

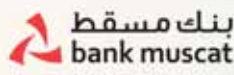


HM SENDS GREETINGS

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Dame Susan Dougan, Governor General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on her country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to Governor General of Saint Vincent and her country's people stability and progress. **-ONA**

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SAYYID THEYAZIN PRESIDES OVER OMANI YOUTH DAY CELEBRATION



The ceremony was held at Oman Across the Ages Museum in the Wilayat of Manah

MANAH: HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, yesterday presided over a ceremony marking Omani Youth Day. The ceremony, held at "Oman Across the Ages Museum" in the Wilayat of Manah (A'Dakhiliyah

Governorate), saw the felicitation of winners of the Youth Excellence Award, 5th edition. The ceremony included the opening of a 3-day Youth Initiatives Exhibition featuring 10 themes. The initiatives cover a range of specialisations, including

financial technology, education, employment, physical fitness, crafts, environment, the media, engineering and law. The ceremony included the opening of branches of the Youth Centre in the governorates. The Centre's branches seek to accommodate and hone the skills of all youth segments in the Sultanate of Oman. The ceremony also saw the signing of five 'cooperation and partnership agreements'. The first was a 'cooperation programme' agreement to finance a feasibility study for the Youth Centre project with OQ Group. **>A4**

FOREIGN MINISTRY

Oman condemns Israeli airstrike on Iran territory

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the airstrike launched by Israel on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Saturday. In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Saturday, Oman said that this attack constitutes a flagrant violation of its sovereignty and a clear breach of the rules of international law and an escalation that fuels the cycle of violence and undermines efforts aimed at calming, reducing tensions and containing crises through peaceful and diplomatic means. While condemning these ongoing Israeli practices that threaten to drag the region towards further instability, Oman calls upon the international community once again to take effective action to stop the aggression and put an end to these blatant violations on the lands of the regional neighbouring countries.



The Sultanate of Oman reiterates its call for the necessity of addressing the roots and causes of the crises in the region by ending the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories and stopping the aggression on the Gaza Strip, as stipulated and demanded by the resolutions of the United Nations and the Security Council.

Oman also stressed the importance of granting the Palestinian people their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state on the 1967 borders within the framework of the two-state solution and in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, in a manner that ensures achieving a just and lasting peace for all parties. **-ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Agreement with US to boost jobs in Oman

1 The MoU will serve Oman's private sector institutions through various financing tools provided by the EXIM to these companies to expand, and generate jobs. **>A2**

OMAN Discussion to stop terror financing

2 The Financial Action Task Force discussed the mutual evaluation report of the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing systems in Oman. **>A3**

SPORTS India suffer defeat to New Zealand in Pune

3 India's historic streak of home Test series victories has come to an end as New Zealand secured a remarkable 2-1 series win during their tour in 2024. **>A7**



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PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	11:56pm
Asr.....	3:11pm
Maghrib.....	5:37pm
Isha.....	6:48pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:54am

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CABLE

HM sends greetings to Turkmenistan

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Dr. Serdar Berdimuhamedow, President of Turkmenistan on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to the president and his country's people further progress and prosperity. - **ONA**

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Finance ministry, EXIM pact to boost jobs, trade

The MoU signed last year between Oman and EXIM aims to boost economic cooperation between the two sides in areas related to financing trade, goods and services

MUSCAT: Judith DelZoppo Pryor, First Vice President and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors at the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) affirmed that the MoU signed between the Ministry of Finance and EXIM in 2023 represents a new step in the march of 230 years long relations between Oman and the US.

In an interview with Oman News Agency (ONA), she explained that the MoU outlined the partnership and cooperation between the two sides, worth USD 500 million dollars, and includes various sectors such as communications, biotechnology, agriculture and manufacturing.

She stressed EXIM's keenness to provide all banking and financ-



Judith DelZoppo Pryor, First Vice President and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors at the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM). - **ONA**

ing facilities to Omani companies and small and medium enterprises to reach the US market.

The US official pointed out that the MoU represents a new aspect

to strengthening investment co-operation relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States of America.

She said that the MoU will serve private sector institutions in the Sultanate of Oman through the various financing tools provided by EXIM to these companies to expand, prosper and generate job opportunities, which will contribute in one way or another to strengthening and developing the Omani economy.

The MoU signed last year between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, and EXIM aims to boost economic co-operation between the two sides in areas related to financing trade, goods and services.

It also aims to provide financial facilities for establishing projects in the industrial sector in various fields, including wireless communications equipment, the fifth generation network, biotechnology, renewable energy, agriculture, water and wastewater treatment, mining and manufacturing.

It is worth noting that the First Vice President and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors at EXIM held several meetings during her visit to the Sultanate of Oman with a number of officials in the economic, commercial and banking sectors.

The meetings focused on ways to enhance existing cooperation and build new partnerships between the two sides, in addition to discussing the possibility of Omani companies entering into building or expanding manufacturing facilities in the United States.

- **ONA**

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The Times of Oman 'Business Leadership Summit 2024' will explore the innovative leadership practices driving business success and sustainability. The premier event will bring together senior government officials, international experts, top business owners, leading CEOs, SMEs and industry leaders. Attendees can look forward to thought-provoking discussions, invaluable networking opportunities and the celebration of outstanding leadership achievements.

GUEST OF HONOUR & KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
His Excellency Qais Al Yousef
Minister of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion

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Co-located: Times of Oman 'Business Leadership Awards'

The Times of Oman Business Leadership Awards will celebrate exceptional achievers in Oman's business landscape, honouring outstanding companies, visionary business owners, exemplary CEOs and innovative SMEs. Recognizing leadership excellence across industries, these awards will highlight achievements that drive economic growth, foster innovation and inspire others in the pursuit of business excellence.

Key Award Categories

- Business Leader of the Year
- Young Business Leader of the Year
- Entrepreneur of the Year
- SME of the Year
- IPO of the Year
- Company of the Year

FOR MORE EVENT DETAILS, CONTACT

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Entry of new telecom players driving Oman’s digital growth

Vodafone Oman aims to cover 95 percent of populated areas by the end of 2024, after achieving 78 percent of fifth generation coverage last year

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has witnessed a remarkable development in the telecommunications sector and a number of global companies have come, creating a positive competitive movement in the sector.

The entry of Vodafone Oman has contributed to the spread of fifth-generation networks that provide innovative digital solutions that contribute to improving the user experience and driving the digital transformation witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman.

Eng. Badr bin Saud Al Zidi, CEO of Vodafone Oman, spoke about the pioneering role played by the company in the Omani telecommunications sector, noting that Vodafone Oman’s entry came as a result of a strategic partnership with Vodafone International, which is one of the world’s leading companies in the field of fifth-generation technology and the Internet of Things, as its services extend to 29 markets around the



world, especially in the European and African markets.

In a statement to *Oman News Agency*, he said: Vodafone Oman has invested heavily since the beginning of its operations in developing the infrastructure of the fifth generation network in the Sultanate of Oman, as its investment

helped build an advanced network based on the latest technologies such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing, which provides flexibility and connection speeds that are the highest in the Sultanate of Oman.

Eng. Badr Al Zidi pointed out that Vodafone Oman aims to cover 95 percent of populated areas by the end of 2024, after achieving 78 percent of fifth generation coverage last year, and this expansion ensures improving and enhancing digital transformation efforts.

174 percent growth

The CEO of Vodafone Oman also pointed out that the company achieved a 174 percent growth in its operating revenues during the past two years, reflecting its ability to compete in the local market and provide digital solutions that meet the needs of subscribers effectively and efficiently.

Eng. Badr Al Zidi stressed that the company is committed



COMPETITIVE MOVEMENT: Eng. Badr bin Saud Al Zidi, CEO of Vodafone Oman.

to supporting small and medium enterprises and contributing to the development of the national economy, by assigning a large portion of its contracts to these companies, and the Omanization rate in the company reached 95 percent, which confirms its commitment to employing national competencies.

The company also participated in many initiatives that aim to train and qualify Omani youth, whether through its internal programmes or in cooperation with Vodafone International; to develop their skills and enable them to benefit from opportunities in global markets.

He explained that one of the most prominent aspects that distinguishes Vodafone Oman is its commitment to environmental sustainability by seeking to reduce its carbon footprint by adopting operating systems that rely on highly efficient technologies to

reduce energy consumption, noting that this trend comes as part of global efforts to achieve net zero by 2050, which makes Vodafone Oman one of the leading telecom companies in adopting sustainability as an essential part of its operations.

Regarding Vodafone Oman’s vision for the future, Eng. Badr Al Zidi stressed that the company seeks to provide advanced digital communications solutions that help enable individuals and companies to face the challenges of the changing market.

The company’s operations are based on AI and the Internet of Things, which makes it a major strategic partner in Oman’s journey towards digital transformation. Vodafone Oman also seeks to enable Omani companies to benefit from modern technologies and develop innovative solutions that support business growth and increase their flexibility.

INTEGRATED VENTURE

Tender for Al Mudhaibi Industrial City Project by Madayn to be launched today

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) will launch on Sunday the tender for the Al Mudhaibi Industrial City Project.

It is expected to be an integrated venture for the industrial sector in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate due to its promising components in mining, food, tourism, and other sectors whose raw materials are available near the governorate.

This comes as a continuation of Madayn’s prominent role and contribution to supporting economic development and encouraging the establishment of value-added industries in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Eng. Saleh bin Salman Al Abri, Director General of Facilities and Infrastructure at Madayn, said: “The general detailed plan for the industrial city has been completed, and all final designs and consulting studies have been approved, such as the soil testing study, traffic studies, and topographical studies. The preparation of the tender documents for the implementation of the first phase, which is expected to be launched in the near future, has also been completed.”

He added in a statement to Oman News Agency that the tender will include the development of approximately 2.5 million square meters, including a number of basic services, such as road networks, water, sewage, lighting, water tanks, security fences, surveillance devices, and a number of ready-made units in the pioneering Madayn complex



with an area of 500 square metres for each industrial unit, as the complex will contain administrative offices with manufacturing workshops, private parking lots and truck entrances.

