

DATES FOR START OF NEW ACADEMIC YEAR ANNOUNCED

Students will start the new academic year 2023/2024 on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, according to the Ministerial Decision No. (205/2023) regarding the annual calendar of school work for the academic year 2023/2024. **>A3**



ROYAL OFFICE MINISTER RECEIVES SEVERAL AMBASSADORS

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'aimi, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office several Ambassadors, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman. Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'aimi received Stella Kloth, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Oman, Filali Ghouini, Ambassador of Algeria to Oman, Abdullah Saud Al Anzi, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia and Thomas Friedrich Schneider, Ambassador of Germany to the Sultanate of Oman, on Sunday. **>A5**



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OMAN TARGETS 3.5 MILLION TOURISTS ARRIVAL THIS YEAR

NEW REPORT



Oil prices at 12-week high, tops \$80 a barrel mark

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Crude oil prices reached the highest level since the last week of April-2023 after seeing consistent gains since the end of June-2023, according to a new report.

“After reaching multi-month low levels last month and the biggest monthly decline in prices this year in May-2023, crude oil prices breached the \$80 per barrel mark on 12-July-2023 to reach \$80.11 per barrel,” the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest said in its Oil Market Monthly Report, July 2023.

“The gains came initially on the back of tighter supplies as Saudi Arabia’s additional voluntary cuts came into force coupled with cuts announced by Russia and Algeria. Further support came from optimism on the demand front after inflation in the US came in weaker-than-expected and to some extent economic sops announced in China,” it added. **Full report >B1**

Around 1.5 million Middle East tourists are expected to visit Oman in 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The total number of international tourists arriving into the Sultanate of Oman in 2023 is expected to reach 3.5 million, up by 20.8 percent on an annual basis, compared to 2022, according to a report.

The report issued by BMI, an economic solutions entity affiliated with Fitch agency, has revealed that the recovery of the tourism sector in Oman in 2022 was stronger than expected, with the continuation of positive trends in 2023.

The average annual growth of the number of tourists arriving to Oman over the medium-term (2023-2027) is expected to reach 7.4 percent, as demand for leisure and commercial tourism continues to drive recovery amidst high oil prices that boost domestic investments.



11mn

tourists are expected to visit Oman annually by 2040 as part of the comprehensive plan prepared by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

The report predicts that the Middle East region will be the largest source of tourists arriving to Oman in 2023, reaching 1.5 million, followed by tourists from the Asia-Pacific region 606,390 and Europe 320,600.

The number of arrivals from Africa is expected to reach 72,000, while the number of tourists from America is expected to

reach 72,800.

The report expects steady gains for Oman’s tourism sector until 2027 and beyond, supporting long-term prospects through economic diversification and the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. This is based on the efforts exerted by Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, to support the tourism

sector through investments in infrastructure.

Further, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism’s comprehensive plan targets the annual arrival of 11 million visitors by 2040. The plan includes new tourism and heritage projects that contribute to raising the volume of total Investments in the sector.

BMI’s report pointed out that there are various tourism projects under implementation process, and many adventure tourism projects that are slated for completion by 2025/2026, in addition to a number of other major projects.

Growth targets

The report also added that in addition to strong government support and ambitious growth targets, the tourism sector in the Sultanate of Oman is enhanced by natural attractions, wildlife, historical and cultural heritage, including various heritage sites and Oman’s proximity to tourist markets.

Oman enjoys various areas with exceptional temperatures in summer and a variety of High-end adventures, eco-tourism opportunities, deep-sea ports capable of accommodating various cruise ships, in addition to the capabilities of Muscat International Airport, which has a capacity of receiving 12 million passengers annually. **>A2**

Dhofar Governorate

Four of a family injured in Salalah vehicle accident

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Four persons of a family were injured when their vehicle met with an accident in Jabal Atin, Dhofar Governorate, on Sunday.

On getting information, the rescue and ambulance teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Department in Dhofar Governorate responded to an accident involving a vehicle with a family of four in it at Jabal Atin in the Wilayat of Salalah.

“Emergency medical care was provided to the injured people on the spot, and they were taken to the hospital for treatment,” the CDAA said in a statement.



The CDAA called on visitors during the Khareef season to follow safety instructions while visiting the governorate and prepare well for the trip, maintain the vehicle, keep a first aid bag, and ensure that the fire extinguisher is in working condition.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Thrilling motorsport events on cards at Khareef

1 The Oman Automobile Association will launch exhilarating motorsport events as part of the much-anticipated Khareef Dhofar Festival in Salalah. The addition of these events aims to provide a unique and thrilling experience for the general public. **>A2**

WORLD

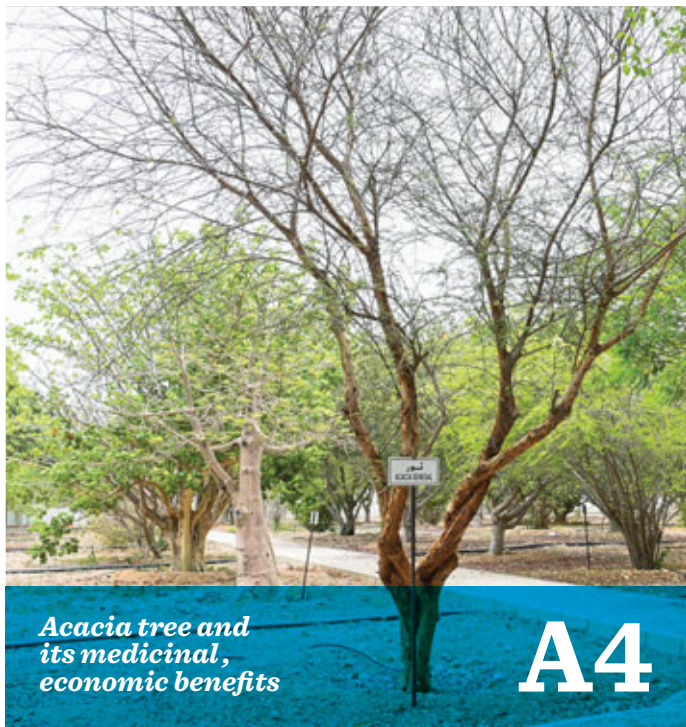
India and UAE to work for global good

2 After concluding his official visit to the UAE, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday shared a video bearing highlights from his trip to the Gulf nation and said both the countries will continue to work closely for global good. **>A7**

SPORTS

Inter Miami confirms Messi’s signing

3 Major League Soccer outfit, Inter Miami, announced the signing of Lionel Messi on a free transfer. The World Cup 2022 winner will begin now begin his new journey on a deal that runs until 2025, following his departure from the Ligue 1 club PSG. **>B6**



Acacia tree and its medicinal, economic benefits

A4

MARITAL DISCORD

Muscat Governorate tops in divorce cases in 2022

Times News Service

MUSCAT: There has been an increase in divorce cases in recent times with Muscat Governorate recording the highest number of divorce cases during 2022, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The NCSI report said that more than 970 registered divorce documents were received from Muscat Governorate alone last year.

In 2022, 4,160 divorce cases were registered across all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. Among them there were 3,682 cases between Omani couples while 208 cases were between Omani and expatriate couples.

The NCSI data revealed that the

The spike in divorce cases raises a lot of questions. From changing societal norms to the evolving role of women, several factors are responsible for the growing trend.



Muscat Governorate recorded 977 cases, followed by Dhofar Governorate 786 and North Al Batinah Governorate 666 cases.

Musandam Governorate recorded the lowest number of divorce cases with just 32 while Al Wusta Governorate registered 41.

There has been a steady increase in divorce cases from 2021 when 3,837 documents were registered as compared to 4,160 in 2022.

The NCSI report said that 15,400 marriages took place in Oman in 2022, which included 14,127 of Omani couples and 613 between Omanis and expatriates. Also there were 66 expatriates who married Omani women.

Muscat Governorate recorded

the highest number of 3,162 marriage registrations.

There was a sharp decline in marriages with more than 50 percent drop as compared to 2021. Last year only 15,400 marriages took place, but there were 39,000 weddings in 2021.

A marriage counsellor said, “The spike in divorce cases raises a lot of questions. From changing societal norms to the evolving role of women, several factors are responsible for the growing trend. Modern living also puts a lot of stress and strain on marriages, as individuals adapt to new expectations and challenges. Work pressure, financial burden and maintaining a healthy work-life balance often contribute to marital discord.” **>A5**



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MUSCAT





OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:18pm

Asr.....3:38pm

Maghrib.....7:01pm

Isha.....8:22pm

Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:05am

Thrilling motorsport events on cards at Khareef Dhofar

Salalah Celebrations Square will be transformed into a hub of adrenaline-pumping action, hosting a series of four captivating motorsport events for participants of all ages and interests

Times News Service

SALALAH: The Oman Automobile Association will launch exhilarating motorsport events as part of the much-anticipated Khareef Dhofar Festival in Salalah.

The addition of these events aims to provide a unique and thrilling experience for the general public, families, and motorsports enthusiasts attending the seasonal annual festival.

From July 15 to September 1, Salalah Celebrations Square will be transformed into a hub of adrenaline-pumping action, hosting a series of four captivating motorsport events for participants of all ages and interests.

“Bringing motorsport events to Khareef Dhofar Festival is a significant milestone for us,” said Sulaiman Al Rawahi, Managing Director of the Oman Automobile Association. “We aim to create an unforgettable experience for not only motorsports fans but the wider community in Oman, showcasing the passion and excitement that motorsports can offer.”

Hamood Al Balushi, Event Director at Khareef Dhofar Motorsport events, added, “We are thrilled to present these thrilling motorsport events as part of the Khareef Dhofar Festival. With a diverse range of activities, from karting circuits to digital mot-



orsports and bike ride parades, we are confident that participants and spectators alike will be captivated by the exhilarating atmosphere.”

Karting Circuit Experience

Date: July 15 to August 31, Time: 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Location: Salalah Celebrations Square

Kicking off the motorsport extravaganza, the Karting Circuit

Experience promises an exhilarating adventure for individuals aged 5 and above. Participants will have the opportunity to unleash their inner speedster by racing on state-of-the-art karts, including Rt8, Dino, Baby Kart, and Double Seater models. It's an experience not to be missed!

Digital Motorsports

Date: July 15 to August 31, Time:

4:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Location: Digital Room, Salalah Celebrations Square

In the digital realm, motorsport enthusiasts can indulge in the world of virtual racing and compete against each other in thrilling driving simulators. The Digital Motorsports event, held adjacent to the Karting Circuit Experience, offers an immersive experience for both casual gamers and competi-

tive drivers.

Bike Ride Parade

Nizwa Bikers: August 6 to August 10, Oman Riders: August 25 to September 1

Embark on an epic journey as two prestigious bike clubs, Nizwa Bikers and Oman Riders, traverse the scenic route from Muscat to Dhofar. Witness their awe-inspiring display of passion and skill as

they make their way through the beautiful landscapes of Oman.

These motorsport events are designed to captivate and entertain the entire family, offering a unique opportunity to witness high-octane action during the Khareef Dhofar Festival. Whether you're a motorsports enthusiast or simply seeking an adrenaline rush, these events are guaranteed to leave you breathless!



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FROM 1 JANUARY TO 25 JUNE 2023



Number of international arrivals in Oman surges by 126.7%

<FROM A1 Meanwhile, a report issued by Forward Keys, a global leader in travel data and analytics, shows that the Sultanate of Oman has recorded an increase of 126.7 percent in the number of arriving international flights during the period from 1 January to 25 June 2023. This increase came from a number of international tourism markets in the region and beyond, with a minimum one-night stay.

On its part, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism emphasised that the ministry accords attention to monitoring international indicators related to the tourism sector, which helps to understand market trends and analyse the performance of the tourism sector at the global level and its reflections locally.



The ministry measures the impact of marketing efforts to improve offers to tourist destinations and direct plans to enhance the sector and improve its performance.

These indicators contribute to increasing competitiveness in

the global market. Improvement of international indicators leads to positive results that contribute to increasing investors' interest and attracting investments into the sector, which leads to its development and strengthening its economic cycle.



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COMMENTARY

Someone from my old past

AS I was patiently standing in the queue in a fast food restaurant, I saw a man furiously stabbing the numbers of a calculator. I also noticed that he was mumbling to himself, perhaps the calculations did not add up to his expectations. I kept my eyes on him because there was nothing else I could do but wait for my turn to be served. I recognized him when he lifted his head. Since he was sitting alone, I joined him with my burger tray but there was no recognition on his face as I sat opposite him. I reminded him who I was and his face lit up. His thoughts traveled back in the mist of time. He stretched his hand. That was not all. He pulled me towards him and gave me a bear hug. It must have been a spectacular sight to other diners. The funny thing was that, two decades ago, the man would not even give me an appointment to see him in his office when I was desperate. He would walk past me and other colleagues as if we were litter cluttering his path.

