World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

USA head coach Vlatko Andonovski called her "one of the most important players in women's soccer history and a personality like no other".

Rapinoe is set to win her 200th cap in the game against Wales at PayPal Park in San Jose, California, her home state.

"It does feel very special, it feels kind of perfect," she said.

ODI SERIES

Bangladesh's Mehidy unfazed by series defeat to Afghanistan

CHATTOGRAM: Bangladesh are writing off this ODI series defeat to Afghanistan as "two bad days", according to Mehidy Hasan Miraz on Sunday.

The hosts were crushed by 142 runs as their recent ODI form deserted them, and Afghanistan went on to amass 331 by breaking a few records and seal their first series against the hosts.

Mehidy said Bangladesh were "not worried" about the series loss and will plan better for the two big tournaments later in the year, the Asia Cup and the ODI World Cup.

Speaking to *ESPNCricinfo*, Mehidy said: "I think we had two bad days. We are not worried about it."

"We can plan better for the Asia Cup and World Cup. We play to win every game. We will find out where we are lacking. I said in a press conference a little while ago that losing against Afghanistan



won't make us a bad side. One series can go bad.

"We have a good record in the last three-four years. We finished in the top four in the ICC ODI Super League. I think we can overcome these mistakes from the past two games, and play much better



in the Asia Cup and World Cup."

Mehidy rejected the idea that Tamim Iqbal's retirement and then the U-turn played any part in the defeat in the second ODI on Saturday.

"Everyone was shocked with Tamim bhai's decision. Nobody

expected it," Mehidy said after the loss Chattogram.

"It was a break that day and we had training yesterday. We prepared for this game. But that bad feeling was temporary."

Mehidy said that Bangladesh had fallen well behind in the match

when they couldn't stop the Afghanistan openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran, who scored 145 and 100 respectively, from adding a massive 256 in 36 overs.

"We gave away 30-40 more runs [than we should have]," he said. "We weren't organised enough as a bowling unit. If our top order also made runs and had a partnership going, we could have taken this game deep. It became hard when the top order fell [quickly]."

However, Bangladesh's bowlers brought them into the contest despite the visitors being well on track to post even 400.

They grabbed nine wickets in the last 14 overs, thus restricting Afghanistan to only 75 runs in the period. That was a significant slowdown, particularly when they were going at above ten runs an over in the six overs before Gur-

baz's dismissal in the 37th over.

Mehidy said that Bangladesh's decision to bowl was to give their batters the best batting conditions under lights at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

"We expected the wicket to play better at night," he said. "We batted first in the first game [after losing the toss]. The wicket was slow. It kept low. It improved in the evening, so the captain and coach thought that if [on winning the toss in the second ODI] we bowled well up front and then batted in the second innings, things will be easy for us."

Bangladesh were a bit slow in their chase and stumbled to 28 for 3 in the powerplay. The remaining six wickets - Ebadot Hossain didn't bat due to an injury - fell in clusters of three each, too. And once they were 72 for 6 in the 19th over, the game was all but done.



ALL-NEW CHANGAN CS95 4WD 7-SEATER PREMIUM SUV LAUNCHED IN OMAN



The new Changan CS95 seven-seater 4WD promises to redefine the driving experience with advanced technology and safety features

MUSCAT: Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE), has announced the launch of the highly anticipated All-new Changan CS95 2024 model in Oman. The new Changan CS95 seven-seater 4WD promises to redefine the driving experience with advanced technology and safety features.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, “We are thrilled to introduce the 2024 Changan CS95 in Oman. With its AISIN 8AT transmission, this new model ensures comfortable and safe driving with Adaptive Cruise control and radar-based safety features. Packed with numerous updates, the new CS95 delivers an enhanced driving experience with larger size 20” Alloy Wheels, the latest generation 8 Speed AT transmission and a new 12” High-definition screen providing 540-degree panoramic image quality. The Changan CS95 added a stylish design Dot matrix grill, a revamped front and rear SUV feel, making it a standout choice for those seeking a premium SUV experience.”

