



HM THE SULTAN CONFERS
ROYAL COMMENDATION
ORDER ON RETIRED MINISTER
MOHAMMED AL ALAWI >A9



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HIS MAJESTY STRESSES ON CREATING MORE JOBS, SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS, SMEs



HM gave special emphasis on studying the needs of citizens, notably the segments that rely on the social protection system

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday presided over a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Barakah Palace. At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the bounties of security and stability that He has be-

stowed on Oman and its people. He prayed to the Almighty to perpetuate these bounties and blessings on all citizens and residents on Oman's lands, wishing all good health and wellbeing. Then, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed domestic conditions. He commended the accomplishments made during the past year (2023) and expressed his satisfaction with the continuous improvement in financial, economic and social performance indicators. He stressed the importance of all government departments' keeping up efforts to upgrade performance. As part of his keenness to follow up the evaluation of government institutions' performance in 2023, His Majesty the Sultan took note of an uptake in performance that promises the realisation of goals, visions and aspirations in tune with developments. His Majesty underscored the significance of the authorities' improving their assessment of all indicators during this year (2024) and studying the areas of strength and weakness, with the prime aim of determining the best ways to address the potential challenges. His Majesty the Sultan commended the efforts made by government institutions in their effort to perform the tasks entrusted to them, notably the units that received 'high' and 'excellent' performance evaluation. His Majesty praised the role of the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) in meeting the State's needs for statistics and information. He laid emphasis on government departments' using the data provided by the NCSI as a springboard for planning, decision-making, evaluating government programmes and projects and measuring the impact of policies and plans to determine the degree of their effectiveness and gauge progress in achieving the desired goals. >A9

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Sheikh Khalifa meets German Minister

1 Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs met on Tuesday with Dr. Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany. >A4

MARKET Tethys Oil raises its activities

2 Tethys Oil has raised its operational activities at Block 56 onshore Oman. The Menna-1 exploration well has been completed with logs indicating hydrocarbons in three separate zones. >B1

SPORTS Cape Town pitch 'unsatisfactory'

3 The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday gave an "unsatisfactory" rating to the Newlands pitch in Cape Town following a low-scoring second Test between India and South Africa. >B6

HM GIVES AUDIENCE TO GERMAN MINISTER

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday gave an audience to Dr. Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany. The audience dealt with friendship and means of consolidating cooperation in various areas. >A4



Wise guidance. Renewed renaissance.

Congratulations to
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
on the occasion of the anniversary of His Majesty's accession. Guided by his Majesty's wise leadership, we pledge to the progress of this renewed renaissance.

His Majesty the Sultan gives audience to German Minister



The audience dealt with relations of friendship and means of consolidating cooperation in various areas to serve interests of the Omani and German peoples

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eral Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Consolidating cooperation
The audience dealt with relations of friendship and means of consolidating cooperation in various areas to serve interests of the Omani and German peoples.

Exchanged views
His Majesty the Sultan and the guest also exchanged views on a number of issues of common concern.

The meeting was attended by Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Maithaa Saif Al Mahrouqi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Federal Republic of Germany and Dirk Lölke, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Sultanate of Oman.

-ONA

MEETING

Sheikh Khalifa reviews ties with German Minister

MUSCAT: Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs met here on Tuesday with Dr. Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and means of boosting them. They also exchanged views in a bid to serve the interests of the two countries.

Further, the two sides discussed several regional matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Maithaa Saif Al Mahrouqi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of



Oman to the Federal Republic of Germany, Munthir Mahfoudh Al Manthiri, Head of the Europe Department, Dirk Lölke, Ambassador of Germany to Oman and several officials from both sides. -ONA

MOU SIGNED

German Minister visits GUtech

MUSCAT: Dr. Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany on Tuesday visited the German University of Technology (GUtech).

Prof. Michael Brown, Rector of GUtech gave a speech in which he introduced the university and its academic role. He also highlighted the academic specialisations and services offered by GUtech to students.

On the sidelines of the visit, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between GUtech and Siemens Company dealing with boosting the enhancement of energy and sustainability within the university campus.



The MoU was signed by Dr. Hussain Al Salmi, Deputy Rector of GUtech for Administration and

Finances and Jamie Hoyzer, CEO of Siemens company in Oman.

-ONA



شركة تنمية نفط عُمان

Petroleum Development Oman

Warm felicitations to

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

and the people of Oman

on the occasion of the 4th Anniversary

of His Majesty's Accession





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COMMENTARY

Bold Move: A grateful thank you to South Africa for filing a case against Israel in ICJ



MOHAMED ALZADJALI

In a world where justice often seems elusive, it is heartening to witness countries taking a stand against injustice and human rights violations. South Africa's recent decision to file a case against Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is a commendable step towards seeking accountability and promoting peace in the Middle East. As concerned global citizens, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to South Africa for its courageous move and commitment to upholding international law. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a long-standing issue, causing immense suffering and loss of life. The ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories, illegal settlements, and human rights abuses have raised serious con-



cerns within the international community. South Africa's decision to take this matter to the ICJ signifies its determination to address these violations and seek a just resolution. By filing a case against Israel in the ICJ, South Africa has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to upholding international law. The ICJ serves as the principal judicial organ of the United

Nations and plays a crucial role in resolving disputes between nations. South Africa's action highlights the importance of holding all nations accountable for their actions, regardless of their political or economic power. South Africa's move is about seeking justice for the Palestinian people and promoting peace in the region. By resorting to legal means,

South Africa has chosen a path that encourages dialogue, negotiation, and a peaceful resolution to the conflict. It sends a powerful message that pursuing justice and peace can go hand in hand, fostering an environment conducive to meaningful negotiations. The decision to file a case against Israel in the ICJ amplifies the voices of the oppressed and marginalised. It provides

a platform for the Palestinian people to have their grievances heard and their rights defended. South Africa's action acknowledges the importance of standing up for those who have been silenced and marginalised, reaffirming the principles of equality, justice, and human rights. South Africa's bold move also encourages global solidarity in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It inspires other

nations to take a stand against human rights violations and work towards a just and lasting solution. By initiating legal proceedings, South Africa has opened the door for other countries to join forces and collectively advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people. Israel, for the first time, feels the pressure of the international community and is using all its forces, ranging from media propaganda, its ambassadors and any powerful individuals, to help and assist in stopping or affecting the court decision. It is for the first time in the world that Israel has gone to court and doesn't feel good about it as many of their officials will be held accountable along with some others who are helping them. South Africa's decision to file a case against Israel in the ICJ is a significant step towards seeking justice and promoting peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We extend our deepest gratitude to South Africa for its unwavering commitment to upholding international law, amplifying the voices of the oppressed, and encouraging global solidarity. This courageous move is a beacon of hope, reminding us that justice can be achieved.



