

'A LIFE-ENRICHING EXPERIENCE THAT LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON MY HEART'

For a long time, I had yearned to visit the mesmerising desert, and thanks to the Guide Oman Team (3R), my dream finally became a reality, writes Naveen Rajghatta. **>A4**



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HM THE SULTAN ISSUES TWO ROYAL DECREES

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Thursday issued two Royal decrees reading as follows: Royal Decree No. 80/2023 deals with tax exemption. Article (1) stipulates that the Minister of Finance shall be responsible for tax exemption wherever tax exemption is mentioned in laws and Royal decrees. **>A5**



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PHONE CALL

His Majesty, US President discuss Palestine situation

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received today a phone call from President Joe Biden of the United States of America (USA).

During the call, the two leaders reviewed fields of bilateral co-operation. They also exchanged viewpoints on regional and international issues of common concern, particularly the latest developments in Palestine.

HM The Sultan underscored

the importance of halting military operations in Gaza Strip and West Bank, protecting civilians and according top priority to humanitarian aspects.

His Majesty also stressed the importance of resorting to resolutions of international legitimacy, international humanitarian law, and underlined the Palestinians' right to establish their independent state on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. **>A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Diwali celebrations take a subdued tone

1 Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights, is set to be a subdued affair in Oman, as many Indian expatriate families have opted not to illuminate their homes in light of the Israel-Hamas conflict. **>A3**

OMAN Engine for growth

2 The IEA report says that Oman must adopt hydrogen as a new economic engine for growth. **>A5**

WORLD Attacks in Gaza Strip

3 A WHO spokesperson said that there has been an 'unprecedented' attacks on healthcare in the Gaza Strip. **>A6**

SELF-DEFENCE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR KILLINGS BY ISRAEL: SAYYID BADR

Foreign Minister heads Oman's delegation at Joint Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh

RIYADH: Assigned by His Majesty the Sultan's sincere wishes for the success of the summit. Foreign Minister, headed the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman that participated in the extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic Summit held in Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia yesterday, in the presence of country leaders and heads of the delegations.

During the summit, Sayyid Badr conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the leaders and heads of delegations who took part in the



summit, along with His Majesty the Sultan's sincere wishes for the success of the summit.

In his speech, Sayyid Badr said that the Palestinian people are undergoing excessive, heart-rending human suffering at a time the UN Security Council remains stagnant and incapable of taking any

decisive action to stop the current barbaric war that Israel is waging against the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip under the pretext of self-defence.

Sayyid Badr stressed that self-defence is not a justification for Israel's killing and displacement of innocent people or slaying of

children, women and defenseless men or demolishing Palestinian people's homes, places of worship, infrastructure facilities, schools and hospitals or interrupting services or depriving the population of water, food, fuel and medicine or imposing an unlawful blockade on the Gaza Strip. **>A2**

COMMENTARY

World is watching a live holocaust II, done by the victims of holocaust I



MOHAMED ALZADJALI

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has captured the world's attention, sparking widespread concern over the suffering of civilians caught in the crossfire. As we all know, after World War II, most Jews were sent to Palestine as a new home for them, and the Palestinians welcomed them with open arms. Unfortunately, it was a ploy designed by the West to occupy and build a new country for them. If the Israelis had fought alone without the help of Western countries, Palestinians would have defeated the Zionists' terror. The West is the root cause of all the problems that we see today in the Middle East. People around the world are protesting and want their government to take action against Israel for its bloody massacres of Palestinians. But there is an apparent lack of global intervention, questioning the motivations of leaders who seem unresponsive to the plight of those affected.

As we all know, the Western governments are not acting and not condemning Israel even a bit, rather they are propping up Israel under the guise of its right to defend. Shocked as the world today is, they are wondering whether those leaders are from a different planet as they have turned a blind eye towards Zionist regime barbarism. The reason why such people are not acting despite the humanitarian



catastrophe in Gaza is due to a simple thing - most of the governments want to be re-elected and we all know the Zionists lobby is very powerful and decides elections in their country. Therefore, they will support them and follow their diktat. The other interest is purely monetary gain.

A project to explore oil or gas in Palestine territory is a major interest for some politicians and they want to make money out of it. Don't forget the arms merchants who also want to make money by selling all types of weapons and test them in a real live environment. While the head of UNICEF has a role to promote peace, her husband is the chairman of BlackRock.

The world's leading providers of investment, advisory and risk management solutions, BlackRock, is the one of the largest shareholders in publicly traded gun manufacturers.

It is really sad to see how many innocent people, women and children are dying while those politicians gamble for their interests only. So far more than 11,000 Palestinians including women and children have been martyred and the toll is mounting every day. Thousands have fled from their homes after Israeli bombardment. Healthcare is in total mess as the Gaza Strip is running short of basic amenities.

Even the hospitals and health centres have not been

spared in the airstrikes.

The Gaza Strip's largest hospital has been left without electricity amid ongoing violence and shortages, with doctors reporting the first fatalities as a result.

The Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza has been left without water, fuel, food, electricity and telecommunications, with thousands of people inside, including wounded, patients and displaced people. Operations at the hospital were said to have been suspended because of the lack of power, and those needing life support were at risk.

It is time for the people of the world to take all those politicians to the International Criminal Court for prosecution as war criminals, but unfortunately those Zionists control this court and all UN organisations too. It is time to rethink and stop the slogan anti-Semitism and start the slogan anti-human. I don't know why countries pay money as membership fees for the UN and its related organisations, they are useless and fulfil only what USA and Israel want.

Some of the children and grandchildren of the holocaust victims are Zionists committing the crime while the world is watching helplessly and the western puppet politicians are singing the anti-Semitism song that Israel has the right to defend itself.

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SUMMIT

Palestinian people are facing horrific human suffering, says Sayyid Badr in Riyadh Summit



< FROM A1 Sayyid Badr observed, “It really saddens us to see inaction from some friendly countries known for defending the international law and its application in other regions of the world, while failing to denounce Israel’s violation of the same international law in the context of Palestine!”

Sayyid Badr affirmed “The Sultanate of Oman, from this podium, remains steadfast in supporting the Palestinian people’s legitimate right to life and their inherent right to live in a manner that guarantees them freedom, dignity and self-determination”.

Sayyid Badr urged everyone to be sincere with oneself, to advocate ethics of the free human conscience, to call for ending this senseless war, the opening of humanitarian corridors to deliver life-saving relief supplies to the population in the Gaza Strip, lifting the

siege imposed on the Strip and releasing the hostages, prisoners and detainees. He called upon countries that support Israel to refrain from exercising double standards in applying the international law.

Sayyid Badr pointed out that the only solution to the Palestinian cause lies in political action to end Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian lands and to establish an independent Palestinian state on the borders of 4 June 1967, with Al Quds Al Sharqiya (East Jerusalem) as its capital, as well as the implementation of the international law and the UN resolutions—to ensure justice, security and peace for all.

Sayid Badr said that the Sultanate of Oman affirms its constant strive to serve issues of significance to global security and peace, acting from its conviction that it is an integral part of this interconnected world, sharing its interests and the destiny of its people.



“Therefore, supporting the fair cause of the Palestinian people constitutes an absolute obligation on everyone in our modern world. Now that the ordeal has become so flagrant and so unbearable, the

world must echo with the voice of truth and wisdom, so that Palestine obtains its rights guaranteed by the international law and becomes a full member of the international community, a free country existing

with equal dignity within its own territories,” Sayyid Badr added.

The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman that took part in the summit included Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, HH Sayid Faisal Turki Al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Abdullah Nasser Al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League, and Khalid Sulaiman Ba’omar, Head of the International Organizations Department at the Foreign Ministry.

Written message

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a written message to HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, Crown Prince, and Prime Minister in the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia relating to the strong fraternal relations binding the two brotherly countries and peoples, and ways to strengthen them in all fields.

The message was delivered by Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, during his meeting in Riyadh on Saturday with Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Final communique

An Arab-Islamic summit hosted by Saudi Arabia on Saturday called for an end to the war in Gaza and rejected justifying Israel’s actions against Palestinians as self-defence. The summit condemned “Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, war crimes and barbaric and inhumane massacres by the occupation government,” a final communique said, reported news agencies.. -ONA

Muscat and Salalah airports are gateway to tourism in Sultanate

The fifth anniversary of the opening of Muscat International Airport, and the eighth anniversary of the opening of Salalah Airport were celebrated on Saturday

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Airports on Saturday celebrated the fifth anniversary of the opening of Muscat International Airport, and the eighth anniversary of the opening of Salalah Airport.

The two airports constitute the gateways to success for tourism and travel in the Sultanate of Oman and a strategic landmark of national achievements of the Renewed Renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Since its opening on November 11, 2018, Muscat International Airport has jumped about 52 places in the list of the best airports in the world in the field of services and passenger satisfaction, competing with several international airports within its capacity category of 15-25 million passengers regionally and internationally.

International awards

It also won a series of international awards that confirm its leadership in the aviation and travel sector, and was crowned with the award for the Best New Pioneering Airport for the year 2018, during the 25th edition of the World Travel Awards in Lisbon, Portugal, after which it continued its series of achievements in the field of travel



and tourism.

With regard to aspects of responding to health crises, Muscat International Airport played a positive role during the Covid-19 pandemic, as it was the first airport in the Middle East to obtain a health accreditation certificate for travel and safety procedures during the global pandemic, stressing the endeavour with all partners to provide everything needed for the airport to be a safe crossing to and from the Sultanate of Oman during that period.

Immediately after the end of the pandemic, efforts continued to be crowned with many awards, the most recent of which was the best airport in the quality of airport service by the International Airports Council in the category of airports with a capacity between 15 - 25 million passengers, and the award for the best airport employees in the Middle East, based on the classification of the specialised international company Skytrax.

The award for the best airport in the quality of airport service by the International Airports Council,

the award for the most dedicated airport staff in serving passengers in the Middle East, the award for the easiest travel procedures in the Middle East, and the award for the cleanest airport in the Middle East.

Muscat airport has become the first airport in the Middle East to provide global educational roaming service, giving an opportunity for students, and academics to complete their tasks at the airport via the Internet.

In order to encourage small and medium enterprises, Oman Airports announced the availability of sales outlets for small and medium enterprises at Muscat International Airport, in order to push these enterprises to provide multiple services in the airport environment, to strengthen the partnership to provide spaces to emerging companies and entrepreneurs in carrying out a smart and advanced approach.

To enable the creative ideas of innovators and owners of start-up companies, and to attract investors, Muscat International Airport hosts the Innovation Lab of the Oman Airports Company. The laboratory

provides spaces equipped with the latest technologies that serve as an empowerment incubator for owners of innovative ideas and start-up companies, by providing approved linking platforms with the experience of technology companies and digital applications. It also provides platforms to showcase the latest technologies and build effective links between startups and existing technology companies.

The airport also formed a platform to compete for ideas, innovators and startup companies, within the “Aerohack from Oman Airports” programme, which is the first ideas race of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman specialised in developing ideas in the airport sector, to attract an elite group of innovators, technology developers, designers, students, startups, small and medium-sized companies, and university students to enhance innovation.

Muscat International Airport has become an attractive destination for emerging airlines, especially airlines operating within the framework of budget airlines,



in light of the facilities provided by Oman Airports Company to regional and international airlines as part of its efforts to make the Sultanate of Oman a major hub for these air carriers.

In terms of environmental sustainability, after its opening, Muscat International Airport joined many environmental programmes managed by international organisations and councils, and today the airport is at the third level within the carbon emissions control programme implemented by the Airports Board of Directors.

Locally, the airport contributes directly to programmes for recycling agricultural waste in its green atmosphere by supplying the “Kala” fertilizer factory of the Nama Group. It will also contain the first hybrid hydrogen station in the Sultanate of Oman in partnership with Oman Shell.

Muscat International Airport was also able to obtain accreditation certificates from international organisations and institutions. It was accredited by the American Heart Association to provide courses

in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and was accredited by the Civil Aviation Authority to hold training courses in the field of aviation security and safety.

These projects and achievements confirm the efforts made by Oman Airports and all its strategic partners to ensure the provision of the highest global standards and to create the best professional practices in the work environment for its employees to complete the national mission to make Muscat International Airport among the finest airports in the world.

Muscat airport, with its three wings whose designs and colours extend from the core of the Omani environment and its immortal heritage, is an icon and a distinctive masterpiece in the Middle East region with its distinctive interior architectural design that is in harmony with the smooth movement of travel, as this culminated in hosting a permanent corner for the National Museum within its many corridors. One of the designs inspired by the regions of Amman and its markets.



