



HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREETES PRESIDENT OF BENIN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Patrice Talon of the Republic of Benin on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Patrice Talon and the people of his country. — **ONA**



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STATE'S HILLY AREAS

Indian expats in Oman express shock, grief over Kerala landslides



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Indian expatriates in Oman from the south Indian state of Kerala are engulfed in grief and sorrow following the devastating landslides in the Wayanad district on Tuesday morning that has claimed over 164 lives so far.

The death toll continues to rise as search and rescue operations intensify. Authorities report that many are still missing, and the number of casualties is expected to increase.

Numerous relief teams have been deployed to evacuate the injured and search for the missing.

Among the grieving expatriates in Oman are those who have lost loved ones in the disaster.

The landslides struck early on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, hitting mainly the hilly areas of Meppadi panchayat.

Villages including Mundak-kai, Chooralmala, Attamala, and Noolpuzha in Wayanad district were severely affected.

The catastrophe occurred while many residents were

asleep, wiping out entire areas in what is considered the worst disaster to hit Kerala since the tragic floods of 2018.

Asharaf, a 27-year-old expatriate from Noolpuzha who has been working in Oman for the past five years, was heartbroken.

He said: "While many died, those who survived have lost everything. The process of rebuilding will take a very long time as hundreds of families have to start their lives from scratch."

Basheer, another expat from Wayanad, expressed his sorrow upon hearing the news of the landslides.

He said: "Some homes of my relatives were buried under debris while others were filled with raging floodwaters displaced by rock and soil. Many were trapped in the floodwaters after escaping the initial impact of the landslides."

He and his friends are closely monitoring the situation through television and social media updates.

Wayanad, known for its lush

HM the Sultan condoles President of India

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Droupadi Murmu of the Republic of India on the victims of floods and landslides in India's southern state of Kerala.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sympathies to President Droupadi Murmu, families of the victims and the people of India. — **ONA**

tea plantations, regularly experiences floods during the monsoon season when torrential rains persist for days. The incessant rainfall has resulted in 164 confirmed deaths, with hundreds still missing.

The Indian community in Oman stands in solidarity with their fellow Keralites, mourning the tragic loss and hoping for swift recovery and rebuilding efforts.

See also >A7

OMAN CONDEMNS ASSASSINATION OF HAMAS LEADER

This is a blatant violation of international and humanitarian law and a clear undermining of efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, Head of Hamas Movement's Political Bureau.

Oman considered the assassination, which took place in the Iranian capital city of Tehran, as a blatant violation of international and humanitarian law and a clear undermining of efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday, Oman reiterated its firm stance in rejecting all forms of terrorism, regardless of its motives and causes, as well as rejecting the violation of the sovereignty of states.

Oman called on the international community to intervene urgently to punish the perpetrators of these crimes and political assassinations, besides taking immediate action to stop the Israeli aggression and the ongoing illegal occupation of Palestinian territories.

It also called for stopping the Israeli policy of killing, extremism and abuse practiced against the defenceless Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem.

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of July 31, 2024



Oman expressed its heartfelt condolences to the family of Ismail Haniyeh and his companion, praying to the Almighty Allah to grant the Palestinian people and leadership patience.

Day of mourning

Meanwhile, Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas declared a day of mourning on Wednesday in protest of the assassination of Hamas political bureau chairman, Ismail Haniyeh.

The president ordered that flags be flown at half-mast in official Palestinian institutions in the West Bank governorates.

Earlier, the President called on the Palestinian people to unite, be patient and steadfast in the face of the Israeli occupation.

Eight civilians killed

The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) carried out another airstrike on Wednesday in the town of Az-Zawayda. Wafa news agency reported that an occupation drone targeted a group of civilians near the electricity company in the Az-Zawayda area, murdering eight of them. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN 5th edition of 'Eidaad' programme launched

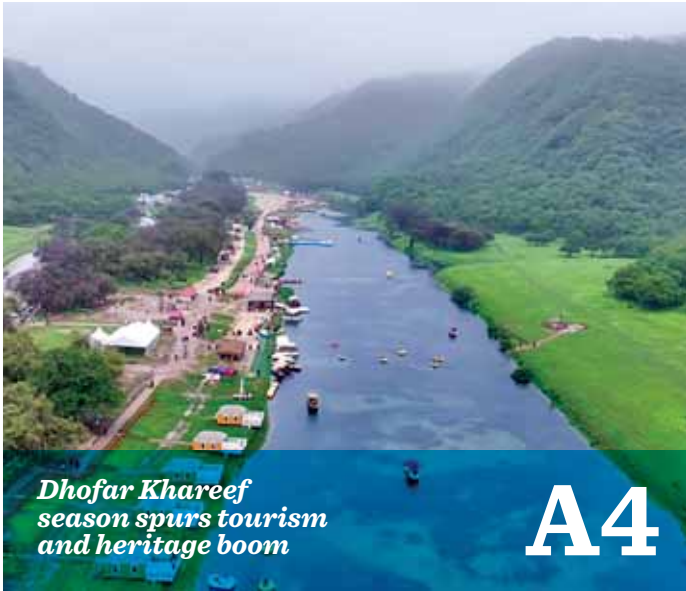
1 The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in cooperation with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) launched the 5th phase of the national programme to train university students 'Eidaad'. The event also saw the launch of an initiative to align specialisations. **>A2**

OMAN Shinas-Bandar Abbas Port sea route opens

2 The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announced the launch of a new maritime route connecting Shinas Port with the Port of Bandar Abbas in Iran. The move comes in line with the ministry's efforts to activate and boost revenues of Omani ports. **>A2**

WORLD Indian girl crosses the English Channel

3 A 16-year-old girl, Jiya Rai, with autism spectrum disorder, successfully swam across the English Channel, a distance of 34 km, in 17 hours and 25 minutes and became the youngest and fastest para swimmer in the world to achieve this feat in solo swimming. **>A6**



ATHLETICS EVENTS

Omani sprinters aim for a good show at Paris 2024 Olympics

Times News Service

PARIS: Despite the disappointing display of Said Al Khatri (shooting) and Issa Al Adawi (swimming), there are lot of hopes from Oman's sprinters with both Ali Anwar Al Balushi and Mazoon Al Alawi set to compete in athletics events, beginning at Stade de France from Friday.

For Mazoon, this will be her third Olympics, and she will compete in the preliminary heats of the women's 100m race on Friday. Known as the fastest Omani woman, she previously participated in the Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

In Tokyo, she finished sixth in the preliminary heats of Group 3 with a timing of 12.35 seconds, while in Rio, she clocked 12.43 seconds.

Young sprinter Al Balushi will make his Olympic debut on Saturday

day in the men's 100m race at the same venue. While both athletes have slim chances of advancing to the final rounds, they are focused on achieving personal bests and representing Oman with pride.

Both have been rigorously training over the past few days in Paris to acclimatise to the competitive environment.

Focused preparation for Al Balushi

National head coach Fahad Al Mashaykhi said that the training programme for Al Balushi began in August 2023. "Our aim was to prepare him for this grand stage. During a training camp in Türkiye last January, we concentrated on the 60m indoor race, where he broke the Omani record with a time of 6.58 seconds," he said.

"Ali participated in several overseas camps and competitions, in-



cluding the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in Iran, where he won first place with a time of 6.50 seconds, setting both Oman and Gulf records. From March to April, training continued at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat. In May, Ali participated in international athletics meets, including the Grand Prix in Dubai and several camps in Europe, achieving

his best time of 10.17 seconds. He also competed at the West Asian Championships in Iraq and attended camps in France, Italy, and Türkiye in July.

"Ali then participated in the Arab Youth Championships in Egypt, winning two gold medals with timings of 10.00 seconds in the 100m event and 20.68 seconds in the 200m," added Al Mashaykhi.

Valuable experience

Meanwhile, Saud Al Abadi, the national shooting team manager, highlighted the significance of international shooter Said Al Khatri's debut at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. "Competing alongside top-ranked shooters worldwide, Khatri's presence at the Olympics is a valuable addition to his career and helps improve his international ranking," he said. Khatri finished his first Olympic participation in the last place (30th) in the preliminary qualifiers for the men's trap shooting event with a total score of 114 points.

"Olympic participation will contribute to his sporting journey and enhance his international ranking. This experience will place him in a favourable position for future international events and championships, where he will strive to do better," said Al Abadi.

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:18pm
Asr.....3:42pm
Maghrib.....6:55pm
Isha.....8:12pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:14am



Fifth edition of ‘Eidaad’ launched

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in cooperation with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) launched the 5th phase of the national programme to train university students ‘Eidaad’.

The event was held under the auspices of Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

Moreover, the event also saw the launch of an initiative to align specialisations.

This initiative aims to equip students and academics with

clear visions regarding different jobs and career paths in order to help them take realistic and responsible decisions.

Further, a cooperation protocol between the academic and industrial sectors was signed between the Ministry and PDO. It was signed by Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Dr. Afrah Said Al Hadhrami, CEO of PDO.

It is worth noting that Eidaad is a one-year-long national programme.

— ONA



New maritime route connecting Shinas Port with Iran’s Bandar Abbas Port opens

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announced the launch of a new maritime route connecting Shinas Port with the Port of Bandar Abbas in Iran.

The move comes in line with the ministry’s efforts to activate and boost revenues of Omani ports.

The strategic partnership aims to enhance tourism movement and trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran. — ONA



Traffic Awareness Exhibition begins

SALALAH: The Royal Oman Police (ROP), represented by the Directorate General of Traffic and Dhofar Police Headquarters opened the activities of the 6th edition of the Traffic Awareness Exhibition, within the traffic awareness campaign for visitors of Khareef Dhofar 2024 on Wednesday.

Five-day traffic exhibition

The opening ceremony of the five-day traffic exhibition was organised at Salalah Gardens Mall, under the patronage of Basil bin Ahmed Al Rawas, undersecretary for Sports and Youth at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Lt. Colonel Ahmed bin Khalifa Al Shukailli, Director of Dhofar Traffic Department said that the traffic exhibition accompanying the activities of Khareef Dhofar 2024 aimed to raise awareness with the significance of traffic safe-



ty for citizens, residents and visitors of Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef season, it also aimed to curb traffic incidents through dissemination of awareness messages and setting awareness points and boards at the various tourism sites and roads leading to them.

He said that the traffic exhibition is accompanied by awareness competitions, short video presentation and awareness message released through the various mass media and the social media in cooperation with the Department of Relations Security Information.

The exhibition consists of various corners including the corner of the National Committee of Road Safety, the Corner of the Traffic Safety Institute at ROP aimed to train ROP personnel and rad users in the field of traffic safety.

— ONA

Registration opens for ‘Mu’tamad’ programme for Omani graduates

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has announced that it is now receiving applications for the 2nd edition of the ‘Mu’tamad’ programme.

This initiative aims to develop and employ Omani graduates in the fields of finance, accounting, and economics, enabling them to obtain one of two professional certifications: the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) or the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).

This step stems from OIA’s recognition of the importance of developing Omani competencies and enhancing their abilities to obtain professional certifications, and as a continued effort to support na-

tional cadres in bridging the gap between market needs and professional specializations.

Ayad Al Balushi, Assistant Deputy President for Finance at OIA, stated that ‘Mu’tamad’ offers an exceptional experience for its participants.

“The programme allows them to familiarise themselves with the work environment and its job requirements, in addition to ongoing professional courses, guidance sessions, and full funding for obtaining the certified qualification.”

He noted that the 2nd edition of the programme includes the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) certification and involves participation OIA and a number of its companies.

The 2nd edition of ‘Mu’tamad’

targets Omani graduates in the fields of finance, accounting, and economics.

This programme offers them the opportunity to obtain one of the prestigious professional certifications through two pathways: the ACCA certification over three years, or the CFA certification over four years. Accepted participants will have the option to choose the study track that aligns with their career aspirations, embarking on a professional development journey that includes educational programs at various levels, along with technical and behavioural training designed according to international standards. This initiative aims to enhance the financial and accounting operations at OIA and its companies.

The 2nd edition of ‘Mu’tamad’ follows the notable success of its 1st edition, in which participants completed the first unit of their journey and are now progressing through the second unit of the ACCA certification. These participants have been distributed among OIA and a number of its subsidiaries. They have also completed numerous mentoring sessions. OIA is committed to developing its human resources and equipping them with high-quality specialized and professional certifications. For example, more than half of the CFA, one of the world’s most prestigious certifications in financial and economic analysis, charter holders in the Sultanate of Oman are OIA Employees.