Energy Development Oman is honoured to congratulate His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - May the Almighty Allah Protect Him - and the people of Oman on the occasion of the 4th anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne.





Our investment portfolio, in collaboration with our partners, contributes to the blessed Renewed Renaissance. We are dedicated to maximising the utilisation of Oman's abundant oil and natural resources. This commitment aligns with the government's strategy for economic diversification, which includes attracting both national and international investments. We are actively establishing strategic partnerships, a critical step in realising the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. Looking ahead, we are eager to broaden investment horizons, focusing on transformative industries and alternative energy projects.

> Major Investment Projects

- | | |
|---|---|
|  > \$8.9 Billion
OQ8 |  > \$524 Million
Ras Markaz Crude Oil Terminal project |
|  > \$7.2 Billion
Liwa Plastics Industries Complex (LPIC) |  > \$510 Million
Marafiq |
|  > \$1.2 Billion
Bisat Oil Field |  > \$463 Million
Ammonia Project |
|  > \$826 Million
OQ LPG | |

> Alternative Energy Projects

(Under Development)

Liwa Solar Power Plant
Renewable Energy Capacity: 93 MW

SalalahH2
Renewable Energy Capacity: 3.8 GW

Green Energy Oman (GEO)
Renewable Energy Capacity: 25 GW
to be developed over multiple phases

B60 Solar Project
Renewable Energy Capacity: 35 MW

HYPOR Duqm
Renewable Energy Capacity: 1.3 GW



We extend our heartfelt congratulations to
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

on the occasion of the Accession Day anniversary, reaffirming our pledge of allegiance and loyalty to our esteemed leader. Guided by his wise leadership, we are committed to supporting his vision for the renewed prosperity and well-being of our nation and its people.

Oman to mark anniversary of HM’s accession to power on 11 January

Since His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik assumed the leadership of the country, the Omani economy has witnessed remarkable growth at various levels

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will celebrate the annual anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik’s accession to power in the country on 11 January (Accession Day).

Since His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik assumed the leadership of the country, the Omani economy has witnessed remarkable growth at various levels, with fiscal surpluses made in State Budget.

The additional financial revenues have been utilised to enhance social spending, stimulate economic growth, manage the country’s lending portfolio, reduce public debt, and develop governorates.

The government took financial measures and policies that contributed to controlling public spending and improving non-oil revenues. This reflected positively on the state’s financial performance during the first three years of the 10th Five Year Plan (2021-2025). It also boosted the credit rating and future outlook at international credit rating agencies. In addition, it attracted more foreign investments.

Preliminary results of Oman’s financial performance in 2023



strong backing through the issuance of Royal Decree No. 52/2023 that promulgated the Social Protection Law. Social protection benefits will begin to be provided during January 2024.

As many as 1,467,000 citizens will benefit from these measures. These include 167,000 citizens in the ‘elderly benefits’ segment, while 1,300,000 children will receive support within the ‘childhood benefits’ segment.

The Social Protection Programme also provides OMR130 as monthly financial assistance to people with disabilities in Oman.

In its Renewed Renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Oman maintained the principles that guide foreign policy. This qualified Omani political diplomacy to be a model in good neighbourliness, neutrality and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

Omani policy also underscores the establishment of a fair system for exchanging benefits and interests, consolidating the foundations of stability, peace and international cooperation at all levels. -**ONA**

showed that a total surplus of OMR931 million was achieved, compared to an estimated OMR1.3 billion deficit in the State Budget. The Budget’s revenues also increased in 2023 to OMR12.213 billion, which means an increase of about OMR2.163 billion, compared to estimates approved in the 2023 Budget, while public spending stood at OMR11.282 billion.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant prices until the third quarter of 2023 posted a growth of 2 percent and stood at OMR26.433 billion. This was due to a 2.7 percent rise in the added value of non-

oil activities, which stood at about OMR18.190 billion. The added value of oil activities also increased by 0.5 percent and stood at about OMR9.68 billion.

By the end of November 2023, the inflation rate in Oman went down to about 1.03 percent. This percentage is considered moderate compared to global inflation indicators. The measures undertaken by the government had a positive impact on controlling inflation rates, notably through subsidy to food and fuel products.

Oman’s trade balance as at the end of October 2023 stood at about

OMR6.370 billion, while local liquidity grew by 10 percent to more than OMR22 billion by the end of October 2023.

Oman advanced 10 places according to the 2023 Global Innovation Index report issued by the World Intellectual Property Organization. Oman ranked 69th globally out of 132 countries whose performance was assessed in accordance with seven pillars of credibility. Oman achieved its highest performance in indices of human capital, research and infrastructure.

Oman took fifth place in the Middle East and North Africa

and ranked 50th internationally in the Government Readiness for Artificial Intelligence Index. It advanced two places from its previous ranking, according to the Oxford Insights 2023 report.

The 30-indice report covers 193 countries and focuses on three main pillars: government, technology sector, data and infrastructure. Oman advanced in all indices to varying degrees and achieved its best performance in the technology sector (2.96 points), notably in the innovation capacity index, advancing more than 6 points.

The social sector received



The Chairman and members of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, members of the boards of directors of its branches across the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, the executive management of the Chamber, and all companies and enterprises of the Omani private sector , are honored to congratulate His Majesty

Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

-May Allah the Almighty protect him-

On the anniversary of His Majesty’s Accession to the Throne May Allah the Almighty protect His Majesty the Sultan, and perpetuate the blessing of peace, security and prosperity for the Sultanate of Oman.



chamber_oman



AL BARAKAH PALACE

His Majesty presides over Council of Ministers meeting

<FROM A1 Within the context of implementation of the provisions of the social protection scheme in 2024, His Majesty the Sultan stressed the importance of monitoring the system's performance and all its programmes.

He gave directives to evaluate its performance and accommodate social and economic developments, with special emphasis on further studying the needs of citizens, notably the segments that rely on the social protection system.

The Council of Ministers had directed the authorities concerned to prepare a national policy for local content with the aim of reducing imports and increasing exports. The Council endorsed the "National Policy for Local Content (2024-2030)", which aims to develop a national system for regulating and monitoring local content in all sectors.