He pointed out that the tender will also include the service building having the offices of the management of the industrial city, the “Masar” service centre (a one-stop shop for providing services to investors), and meeting rooms with

other facilities that serve investors in the industrial city.

He explained that due to the industrial city’s strategic location and its proximity to the main road that connects the Special Economic Zone in Duqm to the main ports and border crossings in the Sultanate of Oman, an area of 100,000 square metres has been allocated to provide logistics services.

Areas will also be allocated for agricultural investment in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in order to attract investments in the agricultural sector that serve the transformation industries related to food security in the governorate.

The industrial city will also focus on investing in renewable energy and knowledge industries in coordination with educational institutions in the governorate and private entities related to these two fields.

For his part, Eng. Saeed bin Khalfan Al Shabibi, Acting Direc-

tor General of Al Mudhaibi Industrial City, said: “The presence of an industrial city equipped with basic services will be a real supporter in driving the development of economic activities in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, by providing the appropriate environment for the private sector to practice various industrial, commercial and service activities in one integrated place.”

He said that Al Mudhaibi Industrial City will be distinguished by some exceptional incentives and exemptions provided to investors, which are considered attractive and contributing elements for investment in it.

Eng. Saeed bin Khalfan Al Shabibi invited investors and business owners to submit an investment application in Al Mudhaibi Industrial City during this stage, which represents the actual launch of providing the infrastructure in the city, as well as supporting and facilitating the procedures for localising investments in it.

FATF

Discussion held on combating terror financing

PARIS: The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) discussed the mutual evaluation report of the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing systems in the Sultanate of Oman during the group’s meeting held in Paris from October 21 to 25, 2024.

The general meeting of the group commended the positive steps and efforts taken by the Sultanate of Oman that contributed to the development of the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing system over the past years, along with the great technical commitment in terms of the compatibility of the legislation and procedures taken by the relevant authorities with the international standards issued by the group.

For example, the group commended the efforts made regarding the use of financial information for investigation and inquiry purposes, international cooperation in aspects related to legal and judicial assistance, combating and prosecuting terrorism financing crimes, and implementing targeted financial sanctions related to combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

For his part, in a speech delivered during the group’s general meeting, Tahir Salim Al Amri, Executive President of the Central Bank of Oman and Chairman of the National Committee

for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing, stressed the high-level attention paid by the Sultanate of Oman, which led to the development of the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing system that operates according to the tasks assigned to it at the national level, benefiting from the results of the national risk assessments for the years 2018 and 2023.

The system enables it to stand with the rest of the world’s countries to contribute to protecting the global financial system from exploitation by criminals, he said.

He stressed that the Sultanate of Oman is moving forward in developing the system for combating money laundering and terrorist financing crimes in line with the updates to international standards, in accordance with the national strategies and action plans approved by the Sultanate of Oman that enable it to uncover, prosecute and confiscate the funds of the perpetrators of these crimes.

As the mutual evaluation process is a joint process between the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), the report will be discussed and approved during the general meeting in mid-November before being published in its final form in early December. -ONA

OMANI YOUTH DAY

Sayyid Theyazin praises contributions of youth



MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, yesterday addressed young people in Oman on the annual occasion of Omani Youth Day, which falls on 26 October.

In the speech, HH Sayyid Theyazin expressed his commendation and pride over the dedication of Omani youth.

The speech reads as follows:

“On this auspicious day, I am pleased to greet you—loyal builders of Oman and guardians of its glorious legacies—and to congratulate this benign country for bringing about this noble offspring whose honorable deeds make us proud before other nations, generation after generation. We deeply appreciate your enlightened thinking and self-denial aimed to make Oman relish the bounties of security, peace, generosity and prosperity.

“We value your resourcefulness and the good presence you portray wherever you might be.

Your country counts on you to utilize your energies in promoting the blessed development process. It is entrusting you to keep the momentum of progress. In this spirit, we look forward to a society whose members are innovative—a society that is capable of employing its identity and values for the realization of a decent life for all those who live on this benign land. We envision a robust society that aspires to make this country a better place for all.

“Based on this stance, we would like to affirm our keenness to add weight to your tireless efforts and your persistent pursuit of comprehensive development in all governorates of Oman.

Loyal Youth of Oman,

“Knowledge, technology and innovation constitute the basic pillars of the country’s development process and they comprise the engine that operates the economy. Yet, the cornerstone of this structure lies in Omani values in which we take pride and which are deeply

depicted in our souls like a towering mountain.

“Armed with these lofty values, you proved your mettle in all the events in which you represented Oman—the land, the people and the civilization, guided by the wise vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, in all that you aspire to achieve.

“On the occasion of Omani Youth Day, we are pleased to announce that we are determined to press ahead with the march that we started since the establishment of the main branch of the Youth Centre. We will keep pace with the vision to expand this initiative in a number of governorates, according to our strategic plans. New branches of the Youth Centre will be established in the governorates of Al Dakhiliyah, Musandam and South Al Sharqiyah.

“We hereby reiterate our firm resolve to provide a suitable environment for the realisation of aspirations of Omani youth.

Happy Omani Youth Day.” -ONA

HONOURING THE YOUTH

Sayyid Theyazin honours youth excellence award winners

< FROM A1 The second ‘partnership agreement’ was signed with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) for the implementation of a programme codenamed “musta'id” or ‘Ready’. The third ‘partnership agreement’ was inked with Vodafone Company.

The 4th was a ‘strategic partnership agreement’ between the Youth Centre and ITCHA Group. The 5th was a land investment agreement for the setting up of the Youth Centre’s branch in the Wilayat of Nizwa. At the conclusion of the ceremony, HH Sayyid Theyazin honoured the winners of the Youth Excellence Award (5th edition) for the year 2024. As many as 21 youth merited the award, which covered five domains: Digital Media, Digital Economy, Environment, Youth Initiatives and Entrepreneurship. -ONA







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AGREEMENT

Oman Air signs loyalty programme partnership with Qantas Airways

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Air and Qantas Airways, Australia's largest airline, have taken their partnership to new heights with the launch of a new and exciting loyalty programme offering.

Sindbad members will soon be able to redeem their Miles on flights with Qantas, which operates an extensive network including Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific, with Qantas members able to access the same benefits on Oman Air's network.

The airlines, who have an existing interline partnership, will add more attractive benefits, such as Mile-earning opportunities, as Oman Air prepares to join the

oneworld alliance in 2025.

Oman Air CEO, Con Korfiatis said, "Our partnership with Qantas reinforces our commitment to bring even greater value and rewarding experiences to our loyalty members. This collaboration not only enhances the travel journey by offering more ways for members to redeem their hard-earned Miles, but also plays a key role in attracting Qantas' huge membership-base to come and experience Oman. As we look towards our highly anticipated oneworld membership next year, we look forward to providing more rewards and seamless travel across all member airlines."

Qantas Loyalty CEO Andrew Glance, added, "We know how much our members love to use

their points to book international reward seats, with record numbers redeemed in the last twelve months. Frequent Flyers also tell us that exploring new destinations is high on their priority list, so this partnership will be welcome news for members eyeing their next overseas adventure. Oman Air is an impressive airline with an expansive network, a modern fleet, and a premium offering that rivals any international carrier."

With an ever-growing range of partners, Sindbad, Oman Air's award-winning frequent flyer programme, allows members to spend Miles both in the air and on the ground. Membership has three tiers, each offering a wide range of exclusive benefits.

LISTING

MSX will see trading in OQEP shares on Monday

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) will see on Monday, trading in the shares of OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) Company, following the success of the IPO, which is the largest in the history of Oman's capital market and one of the top IPOs offered during the march of MSX since inception.

OQ Exploration and Production Company offered from 30 September to 10 October 25% (2 billion shares) of its total shares in and IPO. The IPO saw a strong demand (of OMR1.8bn) from the establishments and individuals.

Azzan Mohammed Redha Al Abdullatif, Vice Chairman for Acquisition Projects at OQ Group said that listing the shares of OQ Exploration and Production Company in MSX represents a historic event in Oman as the company is the leading company in energy sector in the field of exploration and production and that the listing of its shares is as part of Oman Investment Authority's Exit Plan regarding some government assets.

He said that this subscription in OQ shares, is the largest in the



history of Oman's capital market and the largest in the Middle East and North Africa since the beginning of 2024.

Mustafa Ahmed Salman, Vice Chairman and CEO of United Securities Company said that listing the shares of OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) Company in MSX would give MSX the strength to move to the next stage of the development plan and that the company's market value is expected to exceed OMR3 billion when listed on MSX. -ona

NASA

US team explores opportunities for cooperation in space sector



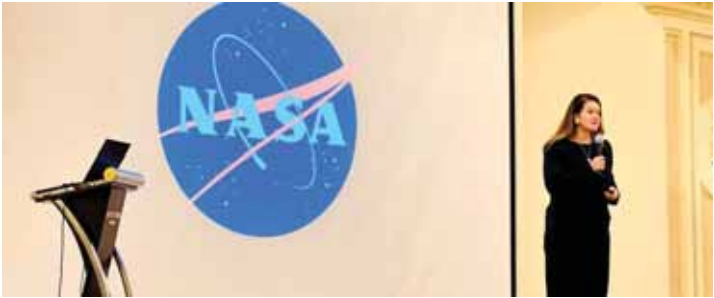
Times News Service

MUSCAT: In continuation of the efforts of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology to achieve the national vision for the space sector, the National Space Programme received a delegation from the United States to explore potential opportunities for co-operation and partnership in the space sector.

The delegation included government and NASA officials and representatives from leading space companies and universities.

The Deputy CEO of NASA gave a presentation in which she spoke about the role played by the agency in the global space sector and pointed out possible areas of cooperation with friendly countries.

During the two-day discussions, the two sides touched on various aspects of space services and applications, satellite technologies, capacity building efforts, ways



to exchange knowledge, transfer technology and potential development of joint space projects.