Recall

Recall Date: 01/08/2024

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
AMG GLE 53 4MATIC+ Coupé	2019-2024	4
GLE 53 4MATIC+	2019-2024	116
AMG GLE 63 S 4MATIC+	2019-2024	1
AMG GLS 63 4MATIC+	2019-2024	1
GLE 450 4MATIC	2019-2024	151
GLS 450 4MATIC	2019-2024	35
GLS 580 4MATIC	2019-2024	3
Maybach GLS 600 4MATIC	2019-2024	9

Recall consequence

Mercedes-Benz AG has determined that on certain GLE and GLS (167 platform) vehicles, the 48V ground connection under the passenger seat might have come loose. In this case, the cable lug of the ground line would not be secured correctly. Subsequently, the electric resistance of the connection might increase. In combination with the high electrical currents potentially flowing through this connection, the temperature in this area might increase.

Recall Action

As a precautionary measure Zawawi Trading Company team will check the bolting of the ground connection on the affected vehicles and correct it, if necessary. Zawawi Trading Company team will also contact the customers affected by the recall to arrange a convenient time from 01.08.2024 on all working days between 08:00 AM-5:00 PM to perform the respective checking and correction, if necessary.

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‘Sports Spark’ offers diverse activities for all ages

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The “Sports Spark” event at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre is in full swing and will continue until August 24th.

This initiative offers many sports and entertainment activities for everyone.

Wide Range of Activities: The event caters to all ages and interests, including children, youth, families, and sports enthusiasts. From traditional sports like football and basketball to innovative activities like the Ninja challenge, there's something for everyone.

Dedicated Women's Days: Seeking a comfortable and private environment to exercise? Special days have been allocated for women on August 3rd and 17th, from 3PM to midnight. Registration fees are only OMR5, and one can sign up via WhatsApp or the event website. Activities include athletics, electronic games, fitness classes like Zumba, and even sound therapy sessions.

Consumer Awareness for Children: The Consumer Protection Authority has teamed up with the event to educate children about responsible consumerism.

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PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DIVING INSTRUCTORS

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SeaOman instructors gain PADI certifications

HM sends greetings

MUSCAT: Instructors from SeaOman, Oman's number one marine leisure provider and the commercial department of Oman Sail, have received qualifications from the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) to recognise the excellence of scuba and snorkelling experiences offered to customers. This commitment to providing excellence was also recently recognised by Tripadvisor, the world's largest travel guidance platform, which named SeaOman as a winner of Tripadvisor's® Travelers' Choice® Awards for 2024.

Senior Dive Instructor Azzan Al Sinani was awarded the Professional Member Recognition for 25 years as a PADI certified dive instructor, Abdul Naser Al Sinani earned his Emergency First Response (EFR) Elite Instructor Award and a Certificate of Excellence from PADI, and Faisal Al Jahdhami also received a Certificate of Excellence from PADI.

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Viola Amherd of the Swiss Confederation on her country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Amherd and the people of the Swiss Confederation. — **DNA**

Project aims to cut wax deposits in oil pipelines

The innovative project focuses on the use of ultrasound waves used in various oil and gas sectors for developing an effective method that is friendly to environment



MUSCAT: The project aimed to reduce the wax deposits in oil pipelines is one of the winning project in Upgrade Programme under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The project aimed address the issue of wax deposits in crude oil pipelines and to reduce the carbon emissions.

Al Waleed bin Yousef Al Maharbi, CEO of the project said that the idea of the project focuses on the use of ultrasound waves used in various oil and gas sectors for developing an effective method that is friendly to environment for elimination of wax deposits in oil pipelines. Wax deposits in pipelines is one of the key issues facing oil companies which may increase the cost of maintenance and reduce the efficiency of transport, he added. He said that the project uses ultrasound waves for elimination of wax deposits.

The ultrasound waves operate in high frequencies which generates vibrations leading to formation of bubbles in the crude oil which explode to crush the heavy wax particles into smaller particles that prevent reformation of wax deposits, he added.

The use of this technology would reduce the use of chemicals and electrical heating, which results in reduction of the cost and increase the productivity.

— **DNA**



TENDER NOTICE

Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama water) hereby announces the following Tenders:

Tender No.	Description	Eligibility	Tender Fee R.O.	Last Date of Sale Tender Documents	Bid Submission Date
T/2649000/2024	Design, Supply, installation, Commissioning and Testing of MBRR (Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor) system Package STP at Quriyat	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and have sufficient experience in the works mentioned	1,500 /- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	15/08/2024	16/09/2024
T/2614960-2/2024 (Re-Float)	Service Contract for Standby Generators at Nama Water Services STP and Pump Stations	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and have sufficient experience in the works mentioned	50/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	15/08/2024	09/09/2024
T/2640990/2024	Construction Of water Distribution Networks in Wadi as Sahtan in Al-Batinah South Governorate - Phase I	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board in Excellent Grade and International Companies specialized in the works mentioned	2500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	15/08/2024	23/09/2024
T/2645008/2024	Extension of Water Network in in Al Badaya 5, 10 and AL Hujayrah, Al Suwaiq Wilayat in Al Batinah North Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and have sufficient experience in the works mentioned	500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	15/08/2024	23/09/2024
T/2650010/2024	Construction Of Water Distribution Network In Al Marfaa, Saham Wilayat in Al Batinah North Governorate	Small and Medium Enterprises (Riyada Card Holder) registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	Free	15/08/2024	23/09/2024

The tender documents can be obtained from the e-tendering page (Supplier Login) from this announcement date. The applicants shall pay the tender fee by logging into their (I-supplier Page).

Applicants who are not registered shall register through the following link: <https://owwsc.nama.om/Business-with-Us/Vendor-Registration> in order to receive the login credentials of the Supplier portal.

All applicants who have paid the tender fee shall have access to the Tender Documents through Nama Water Services e-tendering page (Supplier Login <https://nws.nama.om/en-us/Business-with-Us/Supplierlogin>). All participating Companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of the bid value in a sealed envelope. Bid Bonds must be obtained from a local Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman addressed to Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) Chairman of Tender Committee not later than 2:00 pm on the bid submission date.

The bid along with all required documents shall be uploaded through Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) e-tendering page not later than 2:00 pm on the date specified above. For more details refer to Tender Page of our website www.owwsc.nama.om & in case of general queries you may contact us through the email ID of tender@owwsc.nama.om



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DHOFAR KHAREEF SEASON SPURS TOURISM AND HERITAGE BOOM



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Dhofar Khareef season, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and unique weather phenomena, has become a pivotal force in transforming Dhofar Governorate's tourism and heritage sectors.

This annual natural marvel draws an ever-increasing number of tourists, driving a surge in hotel establishments, the creation of world-class resorts, and the revitalisation of heritage and archaeological sites.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in collaboration with various tourism sector partners and hotel establishments, has undertaken extensive efforts to prepare for the Khareef Dhofar season 2024.

These preparations include assessing the readiness of establishments and ensuring the quality of services provided to a diverse range of visitors and tourists.

Khalid bin Abdullah Al Abri, Director General of the Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate, confirmed that five new tourism projects will be launched this year. This will bring the total number of hotel rooms in the governorate to 7,000, spread across 70 licensed establishments.

Al Abri noted that Al Baleed Archaeological Park, alongside the "Museum of the Land of Frankincense" within the park, will host three specialised exhibitions during this year's Khareef season, enriching the tourist experience.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is a strategic partner, collaborating with various governmental and private entities to organise numerous exhibitions and conferences. These events are expected to boost the conference and incentive tourism sectors.

Al Abri said: "A comprehensive promotional plan for Dhofar Governorate is in place, beginning with hosting content industry representatives to promote the Dhofar Khareef season 2024 and future seasons.

Last year, the tourism sector in Dhofar Governorate grew by 18 to 20 percent, a promising sign for the growth of other economic sectors."

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has developed several tourist sites, including Al Baleed Beach, and completed joint projects with Dhofar Municipality, such as the "Al Damar Oasis" in the Wilayat of Mirbat.

The top official said: "Hotel occupancy rates in Dhofar Governorate have significantly improved compared to last year. An increase is expected during the peak season in August, driven by a surge in tourist arrivals. The ministry's promotional programmes for Dhofar Governorate are anticipat-



ed to have a substantial positive impact, especially in attracting tourists from Gulf markets. Tourist sites in Dhofar Governorate are fully prepared and well-serviced to welcome visitors for the Dhofar Khareef season 2024."

The ministry is also working on a series of events and programmes for the "Sarab" season, which begins after the Khareef season ends on September 21 and continues until the end of October.

The ministry aims to promote the governorate as a sustainable tourist destination year-round, with ambitious plans to develop the "Land of Frankincense" sites.

This year, a tender will be awarded to update the Frankincense Land Museum's narrative, and next year, the public breathing

space of Jabal Samhan will be operational, along with a visitor centre in Wadi Dokah Reserve.

The governorate's tourism strategy aims to attract 3 million visitors across four large tourist complexes.

The development of tourism and the allocation of lands ready for investors are progressing, with over 18 tourist lands, some awarded with usufruct contracts and others under negotiation.

Ali bin Salem Al Kathiri, Director of the Department of Frankincense Land Sites at the Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate, said that heritage and archaeological sites in Dhofar witness continuous tourism activity throughout the year.

He said: "Winter tourism is particularly vibrant, with visitors from European countries arriving via charter flights to Salalah Airport and cruise ships, as well as tourists from GCC countries."

Al Kathiri added that the directorate general of the ministry organises numerous activities, events, and exhibitions at these sites, including the Frankincense Season events in December. These sites also host school and university student visits, enhancing museum education activities.

Furthermore, the directorate holds many scientific lectures, seminars, and specialised sessions for researchers, enthusiasts, and students within local, regional, and international programmes and events.



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OMAN/WORLD

MINISTRY OF HAJJ AND UMRAH, SAUDI ARABIA

14,000 pilgrims given approval for 1446 AH Hajj season

MUSCAT: As many as 14,000 pilgrims from Oman are given approval to join their brethren from other parts of the globe during the 1446 AH Hajj/pilgrimage season, according to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This was unveiled at a media meeting held on Wednesday by Omani Hajj Mission for the 1445 AH season at the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs.

Sultan Said Al Hinai, who headed the Omani Hajj Mission during the 1445 AH season, said that the mission utilised its full share of 14,000 chances offered to pilgrims from Oman (at a rate of 100%).

Giving a breakup, Al Hinai said that the numbers of those who performed pilgrimage in the recent Hajj season were as follows: 89.2% of pilgrims performed the ritual as a religious duty (since they had the ability and resources to perform it), 1.7% of pilgrims performed Hajj as a “will” on behalf of the dis-



advantaged or the deceased and 9.1% of pilgrims performed Hajj as a form of voluntary worship.

Al Hinai explained that 49.9% of the pilgrims in 1445 AH were women and 50.1% were men.

He added that electronic Hajj system figures indicate that 83.2% of Omani pilgrims were in “youth”

category (within the age group of 18-60 years), while 16.8% belonged to the category of people aged more than 60 years.

Al Hinai pointed out that the average cost of Hajj by air stood at OMR2,137 compared to OMR2,054 in 1444 AH. The average cost of Hajj by land stood at

OMR1,319 compared to OMR1,367 in the 1444 AH season.

Al Hinai said that the mission was able to streamline the cost of the “service package” in the Mina and Arafat shrines and that it introduced improvements in the services it offered, noting that a survey of pilgrims showed a high rate



of satisfaction with the services they received from mission members. This included satisfaction with the specifications of the tents at Arafat camp (up by 20 points to 91%) and Mina camp (up to 75% compared to 66% in the 1444 season), he said.

He added that the pilgrims’ opinion poll index showed 97% satisfaction with medical services offered at camps in Mina and Arafat, noting that the mission served

as many as 5,616 people registered in its medical records.

Al Hinai stressed that the “Plan of Sequencing” travelers that was approved by the Omani Hajj Mission for land pilgrims succeeded in serving more than 5,500 pilgrims within 48 hours. The Arafat Day management plan also achieved an average satisfaction rate of 92%, while the success of the services management plan in the Mina camp stood at 81.5%, according to pilgrims’ opinions about 12 regular items of such services.