More job opportunities

In this context, His Majesty the Sultan stressed the importance of focusing on all target goals, notably generating more employment job opportunities for citizens, localising industries, supporting entrepreneurs, encouraging small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups and cutting down the volume of foreign purchases to secure surplus in the country's trade balance.

Given the need to promote the culture of local content in society, support, introduce and back the national product, the Council of Ministers gave green light to the "National Product Loyalty Programme", which seeks to encourage consumers to go for Omani products and enhance the growth of local companies.

To further utilise the diversity of the governorates of Oman and its natural attractions, historical and cultural heritage, the Council of Ministers stressed the importance of governors' focusing on tourist sites in their respective governorates and developing appropriate plans to host tourism activities



His Majesty the Sultan also gave directives to review the roles of the authorities operating in areas of food safety

and events that attract visitors to such sites throughout the year.

To enhance the role of the tourism sector in boosting the gross domestic product (GDP), generating local added value and providing employment opportunities for citizens, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to set a timeframe for developing "Al Jabal Al Abyad" area and "Wakan" village. This includes providing necessary infrastructure and appropriate con-

ditions for the development of the two areas due to their unique capabilities and their tourist attractions that qualify them to be major destinations for trips, camping and adventure tourism.

His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to review the roles of the authorities operating in areas of food safety, with a view to integrating these roles to ensure the effectiveness of relevant procedures. This was seen within the context of

the Council of Ministers' attention to food safety and related legislations, executive procedures aimed at ensuring the production, import, export, circulation and consumption of food products that are safe for the health of consumers.

In pursuance of the general trend regarding the streamlining of procedures, the business environment and the competitiveness of the national economy, the Council of Ministers approved the

results of the third phase of the draft government services' pricing guide.

This includes cancelling, reducing, simplifying and merging of 411 fees.

The Council also approved a proposal submitted by the authorities concerned with regard to the reduction of drinking water connection service fees for residential and non-residential units.

Upon his review of relations

with Arab and friendly countries, His Majesty the Sultan pointed out that the visits and meetings that took place recently yielded good results. In this context, he stressed the Sultanate of Oman's keenness to cooperate with all in accordance with the principles and constants of the country's foreign policy.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan touched on various aspects of concern to the nation and citizens and gave directives in this regard. He wished all continued success and progress, along with his sincere wishes for Oman and its loyal citizens. -ONA



HM CONFERS ROYAL COMMENDATION ORDER ON FORMER MINISTER

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday conferred the Order of Royal Commendation, 1st Class, on retired minister Mohammed bin Ali Al Alawi in appreciation for the minister's sincere efforts in performing his national duty throughout his tenure. The ceremony took place at Al Barakah Palace. -ONA

OMAN CUSTOMS

Truck loaded with drones seized

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A truck loaded with drones coming from the United Arab Emirates and heading to the Republic of Yemen has been seized at Hafef port.

Hidden professionally

In a statement issued online by Oman Customs on Tuesday, said: "Customs inspectors were able to discover the shipments that were hidden professionally in places specially prepared for smuggling them in the truck."

"The concerned authorities began investigating the case in order to complete the rest of the legal procedures against the suspects," Oman Customs added in the statement.

**Pakistan School Muscat**

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER

Tender No	Tender's Name	Tender Collection Date & Time	Final Submission Date & Time
2024/001	Students Group Personal Accident Coverage	January 10, 2024, to January 17, 2024	Before and Until January 18, 2024
2024/002	Building Fire and Allied Perils Insurance	09:00 AM to 01:00 PM Working Days/Hours	

Experience contractor(s) having relevant experience of at least 3 years of similar nature jobs preferably in Oman, who wishes to participate in the bidding may collect the documents after payment of RO. 20,000 (non-refundable) per Job.

Admin Office
Pakistan School Muscat
P.O. Box 987, P.C. 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman; Tel: 24702489
In case of any query you may contact 00968 93690691
Email: tulaib@pakistanschool.edu.om, chairmanbods@pakistanschool.edu.om

The tenders shall be submitted in Original and complete with all relevant documents. Tenders not in compliance with tender's requirements shall not be considered.

Tender Documents shall be submitted in sealed envelope with clearly mentioned Tender Number/name, Company Name and POC's Number/name. The sealed envelope shall be dropped in the Tender Box available at Admin Office on or before the date mentioned above and addressed to:

Pakistan School Muscat
(PSM is not bound to accept the lowest Tender or any Tender)



Congratulations

TO HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK

and the people of Oman on the occasion of the 4th Accession Day



Gaza death toll reaches 23,210 since the start of Israeli attacks: Health Ministry

A total of 59,167 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip during more than three months of fighting, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday

GAZA: The Health Ministry in the Gaza Strip says at least 23,210 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory since Israel launched its pursuit of Hamas after the October 7 attacks. A ministry statement said 126 deaths were recorded in the past 24 hours. A total of 59,167 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip during more than three months of fighting, the ministry said. The ministry does not provide a breakdown as to how many of its



figures are combatants or civilians. However, it is considered by several UN agencies as a largely reliable source on casualties in Gaza. **WHO fears rapid healthcare collapse in Gaza's south** Officials from the World Health Organization (WHO) say they are concerned about the possible collapse of hospitals in southern Gaza as fighting intensifies around the city of Khan Younis.

There is a fear that many medical staff and patients may simply flee for their lives. "So what we're seeing is really worrying around a lot of the hospitals and an intensification of hostilities, very close to the European Gaza hospital," said Sean Casey, the WHO's Emergency Medical Teams coordinator in Gaza. "We are seeing the health system collapse at a very rapid pace," Casey told a Geneva press briefing

by video link, adding that an estimated 600 patients had fled one facility. **Berlin urges 'concrete measures' on aid to Gaza** German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock says concrete measures must be put in place to stop the suffering of Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. Speaking in Cairo alongside Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh

Shoukry, Baerbock said it was necessary to ensure the flow of aid into Gaza. Baerbock said she would travel to the Strip's Rafah border crossing with Egypt later on Tuesday. "We need to have concrete measures today and now. We need to make sure aid is getting to people in Gaza," she said. The German foreign minister also said more access was needed in the northern part of the territory, where Israel said it has now cleared of Hamas infrastructure. Baerbock, who congratulated Egypt on its role in negotiating hostage releases from Gaza, stressed that Berlin and Cairo agree that Gaza and the West Bank are Palestinian. As such, Baerbock said Palestinians should not be driven away. Egypt's Shoukry said the immediate priority was to get a ceasefire, deal with security issues, secure humanitarian aid and prevent displacement. "All the steps that are being taken [by Israel] are for the purpose of pushing towards displacement," said Shoukry, who added that 2 million Palestinians could not remain trapped. The German foreign minister had arrived in Egypt after a visit to Israel.