Introducing black edition variant: He also added, “We are also pleased to introduce exclusive black edi-



tion Changan CS95 with grill, alloy wheel door handles and exhaust painted in black”. Packed with remarkable enhancements, including an advanced 8-speed transmission and an impressive 390 NM torque, the new CS95 2024 aims to elevate the performance to new heights and is showcased with a 20-inch tyre size which enhances stability and grip on the road.

Key highlights of new CS95 4WD, 7-seater: The CS95 4WD 7seater is powered by a 2.0 Turbo Engine(224 hp) mated with 8-Speed AISIN automatic transmission, an intelligent grille, and an impressive range of cutting-edge technologies like a 540-degree HD view, Carplay, Android Auto, an induction electric back door, and a panoramic skylight, this exceptional vehicle offers an unrivalled combination of comfort, spaciousness, and driving pleasure.

Advanced safety: An important attribute of the new CS95 model is its advanced safety and intelligent technology i.e. ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems) features. This includes a range of advanced safety and assistance systems such as Lane Departure Warning (LDW) and Lane Change Support (LCS) to help ensure safe and controlled driving. The Traffic Jam Assist (TJA) feature assists in navigating congested traffic situations. The CS95MCA2 also includes Pedestrian Warning with auxiliary braking, which helps detect and prevent potential collisions with pedestrians. Additionally, the Blind Spot Detection (BSD), Lane Change Assist (LCA), and Rear Collision Warning (RCW) systems provide enhanced awareness and protection during lane changes and rear-end collision scenarios. These intelligent technologies and ADAS features make the CS95 a reliable and safety-

cused choice for drivers.

A premium 4WD family SUV: A robust and stylish SUV Changan CS95 offers impressive dimensions measuring 4949mm in length, 1930mm in width, and 1790mm in height. Under the hood, it is equipped with a powerful 2.0T GDI engine, delivering a maximum power of 224hp. The all-new Changan CS95 stands out with its latest generation Blue Core Engine, incorporating low NVH (noise, vibration, and harshness), exceptional performance, and fuel efficiency ensuring a smooth and comfortable driving experience. The Changan CS95 features an intelligent grille that offers several benefits to enhance fuel economy and cold start performance. The revised front face shape appears fuller and more refreshing, aligning with the evolving design trends. The through-taillight



serves as a finishing touch, adding a touch of sophistication to the CS95’s exterior design. The model has a simple and sharp tail shape, complemented by the through-type taillight that resembles a magnificent red horizon. This design element conveys a visually striking and dynamic experience, enhancing the overall aesthetics of the vehicle. Additionally, the 2024 CS95 offers a comfortable space with a large-size panoramic skylight, providing a bright and spacious interior environment. With a skylight area of 1.14 square meters, it enhances visibility and provides a panoramic view of the sky, adding to the overall sense of openness and freedom inside the vehicle. The CS95 boasts an oversized trunk space, where the third row can be completely flattened, creating a generous 465L of storage capacity to cater to long-distance travel needs. Moreover, by folding down both the

second and third rows, a flat space exceeding 2000L is created, ensuring ample room to accommodate various storage requirements. The model offers executive comfortable seats featuring Nappa leather with a luxurious pattern, enhanced by quilting and punching technology. The ergonomic design ensures optimal comfort, while the pre-tight seat belts provide added safety. With the main driver seat memory function and 8-way electric adjustment + 2-way waist support, the seats can be customised to provide optimal support and relieve fatigue during long-distance drives. The CS95 ensures a healthy cabin environment with features like independent rear air conditioning, three-temperature zone air conditioning, an air conditioning ion generator, efficient sterilisation, and air purification, creating a consistently fresh and forest-like atmosphere inside the car.



ROUND-UP

Conquer any terrain with Ironman 4X4 accessories from Auto Expert

Auto Expert Oman offers a range of services, including oil changes, engine diagnostics, window tinting, detailing, polishing and more

MUSCAT: Auto Expert Oman is a state-of-the-art diagnostic training and development centre, a subsidiary of MHD ACERE designed to be a one-stop-shop for all your vehicle maintenance, service, and repair needs. Located in Muscat and Salalah, Auto Expert Oman offers a range of services, including oil changes, engine diagnostics, window tinting, detailing, polishing, and more.