Al Hinai said that a number of individuals were found to be forging Hajj cards, during the 1445 AH Hajj season, leading to the cancellation of Hajj approvals. Key challenges during the recent pilgrimage season included cases of transportation of pilgrims without permits, the entry of group buses to Makkah without “sequencing permits” and some instances of power outage in the Mina camp, he added. — **ONA**

If you got something to say, say it to my face, Harris challenges Trump

Harris made the remarks while addressing an enthusiastic crowd in Georgia on Tuesday



GEORGIA: US Vice President Kamala Harris has challenged Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump to meet her on the debate stage.

Harris made the remarks while addressing an enthusiastic crowd in Georgia on Tuesday. She called out Trump for “pulling out” of the debate in November after Trump said he would “probably” debate Harris at the previously agreed upon debate in September, The Hill reported.

Sharing a short video of her remarks in a rally in Georgia on X, Harris stated, “Well, Donald, I do hope you’ll reconsider to meet me on the debate stage because as the saying goes, “If you’ve got something to say, say it to my face. She made the remarks amid cheers from the crowd in the rally.

Kamala Harris said, “The momentum in this race is shifting and there are signs that Donald Trump

is feeling it -- you may have noticed.”

Harris visited Atlanta as she tries to build on a wave of enthusiasm, witnessed through fundraising and volunteer signups since she announced her intention to seek the Democratic presidential nomination, The Hill reported. She highlighted her focus on Georgia, where US President Joe Biden secured a win in 2020 by fewer than 12,000 votes.

Highlighting the importance of Georgia in the US presidential elections, she said, “The path to the White House runs right through this state and you all helped us win in 2020, and we’re going to do it again in 2024. Yes, we will.”

Kamala Harris pledged to get the bipartisan immigration legislation that was negotiated in the Senate signed into law if she is elected.

She said, “In this campaign, I

will proudly put my record against his any day of the week.” Harris stated that as attorney general of California, she went after transnational gangs, drug cartels and human traffickers.

“I prosecuted them in case after case and I won. Donald Trump, Donald Trump on the other hand has been talking a big game about securing our border but he does not walk the walk or, as my friend Quavo would say, he does not walk it like he talks it,” Kamala said, quoting the American rapper Quavo, who addressed the crowd before her at the rally, The Hill reported.

She said that Republicans in the Senate did not allow the passage of the bill twice after Trump urged Republican lawmakers to oppose the legislation, suggesting it could give Biden an election-year win.

Harris said, “Which goes to

Poll shows Kamala even with Trump in swing states

WASHINGTON DC: US Vice President Kamala Harris, has erased former President Donald Trump’s lead in seven key battleground states, roughly a week after becoming the likely Democratic nominee, The Hill reported.

A Bloomberg News/Morning Consult poll showed Harris and Trump in a tight race across all battleground states, with 48 per cent backing Harris and 47 per cent showing support for Trump.

The breakdown among individual states shows each candidate leading comfortably in one swing state, with the others closely contested.

It is a notable shift the same poll results conducted

at the start of July that showed Trump leading Biden overall by 2 percentage points, and Trump leading in five of seven battleground states.

Tuesday’s poll showed Harris opening up an 11-point lead on Trump in Michigan, a 2-point lead in Nevada, a 2-point lead in Arizona and a 2-point lead in Wisconsin.

Trump, meanwhile, led Harris by 4 points in Pennsylvania and 2 points in North Carolina. The candidates were tied in Georgia at 47 percent support.

The poll surveyed 4,973 registered voters from July 24-28. It has a margin of error of 1 percentage point. — **ANI**

his campaign debuted an ad tagging Harris as the Biden administration’s “border czar,” a reference to her work addressing root causes of migration in the Northern Triangle region.

While addressing the crowd in Atlanta, Harris said that “prices are still too high” and spoke on what she would do to lower them, saying that “on Day One,” she would implement policies like reducing price gouging, capping “unfair” rent rises, placing a ban on more hidden fees, and capping prices of prescription drug for all Americans.

In addition, she said that as president, she would pass voting rights bills, including the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. Georgia has remained a centre of controversial election policies since Governor Brian Kemp (R) passed a law in 2021 that bans the distribution of food or water to voters waiting to vote, among other restrictions.

Two popular rappers, Quavo and Megan Thee Stallion, made remarks at the rally before Harris and called on the crowd to show up in November. Grammy award-winning rapper Megan Thee Stallion performed a medley of some of her top songs.

Quavo stated that he had previously worked with Harris to address gun violence. He further said, “One thing I learned about working with vice president is she always stands on business.” — **ANI**

WIDE PROTESTS

EU calls for full vote count in Venezuela election row

BERLIN: European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Wednesday the bloc could not recognise the outcome of Venezuelan election until all votes were counted and records made available.

International criticism has mounted over Venezuela’s vote count that handed incumbent President Nicolas Maduro a narrow victory on Sunday.

Protesters have filled the streets since, with demonstrations turning violent on Monday as authorities in riot gear clashed with people in the capital Caracas.

Other cities saw protests too and at least 11 have died in connection with the protests in the country as of Wednesday, with hundreds more arrested.

Borrell said the electoral commission had announced the result of the vote based on 80% of the ballots counted, while the Venezuelan opposition had published very different results.

“That is an additional reason for not recognizing the results until they will be fully and independently verified,” he told reporters during a visit to Vietnam.

The members of the 27-nation bloc will decide on possible next steps only after the full results are made available, he added.



Criticism mounts over Venezuela vote count

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Wednesday appealed for calm in Venezuela, telling reporters at a news conference that: “I make a firm appeal for calm, civic-mindedness and respect for the fundamental rights of all Venezuelans.” He added he was following “with concern” the events in the former Spanish colony.

UN Human Rights chief Volker Türk said Tuesday he was “extremely concerned about increasing tensions in Venezuela, with worrying reports of violence.”

The Carter Center, a US-based nonprofit organization meant to

monitor the vote on the ground, said the election failed to meet “international standards of electoral integrity” and could not be “considered democratic.”

Political repression

The White House said “Any political repression or violence against protesters or of the opposition is obviously unacceptable.”

Opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia announced that his campaign had the proof it needed to show it won, with Gonzalez and opposition leader Maria Corina Machado telling reporters that they obtained more than 70% of tally sheets. — **DW**

AIRSTRIKE

Israeli forces bomb Gaza, kill 8 civilians

GAZA: The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) has carried out another airstrike yesterday in the town of Az-Zawayda, in the Gaza Strip.

Wafa news agency reported that an occupation drone targeted a group of civilians near the electricity company in the Az-Zawayda area, murdering eight of them.

The bodies of the martyrs were taken to Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah.

The colonists stormed the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque today in Occupied Jerusalem (Al-Quds), under the protection of the occupation police, and performed Talmudic rituals.

Wafa news agency said that the colonists stormed Al-Aqsa in groups, and that the occupation police turned the Old City from the occupied Al-Quds into a military barracks, after having deployed hundreds of occupation police at close quarters, especially at the gates of Al-Aqsa. The IOF tightened their military procedures at the gates of the Old City and Al-Aqsa Mosque, and imposed curbs on the entering Palestinian worshippers. — **ONA**

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Teen Indian girl swims across English Channel

MUMBAI: A 16-year-old girl, Jiya Rai, with autism spectrum disorder, successfully swam across the English Channel, a distance of 34 km, in 17 hours and 25 minutes and became the youngest and fastest para swimmer in the world to achieve this feat in solo swimming.

In the 150-year history of channel swimming, Jiya who is the daughter of Madan Rai, MC-at-Arms II, Indian Navy, is the first girl with autism spectrum disorder to achieve this. She started her heroic effort on July 28 at Abbots Cliff, England, and finished at Pte De La Courte-Dune, France, in the early hours of July 29, as per a Press Information Bureau (PIB) press release.

Jiya dedicated this swim for autism awareness, and in recognition of this endeavour, English Channel Sea Swimming from July 21 to 28 was dedicated for autism awareness.

The Channel is known for its treacherous currents. It’s water temperature in July is 180 C and can cause hypothermia.

Besides the hazards of jelly fish and debris, the Channel is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world with over 600 tankers, ferries and other vessels crossing daily. Weather conditions change abruptly making it almost impos-



sible to plan the swim in advance.

As per the Channel Swimming Association rules, the swimmer cannot leave the water or touch the pilot boat or anyone that accompanies the swimmer. Food and liquids are handed over by boat crew using a long stick.

More people have scaled Mount Everest than swim across the English Channel. In the last 100 years, only about 1,700 people have swum across the English Channel. — **ANI**

EASTERN SUDAN

Drones target graduation event, 5 killed

KHARTOUM: The Sudanese Armed Forces announced yesterday that its anti-aircraft weapons intercepted two drones that targeted the commemoration site of the graduation of batches from military, air and naval colleges following its conclusion at the Jubayt base in eastern Sudan, in the presence of the Chairperson of the Sudan Sovereign Council General Abdul Fatah Al-Burhan.

The Sudanese Armed Forces reported that the incident had resulted in five deaths. The Sudanese News Agency had previously reported that Lieutenant General Al-Burhan witnessed the graduation of batch 68 from the Military College and batches 20 and 23 from the Qualifying College, the Air College and the Naval Academy at the Infantry Institute Stadium in Jubayt, Red Sea State. -**UNA**



Mahmoud Abbas condemns killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh

Abbas had removed Haniyeh from his office as Palestinian prime minister in 2007, though Haniyeh refused to acknowledge his decree for years

GAZA: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, leader of the Fatah party, strongly condemned the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. “President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine strongly condemned the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, deeming it a cowardly act and a serious escalation,” Abbas’s office said in a statement. “He urged our people and their forces to unite, remain patient, and stand firm against the Israeli occupation.” Fatah and Hamas were longtime rivals before they signed a unity



accord in China earlier this month. Abbas had removed Haniyeh from his office as Palestinian prime minister in 2007, though Haniyeh refused to acknowledge his decree for years. West Bank factions calls for strike. Palestinian factions in the occupied West Bank have called for a general strike in the wake of Haniyeh’s killing. **Comprehensive strike** “The national and Islamic factions in Palestine announce a

comprehensive strike and anger marches to [protest] the assassination of the great national leader Ismail Haniyeh, which came in the framework of Zionist state terrorism and its war of extermination,” they said in a joint statement. While Hamas’s control was mostly limited to the Gaza Strip, it had support from other militant groups in the West Bank and recently signed a unity deal agreement with other factions including rival party Fatah.

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed that “harsh punishment” awaited Israel after an airstrike killed the leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh. “With this action, the criminal and terrorist Zionist regime prepared the ground for harsh punishment for itself, and we consider it our duty to seek revenge for his blood as he was martyred in the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” he said in a statement cited by official news agency IRNA.

Pays tribute At the same time, the country’s new President Masoud Pezeshkian paid tribute to Haniyeh on social media site X, writing, “yesterday I raised his hand and today I have to bury him.” Without mentioning Israel by name, Pezeshkian further wrote that those responsible would “regret its cowardly act,” and that “the two proud nations of Iran and Palestine will be stronger than before.” **Qatar condemns killing** Qatar’s Foreign Ministry said that the death of Haniyeh was a “heinous crime.” Like other regional governments, Doha also warned that the strike in Iran was a “dangerous escalation” of growing tensions across the Middle East. The statement continued, “this assassination and the reckless Israeli behaviour of continuously targeting civilians in Gaza will lead to the region slipping into chaos and undermine the chances of peace.” “The ministry reiterates the State of Qatar’s firm position rejecting violence, terrorism and criminal acts, including political assassinations, regardless of the motives and reasons,” it added. Much of Hamas’s political leadership, including Haniyeh, live in exile in Qatar, which has hosted

them with the blessing of the United States since 2012.

China voices concern over conflict escalation Beijing also joined the chorus voicing worries that the attack that killed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran marked a dangerous escalation in regional tensions that could lead to all-out war. “We are highly concerned about the incident and firmly oppose and condemn the assassination,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said. “We are deeply concerned that this incident may lead to further instability in the regional situation,” he added. China has seen itself as a peace broker in the conflict, offering to host both Palestinian and Israeli leaders for cease-fire talks. It also played host to a recent summit in which Hamas, which has controlled Gaza, and Fatah, which is in power in the occupied West Bank, put over a decade of conflict to rest and signed a unity deal.