Blinken hopes Israel can rebuild regional ties after Gaza war The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has told Israel that he sees opportunities for the country to build closer ties in the region once the Gaza crisis has passed. Blinken made the remarks in a televised meeting with his Israeli counterpart, Israel Katz, after visits to several Arab capitals. "I know of your own efforts, over many years, to build much greater connectivity and integration in the Middle East, and I think there are actually real opportunities there. "But we have to get through this very challenging moment and ensure that October 7 can never happen again and work to build a much different and much better future," Blinken said, referring to the Hamas massacres that sparked the Gaza war. Blinken has said he will discuss the "way forward" in Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza as he meets Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Washington's top diplomat has visited Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, plus Turkey and Greece, since Saturday. — Agencies

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

Gabriel Attal, 34, to become France's youngest prime minister in decades

PARIS: French Education Minister Gabriel Attal has been tipped by President Macron as the new prime minister to replace the outgoing premier, according to a presidential statement released on Tuesday. "The president of the republic appointed Mr. Gabriel Attal prime minister, and tasked him with forming a government," the statement said. Former Prime Minister Borne resigned on Monday. Prime ministers in France have a very subordinate position to that of the president and as head of government generally follows the political course laid out by the head of state. Attal, 34, came to widespread attention in France as the government spokesman during the coronavirus pandemic. He has emerged as one of the country's most popular politicians in recent opinion polls, and is a close ally of the president. The previous youngest premier was Laurent Fabius, who was named prime minister in 1987 by late President Francois Mitterrand aged 37.



The appointment comes as Macron and allied centrist forces seek to slow the momentum of the far right under Marine Le Pen ahead of European Parliament elections this summer. The president is also seeking a fresh image for the last three years of his second and last term following protests over unpopular pension reforms, the loss of his overall majority in parliamentary elections and controversy over immigration legislation. — DW

FOR VIBRANT GUJARAT GLOBAL SUMMIT

Indian PM welcomes UAE President Mohamed Al Nahyan in Ahmedabad

GANDHINAGAR: UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived in Gujarat's Ahmedabad on Tuesday evening to take part in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi received him at the airport and the two will hold a roadshow in the city today. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra and other officials were present at the airport to welcome the UAE President. **Ceremonial guard of honour** The UAE President was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour upon his arrival. Apart from the UAE President, other world leaders including Timor Leste President Jose Ramos-Horta are attending the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. PM Modi arrived in Ahmedabad on Monday for a two-day visit to inaugurate the 10th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024 at Gujarat's Mahatma Mandir. Upon arrival in Gujarat, PM Modi in a post shared on X stated, "Landed in Ahmedabad a short while ago. Over the next two



days, will be taking part in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit and related programmes. It is a matter of immense joy that various world leaders will be joining us during this summit. The coming of my

brother, Mohamed Bin Zayed, is very special. I have a very close association with the Vibrant Gujarat Summit and I am glad to see how this platform has contributed to Gujarat's growth and created

opportunities for several people." The Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit was started in 2003 under the leadership of Modi when he was the state chief minister. The tenth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit is being held from January 10-12 in Gandhinagar. There are 34 partner countries and 16 partner organisations for this year's Summit. **Investment opportunities** Further, the Ministry of Development of the North-Eastern Region will utilise the Vibrant Gujarat platform to showcase investment opportunities in the North-Eastern regions. The Summit will host various events including seminars and conferences on globally relevant topics such as Industry 4.0, Technology and Innovation, Sustainable Manufacturing, Green Hydrogen, Electric Mobility and Renewable Energy and Transition towards Sustainability. In the Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade Show, companies are displaying products made from world class state of the art technology. E-mobility, Start-ups, MSMEs, Blue Economy, Green Energy & Smart Infrastructure are some of the focus sectors of the Trade Show. — ANI

EUROPEAN UNION

2023 was hottest year on record, says new EU report

BRUSSELS: The European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) released its 2023 Global Climate Highlights report on Tuesday, backing up scientific consensus that 2023 was the hottest year on record. The report shows 2023 had a global average temperature of 14.98 Celsius (58 Fahrenheit), which is 0.17 C higher than 2016, the previous record-breaking year, by "a large margin." The report said the high average temperatures were tied to several drivers such as greenhouse gas concentrations and El Nino, a warm phase in the Pacific Ocean. Samantha Burgess, Deputy Director of C3S, said in a statement that "2023 was an exceptional year with climate records tumbling like dominoes. Not only is 2023 the warmest year on record, it is also the first year with all days over 1 C warmer than the pre-industrial period." "Temperatures during 2023 likely exceed those of any period in at least the last 100,000 years," she added. Carlo Buontempo, director of C3S, said that the findings have "profound consequences" for the



Paris Agreement. "The extremes we have observed over the last few months provide a dramatic testimony of how far we now are from the climate in which our civilization developed," Buontempo said. The 196 signatories to the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change,

agreed to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 C above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels." The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued repeated warnings that an average temperature in-

crease topping the 1.5 C threshold risks "unleashing far more severe climate change impacts, including more frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves and rainfall." Almost half of 2023 exceeded the 1.5 C limit, and some scientists predict that the Earth's average surface temperature is also likely

to breach 1.5 C in 2024. However, that would not necessarily mean that the world failed to meet the Paris Agreement target, as that would occur only after several successive years above the 1.5 C. At one point in 2023, the daily global temperature average briefly surpassed the pre-industrial levels by more than 2 C.