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Diwali celebrations take a subdued tone

In light of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, many Indian expatriates in Oman opt for modest Diwali observances, refraining from home decorations with lights as a gesture of support for the Palestinian cause

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights, is set to be a subdued affair in Oman, as many Indian expatriate families have opted not to illuminate their homes in light of the Israel-Hamas conflict. The ongoing war has cast a shadow over the celebrations, with a significant number of families forgoing traditional decorations. Despite the festivities officially commencing on Friday, the build-up has been notably muted. Expatriate Hindu families will mark Diwali on Sunday, but the usual vibrancy has been replaced by a sombre mood. Indian students are granted an extended weekend, as schools have extended Diwali holidays until Monday. While a four-day weekend typically sparks celebrations, some students expressed a lack of festive



spirit, attributing it to the ongoing war in Palestine and the tragic loss of many children. Some of the Indian schools will be closed on Sunday, November 12, and Monday, November 13, in observance of Diwali. The decision to abstain from elaborate decorations is a gesture of solidarity with the Palestinians affected by the conflict. In his remarks to Times of Oman, S. Manoj, an Indian Hindu, said, "This year, we decided not to put up lights for decoration to express our solidarity with Palestinians. With

so many deaths in the region, it just doesn't feel good to celebrate." Anita, an Indian housewife, echoed the sentiment, emphasising the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the need to be mindful of the suffering in the region. The general mood reflects a sense of responsibility and awareness of the global situation, prompting a reduction in celebratory activities. Oman itself is scaling back on National Day celebrations, further contributing to the subdued atmosphere. Vinod, another Indian

expatriate, noted, "The usual buzz will be missing this time," as traditional lights are absent from many of our neighbourhoods." An Indian doctor, who spoke on condition of anonymity, acknowledged the global turmoil in places like Ukraine, Sudan, and Palestine, said that "it is not a time for celebrations." He added, "I am pained to see the devastation and misery of people, and in solidarity to the sufferings, this Diwali will be a low-key affair." While some aspects of the celebration are toned down, businesses like jewellery shops and sweets shops in Oman experienced increased activity in the days leading up to Diwali. The Festival of Lights, symbolises the triumph of good over evil, and is marked by the lighting of lamps and the decoration of homes. The customary rituals involve cleaning homes, lighting lamps, and creating rangolis, colorful designs meant to bring good luck. Despite the challenges, the spirit of Diwali endures, albeit in a more subdued form this year.

FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR



Oman Air awarded APEX Five-Star Major Airline 2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Air has been awarded the 2024 Five-Star Major Airline rating by the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX) for the fourth consecutive year. The APEX Five Star and Four Star Airline Awards, formerly APEX Official Airline Ratings, were created based on neutral, third-party passenger feedback and insights gathered through APEX's partnership with TripIt from Concur, the world's highest-rated travel-organising app. Nearly one million flights were rated by passengers across more than 600 airlines from around

the world using a five-star scale, and are independently certified by a professional external auditing company. The award is the latest in a string of accolades Oman Air has received from APEX, including the 2022 Passenger Choice Award for Best Seat Comfort in the Middle East, as well as the Five-Star Major Airline rankings for 2023, 2022 and 2021. The airline was also recently named 'Best Airline Staff in the Middle East' at the Skytrax 2023 World Airline Awards, a testament to its unwavering commitment to setting new benchmarks for guest experience, year after year.

SALALAH PORT

Cruise ship arrives

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Salalah Port received on 10, 2023 a cruise ship carrying 2,885 passengers, including 1,932 tourists. As part of its tourism programme in a number of ports around the world. The cruise ship's passenger

programme - coming from the Egyptian port of Safaga and heading to the city of Colombo - included a visit to the most important archaeological, touristic and historic landmarks in the Dhofar Governorate, in addition to a visit to the beaches and traditional markets in the city of Salalah.

ECONOMIC FORUM

Omani-Turkish relation growing rapidly: OCCI



Times News Service

ISTANBUL: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), is participating in the activities of the GCC-Turkiye Economic Forum, which kicked off yesterday, with the participation of a number of officials and businessmen from the various GCC States. The forum aimed to strengthen the relations between the GCC States and the Republic of Turkey and to increase the volume of trade between the two sides. Mohammed bin Nasser Al Maskari, Member of the Board of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) Branch in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate and head of the Sultanate's delegation taking part in the forum, said that the Sultanate's participation in the forum aimed at availing from the discussions and acquainting

from the promising investment opportunities that serve the Omani private sector. Such forums offer the Omani businessmen an opportunity to exchange expertise with their Turkish and GCC counterparts, he said. He said that the forum would discuss a number of issues related to food security and infrastructure, transport, logistics, tourism, industry, energy, finance and investment among other promising sectors. He also pointed that the Omani - Turkish relation is rapidly progressing as the trade between the two countries has seen a rapid increase since 2017. He said that there are 35 Turkish companies operating in the Sultanate in the field of contracting and engineering. The Sultanate's delegation comprises a number of businessmen and entrepreneurs from the various sectors. -ONA



LIFESTYLE

‘A LIFE-ENRICHING
EXPERIENCE
THAT LEFT AN
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ON MY HEART’



For a long time, I had yearned to visit the mesmerising desert, and thanks to the Guide Oman Team (3R), my dream finally became a reality, writes Naveen Rajghatta

During my daily commute to the office, I found myself often contemplating the various 4x4 drive options – 4H, 4L – in my vehicle, curious about when and how they might come into play. This curiosity sparked a newfound interest in off-road exploration, and one name that consistently surfaced in conversations with fellow enthusiasts was the Guide Oman Team (3R).

I embarked on my first expedition to Sharqiyah Sands in Bidyah with the Guide Oman Team (3R), and from that point on, I was hooked. Guide Oman Team (3R) played a pivotal role in helping me tick off several items from my bucket list, including a visit to Ramlat Jadilah, the world's tallest sand dune, and Bar Al Hikman, famous for its pristine coastlines with white sandy beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters.

The desert landscape offers a unique sense of serenity. Walking on the sand feels like a natural pedicure, and as we relaxed

amidst the dunes, our gaze was drawn to the celestial beauty of the countless stars, constellations, and the radiant moon above. The soft sand beneath us was as comfortable as a mattress, and the vast sky served as an exquisite canopy.

The adventure begins with a thorough morning briefing, complete with morning coffee or tea and a hearty breakfast. This briefing covers essential topics such as tire deflation, distinguishing between hard and soft sand, understanding the impact of gravity, decoding the different 4-wheel drive options, deciphering the meanings of 4H and 4L, and crucial safety instructions.

Armed with this knowledge, we set off on our desert expedition. It was an opportunity to put the tips and techniques into practice.

In the early stages of our journey, we encountered challenges that seemed daunting. However, the Guide Oman Team (3R) swiftly came to our aid, providing invaluable guidance and support. Their expertise and presence made overcoming these obstacles possible. It's like the old saying: "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a

day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." Through multiple trips with their guidance, we gained the knowledge and skills needed to navigate through obstacles independently.

The enchanting desert imparted invaluable life lessons to us:

Be prepared for ups and downs: Desert driving is vastly different from regular road driving. The unpredictable terrain can throw various challenges your way, from steep descents to challenging uphill climbs. Maintaining focus and readiness is crucial to navigate life's highs and lows safely.

Keep the momentum going: When driving on sandy terrain, especially loose sand, maintaining forward motion is key to avoiding getting stuck. Slowing down or stopping can lead to your tires sinking gradually into the sand, potentially leaving you immobilised.

Respect the forces: Dealing with vehicle drifting in desert conditions is challenging. It's crucial to respect both your vehicle's engine and the force of gravity acting upon it. Disregarding either of these forces can

lead to serious consequences. Embrace challenges with a smile and compassion: The Guide Oman Team (3R) handles challenges with remarkable ease, as if they're enjoying a delightful treat. Their incredible skills and techniques are truly impressive. What's most inspiring is their ability to face challenges with genuine smiles on their faces.

Never give up: Sometimes, daunting sand dunes, soft sandy terrain, sharp turns, and narrow passageways may make you doubt your abilities. However, with determination, you can often overcome these challenges, boosting your self-confidence and reinforcing the importance of perseverance.

No challenge is too big when you apply the right techniques and skills. Desert driving engages all your senses, creating a meditative experience with a hint of adrenaline rush.

In the end, my journey with the Guide Oman Team (3R) in Sharqiyah Sands was not just an adventure; it was a life-enriching experience that left an indelible mark on my heart.



COMMENTARY

‘Oman’s Treasures: How Fatima discovered the Ancient Artifacts and Archaeological Sites’



Bhavna Batra

ONCE UPON A TIME, in a land filled with endless deserts, towering mountains, and breathtaking coastlines, there was a young girl named Fatima. Fatima lived in Oman, a country that held a treasure trove of ancient secrets waiting to be uncovered. Fatima was a curious and adventurous 7th Grader with a heart full of wonder. She had heard countless stories from her grandparents about the mysteries hidden beneath Oman’s sands. Tales of lost cities, ancient artifacts, and the legendary “Atlantis of the Sands” had always fascinated her. One sunny morning, as Fatima sat under the shade of a date palm tree, her grandfather, Suleiman, approached her with a tattered map in his hand. It was a map that had been passed down through generations of their family. Suleiman said, “Fatima, my dear, your school holidays are starting soon, and I want you to use this time efficiently. It’s time for you to embark on a journey that has been a dream of mine for years. It’s time for you to explore Oman’s treasures.” Fatima’s heart raced with excitement. She gazed at the map, which showed the locations of ancient archaeological sites, forgotten cities, and the famous “Frankincense Trail.” This was her chance to uncover



the history and mysteries of her homeland. With a backpack filled with supplies, a water bottle, and her trusty notebook, Fatima set off on her adventure. Her first stop was the ancient city of Bat, Al-Khutm, and Al-Ayn. These were archaeological sites filled with tombs, buildings, and carvings on rocks. Fatima felt like an explorer from a storybook as she walked among the ancient ruins. She imagined the people who had lived there thousands of years ago, and the stories they must have had to tell. Next, Fatima followed the Frankincense Trail. She hiked through rugged terrain, passing by ancient wells and oases. She could almost smell the fragrant frankincense in the air. Fatima marveled at the thought that traders from long ago had journeyed through these very same paths, carrying precious bundles of frankincense to distant lands. As Fatima continued her journey, she couldn’t help but wonder about the lost city of “Ubar,” often called the “Atlantis of the Sands.” It was said to have been buried beneath the desert for centuries. Armed with her map and a sense of determination, Fatima headed deeper into the desert, hoping to find clues that would lead her to this legend-

ary city. Days turned into weeks, and Fatima’s journey became more challenging. The scorching sun, the endless dunes, and the solitude of the desert tested her courage and determination. But Fatima never gave up. She knew that great discoveries often required great effort. One fateful day, as Fatima was exploring a remote area of the desert, she stumbled upon something extraordinary. Half-buried in the sand was an ancient inscription, a piece of the lost city of Ubar! She had discovered the city’s entrance. With the help of local archaeologists and experts, Fatima began to uncover the secrets of Ubar. She marveled at the intricate carvings, the well-preserved artifacts, and the ancient buildings that had once stood tall. Fatima knew that this discovery would rewrite history books and inspire generations to come. Fatima’s journey didn’t end there. She continued to explore Oman’s treasures, visiting majestic castles like Bahla Fort and studying ancient artifacts like the “Ras Al Jinz turtle.” She learned about the people who had lived in these lands, their traditions, and their way of life. As Fatima shared her discoveries with her family, friends, and

fellow students, she realized the power of curiosity and determination. She had not only uncovered Oman’s treasures but also inspired others to embark on their own journeys of exploration and discovery. Fatima’s story spread far and wide, reaching young hearts all over Oman. The message was clear: No matter how young you are, with curiosity, courage, and determination, you can uncover the hidden treasures of your homeland. And so, the spirit of exploration lived on in the hearts of Oman’s children, just like Fatima. They knew that beneath the sands and rocks of Oman lay a world of wonder waiting to be discovered, and they were ready to embark on their own journeys, armed with curiosity and dreams of unearthing the mysteries of their land. And that, dear friends, is the story of Fatima and her incredible journey of exploration, a tale of curiosity, courage, and the timeless treasures of Oman. Remember, the world is full of wonders, and all you need to discover them is a heart filled with curiosity and the courage to follow your dreams.

The writer is an HR Expert, Writer, Intuitive Energy Healer, Reiki Master, Miracle Coach.

TAX EXEMPTION



HM issues two Royal decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Thursday issued two Royal decrees reading as follows: Royal Decree No. 80/2023 deals with tax exemption. Article (1) stipulates that the Minister of Finance shall be responsible for tax exemption wherever tax exemption is mentioned in laws and Royal decrees. Article (2) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions. Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. Royal decree No. (81/2023) appoints non-resident ambassadors. Article (1) appoints Badr Mohammed Al Manthiri, the Sultanate of Oman’s ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as Oman’s non-resident ambassador to Ireland, the Republic of Montenegro, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia. Article (2) appoints HH Sayyid Nizar Al Julanda Al Said, the Sultanate of Oman’s ambassador to the Italian Republic, as Oman’s non-resident ambassador to the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Greece, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Albania, Romania and the Republic of San Marino. Article (3) appoints Maitha

Saif Al Mahrouqi, the Sultanate of Oman’s ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, as Oman’s non-resident ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden, the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Finland. Article (4) appoints Talal Sulaiman Al Rahbi, the Sultanate of Oman’s ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil, as Oman’s non-resident ambassador to the Argentine Republic, the Republic of Paraguay, the Republic of Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Republic of Chile. Article (5) appoints Mahmoud Hamad Al Hasani, the Sultanate of Oman’s ambassador to the Swiss Confederation, as Oman’s non-resident ambassador to the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Vatican City State. Article (6) appoints Hamoud Salim Al Tuwaih, the Sultanate of Oman’s ambassador to the Russian Federation, as Oman’s non-resident ambassador to the Republic of Belarus. Article (7) appoints Omar Said Al Kathiri, the Sultanate of Oman’s ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain, as Oman’s non-resident ambassador to the Principality of Andorra. Article (8) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. -OMA

PRECIOUS COLLECTIONS

Oman submits 2 cultural elements to UNESCO list



PARIS: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, has managed to add two new cultural elements to the UNESCO list of precious collections. They were the Castle of Jibreen and a set of publications authored by Omani poet-cum-historian Humaid Mohammed Ruzaqi. The step was taken to mark the UNESCO’s programme to celebrate the 50th or centennial anniversary of important historical events or globally influential persons. This was unveiled during Oman’s participation in meetings of the Administrative and Financial Affairs Committee emanating from the 42nd session of the UNESCO’s General Conference currently held at the international organisation’s premises in Paris and will continue until 22 November 2023. UNESCO included Jibreen castle in this programme due to the landmark’s significant role during major historical events that prevailed in Oman. The programme highlights the 350th anniversary of Jibreen castle’s establishment during the reign of Imam Belarab Sultan Al Yaarubi.