Türkiye condemns killing of Hamas leader The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the killing of Hamas Political Bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh in an attack in Tehran and offered condolences to the Palestinian people. -**aw**

TRAGEDY

Death toll in Kerala landslide rises to 164

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/WAYANAD: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday morning held a meeting to review the rescue operations in the Wayanad district, which was hit by landslides on July 30. The number of people who died in the landslides that struck the hilly areas of Meppadi in Wayanad district on Tuesday following incessant rainfall has gone up to 164, the Kerala Revenue Department said. The chief minister Vijayan held a meeting at the office of the Disaster Management Authority in Thiruvananthapuram to take stock of the rescue efforts. As per a decision taken during the cabinet meeting, the Chief Minister will also reach Wayanad on August 1 morning to attend a state-level all-party meeting that has been convened for tomorrow. Union minister George Kurian this morning visited the affected areas to take stock of the situation and met with survivors at relief camps. Currently, a delegation of nine State ministers is in Wayanad assessing the relief camps. “Today, in the meeting chaired by CM, the National Disaster Management Authority pointed out that they may be in a position to requisition ground penetrating radar that can be mounted on drones” Kerala Chief Secretary V Venu told reporters. A total of 1200 rescue workers from the Indian Army, DSC centre, Territorial Army, NDRF, Indian Navy and the IAF are deployed at the calamity-hit areas. Teams of Army, Air Force and Navy have joined personnel of NDRF, police force and firefighters in rescue efforts, Kerala Chief Secretary V Venu said. “...Today, a large contingent of rescue workers are currently fanning across the Mundakkai and upper regions in order to search for survivors and bodies. It will be difficult to identify the bodies found downstream as they are



mutilated,” the Chief Secretary said. Detailing the challenges faced by the rescue personnel, The Chief Secretary said, “The biggest challenge that the rescue teams have reported is that the hamlet of Mundakkai has been flattened because of huge boulders and trees that have come down as part of a landslide.” “The problem they are facing is to cut into the houses which have collapsed and for that, they need heavy equipment. At the moment, we are not able in a position transfer heavy equipment across the river. We are hoping that the Bailey Bridge being built by the Indian Army will be completed by tomorrow,” he added. “There is a possibility that bodies are buried under the mud. Yesterday, we managed to move all the injured found in Mundakkai. At this moment, we are happy with the assistance given by all government agencies,” he said. Navy teams from Ezhimala-Naval base arrived in Chooralmala this morning. An Army canine unit has also joined in the efforts to sniff out bodies buried under the debris of mud and slush. Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is actively engaged in the rescue and relief operations for those affected by the landslide and the ICG Disaster Relief Team Kochi and Bepore are on the ground, providing aid and support.

Hundreds of people are still missing in the aftermath of the landslides which affected Mundakkai and Chooralmala the most. Attamala and Noolpuzha villages were also affected. Chief Minister Vijayan said that 45 camps have been set up in Wayanad district and over 3000 people have been rehabilitated there. Kerala Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan said, “The priority is to carry out the rescue operations. The military and the NDRF are doing very well...We expect more casualties...It will take time to build the houses again now. The local MLAs and Panchayats are providing all support. “We have demand from the government that all displaced persons should be provided house rent as they don’t have a house now. We will raise all these issues in the all-party meeting tomorrow. We are with the government to overcome this situation...” Satheesan added. Meanwhile, based on inputs from the Kerala Government, forest Officials and Villagers a team of the 122 Infantry Battalion (TA) Madras, led by Sub Gijil, Sub Jayesh and Nb Sub Anilkumar along with 12 Jawans, rescued 19 civilians stranded in ElaResort and VanaRani resort beyond Mundakkai village, the Defence PRO for Kerala said. -**ANI**

Investment Manager Report

On behalf of the Fund Management Board, I am pleased to present the un-audited financial results of ahli Global Equity Fund for the quarter ended 30th June 2024:

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED	Jun-24	Jun-23	Dec 2023	Dec 2022
Number of units	3,806,300	3,326,700	3,409,165	3,375,292
Net asset value (RO)	3,140,983	2,532,724	2,730,741	2,379,581
Net asset value per unit (RO)	0.825	0.758	0.801	0.705
Dividend Paid Per Unit (RO)	-	-	0.020	-
Net profit/(loss)	149,607	254,974	391,722	14,670

The Ahli Global Equity Fund exhibited resilience in Q2 2024, successfully navigating market corrections. Despite a slight decline of -0.3% for the quarter, the Fund's year-to-date performance remained robust at +5.9%, surpassing the benchmark's +3.3%.

This achievement can be attributed to our strategic focus on high-quality companies with strong fundamentals, allowing us to capitalize on attractive entry points presented by the regional market correction midway through the quarter. By leveraging these opportunities, the Fund rebounded during the last month of Q2.

Our continued emphasis on diversified investments and strategic positioning aims to capitalize on emerging opportunities across global markets while managing potential volatility. Notable new positions, such as Care —a company with solid fundamentals and a promising outlook—support our strategy. Additionally, investments in innovation-driven tech companies like META reflect our commitment to long-term sustainable growth. This approach aligns with our philosophy of sustainable long-term capital appreciation and effective risk management. The management team remains dedicated to leveraging its expertise and market insights to achieve favorable outcomes in the ever-evolving investment landscape.

Markets Performance

The second quarter of 2024 performance continued to be marked by the continuation of the AI trade though there was significant volatility in other markets and sectors. Despite some fluctuations, global markets ended the quarter with positive gains, bolstered by encouraging economic data and dovish statements from central banks.

The quarter commenced robustly, with global markets, led by U.S. indexes, exhibiting significant strength. The Federal Reserve's dovish stance in June, hinting at potential rate cuts, buoyed global market sentiment. The S&P 500 recorded a historic six-month winning streak, driven primarily by mega-cap tech companies, as optimism around AI continued to rise. The role of these mega-cap stocks, including Nvidia and Apple, was pivotal in sustaining market gains. In contrast, European markets underperformed, facing headwinds from slower economic growth and geopolitical tensions. Chinese equities also faced pressures from regulatory concerns and economic slowdowns.

The GCC markets were under significant pressure during the month due to various reasons including the rationalization of Saudi projects and the USD 12bn Aramco IPO. However, regional markets were able post a recover in the last month of the quarter.

As of June 30th 2024

Market Outlook

While healthy earnings and robust AI investments have bolstered US equities in the first half of the year, current valuations appear stretched, suggesting a potential shift toward more moderate returns ahead. The economic outlook remains constructive, with projections indicating a soft landing where the economy slows without entering a recession. This scenario could benefit stock prices, supported by the possibility of one to two interest rate cuts by year-end, easing borrowing costs for businesses.

In the second half of the year, we anticipate an expansion in market breadth, offering more opportunities across various sectors. As more companies perform well, sectors such as technology, healthcare, insurance, and consumer goods are expected to offer significant investment prospects due to their resilience and adaptability. This broader market performance is likely to buffer against volatility and enhance overall stability amid ongoing economic uncertainty. The combination of strong earnings, robust margins, and visible cash flow in these sectors supports a positive market outlook, even as valuations adjust from elevated levels. However, in the short term, markets may witness corrections due to uncertainties surrounding the upcoming U.S. elections.

Regionally, we maintain an optimistic outlook for GCC markets, buoyed by sustained oil prices, ongoing reforms, government spending, and significant increases in foreign direct investments. This regional optimism aligns with our strategy of maintaining a well-diversified portfolio across geographies and sectors.

ahliGLOBAL equityfund

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF 30 JUNE 2024

	Unaudited June 2024	Unaudited June 2024	Audited Dec 2023
	RO	RO	RO
Assets			
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	3,081,755	2,385,693	2,726,946
Cash and cash equivalents	71,836	143,052	13,640
Dividend Receivable	121	401	-
Amount due from brokers	3,578	3,578	3,577
Total assets	3,157,290	2,532,724	2,744,163
Liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	15,623	10,256	12,906
Amount due to unitholders	684	366	516
Total liabilities	16,307	10,622	13,422
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	3,140,983	2,522,102	2,730,741
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	3,157,290	2,532,724	2,744,163
Net assets per unit attributable to the unitholders			
	0.825	0.758	0.801
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTH JUNE 2024			
	Unaudited June 2024	Unaudited June 2024	Audited Dec 2023
	RO	RO	RO
Income			
Dividend income	86,741	71,708	90,618
Other income	2	-	-
Total income	86,743	71,708	90,618
Net realised gain/(loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	140,077	122,806	161,985
Net unrealised gain/(loss) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(40,837)	85,960	215,873
	185,983	280,474	468,476
Expenses			
Management fees	(19,020)	(15,224)	(31,359)
Custody fees	(1,475)	(2,641)	(7,648)
General and administrative expenses	(15,880)	(16,635)	(37,747)
Total expenses	(36,375)	(34,500)	(76,754)
Profit and total comprehensive income/ increase in net assets attributable to the unitholders for the quarter ended 30 June 2024	149,607	245,974	391,722
Profit/(Loss) per unit	0.041	0.070	0.117

الأهلي الإسلامي

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SPORTS

Team GB's Yee clinches triathlon gold after thrilling sprint finish

France's Beaugrand won the women's title as the event concluded on the banks of River Seine

PARIS: Great Britain's Alex Yee produced a sensational sprint finish to claim Olympic triathlon gold, after Beth Potter battled to bronze in the women's race on Wednesday.

In a dramatic conclusion on the banks of the River Seine at Paris 2024, Yee upgraded his Tokyo silver as he overhauled rival Hayden Wilde in the closing stages.

Yee, 26, crossed the line after one hour 43 minutes 33 seconds to finish six seconds clear of New Zealand's Wilde, who won bronze three years ago and looked set to triumph after opening a 15-second lead on the run.

However, Yee displayed his class to time his finish to perfection after being led out superbly on the bike leg by team-mate Sam Dickinson, who sacrificed himself



to aid Yee's bid. "I'm so grateful to everyone who's been in my corner for the past three years. That was for them," Yee told BBC Sport.

"At 5km [on the run leg] I was going through a really bad patch and with 2.5km to go I thought I'm going to give myself one last chance at this and not give up, and here we are."

That success came two hours after reigning world champion Potter, 32, held on for third as Cassandre Beaugrand emerged victorious from a lead group of four to

deliver gold for host nation France, who also celebrated Leo Bergere's men's bronze.

Beaugrand, 27, crossed the line in one hour 54 minute 55 seconds to win the women's race, six seconds ahead of Switzerland's Julie Derron and 15 clear of Potter, who finished 34th in the women's 10,000m at Rio 2016.

Both races only went ahead after early-morning tests on Wednesday showed that the water quality in the River Seine had reached adequate standards for the swim leg

to take place. The men's race had been postponed by 24 hours on Tuesday after heavy rainfall over the weekend had contributed to increased pollution in the river.

Beaugrand, the world No.1, broke away on the final lap to become the first French athlete to win an Olympic medal in the event.

The 27-year-old was cheered on by thousands of fans and collapsed to the floor after crossing the line in 1:54:55.

"It was the longest 1500m of my life, but I never doubted it at

the end," a jubilant Beaugrand told Olympics.com. "I didn't realise that I was Olympic champion, I shouted but I told myself that it wasn't possible, I told myself that someone had to wake me up!"

Derron, who had led for most of the final stages, clocked 1:55:01, while pre-race favourite Potter finished nine seconds back.

"It's incredible! It was such a great course, great race, and I'm just so pleased to walk away with (an Olympic) medal," Derron said. "It hasn't sunk in yet to be honest!"

Team GB's Potter competed in the 10,000m at Rio 2016 and made history in Paris by becoming the first Olympic athlete to compete in both events.

"I'm really happy. I think it was an all-round solid performance and I'm really happy to come away with the bronze," she said. "There was a lot of pressure coming in (to Paris 2024), and I would have loved a gold medal but it wasn't to be. I feel like I gave it everything, I committed to the race and I tried to go for it."

FOOTBALL

France to meet Argentina in quarter-finals

PARIS: Hosts France will play Argentina in the Olympic men's football quarter-finals after progressing to the last eight by beating New Zealand 2-0 to top Group A on Tuesday.

Crystal Palace striker Jean-Philippe Mateta got the opening goal for a dominant France who registered an impressive 34 shots to New Zealand's nine.

Mateta gave them a 19th-minute lead and New Zealand soon found themselves placed under relentless pressure as the hosts looked to add to their tally.

They managed to hold out until the 71st minute, but the Kiwis' defence eventually cracked and Desire Doue tucked home from close range before Arnaud Kalimuendo fired home a near-post drive three minutes later.

France finish the group stage having won each of their three games following victories over the United States and Guinea.