In June 2023, temperature anomalies spiked above the pre-industrial level 1.5 C for several days in a row. Eventually, nearly half the days in 2023 were more than 1.5 C higher than pre-industrial levels, as per the report. July and August 2023 were the warmest two months on record. December 2023 was the warmest December on record globally, with an average temperature of 13.51 C — 0.85 C above the 1991-2020 average. **Sea surface warming** Earth's sea surface temperatures were "persistently and unusually high", the report said, reaching record levels from April to December 2023. This was because of marine heatwaves around the globe including in parts of the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, Indian Ocean, North Pacific and much of North Atlantic. Moreover, in the spring of 2023, La Nina came to an end and El Nino conditions began to develop. For Europe, 2023 was the second-warmest year — 0.17 C cooler than 2020. — DW

Atletico Madrid set to host Real Madrid in a marquee match



While Real Madrid leads La Liga, Atletico Madrid, currently is in fifth place

MADRID: Atletico Madrid is set to host Real Madrid in the marquee match of the Spanish Copa del Rey's fourth round, following Monday night's draw. This much-anticipated clash, slated for January 16, 17, and 18, will see the fierce local rivals face off twice in one week, as they also contend in the Spanish Supercup's

first semifinal in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Wednesday. While Real Madrid leads La Liga, Atletico Madrid, currently in fifth place, boasts a 3-1 victory over their rivals in their September league match at the Metropolitano Stadium. The draw's announcement came just an hour after the thrilling conclusion to the third round's final game between third-tier Unionistas of Salamanca and Villarreal. Sunday night's match at Unionistas' ground was halted due to floodlight failure, with the score tied 1-1 after regulation time. The resumption on Monday saw no goals in extra time, leading to a nerve-wracking penalty shootout. Unionistas triumphed 7-6, with missed penalties by Alberto Moreno and Kiko Femenia of the Primera Liga side. This victory sets Unionistas up for another significant



encounter as they now prepare to take on FC Barcelona. Barcelona narrowly overcame fourth-tier Barbastro with a 3-2

win Sunday night and now faces a challenging game at the compact Reina Sofia Stadium. Girona, tied in points with Real

bly drawn to play at home against Rayo Vallecano. The draw also features two regional derbies: last year's finalists, Osasuna, will play Real Sociedad at home, while Athletic Club Bilbao welcomes Alaves to the San Mames Stadium. In another evenly matched pairing, Valencia hosts Celta Vigo, while Getafe, playing at home, emerges as the favorites against a Sevilla side just above La Liga's relegation zone. Second-division Tenerife, one of the two teams from outside the top flight in the last 16, earned a favorable draw against Mallorca, following their victory in the Canary Island derby against Las Palmas on Sunday. Mallorca, more focused on distancing themselves from the relegation zone, might prioritize league survival over Cup progression. *-Xinhua*

SECOND ODI

Janith Liyanage heroics guides Sri Lanka to victory over Zimbabwe



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka batter Janith Liyanage guided hosts to a thrilling victory against Zimbabwe in the second ODI of the three-match series on Monday at the R. Premadasa Stadium, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Liyanage scored 95 off 127 balls and he was the highest score of the side. The right-hand batter missed his well-deserved maiden ton by just five runs as he was dismissed by seamer, Blessing Muzarabani in the 43rd over. As rain fell in the final half hour of play, the islanders would eventually make it to their target of 209. Liyanage explained that the rain, not the scoreline or the desire to hit a century, forced him to take the risk in the 43rd over. "More than a century, what I wanted was to get the team to victory. At that time, we were about five runs behind the DLS score. So I thought if I hit a six in that over, we'd be able to win even if the match stopped because of rain. All I thought of was winning the match, and I'm glad we were able to get there," Liyanage was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. Liyanage and Maheesh Theek-

shana put on a 56-run seventh-wicket stand to help Sri Lanka recover from a 112-for-6. Theekshana contributed only 18 to this partnership, allowing Liyanage to bat more aggressively than he did previously in the innings. However, he chose his targets wisely. "When Maheesh and I were batting, they [Zimbabwe] were bowling their best bowlers, and they only had a few overs left. So our plan was to get two or three runs an over off their best bowlers, then take the game into the last five or six overs, and score our runs there," the Colombo-born player asserted. Rain had been pouring for most of the chase, causing a 13-over delay in Sri Lanka's innings. According to Liyanage, the wetness helped Zimbabwe's pacers. "We lost two wickets at the start, and with the rain, the ball started to move a bit. So I thought at the time that they've got two fast bowlers, so I'll defend against them and if I bat for a while and get set, I could bat till the end. Their tall quicks got a bit extra out of the conditions with the rain," the 28-year-old concluded. *-ANI*



Steering the nation to a brighter future

Congratulations and warm wishes to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** and the citizens of Oman on the occasion of the 4th Accession Day.

On this momentous occasion, Lulu Group salutes the wisdom and prudent policies initiated by **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** for making Oman an exemplary model of modernisation and prosperity.

Our wishes also go out to the citizens of this beautiful country for the commitment to the cause. On this historic day, we reaffirm our pledge to take an even more active role in steering the nation to a brighter future.



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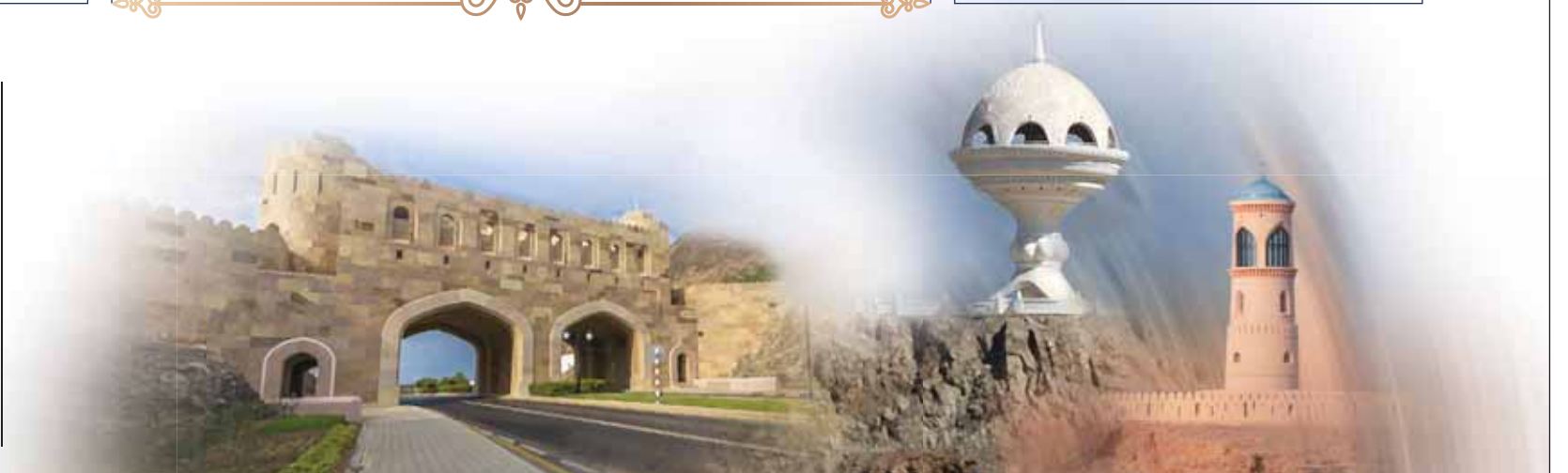