The monument’s construction was completed in 1675. The UNESCO also endorsed the works of Omani poet and historian Humaid Mohammed Ruzaqi on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his death. The addition of the two new cultural elements in 2023 takes to eight the number of Omani elements deposited at the UNESCO. During the past years, Oman added six Omani persons to the UNESCO programme to be included in celebrations marking 50th or 100th celebration of important historical events and globally influential figures, as follows: the inclusion to UNESCO’s collection of linguist Al Khalil bin Ahmed Al Farahidi in 2005, doctor and pharmacist Rashid bin Omairah Al Hashmi Al Rustaqi in 2013, polymath and social reformer Sheikh Nour al-Din Abdullah bin Humaid Al Salimi in 2015, the doctor and physician Abu Mohammad Abdullah bin Mohammad Al Uzdi, nicknamed Ibn al-Dhahabi in 2015, poet Nasser bin Salim al-Rawahi, nicknamed Abu Muslim Al Bahlani, in 2019 and finally Omani navigator Ahmed bin Majid Al Saadi in 2021. -OMA

Hydrogen to become a new engine for Oman’s growth

Oman must seize the opportunity and benefit from its strengths in energy and minerals field to become a leader in industrial innovation, says the IEA report

Times News Service

PARIS: The International Energy Agency (IEA) published a report that focuses on the importance of industrial innovation for the Sultanate of Oman and provides opportunities to enhance its competitiveness in exports and redefine its economic framework. The report stated that the Sultanate of Oman must seize the opportunity and benefit from its strengths in the field of energy and minerals to become a leader in industrial innovation by exploiting exploratory opportunities in mining and technology manufacturing, including hydrogen as an upper sector, in addition to industrial projects in clean products as a lower sector. The report indicated that these measures that will advance the new economy in the Sultanate of Oman must be integrated into a strong road map for industrial innovation by adopting international best practices with promising opportunities and its unique ambitions, and this map can push Oman to the forefront of global sustainable energy. The report suggested that the road map include topics that focus on technological development in the hydrocarbons, new energies and hydrogen sectors so that the Sultanate of Oman can develop a diverse portfolio of both hydrocar-



bons and carbon emissions, while at the same time moving towards developing new energies, which requires technologies such as electrolyzers, carbon capture and storage technologies, which represents an opportunity to strengthen the sector and make it competitive in terms of cost and sustainability. The report explained that the map must adopt hydrogen as a new economic engine, as the Sultanate of Oman could be the sixth largest exporter of green hydrogen in the world by 2030, according to an analysis by the International En-

ergy Agency, and this map could look at hydrogen as a linking factor that combines technology, energy, and the economy. In a common macroeconomic narrative. The report said that the map must include the digitisation of renewable energy systems, as artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and machine learning technologies will allow the Sultanate of Oman to enhance energy production, storage and distribution, and advanced energy storage solutions. The Sultanate of Oman will soon begin generating many renewable energy for the uses of electricity and green hydrogen, which requires this change. In the energy-to-storage mix. It added that among the topics that the roadmap should include are sustainable value chains, modernising and expanding infrastructure and industrial infrastructure to accommodate the next wave of energy innovations, improving logistics services, and building capabilities for high-tech manufacturing, including establishing pioneering centers of excellence, public and private research centers, and information centers to disseminate expertise and export it sustainably.

Dr. Abdullah bin Sulaiman Al Abri, the international adviser and representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the International Energy Agency, explained that there are new economic horizons for which the Sultanate of Oman must be prepared to benefit from the potential of new energies and hydrogen to expand its industrial and innovative horizons. The international advisor and representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the International Energy Agency expected that industrial innovation in the Sultanate of Oman would enable it to rise to the top level, as local goods and solutions would contribute to stimulating clean energy innovations and lower level areas and green manufacturing would flourish. He said that this path will lead to establishing a strong dimension in the overall economic picture of the Sultanate of Oman, the emergence of international alliances, and support local employment prospects, explaining that the road map seeks to link technology, energy, and the economy in the Sultanate of Oman, and its goals are sustainable industrial growth, integration between sectors, investments, global partnerships, and competitive jobs of high quality.

RECEIVING DONATIONS

FBI seizes New York mayor’s phones in graft probe

NEW YORK: FBI agents seized New York mayor Eric Adams’ phones and other devices, his campaign lawyer said on Friday.

Authorities are investigating whether Adams’ 2021 campaign conspired with a foreign government to receive donations from foreign sources.

The seizure comes four days after federal agents searched the Brooklyn home of Adams’ top fundraiser, Brianna Suggs.

“On Monday night, the FBI approached the mayor after an event. The Mayor immediately complied with the FBI’s request and provided them with electronic devices,” Adams’ attorney, Boyd Johnson said. “The mayor has not been accused of any wrongdoing and continues to cooperate with the investigation.”

Johnson said that they had “dis-

covered that an individual had recently acted improperly.”

Federal investigation

“After learning of the federal investigation, it was discovered that an individual had recently acted improperly. In the spirit of transparency and cooperation, this behavior was immediately and proactively reported to investigators,” he said.

Adams says his team will cooperate with law enforcement amid the probe. In a statement on Friday, Adams said he had “nothing to hide.”

“As a former member of law enforcement, I expect all members of my staff to follow the law and fully cooperate with any sort of investigation — and I will continue to do exactly that,” he said.

-DW



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WHO spokesperson says attacks on healthcare in Gaza ‘unprecedented’

There weren’t enough beds at the hospital and that people were staying on the floor or in corridors of the building

GAZA: A spokesperson for the World Health Organization (WHO) has told DW that there has been an “unprecedented” scale of attacks on healthcare in the Gaza Strip.

Margaret Harris said staff at al-Shifa hospital were “terrified” and were dealing with “enormous numbers of injured people with no supplies.”

Harris said there weren’t enough beds at the hospital and that people were staying on the floor or in corridors of the building. She said healthcare workers are “in fear of their own lives while trying to save other lives.”

Asked whether hospitals are being targeted by the Israeli military, Harris said: “We don’t identify or assign blame, but we’ve seen more attacks on healthcare during this 4-week period than we’ve seen ever before. It’s unprecedented.”

“Healthcare is never a target, that’s very clear under international law,” she said.

Referring to humanitarian pauses, Harris said: “We have not seen a difference that is going to enable us to give sustained aid... that we need to provide.”

“We need a sustained humanitarian cease-fire in order to bring teams in, bring supplies in, and get people out,” she stressed. “This is not happening.”

She said that the WHO managed to get some medical supplies to al-Shifa hospital on Tuesday, but no food, water or fuel.

Several people were killed as strikes hit near hospitals in the Gaza Strip, according to the Hamas-led government. Meanwhile, the UN is urging Israel to open the Kerem Shalom crossing to allow aid in.

Gaza Strip’s largest hospital without electricity

The Gaza Strip’s largest hospital has been left without electricity amid ongoing violence and short-



ages, with doctors reporting the first fatalities as a result, staff members and the territory’s Hamas-controlled Health Ministry said.

“The Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza has been left without water, fuel, food, electricity and telecommunications, with thousands of people inside, including wounded, patients and displaced people,” said the ministry.

Operations at the hospital were said to have been suspended because of the lack of power, and

those needing life support were at risk, the ministry said.

“As a result, one newborn baby died inside the incubator, where there are 45 babies,” a ministry spokesman told the Reuters news agency.

The ministry also claimed that snipers deployed surrounding the complex were shooting at people who tried to leave or move between the hospital buildings.

Israel says it does everything it can to avoid civilian casualties, and that Hamas militants have tunnels

under civilian facilities. An Israeli spokesperson has previously claimed that Hamas’ headquarters lie under Al-Shifa hospital.

The World Health Organization on Friday said the al-Shifa hospital had been “coming under bombardment”, with 20 hospitals in Gaza now out of action entirely.

Saudi Arabia’s crown prince has called for an end to the war in Gaza, a stance that was echoed in a declaration with African leaders attending a summit in Riyadh.

“We condemn what the Gaza

Strip is facing from military assault, targeting of civilians, the violations of international law by the Israeli occupation authorities,” Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said during the African-Saudi summit in the kingdom’s capital.

“We stress the need to stop this war and the forced displacement of Palestinians,” he added in his first public comments since the conflict started.

The joint declaration from leaders at the summit voted “deep concern” about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for an end to military operations and for civilians to be protected.

Hundreds of thousands of Gaza residents have been displaced, and more than 11,000 have died, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry.

Leaders who attended the Riyadh summit included the presidents of Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Djibouti and Mauritania, the prime ministers of Ethiopia and Niger, and the foreign minister of Egypt.

Qatar’s Emir visits Egypt for talks on ceasefire

The leaders of Qatar and Egypt have held talks in Cairo, with both seeking to mediate a de-escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip and increase humanitarian aid to the territory.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sissi and Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani discussed intensified efforts to bring about a cease-fire in Gaza and channel more aid to the territory’s 2.3 million besieged residents, according to a statement from El-Sissi’s office.

The two also “discussed the Israeli military escalation in the Gaza Strip and the subsequent regional challenges that push the region in dangerous and uncalculated directions,” the statement said.

Besides Qatar, Egypt has also been involved in the hosting negotiations.

Macron reportedly urges Israel to stop bombing Gaza

French President Emmanuel Macron told the BBC Israel must stop bombing Gaza and killing civilians.

In an interview published late on Friday, the French leader said France “clearly condemns” the “terrorist” actions of Hamas, but that while recognizing Israel’s right to protect itself, “we do urge them to stop this bombing” in Gaza.

“These babies, these ladies, these old people are bombed and killed. So there is no reason for that and no legitimacy. So we do urge Israel to stop,” the British broadcaster quoted Macron.

When asked if he wanted other leaders to join his calls for a cease-fire, Macron said, “I hope they will.”

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said world leaders should be condemning Hamas, and not Israel.

“These crimes that Hamas (is) committing today in Gaza will be committed tomorrow in Paris, New York and anywhere in the world,” Netanyahu said.

WHO Chief outlines ‘unimaginable conditions’ in Gaza hospitals to UNSC

The health care system in the Gaza Strip is “on its knees,” the head of the World Health Organization told the UN Security Council.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the “situation on the ground was impossible to describe.”

“Hospital corridors crammed with the injured, the sick, the dying, morgues overflowing, surgery without anesthesia, tens of thousands of displaced people sheltering at hospitals, families crammed into overcrowded schools, desperate for food and water,” he said.

-DW

TOWN OF GRINDAVIK

Iceland evacuates people amid volcanic threat

REYKJAVIK [ICELAND]: Iceland has declared a state of emergency, compelling authorities to urge residents to evacuate the coastal town of Grindavik due to an increased risk of a volcanic eruption triggered by a series of intense earthquakes in the southwest of the country, CNN reported.

Nearly 800 quakes were recorded between midnight and 2 pm on Friday, with the shallowest at a depth of 3-3.5 kilometres (1.86-2.18 miles), according to the Icelandic Meteorological Office.

Iceland’s Civil Protection Agency issued a statement expressing concerns about a magma tunnel forming that could potentially reach Grindavik. However, as of Friday evening, they stated the impossibility of determining if and where the magma might breach the surface.

“Earthquakes may become bigger than those that have already occurred, and this sequence of events could lead to an eruption. However, there are still no signs

that the magma is nearing the surface. Its progress is being closely monitored,” CNN reported the Civil Protection Agency as saying.

Authorities are advising residents to evacuate calmly, reassuring them that there is no imminent danger.

The agency stated, “Residents must evacuate their homes and leave the town. But we also want to reiterate that this is not an emergency evacuation; there is plenty of time to prepare, secure things and drive out of town calmly.”

“We want to reiterate that residents must evacuate their homes and leave the town. But we also want to reiterate that this is not an emergency evacuation; there is plenty of time to prepare, secure things and drive out of town calmly,” the Civil Protection Agency also said.

“It is clear that we are dealing with events that we Icelanders have not experienced before, at least not since the eruption in Vestmannaeyjar. We faced that

together; we will face this together and we will not lose heart,” it added.

The US Embassy in Iceland issued a volcano alert, cautioning about the heightened signs of volcanic activity. It stated, “If an eruption occurs, follow the instructions of Icelandic authorities. Volcanic hazards may include lava, toxic gases, and heavy smoke from fires ignited by lava.”