There has been recent animosity between France and their quarter-final opponents after Argentinian players were filmed singing a derogatory song about France's black players after winning the Copa America on 14 July.

At the Olympics, Argentina's rugby sevens' players were booed in each of their games, with French fans upset by the Argentine footballers' behaviour.

Quarter-final line-up takes shape

Earlier on Tuesday, a stunning Thiago Almada strike helped Argentina to a 2-0 victory over Ukraine in Group B.



Almada charged through the Ukraine defence before curling home from about 25 yards out, before Claudio Echeverri scored a late tap-in.

But Morocco topped Group B following a 3-0 win against Iraq as

they finished level on points and goal difference with Argentina but beat the South American side in their opening game.

The USA progressed alongside France from Group A on goal difference after beating Guinea 3-0,

with the final-day results seeing them finish above New Zealand.

Elsewhere, Spain suffered a shock 2-1 defeat against Egypt and finished as runners-up in Group C, with their opponents leapfrogging them to go top.

It took Spain until the final minute of normal time to pull a goal back, with Samu Omorodion's reply coming after two Ibrahim Adel goals.

Moa Hosoya scored an injury-time goal as Japan beat Israel 1-0 to top Group D with a perfect record.

Paraguay progressed as Group D's runners-up after their 1-0 win against Mali, ending the group stage three points behind Japan.

The Dominican Republic and Uzbekistan, who both failed to progress, drew 1-1. - Agencies

TENNIS



Murray extends his retirement roadshow

PARIS: British tennis icon Andy Murray extended his retirement roadshow at Paris 2024 with another epic win alongside Dan Evans to move into the quarter-finals of the Olympic men's doubles on Tuesday night.

Murray, 37, will call time on his illustrious career at the end of the Games - but has no desire to quit just yet.

The British pair moved into the last eight after winning 6-3, 6-7 (8-10), 11-9 against Belgium's Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen in the second round.

Murray appeared to sob in his seat as he contemplated what had just happened following the wild celebrations.

"It's unbelievably emotional. I mean you're obviously unbelievably happy and then for whatever reason, I don't know why it happens, it's like happy tears," he said.

Elsewhere in the men's doubles, the high-profile Spanish pair of Carlos Alcaraz and Rafael Nadal also progressed to the last eight.

They beat the Netherlands' Tallon Griekspoor and Wesley Koolhof 6-4, 6-7, 10-2 earlier on Tuesday.

Nadal said he was "having fun" in a "special moment" playing alongside Alcaraz and his team-mate was also full of praise.

"Playing at the same side of the net with Rafa, learning from him, it's unbelievable," Alcaraz said.

DIVING

Hongchan-Yuxi dive to synchro gold

PARIS: iChina's Quan Hongchan and Chen Yuxi dived to Olympic gold once again, this time in the women's 10m platform synchro event at Paris 2024 on Wednesday.

The Tokyo 2020 gold and silver medallists in the individual 10m platform event and reigning triple world champions joined forces once again, dominating the final to win with 359.10 points.

This marks China's seventh consecutive gold in this discipline, an incredible winning streak that began when the event was first introduced in Sydney in 2000.

The teenage powerhouses will compete again in the individual 10m platform event starting 5 August.

In a historic moment for North

Korea, silver medallists Jo Jin Mi and Kim Mi Rae became the first divers from their NOC to claim a medal in Olympic diving.

Bronze went to Team GB's Lois Toulson and Andrea Spendolini Sirieix, with teammate Tom Daley and Lois' boyfriend, Jack Laugher, three-time Olympic diving medallist, in tears. - Agencies

GYMNASTICS

Biles inspires Team USA to gold



PARIS: This was more than just a vault for Simone Biles. It was the moment she lay to rest the Olympic ghosts of three years ago.

The American took in a deep breath as she stood at the end of a 25-metre runway in Paris on Tuesday, preparing to help her USA team-mates reclaim the women's gymnastics team title they had lost in Tokyo in a final that Biles started but was unable to complete when the 'twisties' struck during her vault.

In front of a packed Bercy Arena, where Serena Williams, Mi-

chael Phelps and Bill Gates were among those watching, she powered on to the table and twisted off to land firmly on her feet, breaking into a huge smile as the crowd roared. "After I finished vault I was relieved - I was like 'woo, there's no flashbacks,'" Biles, 27, said.

"I did feel a lot of relief and as soon as I landed I knew that we were going to do this."

And she was right. She and her team-mates went on to win gold by a comfortable margin ahead of Italy and Brazil. From the moment she landed her vault in the

first round, Biles seemed to relax - high-fiving her team-mates Sunisa Lee, Jordan Chiles, Jade Carey and Hezly Rivera, before, one after another, they delivered a series of accomplished routines.

In Tokyo Biles had been left cheering on the team from the stands while afflicted by the dangerous mental block where gymnasts get lost in the air. It led to her pulling out of four individual finals at a Games where she had been tipped for several gold medals.

She returned to compete in the beam final, taking an emotional

bronze, but it was not until now - eight years after she won four gold medals at Rio 2016 - that she could return to the top of the Olympic podium.

"Now that I'm much older, we have so much more experience and we're out here really having fun and enjoying what we're doing - so I think it's just different," she said when asked about the 2016 and 2024 team golds. Biles has qualified for another four finals in Paris, with her next medal opportunity coming in Thursday's all-around final. - Agencies



PARIS 2024



MEDALS TALLY

Rank	Country	G	S	B	T
1	China	8	6	2	16
2	Japan	7	2	4	13
3	France	6	9	6	21
4	Great Britain	6	6	5	17
5	Australia	6	4	3	13
6	South Korea	5	3	3	11
7	USA	4	12	11	27
8	Italy	3	6	4	13
9	Canada	2	2	2	6
10	Germany	2	0	1	3
10	Hong Kong	2	0	1	3
12	Netherlands	1	1	0	2
12	New Zealand	1	1	0	2
14	Kazakhstan	1	0	2	3
14	South Africa	1	0	2	3
16	Belgium	1	0	1	2
16	Guatemala	1	0	1	2
16	Ireland	1	0	1	2
19	Argentina	1	0	0	1
19	Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1
19	Romania	1	0	0	1
19	Slovenia	1	0	0	1
19	Serbia	1	0	0	1
19	Uzbekistan	1	0	0	1

Last updated: July 31, 2024 at 19:25 (Oman time)

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by September 2024 reaching \$79.89, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 33 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was \$79.56. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) lost 2.5 points, comprising a drop by 0.05% to close at 4661.63 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4664.11 points.



Bank Muscat (S.A.O.G.)
First Half Results 2024

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to share with you the results achieved by the Bank during the first half ended 30th June 2024. The Bank persisted in setting positive financial metrics and performing well across various business segments, solidifying its position as the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman.

Financial Overview

The Bank posted a net profit of RO 112.12 million for the period compared to RO 104.32 million reported during the same period in 2023, an increase of 7.5 per cent.

Net Interest Income from Conventional Banking and Net Income from Islamic Financing stood at RO 190.63 million for the six-month period ended 30th June 2024 compared to RO 184.71 million for the same period in 2023, an increase of 3.2 per cent.

Non-interest income was RO 75.27 million for the six months period ended 30th June 2024 as compared to RO 66.48 million for the same period in 2023, an increase of 13.2 per cent. This increase was due to overall improvement in various business lines and volume increase.

Operating expenses for the six-month period ended 30th June 2024 was RO 102.13 million as compared to RO 97.44 million for the same period in 2023, an increase of 4.8 per cent.

Net Impairment for credit and other losses for the six-month period ended 30th June 2024 was RO 29.96 million as against RO 30.11 million for the same period in 2023.

Net loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables increased by 3.3 per cent to RO 10,209 million as against RO 9,880 million as at 30th June 2023.

Customer deposits including Islamic customer deposits increased by 5.3 per cent to RO 9,563 million as against RO 9,084 million as at 30th June 2023.

Strategic Initiatives & Key Developments

The first half of 2024 marked a significant leap forward for Bank Muscat, with achievements across digital adoption and customer service. The Bank registered a remarkable increase of 51% in the number of PoS and e-commerce transactions and a surge of 22.7% in transaction volumes, compared to the same period in the previous year. As a result of the Bank's dedication to keeping pace with digital transformation and implementing its financial inclusion strategy, Bank Muscat witnessed a rise of 17% in digital banking adoption compared to the first half of 2023.

Committing to its branch network expansion strategy and efforts to offer increased service accessibility for customers, Bank Muscat's network grew to 185 branches. The Bank's branches feature modern designs and cutting-edge technologies for better customer service and they are also equipped with services to facilitate access for

elderly customers and people with disabilities. In this regard, the Bank celebrated multiple successful branch inaugurations which comprised inaugurating a new branch in Sahalnoot in the Wilayat of Salalah, relocating Jalaan Bani Bu Ali branch, opening new 'Asalah' centers in Adam, Al-Khuwair, Falaj Daris in Nizwa, and Falaj Al Qabel in Sohar, and opening a new service center in Karsha in the Wilayat of Nizwa. Further, the Bank facilitated service accessibility via over 880 ATMs, CDMs, self-service machines, and statement printers distributed across the Sultanate.

As part of Bank Muscat's pioneering role in the field of electronic payments, the Bank launched its Tap'N'Go digital payment solution, an innovative technology that allows the Bank and Meethaq's customers from merchants and business owners to accept card payments directly on their Android phones and smart devices. Furthermore, Bank Muscat, alongside Meethaq, participated in the 33rd edition of COMEX, during which its commitment to implementing digital transformation and providing state-of-the-arts products and digital services was highlighted.

The Bank has redefined the industry benchmarks by crafting digital banking solutions catering to the needs of its corporate customers. The volume of transactions processed over the corporate online banking platform increased significantly by 77% in the first half of 2024, compared to the corresponding period last year. Bank Muscat's Application Programming Interface Banking Services (APIBS) is a major initiative by the Bank and it has contributed to revolutionising transaction management with an end-to-end digital journey.

Maintaining its role as the premier bank for project finance in the Sultanate, Bank Muscat acted as the Initial Mandated Lead Arranger, Coordinator, and Book runner for one of the largest refinancing transactions of the USD facility of a key government company.

Bank Muscat's Investment Banking team continued advising leading GREs and private sector entities in Oman for financial advisory and fundraising mandates, both on equity as well as debt transactions. In terms of key transactions during the first half of the year, the team successfully provided financial advisory services to National Finance Co. SAOG on its locally listed perpetual bonds issuance and Energy Development Oman on the RegS/144A issuance. Bank Muscat's Assets Under Management continued to grow further to reach approximately US\$ 3 billion comprising a diversified base of institutional and retail investors.

Highlighting the Bank's pioneering role in providing various investment solutions and maintaining its position as the largest and leading asset manager in the Sultanate, Bank Muscat's investment funds persisted to excel and stand out in the market. Money Market Fund continued its superior performance with an annualized yield exceeding 5.3% p.a., which has been the highest ever since its launch in 2012. The Fund also became the largest open-ended

Fund in Oman with assets under management of over RO 147 million achieved during the second quarter of 2024. Bank Muscat Oryx Fund has outperformed the benchmark by more than 6% during the year so far. Further, Oryx Fund paid dividends of RO 0.072 per unit during the period, which was the highest cash dividend distributed by the Fund ever. Likewise, Izdihar Real Estate Fund completed the acquisition of a multi-let commercial complex in Al Amerat.

Enhancing communication with its management teams from different levels, branch officials, and employees, Bank Muscat organized its Annual Leadership Forum in May 2024 which represented a platform where the Bank's management discussed the most prominent trends in the banking sector and exchanged various ideas and aspects of business enhancement potentials. Such official gatherings and events are of great importance for the Bank, reflecting its dedication to maintaining its excellence in the Sultanate's banking industry.

Meethaq Islamic Banking continued its steady growth path with the inauguration of a new branch in the Wilayat of Samail, Al Dakhliya Governorate, bringing the total network to 29 branches and 20 exclusive Hafawa Centers. Further demonstrating its commitment to customer service and innovation, Meethaq continued investing in cutting-edge technology and adapting to the evolving FinTech landscape.