This initiative reflects the Sultanate's commitment to strengthen its presence in the global space industry, contributing to research and innovation, and benefiting from the expertise of established countries in the field of astronomy; in addition to emphasising the Sultanate's growing interest in enhancing its space initiatives and benefiting from new technological and scientific opportunities, to enable the space sector to contribute

to the digital economy.

It is worth noting that the Sultanate aims, through the National Space Policy, to position the Sultanate as a regional gateway for space services and technologies, in line with its strategic goal of economic diversification and scientific advancement.

Such meetings and discussions are seen as part of a broader effort to establish strategic partnerships with friendly countries and international institutions, especially the United States, a leader in space exploration and technology.



Sultanate of Oman

MINISTRY CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

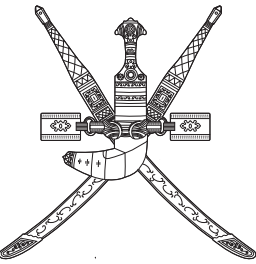
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

Tender No.	Project Category	Tender	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
34/2024	Constriction & maintenance	RENOVATION OF MCSY HQ BUILDINGS AT AL KHUWAIR	02/11/2024	18/11/2024
35/2024	Constriction & maintenance	RENEW AND MAINTENANCE FOR THE BUILDINGS OF CAMEL RACING FIELD AT MWILAH, SOHAR	02/11/2024	18/11/2024
Re – tender 28/2024	Constriction of ports roads bridge rail way dams and maintenance	DESIGN AND BUILD CONTRACT OF ASPHALT ROADS AND ALLIED WORKS IN CAMEL RACE TRACK AT AL MUDHAIBI IN NORTH SHARQIYA GOVERNORATE	02/11/2024	18/11/2024
Re – tender 29/2024	Constriction of ports roads bridge rail way dams and maintenance	DESIGN AND BUILD CONTRACT OF ASPHALT ROADS AND ALLIED WORKS IN CAMEL RACE TRACK AT BIDIYAH IN NORTH SHARQIYA GOVERNORATE	02/11/2024	18/11/2024

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om



Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainmentof tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
450/2024	Building a platform to prevent drug harm	Companies specialized in the field of design, installation and maintenance of software and information systems equipping information data centers registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with excellent or first degree	Sunday 03-11- 2024 02:00 PM	Tuesday 12-11-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
451/2024	General maintenance work for the Al-Wafa Center building for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities at Izki	Companies specialized in the field of construction contracting and maintenance and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second or third degree.	Friday 15-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 05-12-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖

Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), on Sunday 27/10/2024

❖

For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

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Iran says that it has got the right to defend itself



In statement issued on Saturday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry reacted to the Israeli regime's early airstrike on Iran

TEHRAN: The Iranian Foreign Ministry says that the Islamic Republic is entitled and duty-bound to defend itself against the Zionist regime's acts of aggression that took place early on Saturday. In statement issued today, the Ministry reacted to the Israeli regime's early Saturday airstrike on Iran.

The public relations office of the Iranian air defense command issued a statement on Saturday, announcing that Israeli airstrikes against military centers in Tehran, the western province of Ilam, and the southwestern province of Khuzestan have been intercepted and countered successfully. As per the inherent right to legitimate defense, which is enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, Iran is duty-bound and entitled to defend itself against foreign acts of aggression, read the statement. Iran categorically condemns the Zionist regime's aggressive action against several military centers in Iran, considering it a clear violation of international law and the UN Charter, especially the principle of prohibiting threats or resorting to force against the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of countries, it added.

As emphasized by the relevant authorities of the Islamic Republic, the foreign ministry said, based on the inherent right to legitimate defense, which is also enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter, Iran is entitled and duty-bound to defend itself against the Israeli aggression. Calling for maximizing all its material and spiritual capabilities to defend its security and vital interests and recognizing its duties toward regional peace and stability, the Islamic Republic reminds the regional countries of their individual and collective responsibility to safeguard peace and stability in the region, the statement noted. Iran thanks all peace-loving countries in the region and other states that have expressed disgust toward and condemned the aggressive action of the Israeli regime by recognizing the critical situation, it further noted.

The continuation of the occupation, illegal actions, and Israeli atrocities in the region, especially the genocide of the Palestinians and the aggression against Lebanon, which is supported by the US and some other Western countries, is the main cause of tension and insecurity in the region, the statement underlined. **Geneva Conventions** The statement also urged the responsibility of the UN member states, member states of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, member states of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the convention on the prohibition of genocide and international humanitarian law, to take an immediate step to halt genocidal war and aggression against Gaza and Lebanon and to put an end to the Zionist regime's warmongering. -DW



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PERMITS

Germany vows more visas for Indian skilled workers

DELHI: Germany on Friday promised to dramatically boost the number of skilled Indians it permits as Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited the Indian capital, New Delhi.

Berlin has also pledged to reduce the bureaucracy of the application process and to make the recognition of Indian professional qualifications in Germany easier. The announcement was made as Scholz met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Germany has agreed to increase the number of visas granted annually to skilled Indian workers to 90,000, up from 20,000.

"The message is that Germany is open for skilled workers," Scholz said. The chancellor said there had been "good progress" on attracting skilled labour, with nearly 250,000 Indians now living in Germany.

Indians were working "in the sectors where we need them most urgently - whether in medicine, in nursing care, or the IT sector," he said.

Modi welcomed the agreement as an economic benefit for both countries. "When India's dynamics and Germany's precision meet, when Germany's engineering and India's innovation meet... a better future is decided for the Indo-Pacific and the entire world," he said.

India and Germany signed an



earlier migration agreement two years ago to allow greater mobility for professionals and students. Figures released on Thursday showed that Indians were the most likely national group to find work in Germany under a new "opportunity card" scheme. Almost 2,500 migrants have successfully applied to enter Germany to find work since June under the coalition government's scheme. The Interior Ministry said it had registered almost 550 successful applications each month since the measure, which allows skilled workers to arrive in Germany to look for employment, was introduced in June. Of the overall total, there were 780 successful applications from India, followed by China, Turkey and Pakistan. -ANI

BUSINESS TYCOON

Elon Musk's grip on tech and politics is getting stronger

SAN FRANCISCO: For the world's richest man, running a business empire is not enough.

Elon Musk, owner of some of the world's most prominent technology companies, including carmaker Tesla, social media platform X and aerospace company SpaceX, has also emerged as a visible player in politics.

As the US prepares to elect a new president in November, Musk has thrown his support behind the Republican candidate and former President Donald Trump, who has promised Musk a leadership role in an administration if he is reelected.

Musk has regularly been using the influence he wields through his companies to weigh in on political debates in countries around the world, from Brazil to Germany.

The 53-year-old's intervention in politics, unprecedented in its openness and visibility, highlights how a few private tech companies and their executives hold increasingly unchecked power over decisions traditionally reserved for governments, digital rights experts warn.

"The kinds of technologies Musk operates are highly critical, and the companies he owns are incredibly influential and positioned at key junctures in terms of access to information and geopolitics," said Marietje Schaake, a fellow at Stanford University's Cyber Policy Center and author of *The Tech Coup: How to Save Democracy from Silicon Valley*.

"And Musk isn't just running these companies to maximise their success," Schaake, a former member of the European Parliament for the Dutch liberal Democrats 66 party, told DW. "He's also using them as tools for his own geopolitical agenda."

Since founding his first com-



pany in the mid-1990s, the South African-born entrepreneur has built a string of successful businesses and amassed an estimated fortune of more than \$243 billion (€224 billion).

His talent for growing startups into leading technology companies has also given him increasing control over critical digital infrastructure and gradually helped expand his political influence.

Today, the US space programme NASA relies on Musk's astronautics company, SpaceX, to launch satellites. SpaceX subsidiary Starlink delivers broadband internet to some of the most remote places in the world and has become an indispensable tool for militaries in conflict zones from Ukraine to Gaza.

The geopolitical influence that comes with control of these technologies is illustrated by revelations from *The Wall Street Journal*: According to the paper, Musk has been in contact with Russian President Vladimir Putin since late 2022. Among other things, Putin asked Musk not to activate the Starlink sat-

ellite communications system over Taiwan as a favour to Chinese leader Xi Jinping, *The Wall Street Journal* reports.

With his acquisition of X in 2022, Musk also gained control over one of the most influential social media platforms.

At the same time, the entrepreneur, who once identified as a "moderate" on the political fringes, has increasingly aligned himself with headline conservative positions, openly opposing left-leaning ideals he now views as detrimental to society's future.

Breaking with tradition

Musk's political involvement reached new heights in the buildup to the US election in November. After an assassination attempt in mid-July, Musk publicly endorsed Trump. Between July and mid-October this year, Musk contributed nearly \$119 million to a super PAC supporting Trump, according to campaign finance reports.

Earlier this week, he drew attention by offering cash incentives to registered voters in seven swing states to sign a petition. -DW

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Sensational Santner guides NZ to historic series victory

Hosts India suffered their first Test series defeat at home since 2012

PUNE: Mitchell Santner delivered a masterclass in spin bowling, securing a historic 13-wicket haul to hand New Zealand a 113-run victory over India, ending India's remarkable streak of 18 consecutive home series wins since 2012.

Santner's impressive figures of 13 for 157 are the third-best by any visiting bowler in India, highlighting a performance that not only sealed New Zealand's first series win on Indian soil but also exposed India's frailty under pressure.

Santner's relentless spell included 29 overs without a break in India's second innings, where he picked up six wickets, adding to his unbroken 19.3 overs in the first innings that saw him claim 7 for 53.

Displaying endurance despite a sore side, Santner only missed one over since he began bowling, anchoring New Zealand's defence against India's ambitious chase of 359. India's hopes had been ignited by Yashasvi Jaiswal's explosive 77 off 65 balls, which propelled them



to a fiery start at 96 for 1. While Santner found little support from Ajaz Patel, whose struggles continued, and Glenn Phillips, who mixed inconsistent deliveries with occasional gems, his control and deception consistently troubled the Indian batters.