The facility is equipped with the latest diagnostic tools and equipment to ensure your vehicle runs at its best. In addition to its maintenance and repair services, Auto Expert Oman also offers a wide

range of high-quality off-road accessories from Ironman 4X4. Ironman 4x4 products are essential for off-road enthusiasts because they are designed to withstand the toughest conditions and provide reliable performance when you need them most. Whether you're navigating rocky terrain, crossing rivers, or driving through the desert, Ironman 4x4 products are built to help you conquer any challenge. Ironman 4x4 offers a wide range of products designed to help you get the most out of your off-road adventures. Here are some of the different types of products they offer: Suspension Systems, Bull Bars, Winches, Roof Racks, Recovery Gear, and more. Whether you're an avid off-roader or simply looking to add some extra functionality to your vehicle, Ironman 4x4 Accessories has the products you need to take on any challenge. No matter what service you're looking for, Auto Expert Oman has the expertise and experience to get the job done right. With a commitment to customer satisfaction and a team of highly trained professionals, you can be sure that your vehicle will be in good hands.

AWARD

Sohar International recognised as 'Fastest Growing Retail Banking Bank - Oman 2023'

MUSCAT: Recording commendable progress in the past year and staying committed to its growth trajectory, Sohar International has been awarded the 'Fastest Growing Retail Banking Bank Oman 2023' Award from the World Business Outlook Awards for its strong financial figures, exceptional performance, expanding customer base, innovative products and services, advanced digitalisation strategies, and unwavering commitment to customer-centricity.

Commenting on receiving the award, Khalil Salim Al Hedaifi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Sohar International, said, "In a dynamically evolving market, customer trust and loyalty become unique competitive advantages – ones that Sohar International has been able to leverage. This award is a testament to the same. While focusing on attaining sustainable growth for our retail segment, we continue to adopt a customer-centric approach, enhance the digital experience for our clients, innovate our portfolio, and customise our offerings according to customer needs. Through these strategies, Sohar International will remain steadfast in delivering an elevated retail banking experience."

Sohar International has achieved remarkable success by prioritising service excellence and unwavering customer focus in an era of rapid digitalisation and innovation. Through agility, creativity, and a relentless commitment to delivering exceptional experiences, the bank has emerged as a leader in transformation, offering unique propositions that enhance the lives of its customers. The bank designs

impactful experiences tailored to deliver superior customer satisfaction by cultivating strong relationships and understanding customer priorities.

The bank has also created comprehensive financial solutions and a curated ecosystem of services, empowering customers at every stage of their lifestyles and lifecycles. By embracing technological advancements and aligning with customer needs, Sohar International continues to progress as a forward-thinking bank, serving its customers with utmost dedication.

Al Hedaifi added, saying, "Winning this award isn't a culmination of our efforts – it is a source of inspiration to push the boundaries and set new benchmarks. As an established leader in retail banking in the Sultanate, Sohar International, while charting new avenues for growth, will pioneer new developments in the banking industry and aid in the socioeconomic progress of the nation."



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Alizz Islamic Bank introduces Chatbot service for instant responses to inquiries

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank recently revealed their Chatbot service that responds to customer inquiries related to products and services and enables customers to communicate with the bank directly and around the clock on 24166000.

This comes as part of the bank's vision toward adopting digital transformation and enhancing customer experience. The Alizz Islamic Bank Chatbot has been launched on WhatsApp and the bank's official Instagram page and it will also be introduced to the bank's corporate website very soon.

Customers can send a message via WhatsApp on 24166000 and experience instant responses to their questions on products, services, branch locations, fees, cards, finances, accounts and much more.

The same applies to the bank's Instagram page, all customers



have to do is send a direct message and the machine learning solution will respond instantly. Additionally, customers can show their interest in a particular product or service by providing their contact

information, selecting the nearest branch to them and they will be contacted by the sales team.

Ali Al Mani, General Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank, stated "Digital transformation is inevitable

and not optional for any entity that provides direct services to its customers, especially the banking sector. Improving digital solutions naturally leads to enhancing the customer experience journey within the banking sector. At Alizz Islamic Bank, we have continued to invest in our existing digital platforms and entered into various partnerships to provide the right customer solutions. The bank continues to work towards obtaining a digital business model to keep pace with changing customer requirements and technological advancement. This approach has led to a doubling of the number of our customers using digital channels of all kinds."