CSR & Sustainability

Bank Muscat continues to place Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the forefront of its corporate identity, which underscores its commitment to extending beyond financial performance. The Bank continued to launch its impactful Anti-Fraud Awareness Campaign in cooperation with Royal Oman Police to raise public awareness around the growing threat of online fraud practices and fake news. In partnership with Muscat Municipality, the Bank launched a new community-driven initiative to support emerging and small businesses by offering them a number of food trucks featuring safety and modern design standards to cater to their diverse needs. The initiative provided them with an ample opportunity to grow and succeed in their businesses. Financial literacy also took center stage with the continuation of implementing the sustainable Maliyat Academy Programme at schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The programme targeted over 20,000 students across the Sultanate who were introduced to basic concepts for financial empowerment. In addition, Bank Muscat continued to successfully enhance its annual Green Sports Programme by the constant inauguration of projects that aim to develop and provide a sustainable infrastructure for sports fields across the Sultanate.

The Bank also fostered social inclusion through charitable initiatives including the "Kiswat Al Eid" donations initiative which supported over 700 individuals from social welfare families and orphanages in partnership with

local organizations. In cooperation with the Oman Down Syndrome Association, Bank Muscat brought smiles to the faces of the kids with Down Syndrome by hosting a summer fun trip to Snow Oman to entertain and engage with them.

Awards and Accolades

As an outstanding achievement fulfilled during the first half of 2024, Bank Muscat was recognized with the coveted Best Places To Work Award, which reflects its pioneering role in fostering employee experience and providing a model and nurturing work environment. The award also represents a testament of the successful plans and strategies implemented by the Bank in the field of human resources development. In addition, the Bank continued to maintain its stance of excellence amongst various global, regional, and local platforms by securing prestigious awards including the Best Retail Bank and Best Digital Bank Awards for Excellence from MEED, multiple awards across various specialized business segments from Euromoney, the Best Private Bank in Oman Award from EMEA Finance, and the Corporate Banking Innovation Award from Infosys Finacle Innovation Awards 2024, and Oman Sustainability Week Award 2024.

Similarly, Meethaq Islamic Banking's dedication to innovation and customer service has been validated through a string of prestigious awards from industry leaders in 2024. Meethaq secured the Best Digital Bank Award from Global Finance, the Global Private Banking Award from PWM/The Banker, the Global Islamic Finance (GIF) Market Leadership Award, and Oman's Best Domestic Islamic Bank Award from Euromoney. This impressive array of accolades underscores Meethaq's commitment to providing exceptional Sharia-compliant financial solutions and staying at the forefront of the digital banking revolution.

In Conclusion

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I take this opportunity to thank our shareholders for the trust reposed in the Bank. The Board of Directors welcomes the measures taken by the Central Bank of Oman and the Financial Services Authority to support the financial market in the Sultanate. We express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik for his vision and guidance.

Khalid Bin Mustahail Al Mashani
Chairman

INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

	Unaudited 30-Jun-2024 RO' 000	Audited 31-Dec-2023 RO' 000	Unaudited 30-Jun-2023 RO' 000
Assets			
Cash and balances with Central Banks	823,144	772,340	806,959
Due from banks	841,201	869,704	568,055
Loans and advances	8,664,189	8,350,080	8,330,661
Islamic financing receivables	1,544,233	1,527,030	1,548,793
Investments securities	2,053,205	1,866,955	1,847,702
Investment in associate	9,157	8,889	8,680
Other assets	177,765	201,073	175,700
Property, equipment and software	78,068	77,300	69,564
Total assets	14,190,962	13,673,371	13,356,114
Liabilities and equity			
Liabilities			
Deposits from banks	1,568,010	1,100,089	1,278,344
Customers' deposits	8,258,225	8,170,075	7,780,649
Islamic customers' deposits	1,304,782	1,267,717	1,302,861
Sukuk	16,842	45,869	45,869
Euro medium term notes	195,139	195,139	195,139
Other liabilities	441,921	477,998	473,821
Taxation	50,145	61,629	41,699
Total liabilities	11,835,064	11,318,516	11,118,382
Equity			
Equity attributable to equity holders of parent:			
Share capital	750,640	750,640	750,640
Share premium	156,215	156,215	156,215
General reserve	410,258	410,258	410,258
Legal reserve	160,474	160,474	139,229
Revaluation reserve	4,904	4,904	4,904
Cash flow hedge reserve	7,160	3,254	6,008
Cumulative changes in fair value	54,836	41,825	18,561
Foreign currency translation reserve	(3,617)	(3,642)	(3,674)
Impairment reserve / restructured loan reserve	-	2,136	2,327
Retained earnings	309,708	323,471	247,944
Total equity attributable to the equity holders	1,850,578	1,849,535	1,732,412
Perpetual Tier I capital	505,320	505,320	505,320
Total equity	2,355,898	2,354,855	2,237,732
Total liabilities and equity	14,190,962	13,673,371	13,356,114
Net assets per share (in RO)	0.247	0.246	0.231
Contingent liabilities and commitments	1,686,755	1,669,583	1,604,372

INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE SIX MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Unaudited for six months period ended 30-Jun-2024 RO' 000	30-Jun-2023 RO' 000
Interest income	302,903	272,253
Interest expense	(128,248)	(106,173)
Net interest income	174,655	166,080
Income from Islamic financing / investments	49,446	47,841
Distribution to depositors	(33,474)	(29,210)
Net income from Islamic financing	15,972	18,631
Net interest income and income from Islamic financing	190,627	184,711
Commission and fee income (net)	46,951	45,186
Other operating income	28,320	21,290
Operating income	265,898	251,187
Operating expenses		
Other operating expense	(92,076)	(87,751)
Depreciation	(10,051)	(9,692)
	(102,127)	(97,443)
Share of results from an associate	546	200
Net impairment losses on financial assets	(29,959)	(30,105)
	(131,540)	(127,348)
Profit before taxation	134,358	123,839
Tax expense	(22,243)	(19,518)
Profit for the period	112,115	104,321
Other comprehensive (expense) / income		
Net other comprehensive (expense) / income to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods, net of tax:		
Translation of net investments in foreign operations	25	207
Change in fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI) debt investments	(634)	714
Share of other comprehensive income of an associate	18	(19)
Change in fair value of cash flow hedge	3,906	6,008
	3,315	6,910
Net other comprehensive (expense) / income not to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods, net of tax:		
Change in fair value of FVOCI equity investments	13,501	18,448
	13,501	18,448
Other comprehensive income / (expense) for the period	16,816	25,358
Total comprehensive income for the period	128,931	129,679
Total comprehensive income for the period attributable to:		
Equity holders of Parent Company	128,931	129,679
Profit attributable to:		
Equity holders of Parent Company	112,115	104,321
Earnings per share (in RO)		
- Basic and diluted	0.013	0.012

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Madina Investments, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while Galfar Engineering, down 4.52%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,661.63 points, down by 0.05% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.03% at 445.09 points. Al Madina Investments, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while Galfar Engineering, down 4.52%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 593 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 1.71 million, with more than 10.98 million shares changing hands. Out of 46 traded securities, 10 advanced, 12 declined, and 24 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 230K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 120K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 110K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,597.60 points, up 0.29%. Pric-

es of Al Madina Investments, Oman Arab Bank, Bank Nizwa were up by 10.00%, 2.07%, 1.94% respectively. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Madina Takaful, Global Financial Investments were down by 1.33%, 1.30%, 1.28% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,938.85 points, down 0.45%. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products, Gulf International Chemicals, A'Saffa Foods were up by 1.81%, 1.43%, 1.02% respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Oman Cement were down by 4.52%, 1.25% respectively. Services Index was up by 0.06% before closing at 1,819.40 points. Prices of Barka Desalination, Al Maha Marketing, Renaissance Services, Abraj Energy were up by 3.33%, 2.44%, 0.54%, 0.34% respectively. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Ooredoo, OQ Gas Networks, Barka Water & Power Company were down by 1.30%, 1.04%, 0.70%, 0.36% respectively. -United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,668.31	4,658.05	4,661.63	4,664.11	-2.48	-0.05
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,611.33	7,574.76	7,597.60	7,575.99	21.61	0.29
Industry Index	5,966.95	5,936.62	5,938.85	5,965.77	-26.92	-0.45
Services Index	1,823.01	1,812.22	1,819.40	1,818.22	1.18	0.06
MSX Shariah Index	446.26	444.79	445.09	444.95	0.15	0.03
MSX TR INDEX	6,488.21	6,473.95	6,478.93	6,482.37	-3.44	-0.05
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,647.25	8,605.70	8,631.66	8,607.10	24.56	0.29
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,884.45	6,849.45	6,852.02	6,883.08	-31.06	-0.45
SERVICES TR IDX	2,121.36	2,108.80	2,117.15	2,115.78	1.37	0.06
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,984,307	1,706,562	593	24,357,137,011	10	12	24	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (BD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP	
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	8,360	3,283	8	0.391	0.395	0.391	0.395	0.391	0.004	1.023	0.395	0.385	0.395	0.100	47,400,000	
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	5,000	1,960	1	0.372	0.372	0.372	0.370	0.002	0.541	0.372	0.365	0.400	0.100	87,944,520		
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	337,110	99,411	17	0.295	0.295	0.294	0.295	0.294	0.001	0.340	0.295	0.294	0.295	0.100	227,209,000	
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENG & INVESTMENT	1,000	113	1	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.112	0.113	0.100	16,950,000	
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	4,041	1,065	2	0.263	0.265	0.263	0.265	0.265	0.000	0.000	0.265	0.258	0.277	0.100	430,875,784	
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	29,662	10,088	12	0.343	0.343	0.338	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.337	0.340	0.100	227,244,245	
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	6,600	1,129	2	0.171	0.175	0.171	0.171	0.171	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.100	37,620,000	
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	10,611	2,960	3	0.277	0.280	0.277	0.280	0.280	0.000	0.000	0.280	0.278	0.282	0.100	34,971,429	
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	90,000	5,132	3	0.058	0.058	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.057	0.058	0.100	20,289,256	
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,453,842	365,807	35	0.251	0.252	0.251	0.252	0.252	0.000	0.000	0.251	0.251	0.252	0.100	1,891,612,060	
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	61,755	61,862	14	1.000	1.004	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.003	0.100	750,000,000	
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	2,531,637	342,388	37	0.136	0.136	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.135	0.145	0.100	752,928,246	
OM0000004735	SEMBOCORP SALALAH	11,000	1,144	4	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.095	0.104	0.100	99,275,483	
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	278,000	20,850	11	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	50,616,557	
OM0000008072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	783,244	110,539	114	0.141	0.142	0.141	0.141	0.142	-0.001	-0.704	0.141	0.141	0.142	0.100	610,617,973	
OM0000008968	OOREDOO	102,000	29,372	7	0.286	0.286	0.286	0.286	0.289	-0.003	-1.038	0.286	0.286	0.286	0.100	118,170,050	
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,443	371	2	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.401	-0.005	-1.247	0.386	0.386	0.400	0.100	131,025,563	
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	440,096	33,887	26	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.078	-0.001	-1.282	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.100	15,400,000	
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	37,343	2,875	10	0.077	0.078	0.076	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.077	0.100	13,300,000
OM0000004833	AL SUWADI POWER	135,883	10,398	17	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.100	54,284,882	
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	253,868	19,674	16	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.074	0.080	0.100	5,015,750	
Total	21	6,594,505	1,124,409	344													

Parallel Market

OM0000001982	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	10,900	600	2	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.050	0.005	10.000	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.100	4,675,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	7,504	933	4	0.124	0.125	0.124	0.124	0.120	0.004	3.333	0.124	0.124	0.129	0.100	9,964,728
OM0000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MAR	500	525	1	1.050	1.050	1.050	1.050	1.025	0.025	2.439	1.050	1.026	1.070	0.100	72,450,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	74,914	11,006	9	0.145	0.148	0.145	0.148	0.145	0.003	2.069	0.148	0.142	0.156	0.100	247,072,880
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,223,810	127,529	30	0.103	0.106	0.103	0.105	0.103	0.002	1.942	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.100	234,880,068
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	25,250	5,580	4	0.221	0.225	0.220	0.225	0.221	0.004	1.810	0.225	0.221	0.225	0.100	10,297,305
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	500	36	1	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.001	1.429	0.071	0.065	0.071	0.100	1,491,000
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	4,000	840	1	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.000	0.000	0.210	0.000	0.210	0.100	23,678,042
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	91,913	9,557	8	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.103	0.105	0.100	8,840,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	8,166	1,045	1	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.134	0.134	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.128	0.130	0.100	4,020,000
OM0000001434	NATIONAL REAL ESTATE DEV & INV	139	695	1	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	0.000	0.000	5.000	0.000	5.000	1.000	8,812,500
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	55,946	4,196	5	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	15,913,500
OM0000003265	NATIONAL DETERGENT	120	82	1	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.000	0.000	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.100	13,600,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	7,091	2,489	3	0.351	0.351	0.351	0.351	0.351	0.000	0.000	0.351	0.351	0.355	0.100	28,572,365
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	14,100	832	4	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.060	0.059	0.100	86,293,468
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	5,819	419	1	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.071	0.076	0.100	11,199,629
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	26,120	6,914	5	0.252	0.279	0.252	0.279	0.280	-0.001	-0.357	0.279	0.253	0.279	0.100	44,440,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	298,693	19,466	31	0.067	0.067	0.064	0.064	0.066	-0.002	-3.030	0.064	0.064	0.066	0.100	31,413,529
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTR	2,406,144	361,712	117	0.153	0.157	0.148	0.148	0.155	-0.007	-4.516	0.148	0.148	0.150	0.100	30,041,994
Total	19	4,261,629	554,454	229												

OIL PRICE

Oil futures rebounds over \$1 after 7-week lows

SINGAPORE: Oil futures rebounded more than \$1 a barrel from 7-week lows. Brent crude futures climbed \$1.17, or 1.5%, to \$79.80 a barrel, while the more active October contract was at \$79.18, up \$1.11. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose \$1.15, or 1.5%, to \$75.88 a barrel.