With subtle changes in pace, Santner kept India's aggressive batsmen at bay, ultimately achieving his first ten-wicket haul in first-class cricket - a feat that proved crucial in halting India's momentum.

Earlier in the day, India's bowlers sought a breakthrough with the experienced Ravindra Jadeja and R Ashwin, opting to save Washington Sundar, who had already

claimed 11 wickets in the series. The decision backfired when a loose first-ball edge from Ashwin went unclaimed by Rohit Sharma, setting the tone for a gritty partnership as Tom Blundell and Phillips added 33 runs to the overnight score.

While Jadeja found big turn, New Zealand's disciplined tailend approach paid dividends, with Santner and Ajaz holding firm against India's relentless bowling attack.

Jaiswal, in a show of fearless intent, struck the second ball of the innings for six, continuing his explosive approach with three sixes to match the record for most sixes in a calendar year. As he

combined powerful sweeps with lofted drives, he kept the pressure squarely on New Zealand's bowlers, especially targeting Tim Southee, Ajaz, and Phillips. His breathtaking extra-cover six off Phillips was a standout moment, but ultimately, Santner's control under pressure began to stifle India's chase.

Santner's response to Jaiswal's attack was swift. A well-dipped ball dismissed Rohit Sharma via a sharp bat-pad catch, while Shubman Gill's aggressive approach met a swift end as Santner forced a defensive edge to slip, snapped up by Daryl Mitchell. Next to fall was Jaiswal, who was caught out by Santner's classic turning-pitch

delivery - a deft setup that combined sharp turn and subtle angle adjustments.

Adding to India's woes, Rishabh Pant's run-out became a symbolic moment of missed communication, as a mistimed single with Virat Kohli ended Pant's innings despite a desperate dive. Santner, seemingly unfazed by his side strain, continued to hustle between overs, stretching frequently but remaining unyielding. His skillful trapping of Kohli with a full delivery, alongside Sarfaraz Khan's dismissal by a slow-turning beauty that kissed off-stump, reinforced Santner's dominance.

The final blows came as Ashwin and Jadeja, India's most comfort-

able pairing, briefly raised hopes with a 39-run stand for the eighth wicket, yet Santner once again provided the breakthrough, tempting Ashwin into a drive that found Mitchell's safe hands. Ajaz Patel's outfield catches ultimately closed the innings, leaving him with a preserved record for best match figures by a visiting bowler in India, but Santner's remarkable display stole the spotlight.

Brief scores: New Zealand 259 (Conway 76, Ravindra 65; Washington 7-59, Ashwin 3-64) and 255 (Latham 86, Phillips 48*; Washington 4-56, Jadeja 3-72) beat India 156 (Jadeja 38; Santner 7-53, Phillips 2-26) and 245 (Jaiswal 77, Jadeja 42; Santner 6-104). -Agencies

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

Uncapped Abhimanyu, Rana, Reddy picked for India's tour of Australia



MUMBAI: India's squad for the highly anticipated five-Test series in Australia includes three uncapped players: opener Abhimanyu Easwaran, fast bowler Harshit Rana, and seam-bowling allrounder Nitish Kumar Reddy.

The 18-player lineup, led by Rohit Sharma with Jasprit Bumrah as vice-captain, showcases a blend of emerging talents and experienced names. The series begins on November 22 and is set to test India's adaptability on Australian soil.

Notably, seasoned pacer Mohammed Shami remains sidelined, yet to regain full fitness following ankle surgery earlier this year. The squad will also miss wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav, absent due to a "chronic left groin issue," as per a BCCI release. Fast bowlers Mukesh Kumar, Navdeep Saini, and Khaleel Ahmed will serve as reserves.

Easwaran, 29, is positioned to make his Test debut, with Rohit expected to miss one of the first two matches for personal reasons. Easwaran's domestic form has been stellar, recording two centuries in the Duleep Trophy, another in the Irani Trophy, and opening his Ranji Trophy campaign with a ton for Bengal. He was previously in India's Test squad for the Bangladesh series in 2022.

The squad includes spin all-rounders R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, and Washington Sundar, the latter marking his Test return after a three-year absence with a ten-wicket haul against New Zealand in Pune. Reddy, at 21, is the squad's only seam-bowling all-rounder and will have ample time to adapt, given his involvement with India A in Australia, where they face local teams in Mackay and Melbourne.

In the fast-bowling department, Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna,



and Rana round out the lineup. Prasidh, a two-Test veteran, recently returned from a significant back injury, while Rana, 22, has been impressive with his Duleep Trophy performances. India will rely on right-arm quicks this series, with Khaleel Ahmed in the reserves and no left-arm quick included in the main squad.

India's tour begins with a warm-up against India A from November 15 to 17 in Perth, ahead of the opening Test at Perth Stadium from November 22 to 26. The squad will then face hosts in a series of fixtures across Australia, culminating with the traditional Boxing Day Test in Melbourne on December 26, followed by the New Year's Test in Sydney beginning January 3. India currently hold the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, having won their last two tours of Australia, both by a 2-1 margin, in 2018-19 and 2020-21. **India squad:** Rohit Sharma (capt), Jasprit Bumrah (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel (wk), R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna, Harshit Rana, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar. **Reserves:** Mukesh Kumar, Navdeep Saini, Khaleel Ahmed. -Agencies

RAWALPINDI TEST VS ENGLAND

Sajid, Noman shine in Pakistan's series triumph against England

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's long wait is finally over. For the first time since 2021, they have won a Test series at home, sealing a remarkable comeback from a 1-0 deficit to triumph 2-1 over England on Saturday.

The comprehensive nine-wicket victory in Rawalpindi on day three of the final Test came with such ease that England's innings win in the series opener now feels like a distant memory.

Notably, this is only the second time Pakistan has overturned a series deficit and the first instance of achieving this on home soil.

As in previous wins, Noman Ali and Sajid Khan were unstoppable, combining to take all 10 wickets as England crumbled to 112 in a lackluster second-innings display. Noman led the charge with a stellar 6 for 42, marking his sixth five-wicket haul, while Sajid's 4 for 69 secured him his second 10-wicket match performance in just 10 Tests.

With only 36 runs required, Pakistan wasted no time. Shan Masood, eager to cap his tenure as captain with a flourish, scored a brisk 23 off six deliveries, striking four consecutive boundaries off Jack Leach and sealing victory with a towering six over Shoaib Bashir.

Before this, he had endured a tough start to his captaincy, marked by six consecutive defeats, making this win a particularly sweet accomplishment.

Noman and Sajid's introduction into the squad after the first Test transformed the series.

Between them, they accounted



for 39 wickets - Noman's left-arm spin yielding 20 at a stunning average of 13.85, while Sajid's off-spin claimed 19 at 21.01. Their combined impact was on full display as they dismantled England's batting lineup, reducing the final seven wickets for just 46 runs.

England's day had initially started on a hopeful note at 24 for 3, with Root and Brook at the crease, both capable of reversing the tide. And when Brook struck back-to-back fours off Sajid in the 13th

over, England fans could almost believe in a comeback.

However, Sajid quickly adapted his line, and Noman's delivery to Brook - a faster ball that he edged to Rizwan - set off a collapse England could not recover from.

Stokes' ongoing struggle against spin proved costly, as he misread a straight delivery from Noman, while Jamie Smith's ambitious attempt to charge Sajid led to his dismissal. Root, the last batter capable of mounting a significant

resistance, fell to a beauty from Noman, as a well-flighted ball induced an edge to close England's innings with a nominal lead of just 35.

Sajid swiftly cleaned up the tail, earning his second 10-wicket match haul after knocking back Rehan Ahmed's leg stump. A brief DRS reprieve for Shoaib Bashir only delayed the inevitable, and it wasn't long before Leach was stumped by Rizwan, giving Noman his final wicket.

With victory secured in just 3.1 overs, Masood walked off with a sense of redemption, guiding Pakistan to their first series win on home soil in three years. This achievement marks a new era under Masood's leadership, filled with optimism and the return of Pakistani resilience.

Masood later said: "London buses they come together. The first win came after a long time and it is backed up by a series win."

"This group, management, the board, what they have been through in past few weeks - that means a lot. For everyone to stand up and give their best means a lot."

England captain Ben Stokes said: "It's disappointing but whether we do well or not, we try to take the positives. Regardless of the result we should focus on what went right."

"You've got to practice but the pressures of Test match cricket can never be replicated." **Brief scores:** England 267 (Smith 89, Duckett 52; Sajid 6-128) and 112 (Noman 6-42, Sajid 4-69) lost to Pakistan 344 (Shakeel 134; Ahmed 4-66) and 37-1. -Agencies

INDIA'S T20I SQUAD FOR SA SERIES

Ramandeep, Vyshak and Dayal among new faces



NEW DELHI: The BCCI announced India's squad for the upcoming T20I series against South Africa on Friday, with Suryakumar Yadav set to captain the side.

The squad features several new call-ups, with all-rounder Ramandeep Singh and pacers Vijaykumar Vyshak and Yash Dayal earning maiden T20I selections.

Ramandeep, who impressed with his all-around skills for Kolkata Knight Riders in the 2024 IPL season and showcased his versatility at the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup in Oman, joins the team as a key all-rounder.

Vyshak and Dayal, both recognised for their skillful bowling, further strengthen India's pace

options. Dayal had previously received his maiden Test call-up in October.

In the batting lineup, Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson retain their spots after solid performances as openers in the recent series against Bangladesh. Tilak Varma, who led India A to the semi-finals before making a shock exit in the Emerging Teams Asia Cup, also makes the cut, while Jitesh Sharma will serve as the backup wicketkeeper.