The world-renowned Blue Lagoon thermal pool in the affected area has already closed due to the ongoing seismic activity.

Since 2021, Iceland has witnessed an eruption almost every 12 months, with the latest occurring in July south of Reykjavik, the capital.

Iceland, situated on a tectonic plate boundary, continuously undergoes splitting, pushing North America and Eurasia away from each other along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. The country is home to 32 active volcanoes, CNN reported.

-ANT



US President to meet Chinese counterpart

The meeting will test whether the two leaders can slow a downward spiral in relations at a moment of heavy global turbulence

WASHINGTON, DC: US President Joe Biden is set to meet Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping next Wednesday in the San Francisco Bay Area, CNN reported citing senior US administration officials. The meeting will test whether the two leaders can slow a downward spiral in relations at a moment of heavy global turbulence. However, reportedly, the talks are not likely to soften the world's most consequential bilateral relationship. Instead, the fact that the meeting is happening at all is viewed by White House aides as a positive sign after months of friction. Moreover, the US officials stressed that the leaders hoped to develop a "framework" for managing successful competitive relations between the two powers, with the goal of clearing up misperceptions and avoiding surprises, reported CNN. Additionally, the US officials said that Biden's aides were enter-



ing the summit with realistic expectations and did not anticipate a long list of outcomes later on. As the conflict continues in West Asia and a war in Ukraine, Biden is eager to prevent another world crisis from exploding on his watch. Moreover, one of his top foreign policy priorities stands for restoring stability to the Washington-Beijing relationship, even as global tensions rise, CNN reported. The two leaders are expected to discuss various issues, including, restoring military-to-military communication between the two countries, a chief objective for

Biden, who plans to press Xi on the issue. Moreover, it also includes the conflicts in Israel and Ukraine, areas of potential cooperation like climate change and counter- ing narcotics trafficking, deep disagreements over human rights issues and military escalation in the South China Sea and around Taiwan. According to the US officials, the talks would be expansive and spread out over multiple working sessions, CNN reported. Meanwhile, the US has pressured China to play a more constructive role in both the

Israel-Hamas conflict and the Russia-Ukraine war and encouraged the country to step up its role on the world stage. Bonny Lin, director of the China Power Project and senior fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, said, "Right now, neither the United States nor China is entering the meeting between President Biden and President Xi expecting to significantly improve or reset the relationship. Rather, the meeting will be about managing and stabilizing the bilateral relationship, improving communication, and reducing misunderstandings before they occur." -ANI



Afghan girls reiterate demand to reopen schools

KABUL: After two years of the Taliban's decision to ban girls from accessing education after sixth class, Afghan girls reiterated their demand to reopen schools for them once again, reported TOLO News. Coinciding with World Science Day, Afghan girl students who are above sixth class, said that education is one of their fundamental rights and the Taliban should open the gates of schools to girls as soon as possible. Asma, a student, said, "Eight hundred days is not a small number. A day for a girl to study is like a year, but it's been 800 days since you deprived Afghan girls of education." Another student, Shabnam, 18, who aspires to be a doctor, said, "Today is the World's Science Day, and the largest part of the Afghan society, which is women, are deprived of their most basic right. My request to the caretaker government is to open the gates of schools to all Afghan girls as soon as possible." World Science Day is celebrated on November 10 every year globally for Peace and Development, reported TOLO News. Many Afghan university teachers consider Afghanistan to be one of the countries where the education process has always faced challenges. They added that the Taliban should put access to education for the girls' students on their agenda. Hekmatullah Mirzada, a university scholar, said, "Keeping a large part of the society, i.e. women and girls, from education, is actually avoiding a religious order on the one hand and on the other hand, depriving this large and influential section of society of the blessing of literacy, which is actually a divine order." However, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, said that the caretaker government is trying to make Afghanistan progress in various sciences, TOLO News reported. -ANI

TEMPERATURES

Earth records its hottest 12-month stretch: US study

WASHINGTON DC: A new US study has found has said the Earth just recorded its hottest 12-month stretch, CBS News reported. CBS News is the news division of the American television and radio service CBS. As per a report from Climate Central, the planet ran nearly 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit above average from November 2022 through October 2023. The report said that 90 per cent of people worldwide, and 49 per cent in the US, experienced at least ten days of temperatures very strongly influenced by climate change. In addition to heatwaves, costly and deadly wildfires, droughts and extreme weather also took a toll on populations across the globe, according to CBS News. November 22-October 23 was warm but not extreme for the Twin Cities (1.4°F above average), Minnesota (1.3°F above average) or the US as a whole (1.1°F above average). The Gulf Coast was the hottest in the US with Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Florida ranking first for their hottest November 2022 through October 2023 period. The Climate Central report revealed that only two countries around the world were below av-



erage -- Lesotho and Iceland. The hottest international spots were Europe and North Africa, with some countries running more than 3°F above average. Weather attribution analysis reveals that during the 12-month span, 5.7 billion people were exposed to at least 30 days of above-average temperatures made at least three times more likely by the influence of climate change, or level-three on Climate Central's Climate Shift Index. That exposure included nearly every resident of Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam,

Bangladesh, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Italy, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Mexico, and every Caribbean and Central American nation. In India, 1.2 billion residents -- 86 per cent of the population -- experienced Climate Shift Index level-three temperatures on 30 or more days. In China, that figure was 513 million residents -- 35 per cent of the population; and in the United States, 88 million -- 26 per cent of the population - experienced at least 30 days of temperatures made at least three times more likely by climate change. -DW

2+2 DIALOGUE

Blinken meets with Indian minister, discusses defence, strategic relations

New Delhi: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in New Delhi on Friday to discuss defence and strategic collaboration in the face of global challenges. They were joined by US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh for the talks. The top US and Indian officials met for the annual "2+2 Dialogue" to discuss issues of concern, including security and strengthen bilateral ties. Friday's discussions focused on the Indo-Pacific region, China, and the Israel-Hamas conflict. According to Jaishankar, the dialogue aims to establish "a forward-looking partnership" and help "construct a shared global agenda." Blinken's tour of Asia is seen as a move to show unity with regional partners over Russia's war in Ukraine as well as to find common ground over the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The secretary of state's tour has seen him visit key allies in Asia, such as South Korea and Japan. Washington and New Delhi have taken steps to boost their relations, but these are still mired by significant differences, especially in how to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "We are promoting a free and open and prosperous Asia-Pacific, including by strengthening our partnership in the Quad with Ja-



pan and Australia," Blinken said at the start of the meeting. US Defense Secretary Austin and Indian counterpart Singh are set to discuss a plan for industrial defense collaboration to accelerate technology partnership and joint production in various areas, according to the US Defence Department. Singh highlighted defense as an important pillar of the India-US bilateral relationship and said despite "various emerging geopolitical challenges, we need to keep our focus on important and long-term issues." **Talks to build on Modi-Biden vision** The "2+2 Dialogue" seeks to build on the foundation laid by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington in June and the subsequent trip of US President Joe Biden to New Delhi for the G20 summit in September. "Together we have been taking very concrete steps to deliver on the vision that our two leaders put forward," Blinken said. Blinken also addressed the fallout between India and Canada that was sparked by allegations that India was involved in the murder of a Canadian citizen. "These are two of our closest friends and partners and, of course, we want to see them resolving any differences or disputes that they have," Blinken said. "As a friend of both, we think it's very important that India work with Canada on its investigation, and that they find a way to resolve this difference in a cooperative way." These annual meetings, which started in 2018, aim to align policy objectives and deepen defence ties between the two nations. -ANI

REPATRIATION PROCESS

Over 80% of Afghan repatriates possess valid documentation

KARACHI: More than 80 per cent of Afghans sent to transit centres possess some form of identification, raising challenges for authorities in the repatriation process, Dawn reported. Most of these individuals are not willing to return voluntarily, leaving officials with limited options, as there is currently no mechanism in place to efficiently verify their identification documents, including Afghan Citizenship Cards (ACC), Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, and even computerised national identity cards (CNIC). The lack of a streamlined verification process has prompted authorities to seek assistance from the Sindh Home Department. Officials have requested the issuance of directives to Senior Superinten-



dents of Police (SSPs) to instruct Station House Officers (SHOs) not to send individuals with valid documents to transit centres. The verification process for

these documents is causing significant delays in the repatriation process, according to Dawn. A senior official highlighted the issue of some Afghans sending

only their minor children unaccompanied by adult relatives, further contributing to delays. Additionally, there have been cases where SHOs allegedly confis-

cated individuals' ACCs, PoRs, and even CNICs before sending them to transit centres for documentation. The authorities have emphasised that only "completely undocumented" and "documented but willing to go" Afghans are intended to be repatriated in the initial phase. Karachi Commissioner Mohammad Saleem Rajput has urged the home department to collaborate with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to facilitate the verification process, according to Dawn. In a letter, he emphasised the need for NADRA's technical assistance in each district, citing difficulties in verifying the genuineness of documents and identifying illegal foreigners. However, the correspondence revealed challenges with the Nadra Dashboard's functionality in district headquarters, causing delays and affecting the pace of evacuating illegal foreigners in Karachi division. Commissioner Rajput urged the home department to address technical issues with Nadra Dashboard and ensure the provision of skilled staff teams in each district. Meanwhile, over 180 "illegal" Afghans were sent to the Chaman border for repatriation, with intensified efforts to accelerate the process. Directions have been issued to Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and SSPs to enhance search and comb operations, with Nadra support and verification devices available in the field. -ANI

SPORTS



Stokes, Willey fashion a last hurrah as Jos Butler's men beat Pakistan by 93 runs; both the teams make disappointing exits from World Cup



WORLD CUP 2023 GROUP STANDINGS							
TEAM	P	W	L	N/R	T	NRR	PTS
India	8	8	0	0	0	+2.456	16
South Africa	9	7	2	0	0	+1.261	14
Australia	9	7	2	0	0	+0.841	14
New Zealand	9	5	4	0	0	+0.743	10
Pakistan	9	4	5	0	0	-0.199	8
Afghanistan	9	4	5	0	0	-0.336	8
England	9	3	6	0	0	-0.572	6
Bangladesh	9	2	7	0	0	-1.087	4
Sri Lanka	9	2	7	0	0	-1.419	4
Netherlands	8	2	6	0	0	-1.635	4

ICC ODI World Cup 2023
semi-finalists confirmed



MUMBAI: The four semi-finalists have been confirmed for the knockout stage of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 on Saturday. Hosts India will finish top of the standings during the group stage of the event regardless of the result in their final match against the Netherlands on Sunday, with Rohit Sharma's side already locked in to tackle New Zealand in a knockout semi-final on Wednesday, 15 November. That match will commence at 2 pm IST at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, the same venue where India registered a commanding 302-run vic-

tory over Sri Lanka earlier in the tournament. The second semi-final will be held the following day, with South Africa and Australia to battle for a place in the final on Thursday, 16 November at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. That match will also commence at 2 pm IST, with the winner to progress through to the final against either India or New Zealand. The World Cup final will be held at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday, 19 November, where more than 100,000 fans are expected to attend for the climax of the 13th edition of the tournament.

KOLKATA: England produced their best performance of a disappointing World Cup campaign on Saturday, beating Pakistan at Eden Gardens by 93 runs as both teams exited the event at the group stage. Pakistan began proceedings knowing that they had the slim-est of chances of still reaching the semi-finals, requiring a win by an enormous margin to force a gar-gantuan swing on net run rate. And the prospect of such a result soon vanished as England built towards a sizeable first-innings score. Ben Stokes smashed 84 from 76 balls to help spark England in their final game of the tournament, while Jonny Bairstow (59) and Joe Root (60) also hit half-centuries in the 337/9. And, with the ball, England were right on the money right from the start, with David Willey starring on his final day in an England shirt. Willey finished with figures of 3/56, becoming the 14th Eng-land men's player to reach 100 wickets in the ODI format, helping his team secure a guaranteed top-eight finish that cements the team's qualification for the next Champions Trophy. Pakistan lost both their open-ers, with Willey taking both wick-ets with the new ball. Abdullah Shafique was trapped in-front off just the second ball of the innings for a duck. And Fakhar Zaman de-parted two overs later, caught by Stokes. Babar Azam and Moham-mad Rizwan did see out the pow-erplay, but Azam's innings came to an end when he was caught at midwicket off Gus Atkinson for 38. Any lingering hopes for Pakistan were effectively snuffed out when Moeen Ali cleaned up Mohammad Rizwan for 36. On a turning wick-et it was Adil Rashid and Moeen who took advantage, with Rashid removing Saud Shaeel for 29, and then cleaning up Shadab Khan (4). The leg-spinner finished with 2/55, while Moeen took 2/60. Willey returned to pick up his third, with the dismissal of Agha Salman, who hit 51 from 45 balls. Some late hitting limited the margin of Pakistan's loss, as Shaheen Shah Afridi (25) Moham-mad Wasim (16*) and Haris Rauf (35 from 23) connected some big late shots. But it was too little too late for a Pakistan side who join England in departing the tourna-ment at the group stage. Earlier, Buttler decided to bat after winning the toss. From Pa-kistan's perspective, this wasn't the best of news, given the huge net run rate swing they required to snatch the fourth semi-final spot. After overcoming an early hostile spell from Afridi and Haris Rauf, the England openers flourished. They were also assisted by some wayward bowling from Rauf, who conceded three wides in his first three overs, two of which went over the keeper's head for a four. Things slowed down once Wasim came into operation in tandem with the tweakers, with the batters failing to find bounda-ries. Dawid Malan eventually fell to Iftikhar Ahmed. England lost their second wicket when Jonny Bairstow fell to Rauf. Pakistan could've had a third wicket in the 25th over as well, but Afridi spilled a simple chance offered by Stokes off his own bowling. This proved costly, as Stokes smashed four boundaries off the next 10 balls from Afridi. Stokes then unleashed bounda-ries at will to lift the England scor-ing rate to 5.82 at the 35-over mark. Along with Root, he picked the scoring rate even further, adding 36 runs in overs 36-40. It took an absolute jaffa from Af-ridi, to send back Stokes for 84, and Root followed two overs later to the same bowler, departing for 60. England's innings was at risk of petering out, but Jos Buttler 27 (18), Harry Brook 30 (17), Moeen Ali 8 (6) and David Willey 15 (5), all smashed sixes to fire England well beyond 300. But for a superb mini-spell of death bowling from Rauf, who removed Brook and Moeen and ran out Buttler, the total could be far more. **Brief scores:** England 337/9 (Ben Stokes 84, Joe Root 60, Jonny Bairstow 59; Haris Rauf 3/64, Shaheen Afridi 2/72, Mohammad Wasim 2/74) beat Pakistan 244 in 43.3 overs (Agha Salman 51; David Willey 3-56) - (cricketworldcup.com)