Both Brent and WTI fell about 1.4 per cent Tuesday, closing at their lowest levels in seven weeks. Gold prices set for monthly gain on US rate cut hopes Gold prices firmed yesterday, heading for a monthly gain on the back of growing optimism about US interest rate cuts.

Spot gold was up 0.4% at \$2,416.79 per ounce, and has gained nearly 4% for the month. US gold futures added 0.5% to \$2,414.80. Spot silver rose 0.7% at \$28.60 per ounce today. Platinum gained 1% to \$968.80 and palladium edged 1.3% higher to \$900.21. However, both the metals headed for monthly decline. -DNA



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LIFESTYLE



Study finds link between particular cognitive deficits, inflammatory activity in rheumatoid arthritis

All 140 participants underwent comprehensive neurological and psychological assessment, plus various validated cognitive tests, and assessments of mood and quality of life between June 2022 and June 2023

A team of researchers found a connection between particular cognitive deficits and the inflammatory activity in the body caused by rheumatoid arthritis. These include a decline in working memory, inhibition, and focus as well as memory, abstract thought, and visuospatial skills. Although rheumatoid arthritis-related inflammation has been linked to a number of systemic effects, including on the brain, it is unclear which particular cognitive domains may be impacted. To try and find out, the researchers compared the cognitive function of 70

adults with rheumatoid arthritis (80 percent women, average age 56) under the care of one hospital and 70 volunteers without rheumatoid arthritis, and matched for age, sex, and educational attainment. Nearly 3 out of 4 of the patients (49; 72 per cent) had ongoing moderate to high levels of systemic inflammatory activity caused by their disease, as measured by levels of indicative proteins and the degree of joint inflammation, despite conventional drug treatment. They had had their disease for an average of 10.5 years. All 140 participants underwent comprehensive neurological and psycho-

logical assessment, plus various validated cognitive tests, and assessments of mood and quality of life between June 2022 and June 2023. Specific cognitive abilities tested were: ability to process and order visuospatial information; naming; attention; language; abstract thinking; delayed recall; and orientation, plus executive functions of working memory, concentration, and inhibition. Cognitive impairment was defined as a Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) score of less than 26 out of a maximum of 30. Information was collected on other influential risk factors. These included age; sex; smoking; alcohol intake; high blood pressure; obesity; blood fat levels; diabetes; and a history of heart disease/stroke. In general, those who were cognitively impaired tended to be older, have lower educational attainment, and more coexisting conditions, such as obesity, unhealthy blood fat levels, and high blood pressure than those with intact cognition.

But patients with rheumatoid arthritis achieved lower average scores in the Montreal Cognitive Assessment than the volunteers (23 vs 25), and lower scores for executive function. Cognitive impairment was recorded in 60% of them compared with 40% of the volunteers. Significantly more of the patients also scored more highly for anxiety and depression and had lower quality of life scores than the volunteers. Cognitively impaired patients had more substantial and persistent inflammatory activity than those patients who maintained their cognitive function. And they were more likely to have symptoms of depression and poorer physical capacity. The factors associated with the greatest risk of cognitive impairment among the patients were obesity (almost 6 times the risk) and inflammatory activity throughout the course of the disease (around double the risk). As in the general population, older age and lower educational attainment were also risk factors.

By way of an explanation for their findings, the researchers point to previous suggestions that the chronic inflammation, autoimmune processes, and persistent symptoms of pain and fatigue associated with rheumatoid arthritis could underpin the diminution of cognitive function. This is an observational study, so no definitive conclusions about causal factors can be drawn. And the researchers acknowledge various limitations to their findings, including the lack of imaging tests to detect vascular damage associated with cognitive impairment. But they conclude: "These results support the hypothesis that [rheumatoid arthritis] is a chronic systemic inflammatory disease that affects multiple systems, including neural tissue. "[And the] results underline the importance of earlier and more stringent control of the activity of arthritis and the need for new therapeutic strategies aimed at associated factors, with the aim of mitigating the risk of cognitive impairment in patients with rheumatoid arthritis." -ANI

SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Flick opens his Barcelona tenure with win over Manchester City



MIAMI: New Barcelona manager Hansi Flick made a triumphant start to his tenure on Tuesday as the Spanish giants beat Manchester City on penalties after their pre-season friendly at Orlando finished 2-2 at full-time on Tuesday.

Toni Fernandez, who signed with Barca earlier this month after turning 16, flicked in a left-footed shot past reserve City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega to give the German manager's side a 4-1 win on penalties.

Barcelona kicked off its US tour in the pre-season contest against the four-time reigning Premier League champions, guided by former Barcelona player and coach Pep Guardiola. A sellout crowd of 63,237 spectators were unhappy early as a storm delayed the start by 80 minutes, but were delighted with a strong early pace, before both teams gave reserve players abundant time on the pitch.

Barcelona jumped ahead 3-0 on penalty kicks thanks to a left-footed shot by Alejandro Balde before Amar Ahmed kept City in it by beating reserve Barca goalkeeper Ander Astralaga, setting the stage for the teen newcomer's heroics.

Pau Victor had opened the scoring in open play for Barcelona in the 24th minute, taking a quick through ball pass from Marc Casado and firing a right-footed blast

from the right side into the goal.

Nico O'Riley answered for Manchester City in the 39th minute, firing in a left-footed shot from the left side off a pass from Josko Gvardiol, the Croatian international making his first US tour start. Pablo Torre's goal in the second minute of first-half stoppage time gave Barcelona a 2-1 half-time lead.

The 21-year-old Spanish midfielder took a pass from Gerard Martin at the left wing, nudged the ball to his right, then blasted a right-footed shot past Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson and inside the left post.Jack Grealish equalised for City in the 60th minute off an impressive fast break.

Croatian international Mateo Kovacic, making his first start on City's US tour, gathered a loose ball just beyond the City box, split two defenders and raced upfield with the ball before passing to English left winger Grealish, who outraced a defender and finished with an outstanding left-footed shot from a steep angle high into the goal.

Barcelona will continue their US tour with pre-season matches against Real Madrid and AC Milan. City, who lost earlier US matches to Celtic and AC Milan, will close the US tour by facing Chelsea on Saturday at Ohio. - Agencies

FORMULA ONE

Britain's Oakes becomes Alpine team principal

LONDON: Britain's Oliver Oakes was on Wednesday named the new team principal of Alpine.

The 36-year-old, founder of the Hitech team that races in junior categories, replaces Frenchman Bruno Famin. His exit after just a year in the role was announced at last weekend's Belgian Grand Prix.

An Alpine statement said Oakes, for whom this is his first job in Formula 1, would report to Luca de Meo, the chairman of Renault, which owns Alpine.

De Meo said: "It is a pleasure to

welcome Oli to the team and for him to become one of the young team principals that this sport has ever seen. This team is being built for future success and this is highlighted by Oli's appointment in a senior role. We look forward to harnessing his enthusiasm, energy and passion for racing and realising that mindset across the entire team."

Oakes' recruitment comes just weeks after former Renault team principal Flavio Briatore was appointed an executive adviser. - Agencies



Paris attracts world's best male golfers

Players still rate the majors higher but as

Justin Rose showed with his Rio success

in 2016 and Schauffele in COVID-hit Tokyo

three years ago, finishing on top of an

Olympic podium means an awful lot



PARIS: When golf returned to the Olympics in 2016 after a 112-year hiatus, only six of the top dozen male players in the world showed up for the Rio Games.

In the absence of the then-top four players in the world - Jason Day, Dustin Johnson, Jordan Spieth and Rory McIlroy - the sport's return generated a fair amount of ambivalence both within golf and the wider sporting community.

While the threat of contracting the Zika virus was cited as a reason not to travel to Brazil, there was also a feeling that several top stars had not embraced the notion that golf should be an Olympic sport.

Indeed, elaborating on his Zika fears, McIlroy made it abundantly clear just a few weeks before the tournament that he had no enthusiasm for golf's return.

The inclusion of the sport in the Games still generates plenty of debate. The argument that if a gold medal is not the absolute pinnacle then it should not be included in the Games is one with which many sports fans empathise.

But, as we await the start of the men's tournament in Paris, there has been a discernible shift of opinion from the world's best golfers. Shane Lowry is still pinching himself after carrying the Irish

flag at last Friday's opening ceremony, *BBC Sport* reported.

"It was an amazing experience and something that I'll remember forever," said the 2019 Open champion as he prepares for Thursday's first tee shot at le Golf National.

"It was a big honour...memories for a lifetime and just even being there and being around the other athletes, it was pretty cool."

Lowry admits it was something he could not have envisaged growing up as a golfer and said: "It was an amazing experience."

For this, the third Olympic golf competition since the sport's readmission, the only players missing from the top 10 are two Americans who were ineligible because there are a maximum four other compatriots above them in the rankings.

So Patrick Cantlay (world No.8) and Bryson DeChambeau (world No.9) miss out because top dog Scottie Scheffler, Open and US PGA Championship winner Xander Schauffele, Wyndham Clark and Collin Morikawa are all in the top six in the world.

The charismatic DeChambeau is the big miss. The US Open champion would surely be ranked higher if he did not play on the breakaway LIV circuit which does

not qualify for ranking points.

"I think that's the nature of qualification for the Olympics," McIlroy observed. "You could have the fifth-best sprinter in the world but if he's from a certain country, he's not able to make it.

"So I think it's just the way that the qualification works in the Olympic Games, and that's not just in golf."

Despite his recent U-turn to a more accepting view on LIV's presence in the golfing firmament, the 35-year-old four-time major winner has little sympathy.

"It's hard to compare the golf that they play to the golf that we play," he said.

"That's the reason they didn't get world ranking points. If you want to qualify for the Olympics, you know what you have to do.

"Just like if you wanted to qualify for the Ryder Cup, you knew what you had to do. They were very aware of the decision they made when they did."

But, given the varying levels of strength in depth in various countries, seven LIV players do make the Olympic field, including Spaniards Jon Rahm and David Puig. The latter secured his place by making the cut at June's

US Open at Pinehurst.

There is talk of including a mixed competition in Los Angeles in 2028 in the gap between the men's and women's events which has won widespread support from several players.

But in Paris, the strongest ever Olympic golf tournament, it is an individual pursuit. Tommy Fleetwood has spoken of his "pride" at representing Great Britain for the second Games running.

Matt Fitzpatrick is the other British competitor this week because he was ranked higher than Scotland's Bob MacIntyre at the cut-off point for qualification.

Fleetwood has the fondest memories of Le Golf National having won all four of his matches with Francesco Molinari when he made his Ryder Cup debut there in 2018.

Players still rate the majors higher but as Justin Rose showed with his Rio success in 2016 and Schauffele in Covid-hit Tokyo three years ago, finishing on top of an Olympic podium means an awful lot. McIlroy lost a seven-way play-off for bronze in Japan to Taiwan's CT Pan but was thoroughly won over by the Olympic experience. - Agencies

SRI LANKA VS INDIA T20I SERIES

India head coach Gambhir hails SKY's 'outstanding captaincy'

PALLEKELE: Newly appointed India head coach, Gautam Gambhir, lauded the captaincy of Suryakumar Yadav (SKY) against Sri Lanka in the three-match T20I series.