Now, he greeted me as if I was a long, lost dear friend. For a man who never spoke much to anyone, he had a lot to talk that day. I sat there listening to what he had been doing after I left the airport. I noticed the deep lines on his forehead and the untidy grey beard. I also noticed there was no shine in his clothing. The sophistica-

tion had completely deserted him. It suddenly occurred to me, it was all probably an act those days that went along with the title of a 'Director General.' But was he doing now? His answer was vague for a man who was entrusted with the heavy burden of developing an international airport. He was running his own business, he said, but stopped short from giving me the specifics. I did not press him to give me the detail because I wanted to spare him the blushes.

I joked that to pay for a mere burger, did he need a calculator? He quickly stuffed it in his pocket and ignored my question. That was probably a cue to end up our unexpected meeting. He stretched his hand and said he had to go. Before he walked out from the crowded place, he said, "by the way, your English needs brushing up in your writings!"

I told him I would take care

of that. I watched him shuffle out of the place wondering what had happened to his world. Many of us at the airport thought he was destined to become a member of the cabinet. Something must have happened that snatched away the title of "His Excellency" from him. Well, they say God acts in a mysterious way.

I saw him again when I left the restaurant but this time, he was arguing with a petrol station attendant. No wonder they did not give him the opportunity to sit in that powerful round table of the cabinet. He would have been a constant embarrassment to the government. He was still poking fingers in the air when I was driving away, the way he did to the calculator. As I reached a road junction, I wondered what would happen to me in the next decade. Someone else would probably say something similar about me.

Dates for start of new academic year announced

The academic year 2023/2024 for government, special education, private schools following the government calendar system will begin on August 27, 2023

The Undersecretary for Education shall take necessary measures to address any difficulties or challenges that may arise related to the dates of registration, says Article 6

August 29, 2023.

While article three stipulates the study plan and operational framework for the academic year 2023/2024 shall be implemented according to Annexes No. (2) and (3) attached to this decision, article four says that the help of members of the teaching staff in the educational directorates and schools is used to carry out the work of examining and correcting papers, as required by the work interest.

Similarly, article five states that the working hours of members of the teaching staff in educational directorates, government schools, special education schools, and private schools applying the government calendar system for the academic year 2024/2025 will start from Monday, corresponding to August 26, 2024 and students will start studying from Wednesday, corresponding to August 28, 2024.

While, article six stipulates that the Undersecretary for Education shall take necessary measures to address any difficulties or challenges that may arise related to the dates of registration and transfer of students and learners and article seven states that anything that contradicts this decision or contradicts its provisions shall be repealed.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Students will start the new academic year 2023/2024 on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, according to the Ministerial Decision No. (205/2023) regarding the annual calendar of school work for the academic year 2023/2024.

Based on the Royal Decree No. 79/2020 defining the competencies of the Ministry of Education and approving its organisational structure, and Royal Decree No. 31/2023 issuing the School Education Law, and Ministerial Resolution No. 146/2022 regarding study dates, exams and vacations for the academic year 2022/2023, and based on what is required by the interest of the work, the following decisions have been announced.

The article number one says that the academic year 2023/2024 for government schools, special education schools, and private schools following the government calendar system begins on

Sunday, corresponding to August 27, 2023, and ends on Thursday, corresponding to July 11, 2024, according to Appendix No. (1) attached to this decision.

Article two states that the working hours of members of the teaching staff in educational directorates, government schools, special education schools, and private schools following the government calendar system for the academic year 2023/2024 start from Sunday, corresponding to August 27, 2023 while students will start studying from Tuesday,

SQU

Maiden summer school programme for staff organised

SALALAH: The first summer school of its kind, in Oman, for higher education institutions' academic staff was organised in Salalah by Sultan Qaboos University (SQU).

Activities of the 5-day programme took the slogan: "Designing educational materials for a hybrid/blended learning style and a competency-based learning".

The programme was held under the auspices of Dr. Ahmed Mohsin Al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality. It comprised workshops on flexible blended learning and learning based on competencies with a view to enhancing teaching skills and achieve quality education.

Fifty academics from Oman and abroad took part in the programme. -ONA



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ACACIA TREE

AND ITS MEDICINAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR DHOFAR PEOPLE

Times News Service

SALALAH: Acacia Senegal, locally called 'Thawr' and regionally called 'Hashab' is considered one of the most important trees growing in the Dhofar Governorate from which gum 'Malakh' is extracted. It has medicinal properties and is of high nutritional value.

This tree grows in dry and sub-tropical regions in the South African desert from Senegal in the west to Somalia in the east and extends up to the Arabian Peninsula to India, Pakistan and Australia.

However, this tree is not found in the Arabian Peninsula except for Dhofar Governorate as per 'Dhofar Plants Book' compiled by Miller and Miranda in 1988.

Modern scientific studies conducted by the researchers Said Tabuk and Abdul Aziz Al Ma'ashani under the title 'The importance of Acacia Senegal tree in Dhofar governorate' points to the wide existence of this tree in the Dhofar mountains with high medicinal, nutritional and economic benefits.

With respect to the historic importance of the tree, Abdul Aziz Ahmed Al Ma' Abdul Aziz Al Ma'ashani, the researcher said that the gum was exported from Dhofar ports to global markets in huge quantities at high prices, especially in the nineteenth century which indicates the existence of the tree in Dhofar mountains.

He added that the Dhofar Governorate people anciently benefited from the Acacia tree which had an impact on the economic life of the shepherds, beekeepers, farmers, merchants, fishermen and craftsmen of the region.

Eng. Said Musalam Tabuk, a researcher in agricultural engineer-

ing, said that Dhofar mountains contain forests called 'Seasonal clouds forests' which depend on seasonal rains occurring in the Dhofar Governorate from June end till September every year.

The Acacia tree is widely used in the Dhofar Governorate, whether its gum or its crust, which was previously used to treat wounds. Its trunk is thin but strong branches are used in making fishing cages. Due to its high nutritional value, farmers use the leaves for boosting the nutritional value of camel milk and honey is extracted from the nectar of its flowers.

Professor Loay Jamil Rashan, a researcher at Dhofar University Research Center emphasised that the tree has multiple medical benefits as documented in scientific studies. He said that its gum is used as antioxidants for treating mouth, stomach, and digestive system ulcers. In addition, it is used in some dental fillings and manufacturing of anti-caries drugs.

He added that the gum is also used in foods as a preservative and in the manufacturing of capsules, medical tablets and pharmaceutical syrups.

The diversity of the local trees and their wide spread in Dhofar mountains has contributed to the production of the finest types of honey, including gum honey. Its production starts from mid-March to the end of April each year, along with the flowering season in the beginning of the summer.

The estimated data indicated that the production of gum honey in Dhofar Governorate in 2022 was about three tonnes, at prices ranging between OMR20 and OMR35 per kg.





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MEETINGS

Royal Office Minister receives several ambassadors

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office on Sunday Stella Kloth, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting came within the framework of the attention accorded by the Sultanate of Oman to regional and international issues.

Al Nu'amani reviewed areas of joint cooperation and means of enhancing relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Netherlands.

In her turn, the ambassador lauded the bilateral relations between the two countries.

The two sides also discussed several matters of common interest.

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani also received in his office Filali Ghouini, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

The ambassador expressed his appreciation for the cooperation extended to him from all officials in Oman. He also lauded the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Al Nu'amani thanked the ambassador for the efforts he ex-

erted during his tour of duty, wishing him success.

Moreover, Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, received Abdullah Saud Al Anzi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

The Saudi ambassador expressed his appreciation for the cooperation extended to him during his tour of duty, which contributed to enhancing bilateral relations.

In his turn, Al Nu'amani thanked the ambassador for the efforts he exerted in boosting bilateral relations, wishing him success in his future endeavors.

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani also received Thomas Friedrich Schneider, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

The ambassador expressed his appreciation for the cooperation extended to him during his tour of duty in Oman.

The Minister of Royal Office thanked the ambassador for the efforts he exerted in boosting bilateral relations, wishing him success. -ONA

AL BAYT UNIVERSITY

Omani cultural days begin in Jordan

AMMAN: The events of Omani cultural days kicked off in Amman on Sunday.

The function has been organised by Omani Studies Units at Al Bait University in coordination with the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman.

The cultural days highlight the Omani role in serving the Islamic and Arabic language with the participation of a number of academicians and researchers from Oman and Jordan, poets and singers from both the countries.

Abdul Rahman bin Ahmed Al Khalili, Director of Committees and Foreign Relations Depart-

ment at the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and member of the Council of Omani Studies Unit, said: "Omani civilization is wide and deeply rooted in human history so it cannot be discussed in days or weeks. The unit today is only highlighting some aspects and encouraging elites, researchers and people of Jordanian society to visit the Sultanate of Oman and get acquainted with its features and civilization and share the bond between the brotherly people."

Dr. Mohamed Al Darobi, head of the executive committee of the Omani Studies Unit said that since the establishment of the

unit at Al Bait University, there has been an increase in cultural cohesion between Jordan and Oman.

"The unit has organised 14 conferences to date internationally, published works, most of which are among the university's publications, in more than 40 volumes.

The unit has also organised more than 100 daily activities such as lectures, seminars, competitions, and exhibitions. The number of participants in the scientific activities of the unit rose by over 80 from more than 20 countries worldwide.

- ONA

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Top ministry official expresses concern on rising divorce cases

< FROM A1 In an interview with Al Shabiba Radio earlier this year, a senior official at the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) had expressed concern on the rising divorce cases and attributed it to the growing influence of social media.

Rise of divorce cases

Dr Jalal bin Yousef Al Mukhaini, director of family counselling and guidance at the social development ministry, said: "The rise of divorce cases are increasing among young people and groups with low educational and economic levels."

Al Mukhaini expressed his concern on the impact of social media

on newly-married couples.

Lack of communication

He said: "We see young married couples getting carried away with their own ideas, believing that marriage is all rosy and full of love. But the fact is that there are a lot of adjustments to be made by both. And when there is a lack of communication between partners and families who fail to intervene, it causes a rift. At times, the expectations towards life differ for both with financial issues often leading to clashes."

"In today's world, infidelity caused by social media interactions has also led to a rise in divorce cases in Oman, where women are now looking for equal life

partnerships."

Al Mukhaini opined that the reasons for divorce differ for each couple but denial of parity in marriage partnership or a shift in the gender role expectations are among the other reasons.

"Studies have shown that among the other causes of divorce include poor communication and conflict resolution skills, lack of quality time spent together, and a delay or reluctance in seeking marriage counselling," he added.

"There is a great need to bring down the number of divorce cases in the Sultanate of Oman and it would be possible only if efforts are made at all levels to safeguard family life," concluded Al Mukhaini.



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Tender Number	Tender Description	Tender Fee	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date	Grade
2022/MM/QS-85 PRE/22/158	Manufacture and Supply of Safety Barrier 2023 (Re-Tender 2)	25	26/07/2023	31/07/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/063 2022/MM/QS-37	Construction of Proposed Solution to Resolve Water Stagnation at Boshier (35) (Re Tender)	25	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	First
2023/MM/HQ-31 PRE/23/001	Development of traffic light Operating System in Muscat Governorate	50	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	Specialist
2023/MM/QS-50 PRE/23/122	Beatification & Construction of Proposed Road With Concrete Pavement in Fiq at Quriyat	25	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	First
2023/MM/QS-51 PRE/23/123	Design & Construction of Concrete Road at Salamah in Qurayyat	25	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	Forth
2023/MM/QS-52 PRE/23/137	Construction of Irish Crossing in Abayah at Quriyat	25	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	First
2023/MM/HQ-32 PRE/23/138	Maintenance of the official Muscat Municipality website, the Muscat Municipal Council website and the governorate of Muscat website	25	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	Specialist
2023/MM/QS-53 PRE/23/143	Consultancy Services for Supervision of Construction of Slope Protection Works on Al Jabal Road at Al Amirat	25	26/07/2023	31/07/2023	First
2023/MM/QS-54 PRE/23/153	Maintenance Works at different locations at Muscat Governorate	25	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	Specialist
2023/MM/QS-55 PRE/23/163	Maintenance of Water Dispenser and Filters	25	05/08/2023	28/08/2023	Specialist

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SOUTH KOREA

7 bodies pulled out from flooded tunnel

SEOUL: The bodies of seven people trapped in a tunnel submerged by heavy rain in South Korea were retrieved on Sunday, authorities and local media said.

Nearly 400 rescue workers, including divers, continued to search the tunnel in the central city of Cheongju for other victims, having found one body and nine survivors a day earlier.

More than a dozen vehicles, including a bus, were swamped in the tunnel by a flash flood Saturday evening when water from an overflowing river poured into the tunnel, trapping motorists inside.