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SAUD BAHWAN Group



OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by March 2024 reaching \$76.86, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 97 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$77.83. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,607.20 points, up by 0.1 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.93 per cent at 446.78 points. Al Maha Ceramics, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Aman REIT, down 3.09 per cent, was the top loser. > **B2**



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Tethys Oil increases its operational activities at Block 56 onshore Oman

The Menna-1 exploration well has been completed with logs indicating hydrocarbons in three separate zones and preparations for further testing are underway

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil has raised the operational activities at Block 56 onshore Oman. The Menna-1 exploration well has been completed with logs indicating hydrocarbons in three separate zones and preparations for further testing are underway, the company said in a press statement. "Also on the earlier Sarha-3 borehole, testing will resume as maintenance work on the borehole has now been completed. Both activities form an important part of the continued data collection and

development of a field development plan for Block 56," Tethys further added. Menna-1 was drilled vertically to a final depth of approximately 1,600 metres and the logs indicate hydrocarbons in the Al Khlata, Karim and Birba formations. Further evaluation and testing will be conducted in the coming weeks, the company said. Menna is located about 30 kilometres southwest of the Al Jumd discovery, with which Menna shares similar geological conditions. The prospect is one of several



identified on the Eastern Flank trend that runs along the boundary of the productive Karim Small Fields on Block 6. In parallel with the drilling of Menna-1, Tethys Oil has completed maintenance work on Sarha-3

in preparation for testing the remaining zones of the borehole. Test work is expected to resume in the coming weeks. Sarha-3 was drilled in 2022 and is located on the Eastern Flank trend about seven kilometres

northeast of Menna. The drill had a final depth of 1,200 metres with the target formations Gharif, Al Khlata and Karim. The logs from the drilling indicated hydrocarbons in all targets. The initial tests included the Karim Formation, from which limited oil flows to the surface were recorded. When tests resume, they will focus on establishing oil flows to the surface from the remaining two zones in Al Khlata and Gharif. The ongoing activities at Block 56 aim to further increase the knowledge of the geological structures and the potential of the prospects and the potentially oil-bearing structures (leads), as well as to determine the resource base of the Eastern Flank trend. In total, the trend currently has more than a dozen prospects and potentially oil-bearing structures. A compilation of drillable prospects and potentially oil-bearing structures is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2024. Tethys Oil will use the collected data in the company's ongoing

process to determine a field development plan for Block 56. The field development plan, once determined, will in turn serve as the basis for the commercialization of the block. "We are very pleased to have safely completed exploration drilling on the Menna prospect and to have encountered oil in all three zones. We are now focusing on the testing of Menna-1 and Sarha-3, and look forward to sharing more news about the block's development in the coming months," said Magnus Nordin, Tethys Oil's CEO. Tethys Oil is an oil exploration and production company with a focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The company's core area is the Sultanate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58. Tethys Oil has net working interest 2P reserves of 23.9 mmbo and net working interest 2C Contingent Resources of 14.6 mmbo and had an average oil production of 9,940 barrels per day during 2022.

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MARKET

MSX index
ends higher

Al Maha Ceramics, up 10per cent, was the top gainer while Aman REIT, down 3.09 per cent, was the top loser, on Tuesday's trading



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,607.20 points, up by 0.1 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.93 per cent at 446.78 points. Al Maha Ceramics, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Aman REIT, down 3.09 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 596 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR1.51 million, with more than 7.4 million shares changing hands. Out of 37 traded securities, 14 advanced, 8 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR148,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR137,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR10,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,490.00 points, down 0.04 per cent. Prices of Al Batinah De-

velopment Company, Global Financial Investments, Bank Nizwa, Oman United Insurance were up by 2.30 per cent, 1.67 per cent, 1.03 per cent, 0.74 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Finance, United Finance, Bank Muscat were down by 2.00 per cent, 1.72 per cent, 0.74 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,460.16 points, up 0.44 per cent. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Cables Industry were up by 10.00 per cent, 2.22 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics were down by 1.15 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.58 per cent before closing at 1,588.14 points. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, Renaissance Services, Phoenix Power, OIFC, Muscat Desalination were up by 2.91 per cent, 1.92 per cent, 1.79 per cent, 1.41 per cent, 1.28 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Abraj Energy were down by 0.90 per cent, 0.33 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,613.82	4,602.72	4,607.20	4,602.72	4.48	0.10
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,501.07	7,485.95	7,490.00	7,492.67	-2.67	-0.04
Industry Index	5,481.93	5,448.41	5,460.16	5,436.25	23.91	0.44
Services Index	1,588.14	1,578.97	1,588.14	1,578.97	9.17	0.58
MSX Shariah Index	448.26	442.55	446.78	442.68	4.10	0.93
MSX TR INDEX	6,081.57	6,066.94	6,072.84	6,066.94	5.90	0.10
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,185.05	8,168.54	8,172.97	8,175.88	-2.91	-0.04
SERVICES TR IDX	1,766.79	1,756.59	1,766.79	1,756.59	10.20	0.58
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	5,856.07	5,820.26	5,832.81	5,807.27	25.54	0.44

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.....	Up.....	Down.....	Equal.....	Sec. Traded
7,402,639.....	1,505,059.....	596.....	23,931,498,801.....	14.....	8.....	15.....	37.....