All-rounders Hardik Pandya and Axar Patel add balance to the squad, bringing both batting depth and bowling options. Spinner Varun Chakaravathy, rewarded for his standout performances in

the recent Bangladesh series, is expected to lead the spin attack alongside Ravi Bishnoi. The pace unit will be spearheaded by Arshdeep Singh, with support from Vyshak, Avesh Khan, and Dayal, while Pandya doubles as an additional seam-bowling option.

India's four-match T20I series against South Africa kicks off on November 8 in Durban.

T20I squad: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (wicket-keeper), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal. -ANI

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ENHANCING TAX AWARENESS
In a step to enhance financial and tax culture among Omani youth, the Department of Tax in Al Batinah North Governorate organised a series of educational workshops targeting students of Sohar University and Al Buraimi University College.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



CREDIT GRANTED BY BANKS
An analysis of the activities of traditional commercial banks during the period (August 2023 - August 2024) indicates continued credit growth in the Sultanate of Oman, as the total credit balance granted by banks recorded an increase of 1.7 percent.

Muscat Stock Exchange records new gains in weekly trading



During the week, MSX recorded gains in its market value, which rose by the end of Thursday's trading to OMR24.74 billion, registering weekly gains of OMR6.4 million

MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded new gains last week as the main index rose to 4,825 points, up for the third week in a row.

These gains came ahead of the listing of OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP), which is expected to enrich the stock exchange's trading when it is listed for trading on October 28.

The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange rose last week by 25 points, with the financial sector index recording the highest gains, up 76 points, the industrial sector index rising by 13 points, the Sharia index rising to 436 points, up by more than two points, and the services sector index recording a slight increase of less than one point.

During the week, the Muscat Stock Exchange also recorded gains in its market value, which rose by the end of Thursday's trading to OMR24.74 billion, recording weekly gains of OMR6.4 million.

The stock market performed well with the number of shares



traded increasing by 12.5 percent and the trading value increasing by 4.4 percent from OMR12 million to OMR12.5 million.

However, the bonds and sukuk market witnessed a decline in trading value from OMR5.2 million to about OMR1.5 million with investors focusing on Ominvest's mandatory convertible bonds 2024 which closed at 90 baisas after trading 15.3 million bonds worth OMR1.4 million.

OQ Gas Networks topped the most traded companies in terms of trading value, after witnessing trading worth OMR2,864,000, representing 20.3 percent of the total trading value.

Bank Muscat came in second place with trading worth OMR2,223,000, and National Bank of Oman (NBO) came in third place with trading worth OMR1,534,000, representing 10.9 percent of the total trading value.

During the week, prices of 30 securities rose, while 30 other securities declined and 18 securities remained unchanged at their previous levels. The Omani Education and Training Investment Company share recorded the highest gains, rising by 9.8 percent and closing at 657 baisas.

The National Industrial Detergents Company share rose by 9.2 percent and closed at 710 baisas. The units of the Jabal Investment Fund recorded an increase of 8.1 percent and closed at 106 baisas.

The share of the Financial Centre (Fincorp) was the leading loser, declining by 16.2 percent and closing at 36 baisas. The share of Gulf Hotels-Oman fell by 10 percent and closed at OMR3.42, and the share of Muscat Gases fell by 7.4 percent and closed at 100 baisas.

In corporate news, National Bank of Oman said it has successfully completed the issuance of ad-

Omani stock market shows resilience

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market continued its upward trajectory, posting a 0.53 percent gain in its third consecutive week of positive performance, according to an industry expert.

"This growth was fuelled by the release of Q3 earnings, which showed promising results. The market remained near the upper boundary of last week's trading range and demonstrated resilience in the face of geopolitical risks that weighed on regional markets," said George Pavel General Manager at Capex.com Middle East.

"Most ended the week in negative territory despite also reporting positive third quarter (Q3) earnings," he further said.

"The market's potential for continued growth and a possible breakout above its long-term range is bolstered by the upcoming listing of OQEP, which successfully raised \$2.03 billion in its initial public offering and is expected to commence trading next week



on October 28th, potentially enhancing market valuation, liquidity, and growth," said George Pavel.

"Furthermore, rumours of an additional IPO from OQ, specifically for its methanol and liquefied petroleum gas unit, expected to raise between \$1 to \$1.5 billion, suggest that the government's privatisation strategy is gaining momentum," he further added.

"This development could have a profound impact on the market, as the influx of new listings and capital could lead to increased market activity and potentially drive the market to new heights."

Sector-wise, the financial sector led the gains, rising 0.96 percent for the week. National Bank Oman was among the top performers, advancing 1.69 percent, while Ominvest surged 5.35 percent and Sohar International Bank climbed 1.38 percent. Global Financial Investment also contributed to the sector's growth, gaining 3.70 percent.

The Industrial sector posted a modest gain of 0.24 percent, with Galfar Engineering and Contracting leading the way with a 5.77 percent increase. Jazeera Steel Products also performed well, rising 1.37 percent.

The Services sector experienced a slight uptick, gaining 0.02 percent for the week. Oman Telecom was among the top performers, advancing 0.61 percent, while Abraj Energy Services rose 1.02 percent. Al Batinah Power also contributed to the sector's growth, gaining 2.53 percent. However, OQ Gas Networks was lower, declining 4.08 percent and weighing on the sector's overall performance due to its significant size.

STRATEGIC MERGER

Merger of Dreamlab Technologies Oman and NSSG announced

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Swiss cybersecurity firm Dreamlab Technologies and Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest) announce the strategic merger of their respective entities, Dreamlab Technologies Oman and National Security Services Group (NSSG).

This merger will establish a leading provider of cybersecurity solutions and services for Oman and the region. The new entity, operating under the name 'Dreamlab Technologies', will combine Swiss engineering excellence with deep regional expertise to safeguard critical infrastructure and empower organisations to navigate the digital landscape confidently.

This merger represents a significant milestone in Ominvest's strategy to foster innovation and enhance national capabilities in the critical cybersecurity sector.

Sanjay Kawatra, Deputy Group CEO of Ominvest, stated, "This transformative merger establishes a robust cybersecurity entity poised to serve as a trusted partner for both government and commercial organizations across Oman and the region.

"By providing world-class cybersecurity solutions, we are not only fortifying the nation's digital resilience but also actively contributing to its global competitiveness in the digital age. This strategic move represents a pivotal step in Ominvest's long-term growth strategy, demonstrating its proactive approach to capitalizing on emerging opportunities in the dynamic cybersecurity landscape."

Adding to this, Waleed Al Yarubi, Chief People, Corporate Communication and Sustainability Officer at Ominvest, highlighted the strategic importance of this merger: "This investment tran-



sition signifies our commitment to building a future-ready portfolio that aligns with Oman's Vision 2040. By consolidating our cybersecurity strengths under Dreamlab Technologies, we are creating a regional leader capable of addressing the evolving cybersecurity landscape and driving digital transformation securely."

Nicolas Mayencourt, Global CEO of Dreamlab Technologies, added, "Dreamlab's Swiss-engineered software solutions, trusted by governments and critical infrastructure providers worldwide, will provide a secure foundation for navigating the complex cyber dimension. This merger allows us to leverage our cutting-edge technology and deep local knowledge to proactively address the evolving cybersecurity challenges facing the region."

Faiz Al Raisi, who has successfully led Dreamlab Oman since 2017, has been appointed CEO of Dreamlab Technologies. Al Raisi stated, "Our combined team of highly skilled cybersecurity experts is dedicated to delivering exceptional value and innovative solutions to our partners. By integrating international best practices and local insights, we will empower organizations to proactively manage cyber risks and confidently build a secure digital future."

INAUGURAL GALA DINNER

Elevatus launches strategic partnership with OSHRM to propel digital transformation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In line with their shared commitment to harnessing the transformative power of artificial intelligence (AI) across various sectors, Elevatus and the Omani Society for Human Resource Management (OSHRM) celebrated the launch of their strategic partnership at a ceremony held on October 23 in the Sultanate of Oman.

This partnership marks a significant step forward in Oman's digital transformation, empowering businesses to optimize their talent acquisition strategies and achieve sustainable growth. The event was attended by Sayyid Dr. Munther bin Hilal Al-Busaidi, Deputy Chairman of the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Unit.

On the sidelines of the gala dinner, Sayyid Salem bin Muslim Al Busaidi, emphasized, "Oman is committed to leading the way in harnessing the power of artificial intelligence. With rapid digital transformation and technological advancements, AI has become a cornerstone for developing human resources and enhancing efficiency. Through data-driven performance evaluations, AI facilitates personalized training programs that strengthen employee skills. It also revolutionizes recruitment by analyzing resumes and interviews, identifying top candidates based on objective, data-backed criteria."

Building on these insights about Oman's commitment to harnessing AI for human resource development, Faisal Al-Siyabi, CEO of OSHRM, emphasized, "Our strategic alliance with Elevatus is anchored in their cutting-edge AI-powered recruitment solutions, which are at the forefront of AI innovation. These solutions significantly enhance efficiency by automating and managing every stage of the recruitment process—from creating job requisitions to onboarding top talent—maximizing



ing the power of AI to transform the recruitment landscape."

The purpose of this gala dinner is to demonstrate how AI and automation can enhance not only recruitment but also essential business processes in sectors like oil and gas, government, healthcare, telecommunications, and HR. By highlighting these technological advancements, the event seeks to

illustrate how they can expedite the journey towards Oman's Vision 2040, supporting the nation's objectives for digital transformation and economic development.

Yara Burgan, CEO of Elevatus, stated, "We are honored to launch this inaugural gala dinner in Oman alongside esteemed leaders in the Sultanate. This event marks a pivotal moment as we join forces

to showcase the transformative power of AI technology—not only in recruitment but across various sectors. By showcasing these advancements, we aim to empower Omani businesses to build exceptional teams and enhance their capabilities, ultimately driving sustainable growth and progress toward achieving Vision 2040."