“We are focusing on the search operation as there are likely more people there,” Seo Jeong-il, head of the west Cheongju fire station, told reporters. “We are doing our best

to wrap it up today.”

Strong rainfall

Days of strong rainfall triggered flash floods and landslides that have left more than 35 people dead and forced the evacuation of thousands more.

The majority of deaths occurred in the mountainous region of North Gyeongsang, where landslides caused houses to be swept away.

Across the country, at least 10 people were still considered missing after the floods, officials said.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety reported that the rainfall led to the evacuation of nearly 6,000 people and left over 27,260 homes without power.

— DW



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INFLUX OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES



German food banks struggling to keep up with rising demand

BERLIN: Germany’s over 900 food banks, overseen by charitable organisation Tafel e.V., support anyone who can prove they’re facing financial hardship. But fewer and fewer companies are donating to these food banks, although demand is growing amid high inflation and the influx of Ukrainian refugees. That’s why food banks are now calling on the German state for help.

The growing need for food aid is clearly evident in Berlin’s Köpenick district, where the fan center for Bundesliga team FC Union Berlin has been converted into a grocery distribution point. A line of people are standing outside in the blistering heat, waiting to enter. It’s 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) and there’s no shade in sight.

Denise Lauer is making her first visit to a food bank. For a long time, she was too reluctant and ashamed to go. “I wanted to try it out,” she told DW. “But in the past, I was too embarrassed.”

Lauer, a single parent with a son, said “it has become increasingly difficult to make ends because of the high food costs.” Today, though, she has gathered all her courage and is looking forward to taking home a basket of groceries sold for just €1.50 (\$1.70) — the same price for everyone.

Food costs have risen by almost 15% compared to last year, with inflation standing at 7.3%, according to Germany’s Federal Statistical Office.

For many, this means money is tight, which is why they are relying on food banks to get by. Since Russia launched its full-scale

invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, 20% of German food banks have seen the number of people dependent on discounted groceries double, reports Tafel’s federal association.

“Before the war, no more than 340 people would come to our distribution days on Tuesdays, but now, there are often well over 500,” Carol Seele, a volunteer manager at the Köpenick food bank, told DW. “Last Friday, we had 564 customers,” added fellow volunteer Rita Hirsch, who keeps precise records for the church-run distribution center.

‘More and more customers because of the war’

“We have seen more and more customers because of the war,” said Seele. “Fortunately, we have not yet had to limit admission.”

Anyone with the necessary paperwork proving they are in need can receive food aid. However, other food banks have already begun reducing the amount of food they hand out per person, and some have also even stopped accepting new people.

Tetyana Kudyna fled the war in Ukrainian with her young son; her husband and older son have remained in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. Kudyna visits the food bank every Tuesday with her boy. “It helps me save plenty of money,” she told DW. It’s also an opportunity meet and chat with other Germans and Ukrainians, which she said is a “welcome distraction.”

Volunteers in Berlin founded Germany’s first Tafel food bank in 1993.

— DW

Europe and US swelter under blistering heat

In Italy, at least 16 cities were under “red” alerts for heat, including Rome, Florence and Bologna. In the southern Italian islands of Sicily and Sardinia, temperatures were set to soar to 48 degrees Celsius



logical service said temperatures in the eastern Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands would rise to between 40 and 42 degrees Celsius.

US, Japan also face scorching weather

Japan has also been experiencing extreme heat, with temperatures expected to rise to 39 degrees Celsius on Sunday and Monday.

In the US, over 90 million Americans were under extreme heat advisories, watches and warnings.

Experts warned that the heat would get worse this weekend for the states of Nevada, Arizona and California, where temperatures were predicted to soar above 120 Fahrenheit (48.8 degrees Celsius) in some desert locations.

In Las Vegas, Nevada, an intense heat wave was threatening to break the city’s all-time record high of 47.2 degrees Celsius this weekend. Phoenix, the capital city of Arizona, was set to record temperatures above 43 degrees Celsius for the 15th straight day.

Meanwhile, a series of blazes erupted across California earlier this week. In Europe, a forest fire on the Spanish island of La Palma on Saturday also forced the evacuation of at least 500 people, authorities said. With some countries suffering from dangerous heat, others like South Korea and China have reported deadly floods due to unusually heavy rains, leaving several people dead. Scientists have warned that the frequency and severity of heat waves have increased steadily due to the effects of climate change.

2,000 evacuated in La Palma wildfire in Canary Islands

MADRID: Thousands of people were evacuated on Saturday after a wildfire erupted on the Spanish island of La Palma.

At least 2,000 people were told to evacuate, authorities said, and another 12 houses were destroyed, according to Fernando Clavijo, the regional president of the Canary Islands.

“With the resources that were are deploying, we hope we can control the fire today, but the winds are shifting,” Clavijo said.

“More gusting winds are expected and, combined with the dryness of the terrain and the lack of rain, this situation is complicated,” he added.

About 4,500 hectares or 11,120 acres of land has been destroyed by the fire, authorities said.

Firefighters battle to put out blaze

Spain’s army has deployed some 150 of its firefighters to help local crews battle the blaze, with more firefighters arriving on boats from the neighboring island of Tenerife, according to Clavijo.



The fire is on the western side of the island on wooded, hilly terrain dotted with homes.

La Palma, with a population of 85,000, is one of eight members of Spain’s Canary Islands archipelago off Africa’s western coast. In 2021, it was hit by a volcanic eruption that lasted around three months, forcing thousands to evacuate and causing around €900 million (\$1.01 billion) of damage.

The latest wildfire there coincides with blistering heat that have swept southern European countries, as scientists warn that climate change could significantly increase wildfires across the globe.

— DW

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

India’s Bishnoi ‘tree huggers’ renew conservation fight

JAIPUR: Rampal Bhawad leads the Bishnoi Tiger Force in India’s northern Rajasthan state. They are a group of environmental activists from the Bishnoi community, which has a long history of protecting and preserving flora and fauna.

Last year, Bhawad was told that an infrastructure project in a nearby village cut down several khejri trees, dumped them in a drain and covered the evidence with the help of excavators. The khejri tree is sacred for the Bishnoi, as it can survive in Rajasthan’s desert climate.

“Some of us went over immediately,” Bhawad told DW. “We uncovered the remains of the khejri trees and lodged a complaint with the local police.”

“Multiple protests, legal proceedings and appeals to politicians later, we can only see our struggle growing without an end in sight,” Bhawad said.

Protecting the ‘tree of life’

The khejri tree is essential to the desert ecosystem. Largely a community of agrarians, Bishnois rely on the tree for nourishment. The trees also provide hydration, nour-



ishment and shade for wildlife.

The hardy tree dominates vegetation across the state and is often called the “tree of life.”

Ram Vishnoi, a 63-year-old farmer from Khejarli village near Jodhpur, told DW that the tree is essential for agriculture.

“Any field you see here will have khejri planted at regular intervals because the partial shade protects our crops,” Vishnoi said. The tree is also known to help enhance the nitrogen content of soil.

India’s original tree huggers

The Bishnoi community are a Hin-

du sect that was founded in 1485 based on 29 principles (“Bishnoi” translates to 29 in Hindi), most of which promote protecting the environment, plants and animals.

“In Hinduism, the dead are cremated, but our principles don’t allow that because it requires burning wood from trees. So, we bury our dead,” Deepak Chaudhary, a resident of Khejarli, told DW. “Even for ritualistic ceremonies, the community burns coconut husks for the holy fire, instead of wood,” he said.

The Bishnoi are equally passionate about protecting wildlife.

Chinkara gazelles, peacocks, and Nilgai antelopes roam freely in Bishnoi villages with the ease of pets.

“Protecting the environment is in our blood,” Chaudhary said. “It’s what we do best.”

Roughly 300 years ago, a group of Bishnois in Khejarli village mobilized to protect khejri trees from being cut down to harvest lumber for a new palace under orders of the maharaja, or king, of Jodhpur, Abhai Singh of Marwar.

A group of soldiers led by a general was sent to cut down the trees, but a local woman named Amrita

Devi ran out of her house, pleading for them to stop. She hugged the tree in protest. With an obligation to follow the king’s orders, the general took an ax to the tree, slaying Devi in the process.

Her three daughters followed her example, replacing their dead mother in hugging the tree. They were also killed by the soldiers.

As news of the killings spread, more Bishnoi people came from neighboring villages to protect their beloved trees. It wasn’t before 363 people had been massacred that the maharaja found out about the situation.

Overcome with guilt, he ordered his army away and promised the community that no one would cut khejri trees under his regime. The incident became known as the “Khejarli massacre.” It was one of the first incidents in history where people are known to have sacrificed their lives for trees.

And the Bishnoi community has held on to its roots. The Bishnoi Tiger Force was launched in 1998 in response to the killing of two blackbuck antelope in a Jodhpur village by Indian movie star Salman Khan.

After nearly two decades of protest led by the Bishnoi community, Khan was charged with poaching in 2018 and was sentenced to five years in prison.

It was a well-publicised victory for the community. However, Bishnoi environmental groups are struggling to draw attention to khejri deforestation.

Bishnois vs. the government

The Bishnois are again faced with stopping the indiscriminate felling of their sacred trees. This time around, the khejri trees are now under threat from infrastructure development.

In 2019, Rajasthan’s government began allotting land contracts to private companies for developing renewable energy projects, and it soon became apparent that forests were being cut to make room.

In 2022, several Bishnoi conservation groups protested and received assurance from the regional government that trees on the leased land would be replanted, rather than cut down.

— DW

SEA OF JAPAN



Japan, S. Korea and US conduct naval joint drill

TOKYO: Japan, South Korea and the United States held a joint naval missile defence exercise in the Sea of Japan on Sunday after North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), according to media report.

The rare joint defence exercise was conducted in international waters as the three countries have been reinforcing security coordination amid Pyongyang's continued sabre-rattling this year, highlighted by the firing of a Hwasong-18 solid-fuel ICBM last Wednesday, Yonhap News Agency reported. South Korea's Navy said in a statement that Sunday's exercise, which was conducted in international waters and involved Aegis destroyers from the three countries, focused on practising detecting and tracking a computer-simulated ballistic missile target and sharing related information.

Meanwhile, the Maritime Self-Defence Force said in a separate statement that the drills were "intended to vigorously promote trilateral cooperation to address regional security challenges

amid the increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan."

The MSDF specifically highlighted North Korea's launch last week of an intercontinental ballistic missile-class weapon. Pyongyang on Wednesday tested its solid-fueled Hwasong-18 ICBM, which is believed to be capable of striking most, if not all, of the continental US, with the weapon spending 74 minutes in flight — a record for the country, according to The Japan Times.

"This exercise served as an opportunity to enhance our military's response capabilities against ballistic missiles and improve security cooperation among South Korea, the United States and Japan," the Yonhap news agency quoted an unidentified South Korean Navy official as saying.

Earlier, on Wednesday, North Korea fired what it said was a solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missile, just days after Pyongyang threatened to shoot down US military reconnaissance planes flying over nearby waters, CNN reported. — **ANI**

India, UAE will keep working closely to further global good

The visit was of "tremendous strategic significance" as it showcased the "deep bond of friendship and trust" between the Prime Minister Modi and the UAE President



tween India and the UAE."

Briefing about PM Modi's UAE visit, Kwatra said PM Modi held "extensive discussions with the President of the UAE, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan."

He also termed the visit to be of "tremendous strategic significance" as it showcased the "deep bond of friendship and trust" between the Prime Minister Modi and the UAE President.

Strategic landmark pact

India and the UAE signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) last year and since the signing of that important strategic landmark agreement between the two countries, the trade and economic partnership and engagement has grown significantly between the two countries, Kwatra said.

He noted that "visit this time puts together another pillar of that strategic economic partnership in a couple of important ways."

The Foreign Secretary also said that PM Modi's visit will perhaps open-up "new pathways for India" to look at structuring similar partnership with other countries both in the region and beyond.

PM Modi arrived in UAE on Saturday and was received by Sheikh Khaled Bin Mohamed Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi at the airport.

On his arrival at the Abu Dhabi airport, PM Modi also received a ceremonial welcome.

During his visit, the Prime Minister met the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Further, COP28 President-designate, Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber also called on PM Modi and the two leaders held discussions on wide-ranging issues.

PM Modi assured India's support to UAE for its COP28 Presidency as well.

Prime Minister Modi was accorded a grand welcome in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where the iconic Burj Khalifa was illuminated with the colours of the Indian flag.

As a part of the light-and-sound show at the Burj on Friday, setting the stage for PM Modi's arrival to the Gulf nation on an official visit, the skyscraper also showcased his picture, followed by a text that read, "Welcome Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

The PM enplaned for the UAE on Saturday after concluding his two-day visit to France.