Alizz Islamic Bank believes in putting the customer first and the modern customer is constantly changing their methods of communication.

EXPANSION

BankDhofar opens new branch in Khasab

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of Sayyid Ibrahim Said Al Busaidi - Governor of Musandam, and the presence of Abdul Hakeem Omar Al Ojaili, CEO of BankDhofar, a new BankDhofar branch was inaugurated in Khasab, Oman.

The opening ceremony was attended by esteemed guests, dignitaries, and senior officials marking another significant milestone in the bank's commitment to providing convenient and accessible banking services to customers across the country.

BankDhofar has consistently demonstrated its dedication to



enhancing its services and reach, aligning with the 2040 Oman Vision for economic growth and financial inclusivity. The new branch in Khasab reflects the

bank's strategy to expand its presence in key regions, bringing its comprehensive range of banking products and services closer to customers in Musandam.

As part of BankDhofar's commitment to delivering exceptional customer experiences, the new branch in Khasab offers a full suite of banking services with experienced branch staff who are well-equipped to provide expert advice and assistance tailored to customers' needs.

Speaking at the opening ceremony Abdul Hakeem Omar Al Ojaili, Chief Executive Officer of BankDhofar, emphasised the bank's commitment to contributing to the socioeconomic development of the region and empowering individuals and businesses with innovative financial solutions.

ACADEMICS

ABQ announces scholarship recipients for 2023-2024 academic year

THE 2023-2024 ABQ SCHOLARS ARE:

 Ibrahim Abdulrahman Said Al Busaidi	 Ahmad Osama Bangash Abdulaziz Ibrahim	 Al Muhannad Khatun Salah Al Haddad	 Anas Omar Humdan Almasri	 Areej Almi
 Anas Khatun Mahan Nasser	 Jena Al Zaidi	 Laila Wafat Muhammad	 Martin Hama	 Yajoon Bung
 Youssef Salim Said Salim Al Yazili	 Zahra'a Almasri Al Lousati	 Zahidulhasan Omar Mahdi Al-Saidi	CONGRATULATIONS مبروك	

*listed in original

MUSCAT: After a rigorous selection process spanning several weeks, ABQ Education Group has recently revealed the names of the recipients on social media for its highly coveted ABQ Merit scholarships for excellence.

This scholarship programme, open to grade 9-12 students, aims to recognise and reward academic brilliance among both ABQ and non-ABQ students. The selection criteria for the scholarships were based solely on academic merit, ensuring that only the most deserving candidates were chosen.

Applicants were required to go through multiple rounds of evaluation, each designed to provide substantial evidence of their excep-

tional academic history. The process involved the submission of their latest school reports, a digital interview clip, an essay explaining why they deserved to win, and an independent benchmarking assessment. These steps collectively aimed to identify students who exhibited outstanding academic potential.

Initially planning to award 12 scholarships, ABQ's Scholarship Committee made the extraordinary decision to increase the number of recipients to 13 due to the exceptionally high standard of submissions. This move demonstrates ABQ's commitment to recognising and nurturing talent in the academic realm.

Humayun Kabir, the CEO of

ABQ Education Group, expressed his excitement regarding the first year's applicants and the bright future he envisions for these scholarship recipients. He believes that the chosen students will make a significant impact not only within the ABQ community but also in their future academic pursuits.

The scholarship recipients will have the opportunity to attend any of ABQ's premium international schools, namely ABQ Azzan Bin Qais, ABQ Seeb, or ABQ Sohar. The scholarship programme accommodates students studying for the GED, IGCSE, and AS/A Level examinations, ensuring a diverse group of talented individuals can benefit from this opportunity.

With two years of free tuition, the scholarship recipients will have the privilege of immersing themselves in ABQ's excellent academic environment. ABQ has a proven track record of providing high-quality education, and these students are poised for future success with their scholarships.