The inaugural gala dinner underscored the transformative impact of AI technology in propelling Oman's digital transformation. Attendees experienced firsthand how AI can revolutionize recruitment, allowing organizations to efficiently secure top talent while achieving Organisation objectives. Elevatus' cutting-edge AI platform, designed to centralize and automate the recruitment process, emerged as a pivotal force poised to reshape Oman's HR landscape. This event highlighted the vast potential of AI innovations across various sectors, accelerating their adoption throughout the Sultanate and empowering businesses to cultivate skilled workforces that will fuel economic growth and ensure long-term operational success.

MARKET

Credit granted by Omani banks to private sector tops OMR20bn

The total investments of traditional commercial banks in securities witnessed a 41.6 percent increase to reach about OMR6 billion by the end of August 2024

MUSCAT: An analysis of the activities of traditional commercial banks during the period (August 2023 - August 2024) indicates continued credit growth in the Sultanate of Oman, as the total credit balance granted by banks recorded an increase of 1.7 percent.

As for credit granted to the private sector, it increased by 0.8 percent to reach OMR20.4 billion by the end of August 2024.

As for the investment item, the total investments of traditional commercial banks in securities

witnessed a 41.6 percent increase to reach about OMR6 billion by the end of August 2024. Within this item, investment in government development bonds (GDBs) recorded a decrease of one percent compared to the same period last year to reach OMR1.9 billion.

As for the investments in foreign securities, they witnessed an increase of 139.4 percent to reach OMR2.5 billion by the end of August 2024. On the liabilities side, total deposits with conventional commercial banks recorded a 10.1

percent increase to reach OMR24.7 billion by the end of August 2024. Within the total deposits, government deposits with commercial

banks recorded a 2.1 percent decrease to reach about OMR5.4 billion, while deposits of public sector institutions increased by 28.5 per-

cent to reach about OMR1.9 billion during the same period.

Private sector deposits increased by 7.6 percent to reach OMR16.4 billion in August 2024, representing 66.5 percent of total deposits in conventional commercial banks. -**OMA**



2ND EDITION

Oxy Oman celebrates launch of ICV achievements book



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oxy Oman representatives attended the launch of the second edition of the In-Country Value (ICV) Achievements book, published by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Opal (Oman Energy Services). Oxy Oman sponsored and contributed to the ICV Book, which showcases the achievements of companies throughout the industry in enhancing In-Country Value.

The launch event was held at the InterContinental Muscat under the auspices of Dr. Saeed bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy. Abdulkarim Al Ghasani, Vice President of Supply Chain at Oxy Oman, attended with senior representatives from the company.

The ICV Book highlights the progress made in the industry to support local manufacturing and promoting job creation within the Sultanate of Oman. It also outlines long-term goals to invest in local products and services, reinforcing the industry commitment to fostering economic growth and development within the Sultanate.

"The ICV Achievements book highlights and underscores Oxy Oman's dedication to investing in Omani businesses, boosting Omanisation, and developing a diverse local supply chain. We look forward to continuing our support of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and local community contractors in driving ICV to greater heights in Oman," said Steven Lauver, President and General Manager of Oxy Oman.

This sponsorship falls under Oxy Oman's umbrella of strategic partnerships and continuous collaboration with key stakeholders, and is part of Oxy Oman's endeavour and long-term commitment to support programs that enhance economic growth and sustainable development and that yield positive impacts in the neighbouring communities.

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SERIES OF WORKSHOPS

Educational workshops enhance tax awareness among students



Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a step to enhance financial and tax culture among Omani youth, the Department of Tax in Al Batinah North Governorate organised a series of educational workshops targeting students of Sohar University and Al Buraimi University College.

The workshops included a detailed explanation of the tax system in the Sultanate of Oman, with a focus on registration mechanisms, types of taxes, their rates, and the procedures for filing tax returns. The importance of tax compliance and its pivotal role in supporting the national economy and achieving sustainable development was also highlighted.

Ahmed bin Musabih Al Badi, Director of Department of Tax in Al Batinah North Governorate, said: "This initiative aims to empower young people to understand their role as partners in building the national economy and to inform them of their tax rights and obligations. We are confident that this knowledge will contribute to building an aware generation capable of contributing to achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040."

For their part, the participating students expressed their gratitude to the Tax Authority for this initiative, emphasising the importance of the information they received in their future careers.

FUTURE OF ENERGY SECURITY

IEA Summit to examine geopolitical, technological and economic factors affecting energy security

PARIS: The International Energy Agency (IEA) will convene an International Summit on the Future of Energy Security on the 24 and 25 April 2025, hosted by the UK government at Lancaster House in London.

The summit will address traditional and emerging risks related to energy security in an era of geopolitical strains, technological transformation and a changing climate.

The summit will examine the geopolitical, technological and economic factors affecting energy security at the national and international level. It will provide leaders and decision-makers from around the world with an opportunity to review the trends redefining global energy security.

These include changes in energy demand, supply and trade; the adoption of clean and efficient energy solutions; the availability of the minerals and metals required for clean energy technologies – from wind turbines and solar panels to electric vehicles and battery storage; and the allocation of investment during the transition away from fossil fuels. -**WAM**



LIFESTYLE

STUDY FINDS 3% OF CHILDREN

Among autistic children, 33% also exhibit ADHD, and 10% of children with ADHD show autism traits

A SPANISH STUDY revealed that around 3% of school children show symptoms of both autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), while 0.5% might qualify for dual diagnoses.

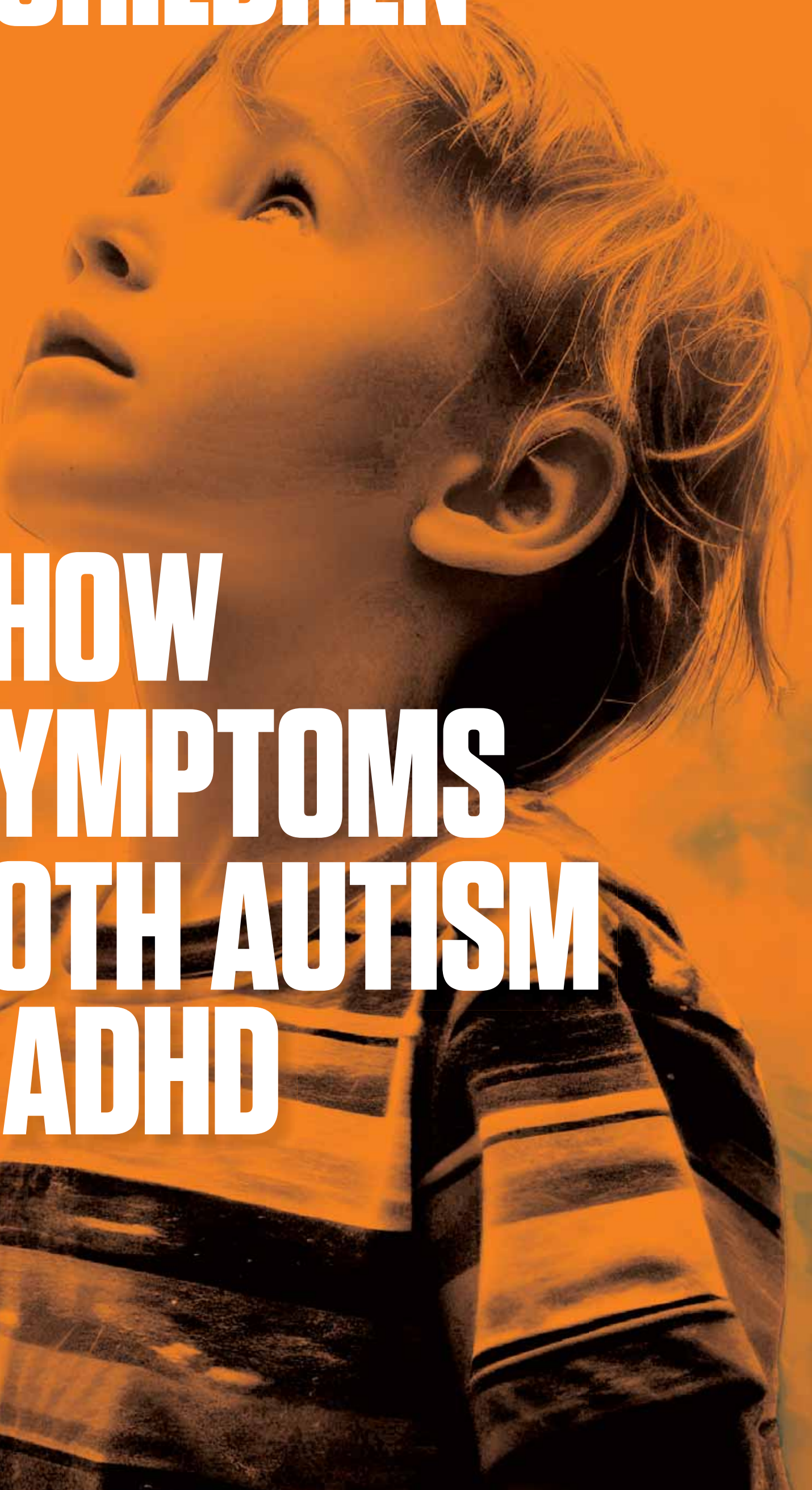
Among autistic children, 33% also exhibit ADHD, and 10% of children with ADHD show autism traits.

The study, led by Josefa Canals and published in 'Autism Research', analysed data from over 3,700 children in Tarragona, Spain, gathered from both parents and teachers.

The study also found higher comorbidity rates in boys (4-5%) compared to girls (1-2%).

The researchers suggest early screening in school and home settings to improve early identification and intervention. - **ONA**

SHOW SYMPTOMS OF BOTH AUTISM AND ADHD



SPORTS

Afghanistan A to take on Sri Lanka A in title clash

Both the teams recorded shock victories over fancied India A and Pakistan A in the semi-finals of the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup on Friday

MUSCAT: It was a Friday to remember for both Afghanistan A and Sri Lanka A teams as they registered upset victories over India A and Pakistan A respectively in the semi-finals of the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy ground.