EIGHT-WICKET TRIUMPH

Marsh ton inspires Australia to win over Bangladesh

PUNE: Mitchell Marsh scored a brilliant unbeaten 177 as Australia chased down Bangla-desh's impressive first-innings effort of 306/8 with ease to end their group stage on a victorious note on Saturday. Australia's No.3 slammed 26 boundaries including nine sixes in his inspired century, lighting up the second innings of the match. Marsh's efforts, along with a half-century from David Warner (53) and good support from Steve Smith (63) saw them make easy work of a demanding chase, send-ing Australia towards the semi-finals full of confidence. Defeat for Bangladesh sees them finish their tournament on four points and with qualification for the Champions Trophy now hing-ing on Netherlands' result against India on Sunday. Australia's top-order strength was on full display as they made short work of what could have been a challenging total. Australia lost a wicket early on in the chase when Travis Head played on while trying to take on Taskin Ahmed, as the ball took an inside edge and then kissed his stumps before rolling back to the keeper. However, the arrival of Marsh lifted Australia. Dealing primarily in boundaries, the all-rounder ensured Australia went ahead closer to seven runs an over. The arrival of Bangladesh spin-ners temporarily slowed down the scoring rate, with Warner taking his time to get going as runs flowed at the other end. Marsh brought up his half-cen-tury off just 37 balls. And Warner followed to his own 50 off 52 balls, kicking on after getting his eye in against the spinners. Australia's dominant start to their chase hit a bump when War-ner, who had begun to get bogged down, clipped a catch to Najmul Hossain Shanto off Mustafizur Rahman for 53 from 61. But, with Marsh still out in the middle and playing beautifully, Australia were still well-placed in their search for 307 to win. And the powerful batter kicked on in style. Supported by the re-turning Smith, Marsh muscled his way to an outstanding knock of 177 from just 132 balls, smashing nine sixes in his phenomenal innings. Smith finished not out on 63* from 64 balls, as Australia reached the winning post with 32 balls to spare and sending a message to their semi-final opponents. **How Bangladesh set a sizeable target** Pat Cummins won the toss and opted to bowl first, before con-firming that match-winning hero Glenn Maxwell had been handed a well-earned rest to get himself back into peak condition for the knockout stages. A classy half-century from Tawhid Hridoy (74) helped Bang-ladesh amass 306/8 against Aus-tralia which might have been much more but for Marnus La-buschagne's impact in the field. Bangladesh's top five batters each made at least 30 but only Hri-doy (74) could turn a start into a fifty as Australia were able to make the most of some outstanding fielding to prevent their opponents from taking command. Labuschagne had a direct hand in four of Australia's dismissals including the stunning run outs of Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mah-mudullah Riyad that broke up a pair of ominous stands. Stand-in skipper Shanto (45) was the first to test Labuschagne's arm when looking for a second run but fell agonisingly short despite a last-gasp dive. In-form veteran Mahmudul-lah (32) was caught out of his crease soon after when attempt-ing a quick single as Labuschagne swooped on the ball and threw down the stumps in one action that included a dive. Australia pacer Sean Abbott (2/61) claimed a wicket in his Cricket World Cup debut to end the first budding partnership be-tween Bangladesh openers Tanzid Hasan and Litton Das (36). The Bangladesh opening pair settled quickly and reached 62/0 at the end of 10 overs, while Aus-tralia failed to take a wicket in the first powerplay for the fourth time in nine matches. Abbott struck soon after with a sharp caught and bowled to dis-miss Hasan for 36 from 34 balls when Bangladesh were on 76. Adam Zampa (2/32) then put Bangladesh on the ropes when Das (36) chipped straight to La-buschagne and lifted the Australia leg-spinner to equal-first for the most wickets at the tournament thus far. Shanto then joined forces with Hridoy to guide Bangladesh to 161/2 at the halfway mark of the innings and leave the match evenly poised. After Labuschagne struck twice to run out Shanto and Mahmudul-lah, Mushfiquur Rahim (21) looked solid until caught trying to lift the run rate as Zampa claimed out-right first place for the most wick-ets at the Cricket World Cup thus far. Bangladesh were able to pass 300 and push toward their high-est total of the tournament while Australia picked up regular wick-ets at the death to ensure it was a target they would still be confident of reaching. **Brief scores:** Bangladesh 306/8 (Towhid Hridoy 74, Najmul Hos-sain Shanto 45; Sean Abbott 2/61, Adam Zampa 2/32) lost to Aus-tralia 307/2 in 44.4 overs (Mitch-ell Marsh 177*, David Warner 53, Steven Smith 63; - (cricketworldcup.com)



GLOBAL ECONOMIC JITTERS

In a stark warning, Fitch Ratings predicts that higher-than-expected oil prices, stemming from potential disruptions in the Middle East's oil supply due to conflicts, could significantly impact global economic growth and lead to a surge in inflation.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



VISIT OMAN AT WTM

At this year's World Travel Market (WTM), Visit Oman, the Sultanate of Oman's trusted B2B travel booking platform, announced a dynamic new partnership with Attraction World Group, a leading distributor of high-quality travel experiences and attractions.

MSX rebounds in weekly trading amid regional uncertainties

The market could remain exposed to additional losses. Geopolitical tensions in the region still constitute a source of risk and could continue to weigh on sentiment

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman stock market saw a volatile week amid global and regional uncertainties, according to an analyst. "While it was able to rebound to a certain extent this week from its long decline, recording a positive performance, the MSX 30 ended with a price correction on its last trading day," Hani Abuagla Senior Market Analyst at XTB said.

As a result, the market could remain exposed to additional losses. Geopolitical tensions in the region still constitute a source of risk and could continue to weigh on sentiment, he added.

The value and volumes traded on the stock exchange have continued their decline for the second week in a row. Both values have been receding from their peak at the end of last month. "The market strongly benefited from the introduction of OQ Gas Networks dur-



ing that period. However, trading volumes still remain higher than in previous months despite the decline," Hani Abuagla said.

The market was mainly supported by the performance of the financial sector which recorded a 1.10 percent increase this week. The services and industrial sectors fell, however, extending their multi-week decline, although losses were more limited than during previous weeks. The financial sector's performance was led by the rise of Bank Dhofar and Ahli Bank. Bank Dhofar recorded one of the best performances on the market this week.

"Banks could remain a focus for investors as the economy continues to feel the weight of high interest rates. At the same time, changing expectations regarding monetary policy could affect stock performance and sentiment. As a result, attention could remain on the Federal Reserve and US economic data in particular after the latest US job market data," he said.

Oman's stock market gains 46 points in weekly trading

MUSCAT: The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) closed at the end of trading on Thursday at 4,539 points, up 46 points, bringing it back to the psychological barrier of 4,500 points that it abandoned at the beginning of this month. The financial sector index recorded gains of 80 points, the Sharia index rose 6 points, and in contrast, the industrial sector index declined 29 points. The services sector index lost about 7 points.

Purchases by local investment institutions accounted for 74.4 percent of the total trading value, compared to sales of 45.8 percent of the total trading value, so that local investment institutions could absorb the excess liquidity from Omani individuals who turned to selling, so that their sales constituted 26.4 percent of the total trading value compared to purchases of about 17.5 percent of the total trading value.

Trading data issued by the MSX showed that Gulf investors tended to sell, with their sales accounting for 20.1 per-



cent of the total trading value, compared to purchases of 2.9 percent of trades.

Trading on the MSX declined last week to about OMR22.8 million, compared to OMR32.9 million in the previous week, with a decline in the trading value of OQ Gas Networks shares, which last week ranked third among the most traded companies, at OMR4.8 million, compared to trades worth OMR19.9 million in the previous week. Last week Bank Muscat topped the most traded companies in terms of trading value with OMR7.3 million, representing 32.3 percent of the total trad-

ing value, and Omantel came second with trading value of OMR6.2 million.

Ominvest said last week that it had obtained approval from the Central Bank of Oman CBO to increase its stake in Bank Muscat to 15 percent, but it did not indicate the target date for reaching this percentage. According to Bank Muscat's financial statements until last September, the Royal Court Affairs owns 23.6 percent of the total. The capital of Bank Muscat, while Dubai Financial Group owns an 11.7 percent stake in the bank's capital, but in recent weeks the group has sold part of

its stake in the bank.

Last week, the Muscat Stock Exchange recorded gains in its market capitalisation amounting to OMR25 million, rising at the end of Thursday's trading to OMR23.64 billion.

Last week, MSX witnessed the execution of 7,146 transactions compared to 12,197 transactions in the previous week, recording a decline of 41 percent. This decline came in conjunction with a decline in the number of transactions executed on OQ Gas Networks shares from 10,576 transactions to 5,267 transactions, and the share price closed at 149 baisas, an increase of one baisa.

Last week, the prices of 21 securities rose compared to 28 securities whose prices declined, and 22 securities maintained their previous levels. National Aluminium Products shares recorded the highest increase, rising by 45 percent and closing at 58 baisas. Ooredoo shares rose by 9.6 percent and closed at 340 baisas. The stock rose. Al Jazeera Services rose to 208 baisas, up 9.4 percent. - ONA

ISWA WORLD CONGRESS

be'ah takes centre-stage in global sustainability talks as ISWA Congress wraps up in Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah) became a prominent destination for international experts on waste management and received international recognition in the field of sustainability, as it hosted the much-anticipated ISWA World Congress 2023, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat from October 30 to November 1.

Organised annually by the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), the prestigious international event garnered significant attention from environmental leaders and experts worldwide, showcasing this year the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to sustainability and positioning the country as a global leader in waste management and environmental stewardship.

The Congress attracted over 1,200 attendees from around the globe, representing a diverse and influential global network dedicated to advancing environmental sustainability and waste management. delegates from around the world were given a unique opportunity to witness Oman's incredible strides in sustainable



waste management. They had the chance to visit be'ah's state-of-the-art hazardous waste management facilities and cutting-edge laboratory in Sohar. The excursion also included visits to the well-maintained landfills in Barka and Amerat, which serve as prime examples of be'ah's commitment to international standards and sustainable practices.

Underlining the value of this international event, Dr. Mohab Ali Al Hinai, VP of Sustainability

and Circular Economy, at be'ah, stated, "We were honoured to host the ISWA World Congress and to welcome esteemed professionals from around the world to witness our operations and advances in the Sultanate. This event provided a platform to reiterate Oman's steadfast dedication to pioneering sustainability across industries, as well as be'ah's commitment to promoting circular economy and sustainability, pursuing its strategy aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

We have set a global benchmark for environmental stewardship, and our commitment to creating a cleaner, more sustainable world is unwavering."

be'ah's journey towards excellence in waste management began in 2012 when they initiated the ambitious task of closing over 300 traditional dumpsites and rehabilitating a significant number of them. In their place, 11 engineered landfills and 16 transfer stations were established, all built to the highest international standards. Sustainability and health, safety, and environment (HSE) considerations were at the core of these developments, ensuring the responsible management of hazardous waste and preventing any leachate leakage.

This ISWA World Congress 2023 showcased Oman's commitment to preserving the environment and served as a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices with the global community, ultimately advancing the cause of a cleaner, more sustainable world. As the Congress drew to a close, the global community passed the torch to the next hosting city, Cape Town, South Africa, with a renewed commitment to shaping a Net Zero Future.

IMF REPORT



POSITIVE IMPACT: With UNWTO data pointing to a return to 95 per cent of pre-pandemic tourist numbers by the end of the year in the best case scenario, the IMF report outlines the positive impact the sector's rapid recovery will have on certain economies worldwide. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

Tourism identified as a key driver of economic recovery and growth: Report

GENEVA: Tourism has again been identified as a key driver of economic recovery and growth in a new report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

With UNWTO data pointing to a return to 95 per cent of pre-pandemic tourist numbers by the end of the year in the best case scenario, the IMF report outlines the positive impact the sector's rapid recovery will have on certain economies worldwide.