PM Modi called his France visit "memorable", adding that it was more remarkable as he participated in the Bastille Day celebrations. He also expressed gratitude to French President Emmanuel Macron and the people of France for their warmth and hospitality.

During his two-day official visit to France, PM Modi participated in the Bastille Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour, on Friday. He visited France at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron.

"To mark the 25th anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership, a 241-member tri-service Indian armed forces contingent led by a military band also participated in the Parade," the PMO said in a statement. — **ANI**

IN ACAPULCO

Mexican crime journalist shot dead

ACAPULCO: Nelson Matus, a Mexican crime journalist, was shot dead in the parking lot of a store on Saturday in the tourist town of Acapulco, regional officials said.

The killing marks the second death of a working journalist within a week in what is known to be the most deadly country for members of the press. Luis Martin Sanchez, a journalist for the Mexican newspaper La Jornada, was found dead on July 8 "with signs of violence" after going missing in the state of Nayarit.

Matus, who was the director of a local news outlet called Lo Real de Guerrero, was shot as he was getting into his car in a thrift store parking lot. According to police reports, officers received a call shortly after 3 p.m., informing them of the incident. Paramedics

arrived at the scene to find Matus' lifeless body, which was identified with his belongings. The area was then cordoned off.

The Attorney General's Office of the coastal state of Guerrero initiated an investigation for aggravated homicide. In a statement, it said that it "reiterates its commitment to exhaust every line of investigation" into Matus' death.

— **DW**



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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DISC/2023/114	DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SEWER HOUSE CONNECTIONS IN DHOFAR REGION	31st July 2023	23rd August 2023	RO. 1,575.000

- To view the tender details, you can visit www.dhofarservices.nama.om / scan the QR code
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 300pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
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Amazing Alcaraz clinches maiden Wimbledon title

The 20-year-old Spanish sensation outlasts favourite Novak Djokovic to deny him a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title in an all-time classic final

LONDON: Sunday's Wimbledon final was billed as the 'ultimate showdown' by Carlos Alcaraz's opponent, seven-time champion, Novak Djokovic, and the Spaniard responded with an inspired performance for a 1-6, 7-6 (6), 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 victory for his maiden Wimbledon title.

The 20-year-old Alcaraz recovered from a shaky start to deliver a high-quality championship-match display and become just the fifth man in the Open Era to win multiple major titles prior to turning 21.

Alcaraz, who won his first major at the 2022 US Open, snapped Djokovic's 34-match winning streak at Wimbledon with his four-hour, 42-minute victory in an SW19 classic.

"It's a dream come true for me," said Alcaraz at the trophy presentation, "As I said before, of course it's great to win, but even if I had lost, I would be really proud of myself with this amazing run. Making history in this beautiful tournament, playing a final against a legend of our sport.

"It's a dream come true to be able to play on these stages. It's amazing for a boy, 20 years old, to reach this kind of situation really



fast. I'm really, really proud of myself and the team that I have. The work we put in every day, to be able to lift this."

He added: "I have to congratulate Novak, it was amazing to play against him. What can I say about him? It's unbelievable.

"You inspired me a lot, playing tennis, [I watched] you since I was born," added Alcaraz, turning to Djokovic. "You were already win-

ning tournaments. You are probably in better shape than me. Thirty-six is the new 26, you make that happen. It's amazing."

Seven-time champion Djokovic, 36, made a sizzling start, but Alcaraz dug deep to clinch a crucial second-set tie-break before later holding off a Djokovic comeback to claim the title.

Alcaraz's task of defeating Djokovic at Wimbledon, where the



Serbian was chasing a fifth consecutive title, only became tougher after he was outplayed in the first set. Yet the Spaniard demonstrated his comfort on the big stage by rallying to a famous victory, just the second defeat Djokovic has suffered in 81 Wimbledon matches when he has won the opening set.

Home favourite and two-time former Wimbledon champion Murray was among those who

enjoyed a fascinating clash on Centre Court, where Hollywood stars Daniel Craig and Brad Pitt, and the Prince and Princess of Wales were also in attendance. They could have witnessed Djokovic make history by equalling former women's star Margaret Court's record of 24 major singles trophies, but instead saw Alcaraz add to his burgeoning reputation as one of sport's brightest young stars.

In a startling comeback, Alcaraz pulled off the nearly impossible, beating Djokovic in a Wimbledon final on the grass that the man widely recognised as the greatest ever to play the sport has long treated as his back lawn. Down a set and struggling simply to avoid embarrassment, Alcaraz rediscovered his unique combination of speed, power and touch and figured out the subtleties of grass-court tennis in the nick of time.

He clawed his way back into the match in an epic 90-minute second set in which he was a point away from what figured to be an insurmountable two-set deficit.

He seized control of the match midway through the third set, gaining a crucial second break of Djokovic's often unbreakable serve during a game that included 13 deuces. He teetered in the fourth set as Djokovic, as dangerous a player as there has ever been when facing defeat, steadied himself and rediscovered the magical footwork that has long served as the foundation of his success.

But then Alcaraz rose once more to claim victory, not only overcoming Djokovic's seemingly endless skills and talents but breaking his spirit, too. When the momentum swung one last time, as Alcaraz cranked a backhand down the line to break Djokovic's serve early in the fifth set, the Serb with the steeliest of minds smashed his racket on the net post.

A few minutes later, the thing that has so rarely happened to him in recent years — a loss to a relative newcomer on a grand stage, especially this grand stage and with tennis history within his grasp — was happening. For Djokovic, the loss cost him a shot at one of the few prizes he has not achieved — becoming the first man since 1969 to achieve the Grand Slam, winning all four Grand Slam tournaments in a single year. - Agencies

FIRST TEST: SRI LANKA VS PAKISTAN

Dhananjaya and Shaheen shine on action-packed opening day

GALLE: Pakistan pacer Shaheen Afridi was back to doing what he does best — picking up early wickets as he ran through Sri Lanka's top order in the morning session on the opening day of the first Test against hosts Sri Lanka in Galle on Sunday.

Rain took out large chunks of play on the first day, but either side of each of those stoppages Pakistan and Sri Lanka were engaged in an intriguing tug of war.

First, the visitors moved ahead courtesy Shaheen's three-wicket burst, before the hosts reeled them back with a 131-run fifth wicket stand between Angelo Mathews and Dhananjaya de Silva.

Shaheen last played a Test match almost a year ago and incidentally, it was at Galle against Sri Lanka.

One year later, after multiple injury setbacks, he is back on the same ground against the same opposition and it looks like Shaheen still hasn't missed a beat.

The left-arm quick remained stranded on 99 Test wickets since July last year but it didn't take him long to get to the milestone.

In fact, in just the second over of his return, Shaheen became the 19th bowler from Pakistan to claim 100 wickets in Test cricket.

Sri Lanka opener Nishan Madushka was the victim, who couldn't deal with the angle and movement Shaheen produced. The 23-year-old added two more wickets in his eight-over long opening spell, squaring up Kusal Mendis for his second before removing the solid Dimuth Karunaratne.

At 23 years of age, only two other Pakistan bowlers had achieved the feat of 100 Test wickets — Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis.

Akram, who is the all-time highest wicket-taker for Pakistan in Test cricket, hailed Shaheen after he got to his 100-wicket milestone.

While Mathews, who had looked imperious during his 109-ball 64, fell on the stroke of tea, Dhananjaya stitched another crucial 57-run partnership with Sadeera



Samarawickrama (36 off 57), before Pakistan struck one final blow on the stroke of stumps, as Samarawickrama was caught brilliantly at short leg by Imam-ul-Haq.

Sri Lanka ended the day at 242/6 with Dhananjaya unbeaten on 94 off 157 deliveries.

Dhananjaya came to the crease with the hosts reeling at 54/4 after Dinesh Chandimal wafted at a full-

ish delivery outside off stump from Naseem Shah to be gobbled up expertly by Babar Azam at third slip.

But Dhananjaya and Mathews weathered that storm and made it through to lunch. After the break, Mathews and Dhananjaya got to work, negating whatever Pakistan threw at them as 120 runs came in this session.

TEARFUL JABEUR AFTER DEFEAT IN FINAL

‘The most painful loss of my career’

LONDON: There was Andy Murray in 2012, Jana Novotna in 1993 and Roger Federer in 2008. Centre Court has seen the highs but this intimate amphitheatre, a cosy living room of a sporting arena, also exposes those crushing lows. Like those before her, the raw emotion poured out of Ons Jabeur of Tunisia as she broke into tears — beaten in the Wimbledon women's final for the second year in a row on Saturday.

"I will try but this is very, very tough," the Tunisian said as she stepped up to speak after her 6-4, 6-4 defeat by Marketa Vondrousova, reported *BBC Sport*.

You could not help but think back to Novotna 30 years ago when she cried on the shoulder of the Duchess of Kent — one of Wimbledon's most iconic moments. This time Jabeur was comforted by the Princess of Wales. "She didn't know if she wants to give me a hug or not," Jabeur, 28, said. "I told her hugs are always welcome from me."

Jabeur served her time in last year's final when she took the first set before being beaten by Elena Rybakina. Throughout that run she had had the Venus Rosewater dish as the image on the lockscreen on her phone.

This year, the lockscreen changed to her niece and nephew, the ghost of Rybakina was banished in the quarter-finals.

Aryna Sabalenka, this year's Australian Open winner, was beaten amid a wave of momentum in the semi-finals with Jabeur seemingly on course to become the first African or Arab woman to win a Grand Slam singles title. But instead, Jabeur's old-school style — she smiles as she crafts points with spins and slice — was tied up in a straight-jacket of nerves.

Her grip was clenched, her shoulders tight and unseeded Czech Vondrousova won, inflicting Jabeur's third Grand Slam final defeat in as many attempts.

"I think this is the most painful loss of my career," Jabeur said, who lost the US Open fi-



nal two months after last year's Wimbledon disappointment.

As the words left her mouth, a crowd who had already embraced her held out its arms and pulled her in tight with a cheer.

She disappeared for the solace of the locker room. There she cried with four-time Grand Slam champion Kim Clijsters, who suffered similar heartbreak on the biggest stage — losing four finals before winning her first major in 2005.

'Didn't play good'

Ninety minutes after the final point, Jabeur made her way to her news conference with her hood pulled up as she tried to hide her emotion from the world.

As she crossed the players' balcony she was spotted by a group of Tunisian fans who proceeded to sing her name.

Jabeur paused, looked to the sky, and the tears flowed again.

"It's painful because you feel so close to achieving something that you want, and actually back to square one," she said, her eyes still red with emotion and a tissue never far away.

"I didn't play good. So many things that I should have, maybe done. Not serving well did not help. My backhand wasn't here today."

"It is going to be a tough day today for me. [I am] not going to give up. I will come back stronger and win a Grand Slam one day," Jabeur said. "I want to thank my team for always believing in me. We are going to make it one day, I promise you."

LULU EXCHANGE BRANCH

Lulu Exchange, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, opened its 40th branch in the country at Salalah Sanaia on Wednesday.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,769.54 points, down by 0.57 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.4457 per cent at 469.56 points. OIFC Bonds, up 12.5057 per cent, was the top gainer while, Barka Water & Power Company, down 9.8057 per cent, was the top loser.

Oil prices at 12-week high, breach \$80 a barrel mark on tight supplies

The gains came on the back of tighter supplies as Saudi Arabia's additional voluntary cuts came into force coupled with cuts announced by Russia and Algeria

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Crude oil prices reached the highest level since the last week of April-2023 after seeing consistent gains since the end of June-2023, according to a new report.

"After reaching multi-month low levels last month and the biggest monthly decline in prices this year in May-2023, crude oil prices breached the \$80 per barrel mark on 12-July-2023 to reach \$80.11 per barrel," the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest said in its Oil Market Monthly Report, July 2023.

"The gains came initially on the back of tighter supplies as Saudi Arabia's additional voluntary cuts came into force coupled with cuts announced by Russia and Algeria. Further support came from optimism on the demand front after inflation in the US came in weaker-than-expected and to some extent economic sops announced in China," it added.

"Nevertheless, a slowing Chi-



nese economy with continued fall in exports and imports as well as higher inventories weighed on prices partially offsetting the overall gains," the report further said.

In its monthly report, the IEA said it expects crude oil demand to reach a record level this year, although the pace of growth would be smaller-than-expected. The agency, however, slashed its oil demand forecast by 220,000 barrels per day from last month's forecast and now expects demand to grow by 2.2 mb/d this year. The IEA also highlighted a slowing industrial activity in the OECD region, particularly in Europe, that is expected to dent overall demand growth during the year.