The summit clash between Afghanistan A and Sri Lanka A will be held on Sunday. The match starts at 5.30pm.

On Friday, in the first semi-finals, it was Sri Lanka A knocking out defending champions Pakistan Shaheens, winning comfortably by seven wickets.

And later in the evening, Afghanistan Abdalyan stunned India A by 20 runs. India's Ramandeep Singh's gritty half-century [64 off 34 balls] went in vain against the Afghans.

Opting to bat first, Afghanistan A capitalised on a commanding 137-run opening partnership between Sediqullah Atal (83 off 52 balls) and Zubaid Akbari (64 off 41 balls) to post the tournament's highest total, reaching 206/4.



In response, India A struggled, losing half their lineup by the 13th over before Ramandeep launched a spirited fightback with Nishant Sindhu, building an exhilarating 68-run stand in just 31 balls.

With India needing 53 runs from the last three overs, the momentum swung as Nishant (23 off

13 balls) was run out following a miscommunication.

Tasked with defending 30 runs in the final over, Abdul Rahman (2/32) held his nerve, dismissing Ramandeep on the last delivery and restricting India to 186/7, sealing Afghanistan's place in the summit clash.

Earlier, in the first semifinal, Sri Lanka A put up a splendid bowling show to restrict Pakistan Shaheens to a modest 135/9.

They, then chased down the target in 16.3 overs with seven wickets in hand.

Dushan Hemantha was the star performer, taking four wickets for

21 runs and earning the Player of the Match award.

Pakistan Shaheens, after electing to bat, struggled against Hemantha's precise bowling.

Omar Yousuf was the top scorer with a solid 68 off 46 balls, but Pakistan A's batting lineup couldn't capitalise further, as they

were restricted to a modest total.

Besides Hemantha, Nipun Ransika and Eshan Malinga took two wickets each, effectively stifling Pakistan's run rate.

In response, Sri Lanka A's chase was led by a quickfire 43 off 20 balls from Lahiru Udara and an unbeaten 52 off 46 balls by Ahan Wickramasinghe. Pakistan's bowlers were unable to break Sri Lanka A's steady partnership-building, with Abbas Afridi and Sufiyan Mugeem each taking a wicket but struggling to maintain control.

Brief scores: Pakistan A: 135/9 (Omar Yousuf 68; Dushan Hemantha 4/21, Ethan Malinga 2/28, Nipun Ransika 2/21) lost to Sri Lanka A 137/3 in 16.3 overs (Lahiru Udara 43, Ahsan Wickremasinghe 52; Abbas Afridi 1/16). Afghanistan A 206/4 in 20 overs (Sediqullah Atal 83, Zubaid Akbari 64; Rasikh Salam 3/25) beat India A 186/7 in 20 overs (Ramandeep Singh 64, Ayush Badoni 31; Allah Ghazanfar 2/14, Abdul Rahman 2/32).

MEXICAN GRAND PRIX

Russell crashes heavily in practice

MEXICO CITY: George Russell made it four accidents for Mercedes drivers in four consecutive days of track action with a crash in Friday practice at the Mexico City Grand Prix.

Russell's heavy impact with the barriers in the high-speed Esses followed Lewis Hamilton spinning out of the US Grand Prix on the second lap last Sunday, Russell crashing in qualifying the day before at the same corner, and a spin for Hamilton at high speed in the Esses in Austin Friday practice.

Russell, who was windied but otherwise unhurt in the crash, said: "It seems like it's one thing after another at the moment. It's frustrating, as in the first practice we were really fast.

"I tried taking the same line cutting that corner and for whatever reason on this occasion the thing just started going on for me."

Russell, who set the pace in the first session by 0.317 seconds from Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, was taken to the medical centre for mandatory checks because of the size of the impact. He said he was "OK".

"I don't really know what happened," Russell said. "The car just started bouncing on the ground and before I had a chance to catch



it, I was already spinning, a lot of work for the guys tonight, again."

Hamilton, who was seventh fastest in the second session, said of his run: "I know what we need to fix. Whether or not we can actually do that, we'll see. It didn't feel terrible, a little bit off the front. (Some) rear end. You always want more rear."

The seven-time champion did not run in the first session as his car was being driven by his replacement in 2025, Andrea Kimi Antonelli. The Italian was 12th fastest, 1.202secs behind Russell.

Title contenders Max Verstappen and Lando Norris had difficult days.



Verstappen's first session was cut short by an engine problem, which then prevented him from doing any timed laps in the second session after Red Bull failed to fix it.

The Dutchman, who leads Norris by 57 points with five races to go and 146 points still available, described it as "a day to forget" but said there was no risk of a grid penalty for using too many engine parts.

Norris ran only in the second session, which was almost entirely devoted to a Pirelli test of 2025 development tyres, because his car was being used by IndyCar driver Patric O'Ward in the first.

The Briton, who was fifth fastest, said: "Not great. Lack of laps compared to most others but playing a little bit of catch-up."

Sainz was fastest in the second session with team-mate Charles Leclerc fourth. Leclerc did not run in the first session because his car was being used by reserve driver Oliver Bearman, who crashed with Alex Albon's Williams at the Esses early on.

Fernando Alonso, celebrating his 400th grand prix this weekend, was replaced in first practice by reserve driver Felipe Drugovich, and Robert Schwartzman took over from Zhou Guanyu in the second Sauber. - Agencies

FIA rejects McLaren request to review Norris penalty

MEXICO CITY: Formula 1's governing body, FIA, has rejected a request by McLaren to review a penalty handed out to Lando Norris in the United States GP. The five-second penalty, for overtaking title rival Max Verstappen off the track, demoted Norris behind the Dutchman from third to fourth place in the race results.

Stewards for the governing body the FIA rejected McLaren's submission on the grounds that it contained "no relevant new element". McLaren had questioned the stewards' verdict on the grounds that it was based on an "error" in assessing the incident.

Norris was penalised because he had not fulfilled F1's driver overtaking guidelines, which dictate that for a car overtaking on the outside to be afforded space by the defender on the inside, their car's front axle must be ahead of the front axle of the car on the



inside at the apex of the corner.

McLaren said in a statement: "We disagree with the interpretation that an FIA document, which makes a competitor aware of an objective, measurable and provable error in the decision made by the stewards, cannot be an admissible 'element' which meets all four criteria."

The decision means Verstappen keeps the 57-point lead he holds over Norris heading into this weekend's Mexico City GP, with five races to go and 146 points still available. - Agencies

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFIER

UEFA bans two Polish referees for 'terrible mistake'



ZÜRICH: Two referees have been banned from officiating in UEFA matches until June 2025 after a bizarre incident on the morning of a Champions League qualifier between Rangers and Dynamo Kyiv.

Bartosz Frankowski and Tomasz Musial were replaced as VAR officials before the third qualifying round match in Lublin, Poland on August 6 after reports of "improper behaviour".

Polish media reports alleged the pair had been drinking and were stopped by police with another man in the early hours having moved a road sign, with Frankowski later confirming details of the

incident in an interview.

UEFA's control, ethics and disciplinary body said on Friday the Polish duo were banned for violating "basic rules of decent conduct" and for bringing the sport and UEFA into disrepute.

A police spokesman said at the time that the men had been caught on CCTV cameras carrying the sign and were detained.

Superintendent Kamil Golebiowski said, according to Polish news outlet TVP World, that the men were breathalysed and had alcohol in their systems and were later fined.

Frankowski and Musial released statements of apology, with

both saying that they cooperated with the police without aggression while Musial described the incident as "irresponsible and unprofessional".

Musial added: "I feel very sorry and - in purely human terms - stupid, because I know that my unfortunate behaviour will cast a shadow over many years of hard work.

"I am aware of the consequences that await me, but I hope that I will be able to rehabilitate myself and rebuild your trust."

Frankowski said: "Throughout my 22 years of refereeing I have tried to discharge my duties professionally and avoid any blemishes on my image.

"I made a terrible mistake that I deeply regret. I will accept the consequences with humility, but at the same time I would like to hope that I will be able to rebuild your trust someday."

Frankowski and Musial were intended to be the video assistant referee (VAR) and VAR assistant for the Champions League qualifier but were replaced by other officials from the Polish Football Association.

The pair were also suspended by the Polish FA in August.

The match was drawn 1-1. Rangers suffered a 2-0 defeat at home the following week that meant Dynamo won on aggregate. - Agencies

IN PICTURES/WORLD



Sino-French children's chorus festival kicks off
A children's chorus from Paris performs during a Sino-French children's chorus festival held at Hainan Song and Dance Theatre in Haikou, south China's Hainan Province. *Xinhua*



Moss wall at Vancouver Fall Home Show
A moss wall installation is displayed during Vancouver Fall Home Show 2024 at the Vancouver Convention Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The four-day event kicked off on Thursday, featuring over 300 exhibitors.



Tiger at Bangladesh National Zoo
A tiger is seen at the Bangladesh National Zoo in the Mirpur section of Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Xinhua*



Selfies at the Windhoek Oktoberfest
People take selfies at the Windhoek Oktoberfest in Windhoek, Namibia. The 64th edition of the Windhoek Oktoberfest kicked off on Friday in the Namibian capital of Windhoek. *Xinhua*

QUEEN NEFERTITI

Should Germany return Nefertiti bust to Egypt?



BERLIN: She has an estimated value of €400 million (\$433 million) and is a jewel in the crown of Egyptian antiquities. Yet a 3,370 year-old bust of Queen Nefertiti has been in Berlin since 1922.

Pressure is now mounting for her to return home.

Zahi Hawass, former antiquities minister of Egypt, began lobbying to repatriate Nefertiti before the protests that toppled Hosni Mubarak in 2011.

This September, Hawass launched a petition to urge Germany to return the famous bust of Queen Nefertiti, which is currently housed in Berlin's Neues Museum.

"This bust, remarkable and unrivaled in history for its historical and aesthetic merit, is now in Germany, but it is time for it to come home to Egypt," the petition reads.

A German archaeological team discovered the painted limestone bust in 1912 and shipped it to Europe a year later.