According to the World Economic Outlook (WEO) Report, the global economy will grow an estimated 3.0 per cent in 2023 and 2.9 per cent in 2024. While this is higher than previous forecasts, it is nevertheless below the 3.5 per cent rate of growth recorded in 2022, pointing to the continued impacts of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and from the cost-of-living crisis.

The WEO report analyses economic growth in every global region, connecting performance with key sectors, including tourism. Notably, those economies with "large travel and tourism sectors" show strong economic

resilience and robust levels of economic activity. More specifically, countries where tourism represents a high percentage of GDP have recorded faster recovery from the impacts of the pandemic in comparison to economies where tourism is not a significant sector.

As the report Foreword notes: "Strong demand for services has supported service-oriented economies—including important tourism destinations such as France and Spain."

The latest outlook from the IMF comes on the back of UNWTO's most recent analysis of the prospects for tourism, at the global and regional levels. Pending the release of the November 2023 World Tourism Barometer, international tourism is on track to reach 80 per cent to 95 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in 2023. Prospects for September-December 2023 point to continued recovery, driven by the still pent-up demand and increased air connectivity particularly in Asia and the Pacific where recovery is still subdued. - WAM

BETTER PROFITS

Wall Street rallies and adds to its strong gains in November

NEW YORK: Wall Street rose sharply Friday, keeping November on track to be one of its best months of the year, as companies continued to turn in better profits for the summer than expected.

The S&P 500 leaped 1.6% amid a widespread rally. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 391 points or 1.2%, and the Nasdaq composite was 2% higher, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

Stocks climbed as financial markets recovered from a slump the prior day, triggered in part by worries that the Federal Reserve may hike its main interest rate further



to get inflation under control. Bets diminished among traders on Friday that the Fed will increase rates at its next meeting, even though a

report in the morning indicated expectations for inflation among US households are on the rise.

This earnings reporting season

is also turning out much better than analysts expected, and it's likely to show the first growth in earnings per share for S&P 500 companies in a year, according to FactSet. But the focus is swinging toward what companies will do later this year and beyond as interest rates remain high and the US economy is expected to slow. "We think earnings growth can accelerate in 2024," said David Lefkowitz, head of US equities at UBS Global Wealth Management. That's one reason he's forecasting the S&P 500 can continue to rise modestly over the next year. - BNA

MARKET

Visit Oman inks pact to expand digital footprint of tourism sector in Oman

Visit Oman strengthens its tourism vision with Attractions World Group, capitalising on recent digital partnerships to enhance value for local businesses

Times News Service

LONDON: At this year's World Travel Market (WTM), Visit Oman, the Sultanate of Oman's trusted B2B travel booking platform, announced a dynamic new partnership with Attraction World Group (AWG), a leading distributor of high-quality travel experiences and attractions.

This alliance comes on the heels of Visit Oman's recent collaboration with digital enabler Prioticket and represents a significant step in the nation's digital tourism strategy. The signing, which took place amidst the buzz and global networking of the WTM from November 6 to 8, sets the stage for a transformative collaboration aimed at digitising and diversifying Oman's travel offerings.



The signing ceremony was attended by the esteemed presence of dignitaries, among them Azzan Al Busaidi, Oman's Undersecretary for Tourism for the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Chairman of Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group); Dr Hashil Al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran Group; and Olly Nicholls, Group CEO of Attraction World Group (AWG).

This latest partnership aims to expand the digital footprint of Oman's tourism sector, harnessing the synergies of both collaborations to enhance the country's global tourism appeal and further support

the growth of Omani SMEs.

AWG is known as a prominent global leader in delivering tours, excursions, and exceptional travel experiences. Their emphasis is on advanced technology solutions customised for travel and tourism industry partners. Visit Oman will leverage AWG's robust digital infrastructure and industry standing, to significantly amplify the reach and accessibility of the products offered by Omani ventures, especially those offered by small and medium enterprises.

"The alliance with Attractions World Group marks a significant leap in integrating state-of-the-

art technology with our tourism initiatives," asserted Dr. Hashil Al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran Group. "It is a move that aligns with our unwavering commitment to cultivate novel opportunities that stimulate tourism in Oman through innovative digital platforms. This partnership stands out as a pioneering effort to position Omani tourism businesses on the global map, enabling them to be accessible to an international audience at the click of a button. It is about simplifying the path to global visibility, minimising marketing overheads, and driving the growth and development of local enterprises."

Group CEO of Attraction World Group, Olly Nicholls, echoes this vision, stressing the strategic importance of connecting global tourists with Oman's unique experiences. "We are absolutely thrilled to announce our latest partnership with Visit Oman. This collaboration marks the beginning of an exciting journey, not only to provide unparalleled distribution opportunities for attractions, experiences, tours, and other captivating activities within Oman but also to afford Visit Oman's partners immediate access to our extensive global network. This spans retail travel agents, airlines, cruise lines, tour operators, and loyalty schemes.

Together with Visit Oman, we're embarking on a mission to empower Omani SMEs, enabling them to put their exceptional products on the international stage. We're setting new standards in travel industry distribution and offer an incredible platform to enhance the visibility of Oman's unique tourism experiences."

This collaboration comes at a time when the importance of digital innovation in the travel sector has never been more pronounced. It is a strategy that not only broadens the market reach for Omani tours and attraction providers but also enhances the travel experience through state-of-the-art digital engagement. By doing so, Visit Oman ensures that the benefits for the entire Omani tourism ecosystem are fully realised, keeping it agile and poised to meet the demands of the modern traveller.

"In an age where most travellers arrange their trips online, digitisa-

tion means putting Oman on the map, quite literally, in the digital world that modern tourists navigate," explains Shabib Al Maamari, Managing Director of Visit Oman. "We're ensuring that with just a few clicks, every Omani tourism entrepreneur and service provider can gain direct advantages from the international exposure to our vibrant culture and the diverse beauty of our landscapes."

With the spotlight on tourism initiatives, this partnership brings new advantages to the Oman tourism sector. The term 'digitisation' might sound hi-tech, but at its core, it means making the entire travel experience smoother, simpler, and more accessible for everyone involved. From a smartphone or computer, travellers can now discover the wonders of Oman, book their adventures, and ensure that their spending supports local businesses. For the SME owner, this translates to new customers from across the globe, fewer barriers to market entry, and the chance to shine on the world stage without the need for complex and costly marketing campaigns.

The partnership with Attractions World Group marks a significant milestone in Oman's deliberate and strategic journey toward digitalization in tourism, showcasing Visit Oman's commitment to creating partnerships that not only advance the sector but also provide real economic advantages and safeguard the interests of the nation's SMEs, equipping them with the tools and visibility to grow alongside the burgeoning global travel sector.

TRADE FAIR IN GERMANY

Over \$10 billion Middle East cables, wires and tubes industry reaps dividends of infrastructure growth

DUBAI: The estimated over \$10 billion Middle East wire, cables and tubes industry reaping the dividends of infrastructure growth in the region is looking at enhancing their export potential further by participating in world's leading twin trade fair, wire 2024 and Tube 2024 in Dusseldorf from April 15-19.

Addressing a press conference, a spokesperson for Messe Dusseldorf GmbH, organisers of the two fairs said 132 companies from the Middle East and India have confirmed participation, including 12 from the UAE and 110 from India, joining their global counterparts to tap into the opportunities presented by the global market estimated to grow from \$330 billion in



2021 to over \$420 billion by 2026 at a CAGR of 5 per cent.

"With robust and exponential growth in the development of infrastructure in sectors such as oil and gas, telecom, construction and industrial manufacturing, the Mid-

dle East is now a sweet spot for the wires, cables and tubes industry. The wire 2024 and Tube 2024 will be a platform and vantage point for ME companies to showcase their strengths and partner with global companies to take the industry forward with innovation and sustainability," said Friedrich Georg Kehrer, Global Portfolio Director, wire / Tube and Flow Technologies, Messe Dusseldorf GmbH.

He said Middle Eastern companies have taken a cumulative exhibition space of 1.142 sqm this year. Exhibitors from the UAE including Ducab which exports over 60 per cent of its products to 45 markets across the Gulf, Asia, Oceania, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

Other participants are from Bahrain, Egypt, Iran and Oman.

The leading global fairs, wire 2024& Tube 2024, will have around 2,000 exhibitors from across 60 countries from the US, Middle East, Central and South America, Asia and Africa, spread across over 1 million sq.ft.

"The Middle East is very significant for wire and Tube since large number of trade visitors come from the region. During the last show, we had 2,365 trade visitors, which was 5.5 per cent of the total visitors. Middle East is a dynamic region where companies like Ducab continues to create new benchmarks in growth, innovation and sustainable methods of production," said Kehrer.

INVESTMENT SUMMIT

'Global investors should eye opportunities in China'

HONG KONG: Global investors have to "be watching and investing" in China in view of the extraordinary capabilities of management teams in China and their highly competitive products, Citadel founder Ken Griffin has said.

Speaking at the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit held in Hong Kong, Griffin noted on Tuesday that in the past, an investor could have been well-served by exclusively investing in US companies for 100 years. However, he said that the world has changed. "There's much more innovation outside of the United States relative to 50 years ago," said Griffin.

He highlighted the extraordinary capabilities of management

teams in China, noting that they produce highly competitive products on the global stage, especially in the solar and electric vehicle industries.

Also on Tuesday, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised its forecast for China's growth by 0.4 percentage point, setting its gross domestic product (GDP) projection for 2023 at 5.4 per cent growth.

"The Chinese economy is on track to meet the government's 2023 growth target, reflecting a strong post-COVID recovery," said a statement made by the IMF's First Deputy Managing Director Gita Gopinath following a visit to China. -xinhua

GLOBAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Global economic jitters: Fitch Ratings predicts economic impact from rising crude prices

NEW DELHI: In a stark warning, Fitch Ratings predicts that higher-than-expected oil prices, stemming from potential disruptions in the Middle East's oil supply due to conflicts, could significantly impact global economic growth and lead to a surge in inflation.

According to Fitch's Global Economic Outlook (GEO), a scenario with average oil prices of \$75 per barrel in 2024 and \$70 per barrel in 2025 could be upended if oil prices spike to \$120 per barrel in 2024 and \$100 per barrel in 2025 due to supply restrictions.

The simulations, conducted using the Oxford Economics Global Economic Model, reveal a potential 0.4 percentage point (pp) reduction in world Gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2024, with a lingering 0.1 pp lower growth in 2025.

Despite the modest rebound anticipated in 2025, Fitch suggests a persistent moderate impact beyond the initial shock.

The impact of higher oil prices would be felt across the board, with the absence of significant growth rebound in 2025 indicating a potentially longer-lasting effect on GDP levels in most countries.

Notably, the negative growth impact in 2024 ranges from 0.1 pp in Indonesia to a substantial 0.9 pp in Korea, with the US, the Eurozone and Japan experiencing impacts of 0.5 pp.

Emerging market countries like



South Africa and Turkey would face significant impacts of 0.7 pp, while Russia and Brazil, owing to their reliance on oil production, would experience varied effects.

The aggregate impact on the Fitch 20 suggests a global GDP growth shortfall of 0.4 pp in 2024 and 0.1 pp in 2025.

Moreover, higher oil prices would lead to elevated inflation rates in 2024, with India, Turkey, and Poland experiencing the highest percentage point rises.

Developed economies would witness more muted impacts, with the US seeing inflation rates around 2 pp higher than forecast by the end of 2024.

While the inflation impact is

expected to be short-lived and corrected in 2025, Brazil and Mexico stand out as outliers, experiencing higher inflation rates in the latter year.

The monetary policy response, although somewhat muted, could pose challenges to central banks striving to bring inflation back to target, especially after the severe global inflation shock of the past two years.

The report also underscores the potential ripple effects of an oil price shock, including tighter financial conditions, lower business and consumer confidence, and corrections in financial markets.

A more severe shock, incorporating a 10 per cent decline in

share prices in 1st half of 2024 (1H24), could further exacerbate these effects, leading to a 0.5 pp to 0.9 pp lower GDP growth next year in major economies.

Fitch highlights that the sovereign credit impact of higher-than-expected oil prices would depend on various factors, including consequences for public finances, external finances, financing conditions, and the balance of energy exporters and importers in Fitch's sovereign portfolio.