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 9

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	200	40	1	0.198	0.198	0.198	0.198	0.180	0.018	10.000	0.198	0.180	0.198	0.100	10,890,000
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	4,857	5,148	4	1.060	1.060	1.060	1.060	1.030	0.030	2.913	1.060	1.050	1.100	0.100	73,140,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	20,000	8,456	5	0.418	0.425	0.418	0.425	0.417	0.008	1.918	0.425	0.410	0.425	0.100	100,474,250
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	115,950	7,138	9	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.001	1.667	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.100	12,200,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	14,516	3,948	5	0.271	0.272	0.271	0.272	0.270	0.002	0.741	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.100	27,200,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	7,707	8,201	7	1.061	1.065	1.060	1.065	1.061	0.004	0.377	1.065	1.060	1.065	0.100	798,750,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	20,995	5,984	1	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.000	0.000	0.285	0.285	0.286	0.100	463,394,711
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	828,155	83,665	21	0.101	0.102	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.100	552,256,739
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	65,090	20,495	16	0.315	0.315	0.314	0.315	0.315	0.000	0.000	0.315	0.311	0.315	0.100	205,047,432
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	670	52	1	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.075	0.079	0.100	15,371,941
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	23,520	1,988	6	0.085	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.083	0.085	0.100	14,875,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,502,044	680,034	48	0.272	0.274	0.269	0.269	0.271	-0.002	-0.738	0.269	0.269	0.271	0.100	2,019,220,810
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	66,400	14,608	20	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.222	-0.002	-0.901	0.220	0.217	0.220	0.100	13,464,940
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	108,087	18,722	36	0.175	0.175	0.172	0.172	0.174	-0.002	-1.149	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.100	37,840,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	54,707	3,118	2	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.057	0.059	0.100	20,299,256
Total	15	3,832,898	861,597	182												
Parallel Market																
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INV. HO.	581,032	49,699	39	0.088	0.090	0.084	0.089	0.087	-0.002	-2.299	0.089	0.086	0.089	0.100	2,670,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	70,599	162,533	38	2.300	2.350	2.300	2.300	2.250	0.050	2.222	2.300	2.300	2.300	0.100	206,310,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	1,080	62	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.001	1.786	0.057	0.054	0.057	0.100	83,368,283
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	11,490	908	1	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.078	0.001	1.282	0.079	0.078	0.084	0.100	12,288,482
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	21,146	1,903	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.001	1.124	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	42,406,775
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	112,591	11,014	13	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.096	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,972,324	291,838	251	0.147	0.149	0.147	0.148	0.147	0.001	0.680	0.148	0.148	0.149	0.100	640,932,340
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	101	479	1	4.740	4.740	4.740	4.740	4.740	0.000	0.000	4.740	0.000	4.740	1.000	14,220,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	4,500	546	3	0.122	0.122	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.000	0.000	0.121	0.122	0.124	0.100	24,200,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	35,100	2,633	5	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.072	0.076	0.100	15,450,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	75,000	3,790	5	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.100	4,250,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	50,200	8,032	4	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.100	375,945,195
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	190	108	2	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.000	0.000	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.100	78,850,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	11,910	1,572	1	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.000	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.100	15,909,885
OM0000004923	AL SUWADI POWER	10,090	210	1	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.021	0.020	0.000	0.100	15,002,533
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	30,000	3,540	1	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.119	0.128	0.100	9,911,596
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	55,730	8,911	3	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.000	0.000	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.100	63,004,840
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	169,024	51,007	15	0.302	0.302	0.300	0.300	0.301	-0.001	-0.332	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.100	231,060,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	216,689	10,618	13	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.050	-0.001	-2.000	0.049	0.048	0.049	0.100	15,050,170
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	94	1	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.097	-0.003	-3.093	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.100	18,800,000
Total	20	3,429,646	607,455	399												

VENTURE CAPITAL

Saudi Arabia tops
in VC funding

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia achieved first rank across Mena for the first time in terms of the amount of Venture Capital (VC) funding in 2023, accounting for 52 per cent of the total capital deployed, up from 31 per cent in 2022, according to MAGNiTT, the Mena-based venture data platform. — WAM

MEETING

Minister of Energy and German
official review bilateral relations



MUSCAT: Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals met with D. Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and means of boosting cooperation, especially in the fields of energy, hydrogen and combating climate change.

They discussed areas of cooperation in the clean energy field. This discussion took place within the context of Oman's investment opportunities, especially in producing hydrogen. Oman has the main components to produce hydrogen, such as solar energy, wind energy and vast spaces.

The meeting was attended by Muhsin Hamad Al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Humaid Al Maani, Head of the International Affairs Department and CEOs of OQ, Hydrom Oman and Oman LNG. — ONA



We are honored to extend our warmest congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the occasion of Accession Day.

Praying for his good health, happiness, long life, and success.



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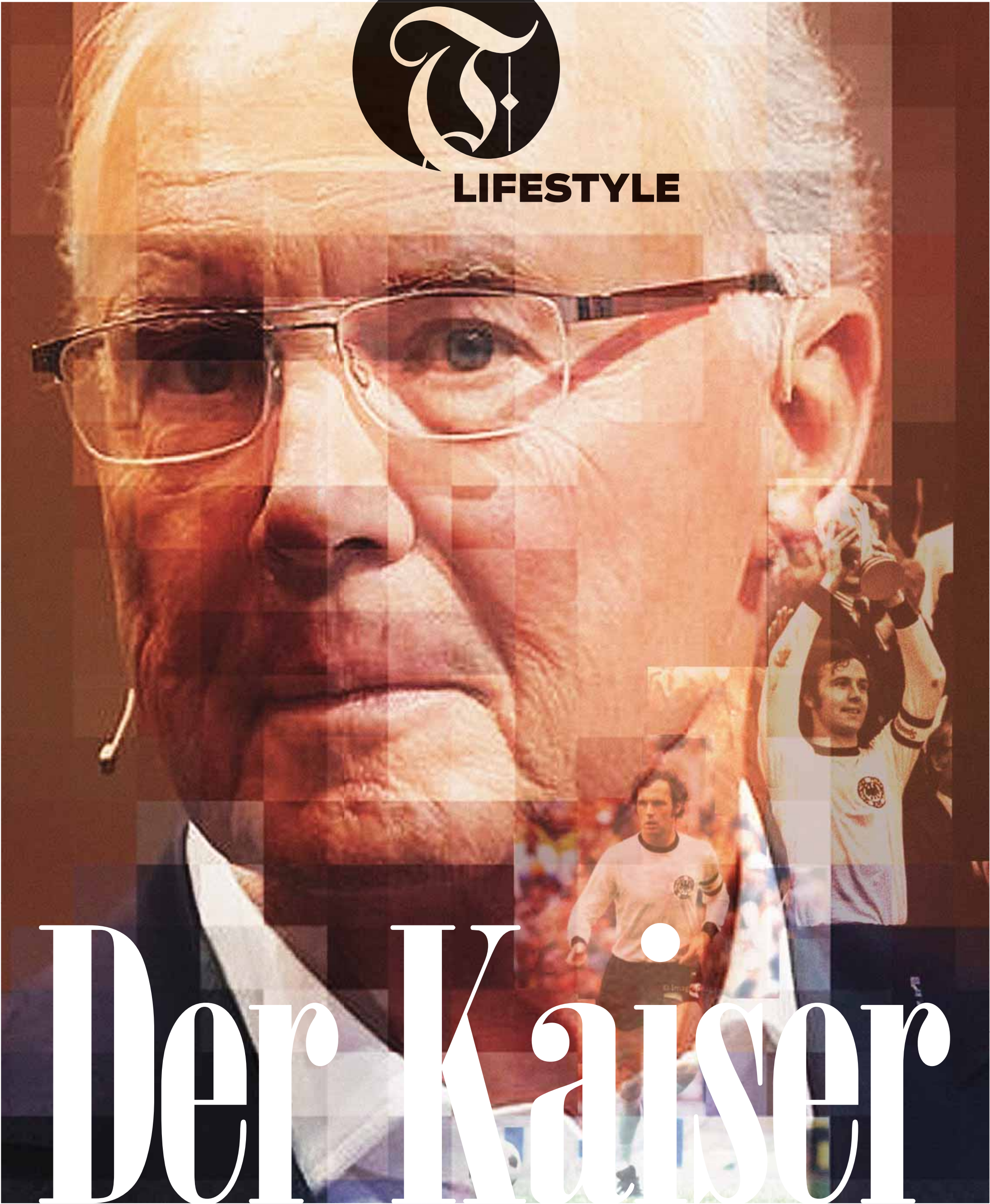
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LIFESTYLE