An official award ceremony will be held at the start of the new academic year in September and the ABQ family eagerly anticipates witnessing the growth and achievements of these exceptional individuals. The scholarship recipients can rest assured that ABQ's commitment to academic excellence will support their endeavours and pave the way for a promising future.



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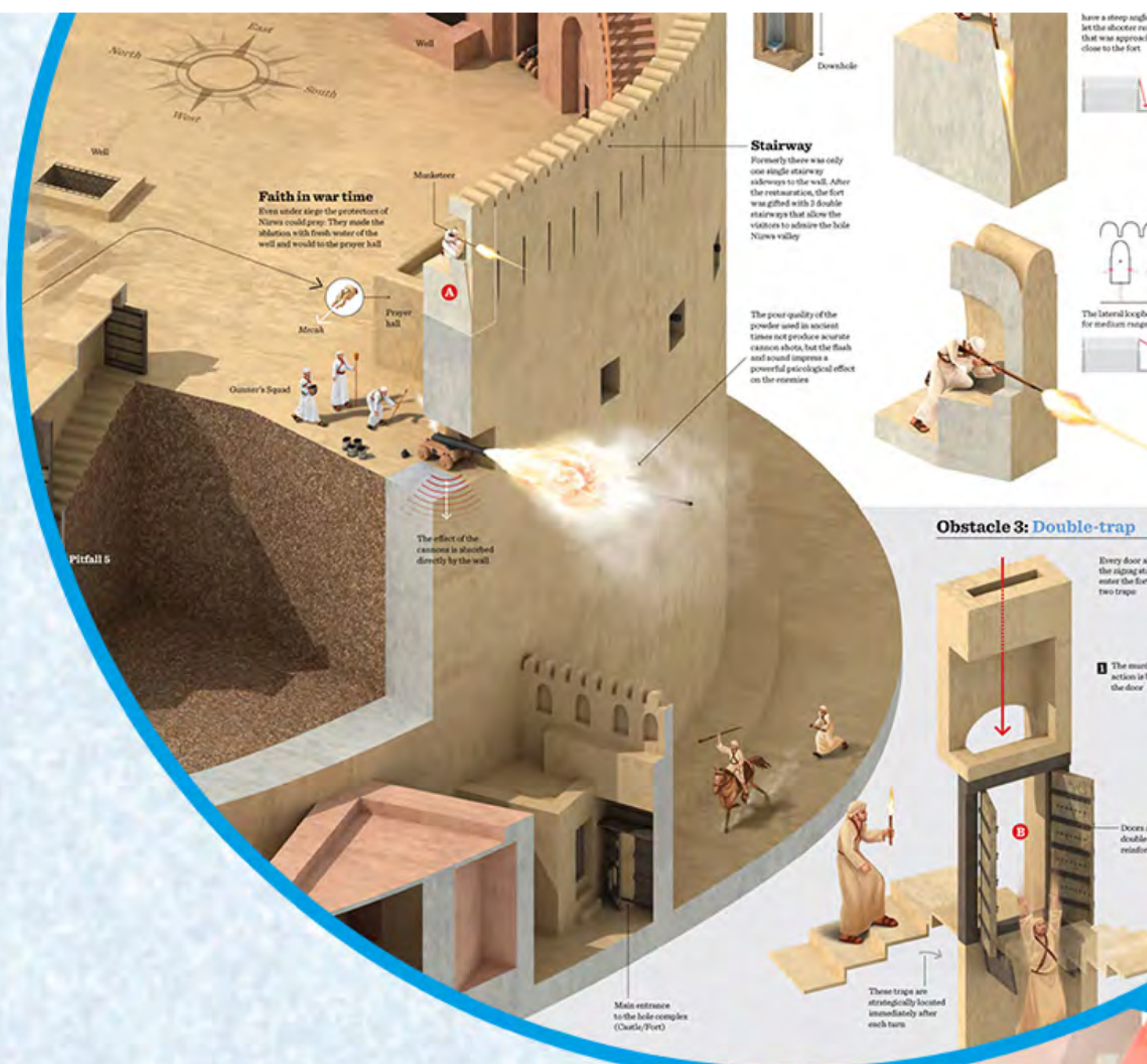
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