Meanwhile, average crude oil

prices continued to decline during June-2023 due to depressed prices for the bulk of the month only to see gains towards the last week of the month. Opec crude oil basked averaged at a multi-month low of \$75.19 per barrel registering a month-on-month decline of 0.8 percent. The fall in average Brent spot prices was slightly higher at 1.4 percent at an average of \$74.7 per barrel while the average Kuwait crude grade witnessed a similar decline of 1.3 percent and averaged at \$76.4 per barrel. In terms of forecast, the IEA marginally lowered its forecast for Brent crude by 2023 to %79.34 per barrel from its previous forecast of \$79.54 per barrel. The forecast for 2024 was kept unchanged at \$83.5 per barrel.

Opec oil production and spare capacity

After seeing declines for the previous three consecutive months, Opec crude oil production saw marginal growth during June-2023. According to Bloomberg data, production during the month stood at 28.6 mb/d in June-2023 as compared to 28.5 mb/d during May-2023, registering a growth of 80,000 barrels per day or 0.16 percent month-on-month (m-o-m). By contrast, Opec secondary sources showed a slightly bigger production growth of 91,000 barrels a day to reach an average production of 28.2 mb/d during June-2023 as compared to 28.1 mb/d during the previous month.

The increase in output during

the month mainly reflected growth in production mainly in Iraq, Nigeria and Venezuela based on data from Opec and Bloomberg. Opec secondary sources showed a sharp growth in production in Iran by 54,000 barrels per day (Bloomberg data showed a decline) while production in Angola and Algeria declined by 46,000 barrels and 16,000 barrels per day, respectively.

Oil production in Saudi Arabia remained almost flat at 10 mb/d during June-2023. The Kingdom is expected to implement additional production cuts of 1 mb/d during July-2023 and August-2023 that would result in production going to multi-year low levels at around 9 mb/d, according to the Ministry of Energy. The Kingdom also hinted that the additional cuts could be extended beyond August-2023.

The increase in Iran's oil production during June-2023 came after reports showing higher exports from the country. A report from S&P Global said that this could be a result of the US relaxing sanctions enforcement on the country. A similar action towards Venezuela was also highlighted by S&P with the Opec member also reporting an increase in production during June-2023.

Iraq witnessed one of the biggest growth in production in Opec during June-2023.

The country produced at an average rate of 4.2 mb/d registering a m-o-m increase of 54,000 barrels per day, as per Opec secondary sources. Iraq also recently signed a long-delayed \$27 billion energy deal with TotalEnergies aimed at increasing the country's oil and gas output in the coming years. As per the deal, the oil production capacity at Basra's Ratawi field is planned to increase by 120,000

barrels per day in two years followed by a further increase to 210,000 barrels per day within four years.

The country plans to increase production capacity to 6 mb/d by offering concession agreements with global oil companies.

On the supply side, Saudi Arabia announced it would extend the 1 mb/d additional cuts to August-2023 aimed at stabilising and bringing a balance to the oil market. Russia joined with another 0.5 million barrels per day (mb/d) of cuts while Algeria announced cuts of 20,000 barrels per day bringing the total pledged cuts by Opec+ to 5.2 mb/d.

Meanwhile, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) has forecasted record production in the US this year although the oil rig count in the US continues to stay well below pre-pandemic levels. The latest weekly report from Baker Hughes showed the oil rig count in the US declining for the 10th time in 11 weeks to reach 537 after declining by 3 for the week ended 14 July 2023.

On the production front, Opec crude oil production increased for the first time in three months, albeit marginally, during June-2023. Opec production averaged 28.2 mb/d, according to Opec secondary data, registering an increase of 91,000 barrels per day from the previous month.

The increase was led by higher production mainly in Iran and Iraq, while declines in Angola and Libya partially offset the overall growth. Production in Saudi Arabia was flatish at 10 mb/d. Crude oil production in the US also remained flatish at 12.3 mb/d after sliding by 100,000 barrels per day from the previous week.

JOB SKILLS

Specialised training course organised to empower new employees at Opaz

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz), represented by the Department of Human Resources, in cooperation with the Capital Experts Institute, organised a specialised training programme entitled 'Basic Skills to Empower Employees'.

The five-day programme aims to provide the participants with the knowledge, job skills, and modern behavioural trends that qualify them to perform administrative work efficiently and effectively.

The programme also aims to provide them with the practical applications necessary to complete the work and simplify its procedures to render the best services, and to develop their positive attitudes towards themselves and their departments.

Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Rawahi, Head of Training and Development Department and Ejada System Responsible for Individual and Institutional Performance Measurement at Opaz, explained, "The programme will enable employees to participate with them



in drawing their personal goals and linking them to the functional organisation. The programme will also provide them with basic skills in communication skills and communication arts. It will also help participants acquire basic communication skills that they need in the work environment. The programme also seeks to instil basic work ethics and loyalty."

"The training programme fo-



cuses on defining personal goals and career planning, communication skills and understanding of personality, refining job skills and fourth industrial wealth skills, developing positive behaviour to increase productivity, ethics of positive behaviour to increase productivity and writing letters, memos and e-mails," Al Rawahi added.

It is noteworthy that Opaz seeks

to follow the best practices in the field of capacity building in the work environment by identifying employees who can transfer and share functional and scientific knowledge with other staff members. Opaz also seeks to rehabilitate and refine the skills and competencies of employees to tailor the training programmes that meet the needs of the employees in 2023.

INDO-PACIFIC BLOC



UK signs 'biggest trade deal' since Brexit

LONDON: The United Kingdom on Sunday formally signed a treaty to join a major Indo-Pacific bloc — what it said was the biggest trade deal since the country left the European Union at the beginning of 2020.

Business Minister Kemi Badenoch put her signature on the accession protocol for the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in Auckland, New Zealand.

"This is a modern and ambitious agreement and our membership in this exciting, brilliant and forward-looking bloc is proof that the UK's doors are open for business," Badenoch said. She later told Sky News that the pact meant that Britain has "a seat at the table in the fastest-growing region" and that other countries are queuing up to join the pact.

The broadcaster cited a government analysis that said the pact would boost UK exports by 1.7 billion pounds (£1.9 billion, \$2.23 billion), imports to the UK by 1.6 billion pounds and gross domestic product (GDP) by £1.8 billion in the long term.

The pact is expected to take effect in the second half of 2024.

What is CPTPP?

The CPTPP is a landmark pact agreed upon in 2018 that cuts trade barriers among 11 countries, including Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

The pact requires countries to

eliminate or significantly reduce tariffs and make strong commitments to opening services and investment markets. It also has rules addressing competition, intellectual property rights and protections for foreign companies.

CPTPP is seen as a bulwark against China's dominance in the region, although Beijing has applied to join, along with Taiwan, Ukraine, Costa Rica, Uruguay and Ecuador.

Politicians in several countries, including the UK and Australia, are lobbying to keep China out, while Beijing is trying to prevent Taiwan from joining.

Why is the CPTPP so important to the UK?

The UK government says CPTPP will cut tariffs for UK exports to Asia Pacific countries and with UK membership, the trading bloc will have a combined GDP of 12 trillion pounds and account for 15% of global trade.

Britain is keen to deepen trade ties in the Pacific after Brexit in 2020. London has been pushing a "Global Britain" strategy since it gave up EU membership after nearly 50 years, leaving the bloc's single market and customs union. Instead, former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson negotiated a trade deal called the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Since Brexit, the UK has sought other trade deals with countries and trading blocs around the world that the government says have faster-growing economies than the EU. -**bw**

STATE'S AUDIT INSTITUTIONS

Oman participates in meeting of training committee for GCC accounting, audit employees



RIYADH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the State's Audit Institutions (SAI) is taking part in the 34th meeting of the Training and Development Committee for employees of GCC financial audit and accounting bureaus.

The two-day meeting, held at the GCC Secretariat General in Riyadh, deals with the selection of training programmes for the years 2024 and 2025, drafting the operational plan for years 2023-2025 and selecting topics for the 6th GCC audit and accountancy research competition. -**UNA**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower



OIFC Bonds, up 12.5057 per cent, was the top gainer while, Barka Water & Power Company, down 9.8057 per cent, was the top lose

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,769.54 points, down by 0.57 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.4457 per cent at 469.56 points. OIFC Bonds, up 12.5057 per cent, was the top gainer while, Barka Water & Power Company, down 9.8057 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of SMN Power Holding were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while A'Saffa Foods were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 624 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.05 million, with more than 10.47 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded securities, 10 advanced, 24 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR351,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR261,000, followed by GCC and Arab investors for OMR90,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,871.55 points, down 0.2357 per cent. Prices of Al Anwar Investment and Bank Muscat were up by 2.2757 per cent, and 0.3657 per cent respectively. Prices of

Takaful Oman, Al Madina Investments, Oman & Emirates Investment, Oman United Insurance, and Al Shargia Investment were up by 5.5657 per cent, 4.3557 per cent, 4.0057 per cent, 2.9957 per cent, 2.6757 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 6,104.66 points, down 0.957 per cent. Prices of Oman Chromite, Voltamp Energy, and A'Saffa Foods were up by 8.8957 per cent, 3.0857 per cent, and 2.1357 per cent respectively. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products, Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Cables Industry, Raysut Cement, and Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 7.9957 per cent, 4.7657 per cent, 2.4957 per cent, 1.6757 per cent, 0.4457 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 1.1957 per cent before closing at 1,688.33 points. Prices of Oman Education & Training, Phoenix Power, and SMN Power Holding were up by 10.0057 per cent, 3.0857 per cent, and 2.3357 per cent respectively.

Prices of National Gas, Oman Oil Marketing, Al Batinah Power, Abraj Energy, and Ooredoo were up by 6.9357 per cent, 4.7657 per cent, 3.4557 per cent, 2.8757 per cent and 2.6757 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

INDICES						
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,769.54	4,769.50	4,769.54	4,796.66	-27.11	-0.57
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,900.36	7,870.50	7,871.55	7,889.58	-18.03	-0.23
Industry Index	6,178.91	6,094.30	6,104.66	6,160.34	-55.68	-0.90
Services Index	1,709.96	1,688.33	1,688.33	1,708.73	-20.40	-1.19
MSX Shariah Index	474.82	468.58	469.56	476.42	-6.87	-1.44
MSX TR INDEX	6,308.87	6,272.53	6,272.59	6,308.24	-35.66	-0.57
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,620.74	8,588.17	8,589.31	8,608.98	-19.68	-0.23
SERVICES TR IDX	1,879.80	1,856.02	1,856.02	1,878.45	-22.43	-1.19
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,600.62	6,510.23	6,521.30	6,580.78	-59.48	-0.90

Trading Summary						
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal
10,473,631	2,051,960	624	23,877,646,941	10	24	14
						Sec. Traded
						48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JULY 16

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (BD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST OFFR	LAST OFFR	PR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	2,063,326	184,024	116	0.089	0.091	0.088	0.088	0.086	0.002	2.326	0.088	0.088	0.089	0.100	17,567,933
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	407,759	114,162	20	0.280	0.280	0.279	0.280	0.279	0.001	0.358	0.280	0.271	0.280	0.100	2,101,791,177
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	377,226	109,396	12	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.288	0.290	0.100	471,524,443
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	18,231	6,922	6	0.380	0.380	0.375	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.000	0.380	0.372	0.380	0.100	253,967,862
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	202,174	72,783	8	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.000	0.380	0.360	0.385	0.100	115,114,176
OM0000002188	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	6,000	1,535	3	0.259	0.260	0.254	0.254	0.254	0.000	0.000	0.254	0.254	0.259	0.100	55,880,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	6,300	1,544	3	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.240	0.260	0.100	14,995,047
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	3,210	562	1	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.175	0.190	0.100	524,361,501
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	195,753	12,696	10	0.065	0.065	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.061	0.068	0.100	12,600,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	83,512	82,371	10	0.993	0.993	0.985	0.986	0.993	-0.007	-0.705	0.986	0.987	0.988	0.100	738,500,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	25,000	2,740	6	0.110	0.110	0.109	0.110	0.110	-0.001	-0.909	0.109	0.109	0.112	0.100	16,350,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,120,000	118,400	15	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.105	0.106	-0.001	-0.943	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	481,956,540
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	18,000	1,548	3	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.087	-0.001	-1.149	0.086	0.086	0.087	0.100	15,050,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	780,363	49,290	28	0.064	0.064	0.062	0.062	0.063	-0.001	-1.587	0.062	0.061	0.063	0.100	22,079,892
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	70,000	5,110	5	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.075	-0.002	-2.667	0.073	0.073	0.075	0.100	8,570,000
OM0000003969	OOREDOO	302,612	110,636	26	0.367	0.367	0.364	0.364	0.374	-0.010	-2.674	0.364	0.364	0.365	0.100	236,943,700
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	12,000	3,124	3	0.262	0.262	0.260	0.260	0.268	-0.008	-2.985	0.260	0.262	0.266	0.100	26,000,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	98,000	7,066	12	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.072	0.075	-0.003	-4.000	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.100	8,775,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	5,000	1,500	2	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.315	-0.015	-4.762	0.300	0.284	0.346	0.100	16,500,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	8,000	2,095	4	0.260	0.265	0.260	0.265	0.268	-0.023	-7.986	0.265	0.265	0.275	0.100	33,097,959
Total	20	5,802,466	887,504	293												