India whitewashed Sri Lanka in the series 3-0.

The India skipper scored 92 runs after playing three matches at a strike rate of 195.74 and was named the player of the series.

In a video shared on the official X handle of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Gambhir congratulated the Men in Blue for their series win over Sri Lanka.

"Congratulations on a great win. Congratulations to Suryakumar Yadav as well. Outstanding captaincy and more important as well because I asked for something before the start of the game and you actually delivered it.

"This is what happens when you keep fighting. You don't give up," Gambhir said.

The India head coach asked the players to increase their fitness levels high when they return for the upcoming series against Bangladesh.

"Some of the guys, who will not be part of the 50-over format will have a longer break, so make sure when you come back for the Bangladesh Series, you can take a break. You absolutely deserve it. But



more importantly, keep your skills and especially your fitness levels high," he added.

On Friday, in the decider, Sri Lanka won the toss and opted to bowl against India.

It was a team performance from the Men in Blue in the first innings, all the batters contributed while setting a target.

Shubman Gill (39 runs from 37 balls, 3 fours) was the highest run-getter among his teammates. Riyan Parag (26 runs from 18 balls, 1 four and 2 sixes) and Washington Sundar (25 runs from 18 balls, 2 fours and 1 six) played a crucial role in the death overs and powered India to 137/9.

Maheesh Theekshana led the Sri Lanka bowling attack and he

bagged three wickets for 28 runs in his four-over spell. Wanindu Hasaranga also picked up two wickets and gave away 29 runs.

During the run chase, Kusal Perera (46 runs from 34 balls, 5 fours) and Kusal Mendis (43 runs from 41 balls, 3 fours) were the top performers and propelled Sri Lanka to 137/8 to take the match into the super over. Opener Pathum Nissanka (26 runs from 27 balls, 5 fours) also played a supportive role while batting.

Rinku Singh and skipper Suryakumar took two wickets each in their respective spells. The India skipper defended six runs in the final over and forced the match into the super over. Ravi Bishnoi and Washington Sundar also took two

wickets in their respective spells.

In the super over, the hosts could only score 2/2 after batting first. While chasing, Suryakumar Yadav ended the match with the first ball

after he smashed a sweep towards the short fine leg for a four.

Washington Sundar was named the player of the match.

Brief scores: India 137/9 (Shub-

man Gill 39, Riyan Parag 26; Maheesh Theekshana 3-28) vs Sri Lanka 137/8 (Kusal Perera 46, Kusal Mendis 43; Rinku Singh 2-3, Suryakumar Yadav 2-5). - ANI

Asalanka replaces Mendis as Sri Lanka ODI skipper

NEW DELHI: Sri Lanka announced their 16-player squad for the upcoming ODI series against India, which will kick off on Friday at R Premadasa Stadium, Colombo.

Kusal Mendis has been replaced as the skipper of the side by Charith Asalanka, who led Sri Lanka in the three T20Is that they lost to India 3-0. Sri Lanka enjoyed a good run in Mendis' captaincy in the ODI format. The 29-year-old has been in good touch with the bat and guided Sri Lanka to five consecutive home match triumphs against Afghanistan and Zimbabwe. However, they lost to Bangladesh by 2-1 in an away series. Test batter Nishan Madushka, 24, has been included in the squad after his impressive performances in



the red-ball format. Sri Lanka pacer Dushmantha Chameera, who was ruled out of the T20I series due to bronchitis and respiratory infection, will also miss the three ODIs against India. Along with Chameera, Nuwan Thushara will also miss the 50-over series after he fractured his thumb during training ahead of the beginning of the bilateral series against India. On the spin bowling front, Sri Lanka will enjoy

plenty of options, between Hasaranga, Maheesh Theekshana, Dananjaya and Dumith Wellalage. Kamindu Mendis and Asalanka also add depth by making themselves available as part-time spinners as well.

On the batting front, Pathum Nissanka, Avishka Fernando, and Mendis will make up the top order.

Sri Lanka ODI squad: Charith Asalanka (captain), Pathum Nissanka, Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Kamindu Mendis, Janith Liyanage, Nishan Madushka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Chamika Karunaratne, Maheesh Theekshana, Akila Dananjaya, Dilshan Madushanka, Matheesha Pathirana, Asitha Fernando. - ANI

ROUND-UP

Omantel brings ‘Bisat Al Reeh’ campaign to Dhofar governorate

‘Towards Dhofar’ campaign highlights the treasures of Oman in a dynamic and creative way during Khareef Dhofar

MUSCAT: Following its success in North Al Batinah, Omantel has brought the ‘Bisat Al Reeh’ to Dhofar Governorate, as part of its participation in Khareef Dhofar, highlighting the beauty and splendour of the governorate and weaving magnificent stories about the treasures of the governorate.

The Bisat Al Reeh is part of Omantel’s “Towards Dhofar” campaign among other key activities of Omantel’s participation in Khareef Dhofar Festival this year. Omantel’s participation includes ICT event for corporate customers and corporate social responsibility initiatives conducted in association with government institutions and charitable organisations in the governorate, in addition to interactive activities for families and children throughout the festival period.

“Bisat Al Reeh” is a journey that spans the whole of Oman, weaving stories about its scholars, people, topography, geography, cities, villages, its stories and heroes. It also embraces Oman’s history and legends. Bisat Al Reeh is designed to help spectators explore the land



and human elements of Oman, as well as learn about the past and the present, so as to take off to a brighter future.

Commenting on the campaign, Shaikha Hamid Al Awfi, Senior Manager of Campaigns Management, said: “We are always delighted to participate in this tourism forum, which attracts thousands of visitors and tourists from across the region, to explore the natural and tourism elements of the Dhofar Governorate. Dhofar Khareef Festival is an ideal plat-

form for Omantel to interact and communicate with all segments of the public.”

“Bisat Al Reeh campaign provides information to our audience, helping them gain knowledge of Oman’s ancient past and its astounding present through personalities and events that played an important role in the history of our nation, in addition to exploring the various touristic places in the Sultanate,” Shaikha Al Awfi added.

The Bisat Al Reeh campaign kicked off last February in Sohar

in North Batinah Governorate, highlighting the most famous aspects of the governorate - fertile plains, marine industries, and heritage elements.

Moving to Dhofar Governorate, the campaign narrates the story of the lost city of “Ubar”, an extension of the stories told in Al Batinah Governorate about “Hora Barga” and how people lived in Dhofar mountains. These stories were embodied in a video clip of a popular song with a modern twist, and the name of the “Bisat

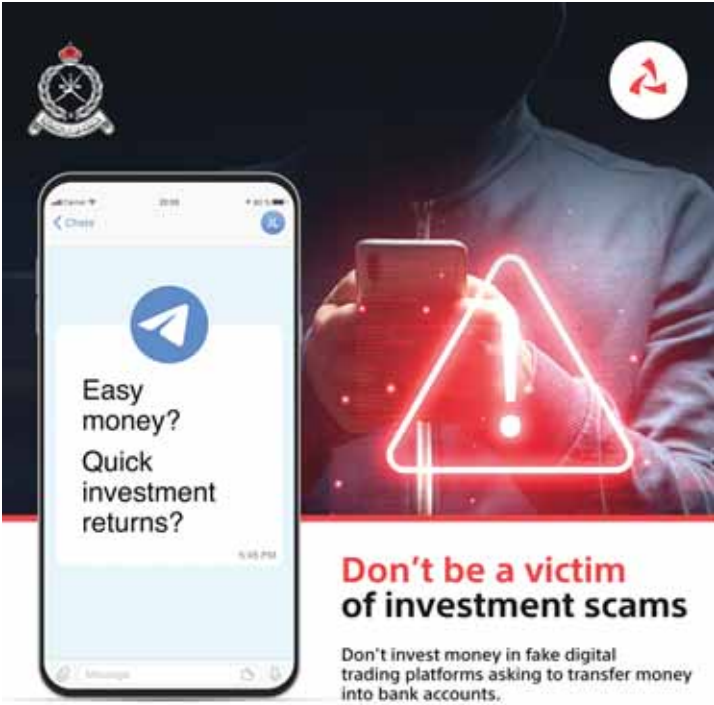
Al Reeh” campaign was linked to the Khareef season campaign “Towards Dhofar”.

Omantel has succeeded, through the integration of its operations, processes, and extensive expertise in the field of communications and digital technology, in establishing its position as a leading telecommunications company within the Sultanate of Oman and beyond. The company’s innovative approaches have contributed to providing state-of-the-art solutions to different consumer and busi-

ness sectors. The company aims to deliver an unparalleled, exceptional experience to its customers and strives to always exceed their expectations. To achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Omantel invests in emerging technologies and provides cutting-edge ICT solutions, such as cloud solutions, AI, Smart solutions, cybersecurity, and much more, in addition to harnessing its technological capabilities to enhance innovation and leadership in new and advanced technologies.

ANTI-FRAUD INITIATIVE

ROP and Bank Muscat raise awareness against digital trading platform scams



The awareness initiative will continue throughout the year across various media channels including TV, radio, print, online media, and social media

MUSCAT: In an ongoing effort to increase public awareness of various methods of digital fraud, Royal Oman Police and Bank Muscat recently emphasised the serious consequences of digital trading platform scams as part of their joint anti-fraud initiative. Fake investment scams are on the rise and it is crucial to recognise them in order to protect oneself.

To avoid falling victim to fraudulent scams, there are a number of precautions steps that need to be

taken: avoid responding to messages with doubtful investment offers; be wary of attractive returns in digital currency and other investments; avoid sharing details such as your password, OTP including PIN and CVV, and digital wallet information; research the investment company and the offer thoroughly; and most importantly, block and report the sender if found suspicious.

The awareness initiative will continue throughout the year

across various media channels including TV, radio, print, online media, and social media; aiming to help the public recognise fraud and avoid falling prey to misleading messages on WhatsApp, requests to share bank details with others.

It is essential to never share personal details with anyone, including those claiming to be employees or officials in certain institutions as this is a vital first step to defend oneself against criminal activities. Being wary and vigilance against fraud methods will help reduce the financial and psychological consequences that they cause.

The public can easily contact the Royal Oman Police hotline at 80077444 to report fraud or for any fraud-related queries.

OMAN INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL

OIH launches new procedure to treat keratoconus: Corneal Allogeneic Intrastromal Ring Implants

MUSCAT: Oman International Hospital (OIH) announced the successful introduction of a groundbreaking new procedure specifically designed to treat keratoconus: Corneal Allogeneic Intrastromal Ring Implants (CAIRS). This innovative treatment represents a significant advancement in the field of ophthalmology, offering new hope to patients suffering from this debilitating corneal disorder.

The Corneal Allogeneic Intrastromal Ring Implant procedure involves the insertion of a specialized ring made from donor corneal tissue into the patient’s cornea with the aid of femtosecond laser. This minimally invasive technique aims to improve corneal shape and vision quality, providing a viable alternative to more invasive procedures such as corneal transplants. Compared to artificial ring implants, CAIRS has demonstrated a better long-term safety profile, reducing the risk of complications and enhancing patient outcomes.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Maskari, Senior Consultant Ophthalmologist and Cataract, Cornea, and Refractive Surgeon at Oman Vision Centre, led the team that performed the first successful procedures. “We are thrilled to offer this advanced treatment to our patients. The Corneal Allogeneic Intrastromal Ring Implants provide an effective solution with quicker recovery times and reduced risk compared to traditional methods,” said Dr. Ahmed Al-Maskari. “This is a significant step forward in our



mission to provide cutting-edge eye care in Oman.”

Early patient outcomes have been highly promising, with improvements in vision. The procedure has been well-received by patients and is expected to become a cornerstone treatment for those suffering from keratoconus.

“The launch of this procedure aligns with Oman International Hospital’s commitment to excellence and innovation in healthcare. As one of the premier medical institutions in the region, the

hospital continually strives to adopt the latest technologies and treatments to enhance patient outcomes and quality of life,” said Marcelo Pereira, CEO of Oman International Hospital.

Oman International Hospital is a leading healthcare institution dedicated to providing exceptional medical care to the community. With state-of-the-art facilities, a skilled team of healthcare professionals, and a commitment to patient well-being, we strive to deliver top-notch medical services.





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