The situation underscores the intricate web of global economic interdependencies and the potential vulnerabilities arising from geopolitical tensions in oil-producing regions. -ANI

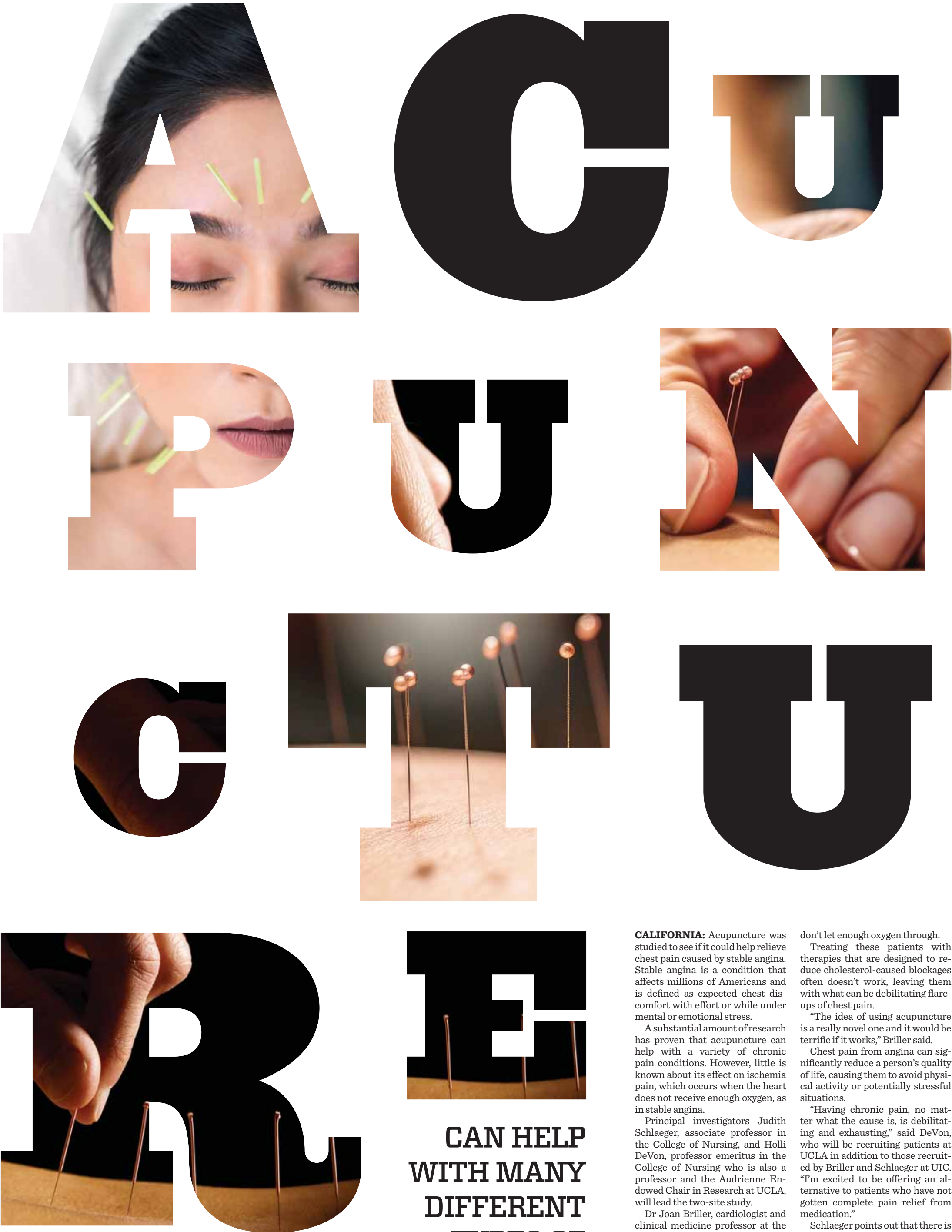
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CAN HELP
WITH MANY
DIFFERENT
TYPES OF
CHRONIC PAIN:
RESEARCH

CALIFORNIA: Acupuncture was studied to see if it could help relieve chest pain caused by stable angina. Stable angina is a condition that affects millions of Americans and is defined as expected chest discomfort with effort or while under mental or emotional stress.

A substantial amount of research has proven that acupuncture can help with a variety of chronic pain conditions. However, little is known about its effect on ischemia pain, which occurs when the heart does not receive enough oxygen, as in stable angina.

Principal investigators Judith Schlaeger, associate professor in the College of Nursing, and Holli DeVon, professor emeritus in the College of Nursing who is also a professor and the Audrienne Endowed Chair in Research at UCLA, will lead the two-site study.

Dr Joan Briller, cardiologist and clinical medicine professor at the College of Medicine, is a co-investigator and subject matter expert.

In a previous pilot study, the team found that acupuncture reduced pain and improved quality of life for participants.

Chest pain
Chest pain from stable angina is often the result of cholesterol buildup in the arteries that reduces blood flow to the heart, Briller explained. But many people with stable angina have it for other reasons, such as when the tiny arteries that deliver blood to tissues malfunction and don't let enough oxygen through.

Treating these patients with therapies that are designed to reduce cholesterol-caused blockages often doesn't work, leaving them with what can be debilitating flare-ups of chest pain.

"The idea of using acupuncture is a really novel one and it would be terrific if it works," Briller said.

Chest pain from angina can significantly reduce a person's quality of life, causing them to avoid physical activity or potentially stressful situations.

"Having chronic pain, no matter what the cause is, is debilitating and exhausting," said DeVon, who will be recruiting patients at UCLA in addition to those recruited by Briller and Schlaeger at UIC. "I'm excited to be offering an alternative to patients who have not gotten complete pain relief from medication."

Schlaeger points out that there is a huge disparity among those who have access to acupuncture in this country, both because acupuncturists tend to practice in wealthier neighbourhoods and because the treatment can be costly.

Study participants will largely come from medically underrepresented groups who will have access to acupuncture for the first time, as was the case in the pilot study.

"Participants in the pilot were really delighted to be offered an intervention that they've heard about but had been beyond their reach," Schlaeger said. -ANI

SPORTS

Kazakhstan, Mongolia players reign supreme at FIDE worlds

The FIDE

World Amateur Championships concluded with Mahad bin Said Ba'owain presiding over the closing ceremony

MUSCAT: Kazakhstan and Mongolia players dominated the FIDE World Amateur Chess Championship 2023 that concluded at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Friday.

Players from both the countries swept the six titles at stake – Open Under 2300, Under 2000 and Under 1700 in men and women categories. The tournament showcased intense battles among 389 players representing 64 countries.

In the Open Under 2300 category, Kazakhstan's Abilmansur Abdilkhair claimed the title with 8 points, dominating the final round against Mongolian player Naranbold Sodbilegt. Indian player Anadkat Kartavya secured the silver, while the bronze went to Egyptian player Marco Fadi (7 points each).

In the Open Under 2000, Mongolia's Dashtogtokh Amarsaikhan emerged victorious, securing gold with 9 points. Indian players R Sham and Velavaa Ragavesh took second and third place with 7.5 and 6.5 points, respectively.

Ganbat Danzanjunai from Mongolia clinched the Open Under 1700 title with 8 points, drawing a crucial match against India's Deepak Batra. Kyrgyzstan's Vadim Pak and Medet Dzhaparov took the second and third place respectively, both with 7.5 points.

In the women Under 1700 category, Mongolian players dominated the top three positions. Bat-Amgalan Anujin secured the



gold with 7.5 points, followed by Tsogdelger Anudari with 7.5 points and Baldanjantsan Khuslenzaya with 7 points. In the women's Under 2000, Badamkhand Norovsambu from Mongolia came first with 6.5 points while Gamage Desandhi from Sri Lanka was second

with 5.5 points. Iran's Nadernia Niki won the bronze with 5 points.

The women's Under 2300 category saw Baurzyhan Arnash of Kazakhstan clinch the top spot with 5 points, followed by Balandin Nayanova Patricia of Bulgaria with 5 points. Lukina Aleksandra (FIDE)



won the bronze with 4.5 points.

The closing ceremony featured a visual presentation highlighting the championship's nine rounds, showcasing the memorable games.

Mahad bin Said Ba'owain, Minister of Labour, was the chief guest and awarded winners. He lauded

the organising committee's efforts, and recognised the companies and entities that contributed to the championship's success.

FIDE Executive Director Victor Bologan and Oman Chess Committee President Ahmed Al Balushi joined Mahad in honour



ing the winners and organisers. The closing ceremony was graced by several dignitaries, national chess federations' officials, and ambassadors from participating countries. The championship saw significant participation from heads of national chess federations in Asia, and FIDE.

COMEBACK

Osaka plans return six months after giving birth



BRISBANE: Former world No.1 Naomi Osaka will return to tennis at the Brisbane International, almost six months after giving birth.

The Japanese four-time Grand Slam winner announced her pregnancy in January and had daughter Shai in July.

The 26-year-old has not played on the WTA Tour since the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo in September 2022. "I am really excited about getting back out on court and competing," Osaka said.

"I always love starting my season in Brisbane and can't wait to return. The Brisbane International is such a great tournament and will set me up for a brilliant comeback this summer."

The Brisbane tournament begins on December 31 and runs through to January 7, serving as a major event in the run-up to the Australian Open getting under way on January 14.

Osaka won the most recent of her four Grand Slams at the Australian Open in 2021, her second title at Melbourne Park.

In May 2021, after pulling out of the French Open, she revealed she had "suffered long bouts of depression" ever since winning her first major title at the US Open in 2018.

She has previously taken breaks from tennis to prioritise her mental health and spoken openly about the issues she has faced.

DECCANI PREMIER LEAGUE



Deccan Eleven claim title

MUSCAT: Deccan Eleven defeated Hyderabad Paltan by 57 runs in the final of the sixth edition of Deccani Premier League Cricket Tournament that concluded at the Al Amerat grounds recently.

Organised by the Deccani Wing of the Indian Social Club Oman, the ten-over event saw Deccan Eleven, captained by Sheikh Ismail, score 116/3. Hyderabad Paltan, skippered by Imran Al Jabri were bowled out for paltry 59 runs.

Mohammed Ramadhan Al Balushi, Member of Majlis Al Shura from Amerat, was the guest of honour, and gave away the prizes. Syed Arshad was named the player of the tournament while Junaid Iqbal and Mohammed Younis were adjudged best batsman and best bowler respectively.

Pankaj Khimji, Oman Cricket (OC) chairman graced the occasion. In his address, Khimji expressed happiness at the large turnout of the spectators that included Indian and Omani fans and their families.

Dr S.M. Wasifuddin, Convener Deccani Wing, expressed gratitude to OC and Pankaj Khimji for



their efforts in promoting cricket in Oman and also among various communities in the country.

Co-Convener of Deccani Wing Mansoor Sabri gave away prizes to man of the match winners.

SPECIAL CEREMONY

Messi vows to win more trophies with Inter Miami



MIAMI: Lionel Messi has "no doubt" Inter Miami will secure more silverware after he extended his record for *Ballon d'Or* wins, *BBC Sport* reported.

The 36-year-old Argentina forward was named the world's best player for an eighth time last month, after helping his country win the 2022 World Cup.

He left Paris Saint-Germain to join Miami in July and the MLS club won its first trophy in August - the Leagues Cup.

"We are going to continue enjoying and winning titles," said Messi.

"I hope you accompany us as you accompanied us all these months that I've been here."

Messi was speaking before playing his first game back in Miami, a friendly against New York City to close the 2023 US season.

The club celebrated Messi's achievement by branding the game the 'Noche d'Or', holding a special ceremony on the field at DRV PNK Stadium.

"I had no doubt that we were going to have a good time, that we were going to enjoy it," added the four-time Champions League winner.

"Today I have no doubt, as I

didn't at the beginning, and much less now, that next year is going to be a lot better."

Miami also signed Messi's former Barcelona team-mates Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba during the 2023 season and have reportedly agreed a deal for Luis Suarez, another ex-Barcelona player, to arrive before the 2024 season.

Before Friday's game, Miami's managing owner Jorge Mas and co-owner Jose Mas walked along a gold carpet with MLS commissioner Don Garber to address the crowd.

They were joined by Messi and gold fireworks went off as he held aloft his latest Ballon d'Or trophy, although he was unable to help his side avoid a 2-1 defeat.

"I've only been here a little while but it really feels like I've been here a long time," added Messi, who is under contract to the end of 2025.

"I want to thank all the people of Miami, not only the ones here at the stadium, but in the city in general, for the way you have treated not only me, but also my family these last few months.

"You've shown me a lot of love and made me feel at home."



A Peruvian farmer battles a German fossil fuel giant

HIKING back home with a flock of sheep on his Andean hillside farm, Saul Luciano Lliuya pauses at a steep, rocky turn and glances at the snow-capped mountains that have dominated the landscape for millions of years.

“The snow caps, the glaciers are disappearing,” said Lliuya, a 43-year-old farmer and trekking guide born and raised in Peru’s Cordillera Blanca mountains.

“Everyone that lives here is worried about that. Like all human beings, we think of our wellbeing, of our survival, and what we will eat and drink in the next years.”

In a fight to secure his home from climate disaster, Lliuya is at the heart of an “unprecedented” legal claim that could herald a new age of climate justice and force the world’s major greenhouse gas emitters to pay for their role in heating the planet.

The Quechua-speaking Peruvian, who lives near to Huaraz — a city of 150,000 people 3,000 meters above sea level — is suing German energy multinational RWE for its alleged role in increasing the likelihood of climate disaster in the region by burning fossil fuels.

Lliuya wants RWE to cover some of the costs for protective measures against potentially deadly future flooding in the town — a risk he says is growing as the planet heats.

The company, founded in 1898, made €3.2 billion (\$3.4 billion) in profit last year and has been named Europe’s biggest polluter.

“For me, it’s difficult. It’s a battle against giants,” said Lliuya, who lives a frugal life the hills with his wife and two children harvesting corn and potatoes.