Parallel Market																
OMAN CEMENT																
OM0000002580	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INVESTMENTS	8,400	2,125	2	0.253	0.253	0.253	0.253	0.230	0.023	10.000	0.253	0.232	0.253	0.100	17,710,000
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	57,325	213,385	25	3.700	3.850	3.700	3.811	3.500	0.311	8.886	3.811	3.820	3.850	1.000	11,433,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	13,949	1,854	7	0.125	0.134	0.125	0.134	0.130	0.004	3.077	0.134	0.121	0.134	0.100	10,907,969
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	59,250	3,970	7	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.065	0.002	3.077	0.067	0.064	0.067	0.100	97,994,298
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,830,452	163,353	52	0.089	0.090	0.088	0.090	0.088	0.002	2.273	0.090	0.089	0.090	0.100	18,540,000
OM0000002904	ASAFFA FOODS	708,980	239,177	44	0.338	0.350	0.331	0.335	0.328	0.007	2.134	0.335	0.340	0.335	0.100	40,200,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	105,076	20,385	4	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.000	0.000	0.194	0.194	0.000	0.100	378,233,548
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	533,476	50,680	17	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.094	0.096	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	50,000	1,400	4	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.027	0.028	0.100	20,003,378
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	17,304	1,629	3	0.094	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.093	0.095	0.100	19,000,000
OM0000002297	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	683	155	1	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.225	-0.001	-0.444	0.224	0.224	0.228	0.100	10,251,539
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	14,500	2,476	5	0.170	0.177	0.170	0.177	0.180	-0.003	-1.667	0.177	0.171	0.177	0.100	35,400,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	8,000	456	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.057	0.058	0.100	17,507,341
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	3,000	2,850	1	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.970	-0.020	-2.062	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.100	90,250,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	6,649	13,298	6	2.000	2.000	1.999	1.999	2.050	-0.051	-2.488	1.999	2.000	1.999	0.100	179,310,300
OM0000004934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	451,879	138,837	73	0.310	0.310	0.305	0.305	0.314	-0.009	-2.896	0.305	0.305	0.315	0.100	234,911,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	10,736	301	2	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	0.029	-0.001	-3.448	0.028	0.028	0.029	0.100	18,896,848
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	238,708	10,040	14	0.042	0.044	0.042	0.044	0.046	-0.002	-4.348	0.044	0.043	0.044	0.100	3,740,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	5,000	5,000	1	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.050	-0.050	-4.762	1.000	0.990	1.050	0.100	61,275,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	95,850	4,897	6	0.052	0.052	0.050	0.051	0.054	-0.003	-5.556	0.051	0.050	0.051	0.100	12,750,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	237,000	22,402	28	0.097	0.097	0.093	0.094	0.101	-0.007	-6.831	0.094	0.094	0.097	0.100	7,998,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	73,250	3,461	6	0.050	0.050	0.046	0.046	0.051	-0.005	-9.804	0.046	0.046	0.056	0.100	7,360,000
Total	22	4,529,457	902,131	309												

IN SALALAH

Lulu Exchange opens new branch

MUSCAT: Lulu Exchange, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, opened its 40th branch in the country at Salalah Sanaiya on Wednesday.

Offering cross-border payments, foreign currency exchange and other value-added services, the branch was inaugurated in a hybrid event in the presence of Adeb Ahamed, Managing Director, Lulu Financial Holdings, Sheikh Mohammed Hamed Ali Al Ghazali, Director, Lulu Exchange, and other senior management joining from various parts of the world.

The new branch also marks the 282nd global branch of Lulu Financial Holdings.

Adeb Ahamed, Managing Director of Lulu Financial Holdings congratulated the team on the opening, saying, “As a company that has embraced digital payments while simultaneously growing our physical footprint, we are committed to the development and growth of Oman’s cross-border payments sector. The addition of our new



branch in Salalah is strategically positioned to bring our services within convenient reach of our valued consumers in the region. Our primary objective is to deliver exceptional service, and this branch

has been thoughtfully positioned to effectively cater to our customers’ payment requirements while facilitating their smooth transition to digital solutions.”

Lulu Exchange presently pro-

vides cross-border payments, currency exchange and value-added services in a timely, transparent and reliable manner through its network of branches and mobile payments app, Lulu Money.

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ECONOMY

Japan Finance Minister: “No discussion” of exchange rates at G7 meeting

TOKYO: There was “no discussion” about exchange rates at a meeting of Group of Seven (G7) finance ministers and central bank chiefs, Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said on Sunday, according to Kyodo News.

Suzuki was speaking after a meeting in India of the G7 - the US, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and Canada.

According to Reuters, the yen weakened as far as 145 per dollar at the end of last month, the level that last fall spurred the finance ministry to intervene in the market to support the currency. However, the yen has rebounded strongly this month to around 138 per dollar.

A weak yen can bolster Japanese exporters’ profits but it boosts the price of energy and other imports in yen for businesses and consumers.

Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda said there was a view that “there is strong uncertainty in the global economy,” the Japanese news agency reported.

Ueda has cited uncertainty about the global economy as a reason for keeping ultra-easy monetary policy in place in Japan, even as inflation runs above the central bank’s target. — **BNA**

HIGH INFLATION



Australia expects unemployment rate to rise as global economy slows

SYDNEY: Australian Treasurer Jim Chalmers said on Sunday that he expected the nation’s jobless rate to lift from near a 48-year low on the back of higher interest rates and slowing global growth.

“As the Reserve Bank forecasts and the Treasury forecasts have inflation moderating over the coming months, they do have a tick up in unemployment as well,” Chalmers told the Australian Broadcasting Corp, Reuters reported.

Amid stubbornly high inflation, the unemployment rate in May edged lower to 3.6 per cent, when analysts had expected a steady 3.7 per cent.

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) has said the jobless rate would need to rise to about 4.5 per cent - still well below pre-pandemic levels - to bring the

economy back into balance.

Unemployment was expected to lift “a bit as the economy slows as a consequence of higher interest rates and global economic uncertainty”, Chalmers said ahead of attending a meeting of Group of 20 (G20) finance ministers and central bankers in India with outgoing RBA Governor Philip Lowe.

The RBA this month kept the

STUDY PROVIDES FURTHER INSIGHT INTO HYPERTENSION THAT IS RESISTANT TO THERAPY



● Many individuals use medicine to control their hypertension, which is excessive blood pressure that can lead to a heart attack or stroke. This form of high blood pressure, known as apparent resistant hypertension (aRH) demands extra medication and medical care

Researchers at Cedars-Sinai's Smidt Heart Institute discovered that, while aRH prevalence was lower in a real-world sample than previously assumed, it was still very frequent, impacting roughly one in every ten hypertension patients. The findings were published today in the peer-reviewed journal Hypertension. Researchers observed that those with well-controlled aRH were more likely to be treated with a common medicine known as mineralocorticoid receptor antagonist, or MRA.

"Apparent resistant hypertension is more common than many would anticipate," said Joseph Ebinger, MD, assistant professor of Cardiology in the Smidt Heart Institute and corresponding author of the study. "We also learned that within this high-risk population, there are large differences in how providers treat high blood pressure, exemplifying a need to standardize care."

Study findings were based on a unique design, which used clinically generated data from the electronic health records of three large, geographically diverse healthcare organizations.

According to Ebinger, treating aRH can be just as tricky as diagnosing it.

In fact, the "apparent" in apparent resistant hypertension stems from the fact that before diagnosis, medical professionals must first rule out other potential reasons for a patient's blood pressure to be high.

These reasons might include medication non-adherence, inappropriate medication selection, or artificially elevated blood pressure in the doctor's office -- known as "white coat hypertension."

"Large amounts of data tell us that patients with aRH, compared to those with non-resistant forms

of hypertension, are at greatest risk for adverse cardiovascular events," said Ebinger, director of Clinical Analytics in the Smidt Heart Institute. "Identifying these patients and possible causes for their elevated blood pressure is increasingly important."

The takeaway, Ebinger says, is awareness -- for both medical professionals and patients. He says providers should be mindful that if it's taking four or more antihypertensive medications to control a patient's blood pressure, they should consider evaluation for alternative causes of hypertension, or refer patients to a specialist.

Similarly, patients should lean on their medical providers to help them navigate the complex disease, including having a conversation around strategies for remembering to take their medication and addressing possible treatment side effects.

Treating patients with complex cardiac issues like aRH is at the heart of Cedars-Sinai's expertise.

The Smidt Heart Institute was recently awarded the American Heart Association's Comprehensive Hypertension Center Certification, recognizing the institute's commitment to following proven, research-based treatment guidelines to care for people with complex or difficult-to-treat hypertension.

"This accreditation, coupled with our research expertise in hypertensive diseases, serves as a mark of excellence," said Christine M. Albert, MD, MPH, chair of the Department of Cardiology and the Lee and Harold Kapelovitz distinguished chair in cardiology. "These efforts signal to patients, healthcare providers, and the community that the Smidt Heart Institute is committed to delivering evidence-based, comprehensive care for hypertension." -ANI

Large amounts of data tell us that patients with aRH, compared to those with non-resistant forms of hypertension, are at greatest risk for adverse cardiovascular events," said Ebinger, director of Clinical Analytics in the Smidt Heart Institute. Identifying these patients and possible causes for their elevated blood pressure is increasingly important.

SPORTS

Inter Miami sign Argentine star Messi until end of 2025

American MLS side owner David Beckham says the signing is a ‘dream come true’

MIAMI: Argentina forward Lionel Messi signed for American Major League Soccer (MLS) side Inter Miami on a deal that runs until the end of 2025 on Saturday. The seven-time *Ballon d’Or* winner, 36, left French champions Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at the end of the 2022-23 season. “I’m very excited to start this next step in my career with Inter Miami and in the United States,” said Messi, who led his country as they won the World Cup in Qatar last year. Messi, who has not previously played for a club side outside Europe, added: “This is a fantastic opportunity and together we will continue to build this beautiful project. “The idea is to work together to achieve the objectives we set and I’m very eager to start helping here in my new home.” Inter Miami co-owner David Beckham said the signing was a “dream come true.” On securing the services of a player expected to win another Ballon d’Or this year, Beckham said: “10 years ago, when I started my journey to build a new team



in Miami, I said that I dreamed of bringing the greatest players in the world to this amazing city. “[I wanted] players who shared the ambition I had when I joined LA Galaxy, to help grow football in the USA and to build a legacy for the next generation in this sport that we love so much. “Today that dream came true. I couldn’t be prouder that a player

of Leo’s calibre is joining our club, but I am also delighted to welcome a good friend, an amazing person and his beautiful family to join our Inter Miami community. “The next phase of our adventure starts here, and I can’t wait to see Leo take to the pitch.” Messi will be available to play for Miami against LIGA MX side Cruz Azul on 21 July in their



opening match of Leagues Cup. “We are overjoyed that the greatest player in the world chose Inter Miami and Major League Soccer, and his decision is a testament to the momentum and energy behind our league and our sport in North America,” said MLS commissioner Don Garber. “We have no doubt that Lionel will show the world that MLS can

be a league of choice for the best players in the game. We look forward to seeing his debut for Inter Miami in our Leagues Cup tournament later this month.” Messi won the last of his seven Ballon d’Or awards for the world’s best player in 2021 and could win it again later this year after leading Argentina to World Cup success in Qatar in 2022.