Nefertiti has become a major tourist attraction and a part of the popular consciousness in the German capital during its long exile.

Visitors take a look at a bust of Nefertiti

The bust, believed to have been

crafted in 1345 BCE, has also been dubbed Egypt's ambassador to the city. But Egyptian archaeologist Monica Hanna questions this narrative.

"An ambassador entails a diplomatic exchange," she told DW, asking if Egypt has received something major in return, such as "the crown of (Prussian monarch) Frederick the Great or a painting by Albrecht Dürer."

"I don't think we have," Hanna said. "If you send an ambassador one way, he's a hostage."

The archaeologist has publicly called for the "decolonization of Egyptian archaeology." She argues that the initiative to repatriate Nefertiti triggers resistance because it "would become a precedent that would pave the road for the return of many different objects taken under colonialism."

Hawass' petition is also calling for the return of the Rosetta Stone and the Dendera Zodiac, Egyptian antiquities held in France and Britain.

The Rosetta Stone, on display in London's British Museum, is an ancient Egyptian stone bearing inscriptions in several languages and scripts — which served as the key to unlock the secrets of hieroglyphic writing.

The Zodiac of Dendera is a gi-

ant stone diagram from a temple in Egypt dating to the mid-1st century BCE, and is currently at the Louvre in Paris.

Berlin museum says there are no grounds for restitution

The Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation that oversees Berlin's museum collections has acknowledged the presence of stolen colonial art in its collections such as the Benin Bronzes — some of which were returned to Nigeria from Germany in 2022.

But the same foundation believes the Nefertiti bust was obtained legally from Egypt after it was uncovered in the remains of the city of Amarna, the short-lived capital under Pharaoh Akhenaten, Nefertiti's husband. After he died, the city, which sits on the east bank of the Nile River, was abandoned in 1335 BCE.

"The bust of Nefertiti was found in the course of an excavation authorized by the Egyptian Administration of Antiquities," said Stefan Mühler, spokesperson for the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation. "It came to Berlin on the basis of a — at that time customary — division of the find which encompassed many more objects." — *AP*



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ROUND-UP

Go electric with Kia's brand-new EV9 model

For those looking for diverse automobile options, the Kia EV9 enhances the driving experience with its futuristic looks, sophisticated appeal and remarkable speed

MUSCAT: Leading the shift from fuel to electric, EVs are the powerhouse of automotive innovation. Adhering to Kia's commitment to a net-zero future, its dynamic EV range is environment friendly and cost-effective, designed to reduce dependence on fossil fuels while addressing the world's climate concerns. Embarking on the trend, Kia's brings in its top-line electric ve-



hicle model, the EV9 to the Omani market. For those looking for diverse automobile options, the Kia EV9 enhances the driving experience with its futuristic looks, sophisticated appeal and remarkable speed, all with the absence of an engine. Enthral with Kia EV9's cutting-edge electric rechargeable battery that delivers an impressive driving range of up to 500 km on a full charge. Whereas, a quick 24 minute charge goes a long way from 0 to 80 per cent embracing both short and extended journeys. Depending on usage, the EV9 is an ideal city car and can be charged at

home with the EV charging device provided as part of the purchase. Engineered to deliver peak power performance of 7,800 rpm and motor output power of 283kw, EV9 provides noise-less acceleration and uncompromised performance. Compared to gasoline-powered vehicles, EVs are low maintenance and consist of fewer spare parts. Exploring the all-new Kia EV9, it is the first mid-sized all-wheel drive SUV based on Kia's E-GMP platform and comes in spacious 6 & 7 seater options. Arrive at your destination in style with EV9's ravishing exterior and ultra-roomy in-

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MACAN SUV, TAYCAN SPORTS SEDAN AND CROSS TURISMO

Porsche Centre Oman launches two significant new sports models

MUSCAT: Two key models marking Porsche's dedication to electrification will be welcomed to Oman with two distinctive events hosted by Porsche Centre Oman. An invitation-only evening at the St. Regis Hotel on October 17, which coincided with Omani Women's Day, and a two-day media presentation on October 20-22 at Porsche Centre Oman's showroom were the highlight events to launch the all-new, second-generation Macan SUV alongside the improved and updated Taycan Sports Sedan and Cross Turismo range.



pass on, to show these important new models to Oman's high society female influencers, VIP guests and prospective customers. This was an exclusive evening by invitation only with live music, displays by two local Omani fashion designers who displayed Macan-inspired collections, and a Provence exclusive Nail station."

Porsche Macan

The second generation, all-electric Macan delivers E-Performance on any terrain with a high level of day-to-day usability along with sports-car-like performance figures matched by up to 613km of range in WLTP and DC fast charging of up to 270 kW. The battery can be charged from 10 to 80 per cent within approximately 21 minutes at a suitable fast-charging station. Two electric motors are controlled via the power electronics almost in real time. The electronically controlled Porsche Traction Management (ePTM) operates around five times faster than a conventional all-wheel drive system and can respond to slip within 10 milliseconds. The wheelbase, which is 86 mm longer than the previous model (2,893 mm), is offset by short overhangs at the front and rear. The

headlights are divided into two parts: the flat upper light unit with four-point daytime running lights is embedded in the wings and emphasises the width of the car

Porsche Taycan

Four powertrain options with rear and all-wheel drive variants are available for the new Taycan Sports Sedan while the Taycan Cross Turismo is available with three powertrain options with all-wheel drive. Depending on the body variant and engine, the WLTP range has increased by 175km, or 35 per cent up to 678km while requiring not only fewer charging stops on long trips than its predecessor, but it also recharges faster than the previous version. The first-generation Taycan achieved a charge time of 37 minutes from 10 to 80 per cent SOC at 15 degrees Celsius whereas the new Taycan takes 18 minutes under the same conditions despite its larger battery capacity. The Performance Battery Plus now has a gross capacity of 105 kWh, up from 93 kWh. Porsche has covered more than 3.6 million kilometres around the world to keep improving its first all-electric sports car.

WEAVING EMPOWERMENT

Oman Shell, Dar Al Herfya spark women artisans' craft revival

MUSCAT: Oman Shell, in partnership with Dar Al Herfya, recently concluded a transformative three-month training programme designed to empower 18 skilled women artisans from the Al Dakhiliya region. This initiative focused on enhancing their technical expertise and business acumen in traditional Omani handicrafts. The programme culminated in a grand three-day public exhibition, coinciding with Omani Women's Day, showcasing the participants' craftsmanship and celebrating their achievements. The exhibition, alongside the graduation ceremony, marked the successful completion of the pilot phase and reinforced the program's commitment to advancing women's empowerment.

Dar Al Herfya's three-month training programme, hosted at the Oman Across Ages Museum, provided technical upskilling in traditional Omani arts and crafts, particularly in fabric and palm handicrafts, to a carefully selected group of unemployed women between the ages of 18 and 55. The initiative aimed to create opportunities for these women to generate sustainable income while preserving Omani heritage. As part of the initiative, participants were provided with tools, machines, and raw materials needed to continue their craft after the training. In addition, Dar Al Herfya facilitated access to six selling platforms, thereby addressing the market access challenges that low-income women in the region often face. This programme aligns with Shell's broader objective of supporting community development and enhancing its contribution to the preservation of Oman's cultural legacy. By empowering women and promoting sustainable business practices in the handicraft sector, the initiative serves as a testament to Shell's commitment to fostering local talent and supporting the long-

ENHANCE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



Muzn Islamic opens new branch in Ibra

MUSCAT: In line with its ongoing commitment to offer customers with a seamless banking experience, Muzn Islamic Banking has officially inaugurated a new branch in Ibra in North A'Sharqiyah Governorate. The strategic expansion reflects Muzn's dedication to enhance accessibility and convenience for its customers across Oman, supporting their financial aspirations while adhering to Islamic principles. Commenting on the inauguration, Salima Al Marzooqi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Muzn, said "At Muzn, we remain dedicated to our customers' needs by providing them with accessible and tailored Shariah-compliant financial solutions. Our new branch in Ibra comes as part of our continuous efforts to bring

quality banking services closer to the community. Moreover, we aim to foster stronger relationships with local customers and contribute to the economic development of the area. The branch offers a full range of Islamic banking services, from personal and business banking accounts, to financing solutions, enabling customers to manage their financial needs in a modern and convenient setting. Muzn's continued investment in physical branch expansion complements its broader digital transformation initiatives. Muzn's customers can also enjoy the convenience of Muzn's advanced digital banking services, providing seamless access to their accounts and financial management tools anytime, anywhere.



term socioeconomic development of Oman. Zuwaina Al Rashidi, CEO of Dar Al Herfya, World of Handicrafts, commented on the programme saying, "We are incredibly proud of the dedication shown by these talented women over the last three months. Their craftsmanship is a reflection of Oman's rich culture and heritage. The Hirfah programme not only equips them with the skills and tools they need to succeed, but also preserves Omani traditions and highlights the important role women play in our communities." Commenting on Oman Shell's strategic partnership with Dar Al Herfya, Malak Al Shaibani, General Manager, Corporate Relations and In-Country Value,

Oman Shell, said, "Over the past 3 months, 18 remarkable women from the Al Dakhiliya Governorate embarked on a journey that began with a simple thread of tradition that has now woven into a tapestry of innovation and self-reliance. Guided by Dar Al-Herfya's vision and supported by Oman Shell, these craftswomen have honed their skills in the timeless arts of weaving and palm leaf work. At Shell, we believe true progress lies in empowering communities and preserving cultural legacies. The Hirfah programme is a shining example of this belief, where tradition meets innovation, and where the hands of these talented women are shaping not just beautiful products, but also brighter futures."



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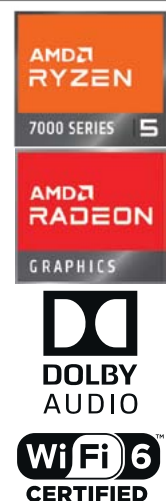
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