A potentially breakthrough legal action

The much-anticipated legal proceedings are the culmination of nearly a decade of efforts. Lliuya filed his lawsuit with the support of NGO Germanwatch, at the District Court Essen in Germany, where RWE is headquartered, in November 2015. Initially, the court dismissed the claim, but he successfully appealed at a higher court in 2017.

“The court agreed for legal evidence to be given in this case, which has never happened before,” said Christoph Bals, policy director of the Bonn-based organization. “If we win the final ruling, it means all the biggest emitters in Europe can be brought to court.”

In May 2022, a group of independent experts and judges traveled from Germany to Peru to assess to what extent the plaintiff is threatened by imminent climate disaster. This August, the report was shared with the parties, and the hearing is set to begin within months in what is the first transnational climate litigation case of its kind to reach this stage.

“The case could be a real breakthrough moment,” says Birsha Ohdedar, a lecturer in climate change and environmental law at London’s School of Oriental and African Studies. “That a litigant in the Global South bringing this against a company in the Global North is hugely significant for the climate justice movement.”



The looming threat from above

The Huaraz threat comes from a glacial lake, located above the city, says Lliuya.

An avalanche of ice or rock falling into the lake could cause a flood wave with deadly consequences. Locals are well aware of the danger. In 1941, an earthquake caused a chunk of glacier to fall into the lake, triggering a surge of water that killed 1,800 people in the city.

“When you read the news reports and when they declare an emergency at Lake Palcacocha, you feel very tense and worried,” said Lliuya. In 2014, he lost a friend and fellow mountain guide, who died during a trek in the rapidly changing terrain.

Aerial view of Huaraz after flooding by a glacial lake in 1941

Aerial view of Huaraz after flooding by a glacial lake in 1941

A chunk of glacier to fall into the lake, triggering a surge of water that devastated Huaraz

Image: Germanwatch
As the planet heats up and glaciers melt, the swollen lake is potentially more deadly. The volume of water in Palcacocha is 34 times greater than in 1970, found a study by the University of Oxford. More broadly, Peru has lost over half its glaciers in the last 50 years.

According to Lliuya’s claim, Palcacocha must be drained to install flood prevention measures, such as dams and a glacial flood outburst early warning system. The farmer is asking for RWE to provide €17,000 or 0.47% of the projected \$4 million total cost. RWE is responsible for 0.47% or 6.8 billion tons of global CO2 emissions since the start of the industrial era in 1751 up until 2010, according to a 2014 report.

If the German court rules that

Huaraz does face a flood risk, it will then determine how much human-made climate change and RWE’s emissions fuel that risk. Lliuya’s team is confident this could be proven, given the advances in climate attribution science, including in the latest report by UN climate body, the IPCC.

But why is RWE being sued?

Lliuya’s case is a leading example of a recent wave of climate litigation. The number of climate change-related court cases has more than doubled since 2017, reaching a total of 2,180 in 2022, according to research by Columbia University’s Sabin Center for Climate Change Law.

It’s based on a “global neighborhood” argument — that emissions from one side of the globe affect everyone else around the world. RWE operates in 27 countries across the

world, including neighboring Chile and Brazil, but not in Peru.

Germanwatch estimates that over 50 jurisdictions across the globe share the basic provision being used to fight the case.

“We think that about half of the 100 biggest emitters in the world are at high risk of similar cases in their jurisdictions,” said Bals. “This would be a good driver for these companies to step out of fossil fuels as soon as possible.”

Guido Steffen, a spokesman for RWE, said in a written statement to DW that there was “no legal basis” to Lliuya’s claim.

“Individual emitters are not liable for universally rooted and globally effective processes like climate change,” he wrote, adding that the company supports Germany’s 2030 coal phase-out and plans to be carbon neutral by 2040.

According to the nonprofit Client Earth, RWE emitted 106 million



“Melting glaciers are threatening a Peruvian farmer’s home and city. He’s suing German energy company RWE for its alleged role in increasing the likelihood of climate disaster

tons of CO2 from its coal operations in 2017. In 2020, almost 80% of the electricity RWE generated came from non-renewable sources.

Fears for the future

Back in the Cordillera Blanca, climate change continues to impact Lliuya and his homeland in different ways. More extreme, unpredictable weather has shifted the rainy season, meaning that only one rather than two harvests are now possible. Pests are thriving in warmer conditions. He fears that eventually farmers like him will run out of water for drinking and irrigation. Tourism, too, could dry up.

“Like all country people, we can see the glaciers are disappearing,” said Lliuya, sitting outside his stone house as the sun sets over the Andean highlands. “That’s why I took the opportunity to make a legal claim. If we win, I think that the glaciers will win.” —DW

ROUND-UP

Celebrate Oman’s 53rd National Day at luxurious Alila Hinu Bay

The luxurious resort blends traditional Omani architecture with contemporary detailing, nestled gracefully between miles of untouched sea life and breathtaking mountain landscape

MUSCAT: Known for its undisturbed, rugged beauty, Alila Hinu Bay offers the perfect luxury escape this Oman National Day, where pink-hued sunrises fade into golden sunsets and where the



‘sea, mountain and desert meet’. Guests are invited to retreat into the ethereal setting of Hinu Bay and truly reconnect with nature in the most incredible ways. The luxurious resort blends traditional Omani architecture with contemporary detailing, nestled gracefully between miles of untouched sea life and breathtaking mountain landscape. As the cool winter begins, start the season with a peaceful kayak

through natural lagoons, snorkel to a paradise of wildlife or discover schools of dolphins and magnificent migrating whales. Scuba enthusiasts can explore Oman’s seabed with its magical show of coral reefs and multicoloured fish, followed by an Alila picnic at sea. For a touch of Omani storytelling this National Day, experience The Frankincense Journey, a culinary voyage with carefully crafted dishes that draw inspiration from



the travels of the frankincense traders on land and sea. Handcrafted dishes include Shuwa Spiced Lamb Rack with Omani dates and Sandalwood-smoke or Bhugasa with Frankincense Cream, Rose Petals and Cardamom. Throughout the experience, guests may also practice Camel Milks-ology

by learning how to prepare a signature ‘Desert Rose’ or ‘Naqaccino’ curiously-infused beverage. Further celebrating Oman’s heritage, Spa Alila offers a ‘Timeless Frankincense Signature Massage for Two’ using heated stones and locally sourced Frankincense Oil from Salalah, paired with a re-

freshing hibiscus-frankincense iced tea. For the ultimate secluded getaway, explore Hinu Bay’s spacious villas with an outdoor bathtub, private swimming pool and majlis living space. Experience the true meaning of an ‘escape’ where luxury, adventure and wellness go hand-in-hand this Oman National Day with stays starting from OMR 53+.. For more information and reservations, visit www.alilahinubay.com, email Reservations.hinubay@alilahotels.com or call +968 23373350. Terms and Conditions: • The offer is valid for Oman residents. • Stay date November 18th – December 30th 2023. • Includes Complimentary A La Carte breakfast. • Complimentary kids’ activities at Play Alila as per the weekly schedule. • Complimentary activities as per the weekly schedule. • Additional terms and conditions may apply.

AUTHENTIC CULINARY JOURNEY

Experience authentic taste of Beirut with exclusive, limited pop up by Al Nafoorah at Jumeirah Muscat Bay

DUBAI: Serving up the finest tastes of Lebanon, the multi-award-winning Dubai dining destination, Al Nafoorah, is opening in an exclusive pop-up at Zuka, the beachfront restaurant at Jumeirah Muscat Bay, bringing the authentic flavours of the Levant to the shores of Oman. Running for a limited period only, from November 15 until December 15, multi-award-winning Chef Ali Fouad will serve a specially curated menu designed to take guests on an authentic culinary journey. Meaning ‘The Fountain’ and taking inspiration from the Berdawni Riviera, known as the ‘city of wine and poetry’, diners are invited to experience rich Lebanese heritage, as they are welcomed with an innovative menu to transport them to the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Beirut, while



taking in spectacular sunset vistas. With over 20 years of experience, Chef Ali has been recognised with several regional culinary awards including being a three-time winner of the ‘Middle East Specialty Chef’ title by ProChefME. His menus are inspired by his Lebanese heritage



and are dedicated to creating local authenticity, a commitment that is supported by quarterly visits to Lebanon for inspiration to con-

stantly improve the offering and range of ingredients. The bespoke pop-up menu will feature signature dishes including Chef Ali’s ‘Tata’s Salad, inspired by his grandmother’s recipe that has been passed on for generations, served alongside well-loved cold and hot Mezzeh, freshly baked manakish and a selection of mouth-watering grills including lobster, tiger prawns and Black Angus tenderloin. For the perfect sweet ending, guests can delight in heavenly Cheesecake Baklava, all served with an array of tantalising cocktails and mocktails inspired by Lebanese heritage. The pop-up will be open for dinner only, with seating available between 18:30 – 22:00. Guest can opt for special ‘Taste of Al Nafoorah’ tasting menu for two available at OMR 42 or a la carte menu.

FERRARI



296 GTs: Latest evolution of Maranello defines concept of driving thrills, including top down

MARANELLO: The 296 GTs, the latest evolution of Maranello’s mid-rear-engined two-seater Berlinetta spider, flanks the 296 GTB in redefining the whole concept of fun behind the wheel, guaranteeing pure emotions not just when pushing the car to its limits, but also in day-to-day driving situations. With its new 663 cv 120° V6 engine, coupled with an electric motor capable of delivering a further 122 kW (167 cv), to be the first 6-cylinder engine installed on a road-going spider sporting the Prancing Horse badge; it unleashes its class-leading 830 cv total power output to deliver previously unthinkable performance levels and an innovative, exhilarating and unique soundtrack, further enhanced by the fact that it can be relished with the top down. The 296 GTs’s plug-in hybrid (PHEV) system guarantees it is an incredibly usable car as well as cutting pedal response times to zero and delivering a 25km range in all-electric eDrive mode. The car’s compact dimensions and the introduction of innovative dynamic control systems as well as meticulously honed aero ensure that the driver will instantly be impressed by its astonishing agility and responsiveness to commands. Its sporty, sinuous design and extremely compact dimensions also visually underscore its unique and modern forms, while skilfully referencing the likes of the 1963 250 LM,

the perfect marriage of simplicity and functionality. Sound-wise, the V6 engine creates a sense of unprecedented involvement even with the roof off, and marking the turning of a new page in Maranello’s Berlinetta history. The 296 GTs further emphasises the clean, sophisticated lines of the 296 GTB. When the top is down, it is the peerlessly elegant epitome of the open-air hybrid concept. Its unprecedented architecture for a spider, in fact, opens a whole new chapter in the marque’s story. The 296 GTs’s cockpit was developed around the new concept of an entirely digital interface.. The idea was to clothe that technology to sophisticated effect. The result is a pure, minimalist connotation characterised by a powerful elegance that, on an aesthetic level, perfectly mirrors the design of the exterior. The 296 GTs’s cabin raises the concept of the formal purity of the functional elements to new heights. Exclusive Italian leather trim to the seats and trim is further enhanced by the noble technical materials used on the functional components. Of course, for owners who want to exploit the car’s extreme power and performance to the utmost, particularly on the track, the 296 GTs is also available with the Assetto Fiorano package, which includes lightweight features and aero modifications.

MUNTADA AL MAR’A SUMMIT & AWARDS

Bank Nizwa’s women leaders win two awards

MUSCAT: As a testament to Bank Nizwa’s focus on cultivating a work culture that provides opportunities for its woman workforce to excel, two women leaders from the bank recently garnered top awards at the prestigious Muntada Al Mar’a Summit & Awards. Haifa Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager HR, at Bank Nizwa, was recognised with the ‘Visionary Leader of the Year Award’; while Tahani Al Alawi, Deputy Manager, Sustainability and CSR, was recognized with the ‘Exemplary Contribution to CSR and Sustainable Islamic Banking Award’. The event was held under the patronage of Her Highness Sayyida Hujajja Al Said. With a central theme, ‘Empowered Women leading towards a brighter future’, it served as a tribute to the infinite capabilities of women leaders and celebrated the pivotal role they play in shaping a more prosperous and equitable future. Congratulating the winners,



Khalid Al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer at Bank Nizwa said, “It gives me immense pride that Bank Nizwa’s exceptional women leaders have consistently been setting new benchmarks in the industry. As I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Haifa Al Lawati and Tahani Al Alawi for their remarkable achievements, I am confident that their zeal and dedication to excel-

lence will drive them to achieve greater milestones in their respective careers. At Bank Nizwa, we believe fostering an inclusive work environment goes beyond empowering and inspiring potential women leaders; it also fuels enhanced innovation, cultivates an enriching workplace culture that encourages personal and professional development, and contrib-

utes to sustainable socio-economic growth.” Commenting on her win, Haifa Al Lawati said, “I am delighted to have received this honourable accolade. This recognition not only mirrors my individual dedication to advancing excellence in the Islamic banking sector but also underscores Bank Nizwa’s alignment with the national goals of empowering women while simultaneously contributing to the broader evolution of the Islamic financial landscape.” Speaking about her achievement, Tahani Al Alawi said, “As an Islamic bank, aligning corporate values with social responsibility and sustainability is intrinsic to Bank Nizwa’s operational ethos. Hence, the spirit of voluntarism, social service, and community engagement runs through our team. “I am honoured to receive this award, which is a testament to the unparalleled support the bank provides to its staff to pursue their areas of expertise.”



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