He scored 32 goals in 75 games for PSG and ended last season with 16 goals and 16 assists in French Ligue 1. Messi joined the French side in 2021 after spending 21 years with Barcelona. Messi is Barca’s record scorer with 672 goals and won 10 La Liga titles, four Champions Leagues and seven Spanish Cups. - Agencies

Sen goes down to Shi Feng in semis



WASHINGTON: Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen bowed out of the ongoing US Open tournament after a loss in the semi-final on Saturday. Sen, the Commonwealth Games champion lost to the world No.7 and All-England Champion Li Shi Feng 17-21, 24-22, 17-21 in a hard-fought match that lasted an hour and 16 minutes. Sen did not have a very good start as he lost a close first game. He maintained his composure to bounce back in the second game that went down the wire to set up an exciting decider. Shi Feng won

despite the fight put up by the Indian star. “A terrific run at #USOpen2023 comes to an end for Lakshya Sen. Lots of positives to take from this week. Keep at it champ: @badmintonphoto #Badminton #IndiaontheRise,” tweeted Badminton Association of India (BAI) Media. Notably, it was Shi Feng that Sen had defeated in the final of the Canada Open recently to win his fourth BWF World Tour title after Dutch Open, SaarLorLux Open (2019) and Indian Open (2022). - ANI

Winning gold medal at Asiad will be very special: Gaikwad

MUMBAI: After being named as the captain for the upcoming Hangzhou Asian Games scheduled to take place from September 23-October 8 in a T20 format, Ruturaj Gaikwad said that his dream would be to win a gold medal. Gaikwad is all set to lead Team India in the upcoming Hangzhou Asian Games as the BCCI selection committee on Friday announced the squad for the tournament. “The dream will be to win a gold medal, stand on the podium and listen to the National anthem for the country,” said Ruturaj after being named skipper in a video posted by BCCI on Saturday. “Really thankful for this opportunity. Playing for India itself is a proud feeling. Leading the side in such a big event will be a great opportunity for me personally and also for all the other members. So really looking forward, really happy and obviously very proud,” Gaikwad added. “I think it will be great fun because we all are youngsters and we have been really gelling around well with each other for the last one or two years, playing the IPL against each other, playing the India A games. “Then some India games as well so I think it’s a really fun group to be a part of and I think it will be really exciting for everyone who is part of the squad to represent the country in the Asian Games and obviously to win a medal for the country is something we always



grew up watching on television and seeing athletes win it for the country. Obviously to get the opportunity to go out there and win the medal will be very, very special,” he said. After a solid performance in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023, Rinku Singh has been included in the Indian team for Asian Games. On the back of their fine IPL performances wicketkeeper-batters Jitesh Sharma and Prabhsimran

Singh claimed a place in the squad. Gaikwad slammed 590 runs in 16 matches for CSK, while Jitesh and Rinku scored 309 and 474 runs for Punjab Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders respectively. Yashasvi Jaiswal, who currently is in red-hot form and playing in the first Test against West Indies, found a place in the squad. Shivam Dube who was the backbone of Chennai Super Kings’ middle order batting (CSK) in the IPL

2023 has been also included. **Squad for Asian Games:** Ruturaj Gaikwad (captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rahul Tripathi, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Shivam Mavi, Shivam Dube and Prabhsimran Singh (wk). **Standby:** Yash Thakur, Sai Kishore, Venkatesh Iyer, Deepak Hooda and Sai Sudarsan. - ANI

INDIA VS WEST INDIES TEST SERIES

Ashwin’s willingness to keep learning is remarkable: Karim

MUMBAI: Old warhorse Ravichandran Ashwin, who claimed a match haul of 12 wickets, in India’s convincing innings and 141-run win over the West Indies in the first Test at Dominica on Friday, is a role model for young spinners, according to former Indian wicketkeeper Saba Karim. Karim praised Ashwin’s efforts on JioCinema and said: “He is always willing to learn and that is what is remarkable about Ashwin. Even in this game, you would have noticed that he was able to gauge

the weakness of the batters quickly and then he went around trying to set them up. You could see him change the angle accordingly.” Ashwin has been playing on the international circuit for over a decade, and Karim is fascinated by his willingness to bring about new dimensions to his game. “As an off-spin bowler he keeps adding so many new things to his armoury and I feel that there is a lot for the young spinners to learn from him,” he said. Ashwin was not part of the team

that played the World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia recently, and Pragyan Ojha believes this is the best possible riposte that the spinner could have come up with. He said: “When champion players are not given what they want they will show it in a different way. The best part is when he got his chance in the very next game, he comes and takes 12 wickets and shows why he is the No.1 spinner. This is the best way to prove yourself rather than talking.”

Yashasvi Jaiswal, who hit a century on his debut also made a massive impression. Speaking about his performance, Karim said: “The fact that he played on all three days, he played through different conditions of the surface here, in different scenarios, in different phases, and he batted in such an accomplished manner and that’s what you would love to see in a young batter and it seems he had come well prepared for a Test match like this.” - ANI



LOVELY LAUSANNE

It's time to rediscover one of Switzerland's historic cities



RAHUL DAS
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The fairytale courtyards of old town, the sporty spirit of Olympic Museum, breathtaking lake side frolics, and boat rides to vineyards, beckon us to escape into a world full of postcard-worthy scenery, invigorating activities, and cozy allure.

Dotted with gothic architecture, towering basilica, lakeside promenade, tranquil mosaic landscape of quaint villages, this capital city of Switzerland, Lausanne is steeped in history tossed up with the flavor of modern richness.

Just over a seven-hour flight from Muscat to Zurich and then two and a half hour train ride through the picturesque landscapes from Zurich airport via the capital town Bern, this cosmopolitan French side of Switzerland is a must visit.

As the train bends along the breathtaking serpentine route through Montreux and charming Vevey with its lush vineyards on one side and Lake Geneva on the other, the journey throws the charismatic view of Chateau di Chillon transporting the passerby to a fantasy land from where one would detest to be withdrawn.

Ornamented by the shore of Lake Genève, the hilly hamlet of Lausanne with its traditionally pretty old town that seamlessly merges with the extravagant new town with a Roman touch but French dialect is culturally rich and vibrant.

An important crossroad of art and trade, the denizen embraced Lausanne, settling along one side of the valley making the hydraulic power produced mills a rich source of their survival while the other side of the Flon valley invited luxury shops and inns.

"Lausanne represents an exemplary version of evolution naturally, culturally, religiously and economically through several decades. An important junction for commerce, Lausanne should not come as a surprise when we relate it to Roman presence in the past," a tourist guide, Helene Rappaz explains the what, why and how about this pretty capital of Vaud canton.

As the Roman port town Vidy (once the port on Lake Genève) is now left abandoned due to the receding water level of the lake, Musée Romain located in this tiny suburb still tells the tale of bygone Roman era.

This wedge of Switzerland has many different aspects to it.

It's entwining steep cobbled route boastfully offers the historic old town – "La Cité" – standing tall witnessing the disappearing Flon and Louve rivers that sculpted the town showcasing



what it appears today. The Cathedral of Notre Dame in the middle of the old town where it merges with the extravagant new town.

The UNESCO heritage site at Lauvax welcomes many walkers seeking vitality through its authentic vineyards.

Also voted as the best small city in the world and is built on a human scale making it easy to walk and explore its myriad sights.

Museums, theatre and vibrant nightlife all harmoniously juxtaposes, portraying Lausanne as an iconic blueprint par excellence.

While each morning wakes up to a canvas sight to behold, the nights here are called upon by the night watchman from atop the cathedral spire.

Following the footsteps of 600 year old tradition, the night watchman trudges the 150 worn stoned steps of the sacred citadel, in his black coat and rimmed hat cups his hand around his mouth to announce the time to the city – "C'est le guet! Il a sonné dix! (It's the night watchman. It is ten!) – and repeats and repeats facing all the four cardinal directions.

This fascinating call of time from the city's sacred highest point at night is as inspiring as its daytime legend.

The Olympic Capital
The city is known as the Olympic Capital because of its iconic Olympic Museum spreads over an area of 3000 square meters and is home to over 1500 attractions, multiple exhibition venues, 150 screens and more that will trace the history of the most important sporting event of the world, the Olympics.

The Olympic Capital, Lausanne has been home to the IOC (Inter-



Must Visit Places
One of the most picturesque from Lausanne is the island-castle of Château de Chillon.
In the Old town, you must visit the Cathedral of Lausanne at night to discover more about the Cathedral's night watchman!

TIPS for Travellers
Be careful to pronounce Lausanne correctly after you land in Zurich airport – "loh-zahn" – and don't confuse it with Luzern or else you will land in another part of Switzerland.

national Olympic Committee) for 100 years and in 1993, the IOC founded its unique official museum on the banks of Lake Geneva. In 2013, The Olympic Museum was completely renovated with the most up-to-date facilities. Now on three floors, the exhibition presents the origin of the games, the competitions and the athletic spirit through over 150 screens and 1500 objects: The Olympic torches and medals of all the Olympic Games, as well as the equipment of the most famous athletes.

Where to stay?
The Royal Savoy Hotel & Spa Lausanne is where heritage meets hospitality and is a cornerstone of luxury hospitality.
The only five-star hotel in Lausanne in the heart of the city, where the address has stood for decades – with views of both Lake Geneva and the Alps – but a late-2015 reopening kick-started a new chapter in the property's longstanding legacy.
Located between the lake and the mountain, the surrounding scenery offers a diverse vista of the city which can be enjoyed from its unique rooftop with a 360 degrees



panoramic view over Lausanne, Lake Geneva and the Alps.

The hotel has been sought after by some of the world's most renowned figures in history such as the Spanish royal family, which made the hotel their home during exile, and a favourite home for Thailand's King during his youth.

The Royal Savoy Hotel & Spa's 196 elegant rooms and suites offer a unique experience with a variety of services suitable for all types of travellers from business visitors to family vacationers. One of the many leisure activities this hotel offers is the Golf Classic package, where guests will enjoy playing the 18-hole course at the exclusive Golf Club de Lausanne, paired with a relaxing one-night stay that includes brasserie dinner and an indulging treatment at the Royal Hotel Spa.

One of the most attractive experiences of the stay is the dinner at the hotel's Sky Lounge. From the top floor of the hotel, people can enjoy breathtaking views of the lake, the mountains, the city and the local vineyards - all against the backdrop of a dramatic Swiss sunset. The Hotel extends a variety of local and authentic

cuisine options throughout its refined restaurants, reimagined into exquisite dishes by the property's signature Chef, wrapped within a warm atmosphere.

But the best thing about this hotel is undoubtedly the spa – with guests entitled to unlimited complimentary access to the incredible facilities. At 1,500sqm, it's the biggest of its kind in Lausanne.

The good thing about staying in Lausanne is that you don't have to pay any extra to get there – tourists staying in Lausanne hotels travel for free across the city thanks to the Lausanne Transport Card. It's valid throughout your stay and gives you access to free public transport across the city, plus discounts at shops, restaurants and museums.

Language
Though the region's official language is French, people here also speak German, English and Italian.

Final Word
Whether it's outdoor adventures, rejuvenating wellness, cultural discoveries, or culinary delights you seek, Lausanne - this idyllic destination promises it all to suit all travellers.

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat updates its e-services to align with new RTGS system

This system provides automated solutions for processing and final settlement between local banks of payment orders exceeding OMR20,000 very quickly and without any waiting period

MUSCAT: Continuing its efforts to keep up with the latest developments in the banking sector, and to enhance the quality of payment system services, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has updated its systems to comply with the new national Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system recently launched by the Central Bank of Oman.

This system provides automated solutions for processing and final settlement between local banks of payment orders exceed-



ing OMR20,000 very quickly and without any waiting period. The Ministry of Finance and banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman as well as Muscat Clearing and Depository Company are the direct participants in the system. After the new update, the RTGS system will work around the clock all days of the week.

Speaking on this occasion, Zuwaina Abdullah Al Sharji, Assistant General Manager – Central Operations & Change Management, Bank Muscat, said: “Bank

Muscat is keen to keep abreast of all developments in the banking sector and develop its digital systems to align with global developments and meet the needs of the financial market in the Sultanate of Oman. With the latest update to the RTGS system, customers will be able to make money transfers at any time – during holidays as well as outside working hours, which enhances their banking experience. Also, this system, through which large-scale and important operations are performed, can af-

fect the economy as a whole and takes more time. On the contrary, reducing risks and speeding up transactions positively affect the efficiency of cash circulation within the economy and boost economic growth. For this reason, Bank Muscat is keen to keep abreast of all these updates in accordance with international regulations aiming at providing a better service to its customers by saving time and effort in clearing transactions in a fast and secure way.”

The new system works in par-

allel with the AFAQ payments system to execute financial transactions between GCC countries through the Gulf Payment Company. In line with the developments in the electronic payment systems domain, the system was implemented in accordance with the best practices, international standards, and the Principles for Financial Market Infrastructures (PFMI). The system also achieves the settlement finality in the Central Bank currencies of different participants from financial and

banking institutions, which helps in enhancing the financial stability of the Sultanate of Oman.

The enhanced liquidity management mechanism for RTGS participants is an additional feature for risk mitigation by enabling them to monitor their liquidity requirements in real time around the clock. The latest gridlock resolution mechanism introduced in the system will help reduce the settlement risk among participants.

Bank Muscat continues to launch new features that enable customers to make money transfer transactions through its omnichannel network as transfers can be also completed to various countries of the world via the SWIFT network. In addition, the bank provides the feature of speed transfer to a number of countries such as Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Over the last four decades, Bank Muscat has gained the admiration of the local, regional and international financial community in appreciation of its excellent performance to develop services and facilities. It has won a number of awards from prestigious local, regional and global institutions like the Best Corporate / Institutional Digital Bank in Oman from Global Finance. The bank will continue to provide the best technological services that help to make transactions smoother based on its customer-centric vision.

BI-ANNUAL EVENT



Zubair Corporation organises 6th edition of its HR Forum

MUSCAT: The Zubair Corporation recently organised the fourth edition of its Human Resources (HR) Forum. A bi-annual event, the forum, is an initiative of the Human Capital Centre of Excellence (HC CoE) and plays a vital role in the corporation's strategy to enhance human capital and provide an enriching work environment within the Corporation and its subsidiaries.

The forum served as a platform for knowledge-sharing, discussions on new and existing policies as well as the Corporation's competency framework. The forum is also considered the cornerstone of promoting the strategic partnership concept among HR departments to fulfil human capital needs in an efficient manner that suits its work nature. Bringing this concept to fruition, the main topic of discussion during the Forum was the launch and introduction of the Tadweer (Training & Development with Effective, Enhanced Rotation) Programme, a job rotation initiative, led by the Human Capital Center of Excellence – The Zubair Corporation's HR function.

The purpose of the Corporation's Tadweer Programme is to establish a framework for a job rotation practice within the Corporation and its subsidiaries while providing employees with the opportunity to enrich their knowledge and skills with a broader understanding of the Corporation's business operations. In 2023, the focus of the Programme will be

the Finance function where selected employees will be rotated to different roles, such as financial analysis, accounting, treasury, and internal controls. The rotations will typically last for three months to a year, depending on the specific role and the individual's development needs.

Speaking on the occasion, Sharifa Al Balushi, Group Head – Human Capital Centre of Excellence said, “Creating a compelling journey from candidate to employee is just as crucial as numerous consumer-facing processes and interactions that have been retooled and simplified to provide a more satisfying customer experience. Our department has shifted its approaches as well with the idea to move from a process-driven mindset to one that always begins with the experience for the HR customer, who could be a candidate, employee, contingent worker, or even alumni.”

The forum is a great platform to enhance the pivotal role that human resources functions should play in achieving the strategic and future goals of all group companies. “To continue meeting the challenges that HR brings requires a balancing act between change, risk and innovation. Whilst conventional perceptions of HR might be limited to hiring and firing, the role is more complex now than ever before; considerations of diversity and training and development are all at the forefront of the corporation's HR plan.

MODERN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

MCBS dean participates in symposium on roles of HEIs in community service and transition to knowledge society

MUSCAT: In the presence of Prof. Rahma Ibrahim Al-Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, Dr Musa bin Abdullah Al-Kindi, Dean of the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS), participated in a symposium organised by the ministry on the roles of private higher education institutions in community service and the transition to a knowledge-based society, with wide participation of HEIs and a number of leading commercial institutions in the field of community service and the Endowment Foundation for the Support of Education (Siraj).

The programme of the symposium, after its inauguration with the national anthem and the Holy Quran, included the speech of the Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation, in which she referred to the importance science in social development, and in developing knowledge economy. In addition, H.E referred to the central role of



HEIs in knowledge production and community service as integral functions of higher education institutions, and as essential channels of learning, skills building and linking the learner to society. Finally, HE shared with the audience figures reflecting the size of social services carried out by HEIs in Oman and their impact on improving Oman's global indicators.

The programme also included a review of the experiences of a number of private higher education institutions, commercial institutions, and the Endowment Foundation for Education Support (Siraj) in organising and implementing community service programs in the Sultanate and their impact on community development. To link these efforts to the Oman Vision 2040,

the Vision Implementation Follow-up Unit presented a paper entitled (Service community and its role in achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040).

At the end of the symposium, the Dean of the College signed with Her Excellency Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation an appendix to the scholarships agreement through which MCBS provides the Ministry with scholarships for the benefit of needy students, so that they can continue their studies as part of the college's integrated plan for community service.

It should be noted here that the college pays special attention to community service and views it as an integral part of its academic mission. Its programs and activities are supervised and planned by the Community Engagement and Outreach Committee headed by the Assistant Dean for Community Outreach, which is one of the main permanent committees of the college.

INEOS AUTOMOTIVE

Global debuts for Hydrogen Fuel Cell Demo and all-new Grenadier Quartermaster



MUSCAT: Following the start of series production of the Grenadier 4X4 last year, INEOS Automotive will make its mark across this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed (13 - 16 July).

The all-new Grenadier Quartermaster, a double cab pick-up variant of the award-winning Grenadier, will make its global debut on Thursday 13th July.

This will be shortly followed by a very special appearance on the famous hillclimb with some familiar Goodwood faces to celebrate two

75-year automotive anniversaries - motorsports at Goodwood and the Belstaff Trialmaster Jacket that lends its name to one of Grenadier's trims.

Also making its first-ever public appearance is the Grenadier Hydrogen Fuel Cell (FCEV) Technology Demonstrator, which will show how well-suited the zero-emissions technology is for a future long-range 4X4 off-roader.

Both the Grenadier Quartermaster and FCEV Demonstrator will be showcased in the First

Glance Paddock and will be driven up the hillclimb route on each of the four days of the festival.

In an exciting exclusive for the Goodwood Festival of Speed, adventurous visitors will be able to get behind the wheel of the Grenadier Station Wagon on a challenging off-road course at the Goodwood Hahnaker Chalkpit neighbouring the main event site. Hundreds of slots are available throughout the four days of the festival for those wanting to put the 4X4 through its paces.



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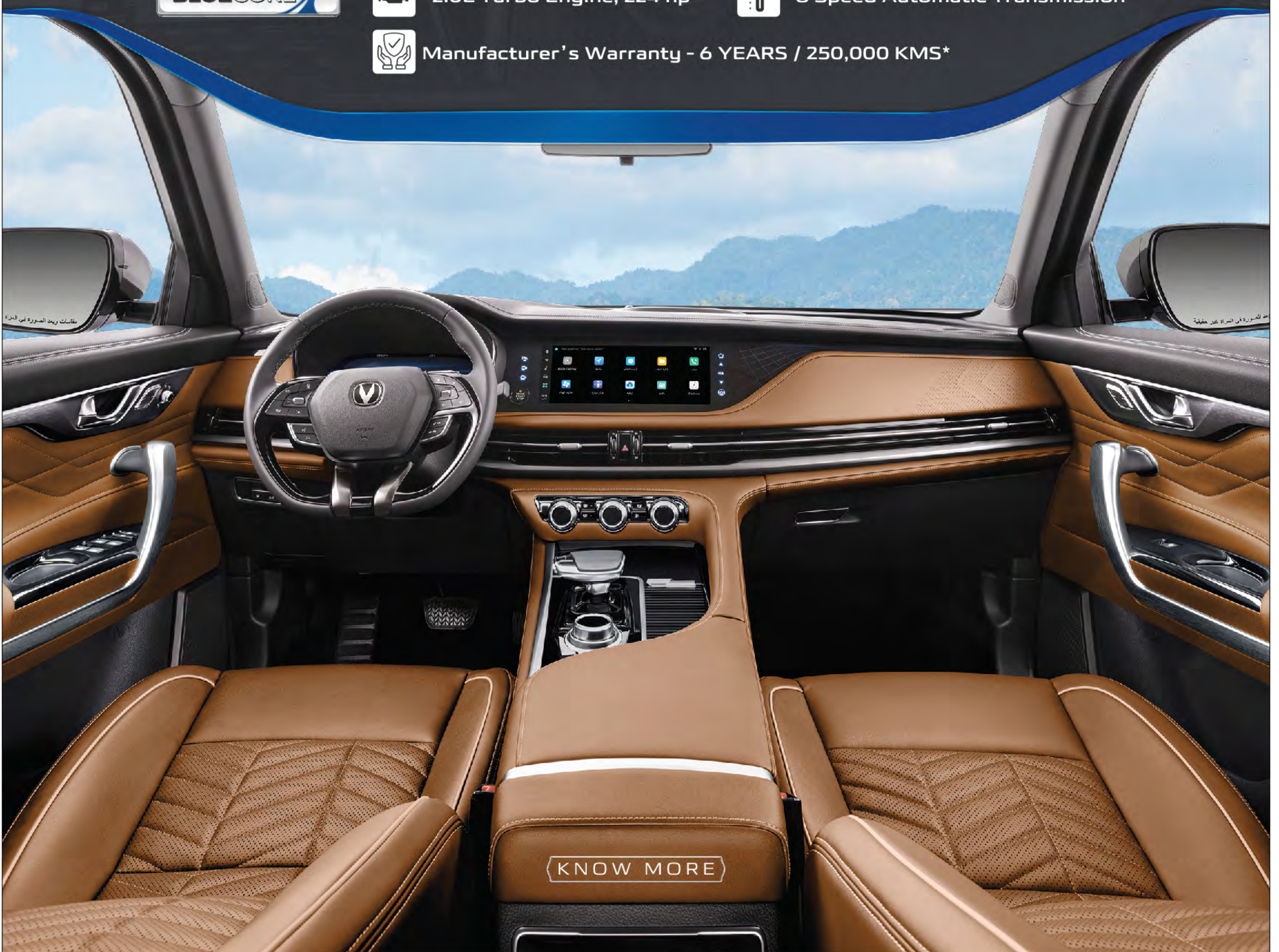
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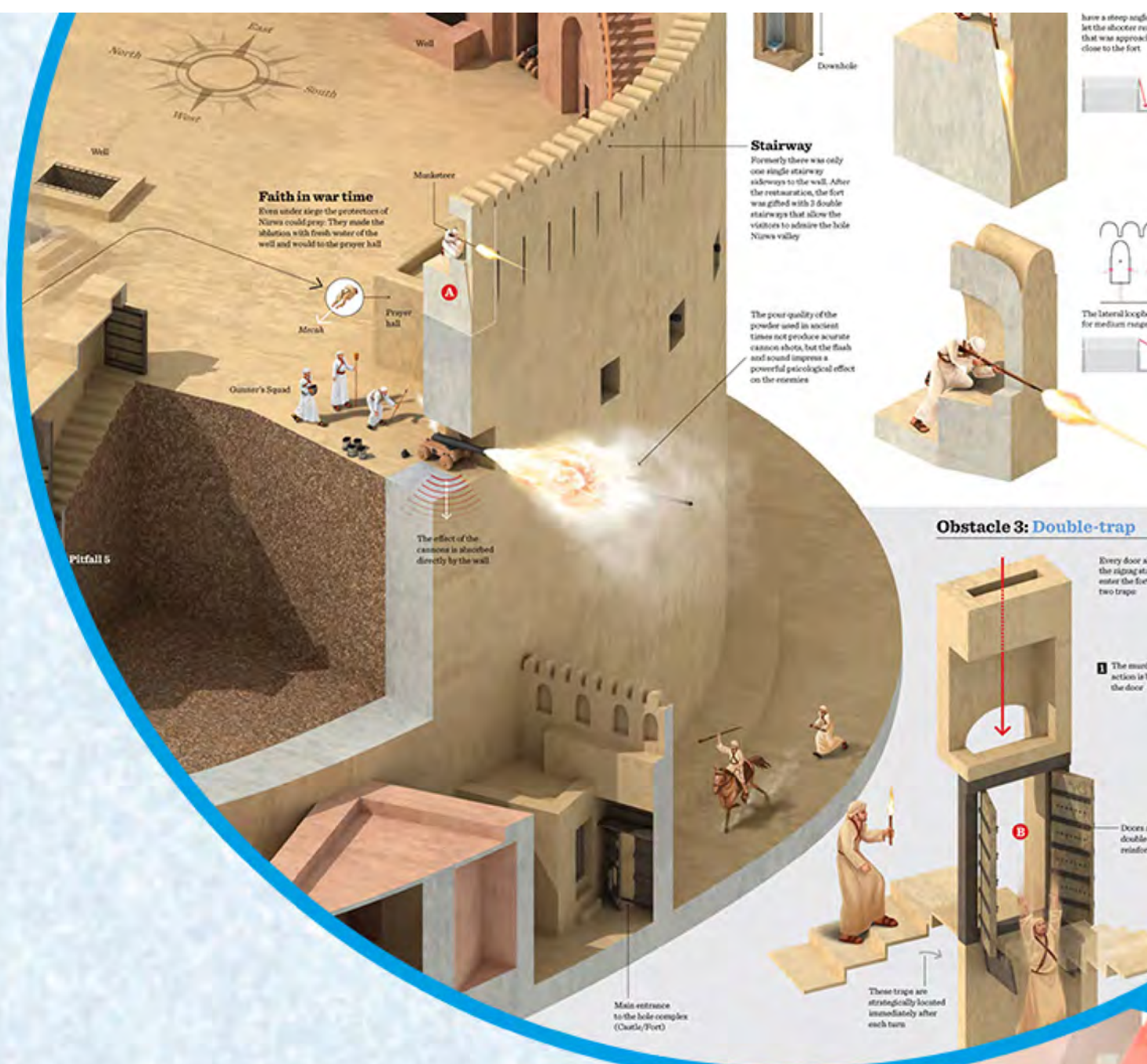
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