Der Kaiser

Franz Beckenbauer called a ‘true legend’ in global tributes

Following the death of German football legend Franz Beckenbauer at the age of 78, tributes have been pouring in. He left a unique impression on football as player, captain, and coach.

Franz Beckenbauer, a German football legend, died on Sunday at the age of 78, his family said Monday.

“It is with deep sadness that we inform you that my husband and our father Franz Beckenbauer passed away peacefully yesterday, Sunday, surrounded by his family,” his family announced.

“We ask that you mourn in silence and refrain from asking any questions.”

Nicknamed “Der Kaiser” (The Emperor), Beckenbauer is widely regarded as one of the finest footballers of all time.

‘Beckenbauer was synonymous with winning’

Tributes flow for ‘Der Kaiser’

FIFA President Gianni Infantino hailed Franz Beckenbauer as a “true legend.”

“Der Kaiser was a great person, a friend of football and a true legend. We will never forget you dear Franz, thanks for everything.

German Football Federation (DFB) president Bernd Neuendorf said “Franz Beckenbauer’s death is a real turning point.”

“We look back on his life’s work with respect and great gratitude. In him, we have lost a unique footballer and an endearing

person,” Neuendorf added.

“‘Der Kaiser’ was one of the best players our sport has ever seen. With his lightness, elegance and overview, he set standards on the pitch. His meticulousness and charisma as team manager and his energy and drive as head of the World Cup organizing committee are unforgettable.”

“Franz Beckenbauer leaves behind a great legacy for the DFB and football as a whole.”

DFB vice president Hans-Joachim Watzke added that Beckenbauer “was definitely the biggest German footballer of all time, and above all one of the greatest men who I have known.”

“The Bundesliga family is devastated to learn of the death of Franz Beckenbauer. A true icon, then, now, and always. RIP, Der Kaiser,” Germany’s Bundesliga said in a statement.

Lothar Matthäus, who captained Germany to win the World Cup in 1990, hailed the late Beckenbauer as “one of the greatest as a player and a coach, but off the pitch as well.”

“His death is a loss for football and for the whole of Germany,” Matthäus told German tabloid Bild.

Meanwhile, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) called Beckenbauer “one

of European football’s greatest sons.”

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also called Beckenbauer one of the nation’s greatest footballers of all time.

“We will miss him. My thoughts are with his family and friends,” Scholz said on social media.

The English Premier League said Beckenbauer will be forever remembered, “‘Der Kaiser’ was as elegant as he was dominant.”

A storied career on and off the field

Beckenbauer was one of just three people ever to win the World Cup both as a player and a coach, alongside the late Mario Zagallo of Brazil and France’s Didier Deschamps.

Apart from his success with the national team, he earned numerous honors during his tenure at Bayern Munich, including three consecutive European Cups and the Intercontinental Cup.

After coaching, Beckenbauer moved into football administration.

However, he made headlines in 2016 when was fined by FIFA’s ethics committee for failing to co-operate with an inquiry into corruption over the awarding of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups in Russia and Qatar, respectively. **—w**

SPORTS

ICC rates Cape Town pitch as ‘unsatisfactory’

The decision was made under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday gave an “unsatisfactory” rating to the Newlands pitch in Cape Town following a low-scoring second Test between India and South Africa.

The decision was made under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process, following the conclusion of the shortest-ever completed Test match in Cape Town’s Newlands, with 642 balls bowled in total.

Mohammed Siraj’s 6/15 bundled out South Africa for 55 in their first innings, while India managed a 98-run lead on the back of their 153, with contributions coming in from Rohit Sharma (39), Shubman Gill (36) and Virat Kohli (46). A brilliant counter-attacking hundred from Aiden Markram proved inadequate in the third innings as India were set a target of 79, thanks to a six-wicket haul by Jasprit Bumrah. India won by seven wickets on day two.

ICC Match Referee Chris Broad submitted his report, expressing the



concerns of the match officials. An assessment followed, after which the Newlands pitch in Cape Town was deemed “unsatisfactory”.

“The pitch in Newlands was very difficult to bat on,” Broad said. “The ball bounced quickly and sometimes alarmingly throughout the match, making it difficult to play shots. Several batters were hit on the gloves and many wickets also fell due to the awkward bounce,” he added.

Demerit points

In the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process, if a pitch or outfield is deemed as substandard, that venue is allocated certain demerit points.

One demerit point is awarded to venues whose pitches and out-

fields are rated by the match referee as unsatisfactory.

On reaching six demerit points, the venue is suspended from hosting any international cricket for 12 months. The penalty is 24 months in case of 12 demerit points.

These points remain active for a rolling five-year period. Cricket South Africa has 14 days to appeal against the sanction. **-ANI**

QUICK REPLACEMENT

‘He’ll be the No. 1 Test opener’: Michael Clarke backs Smith

SYDNEY: Former Australian captain Michael Clarke believes Steve Smith can become the best Test opener if he is given the opportunity to replace David Warner.

Warner’s final dance in red-ball cricket was against Pakistan at his home ground, the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), last week.

With the new World Test Championship cycle already underway, the defending champions will need to find a quick replacement for their former star opening batter.

Clarke backed Smith to do the job and told ESPN’s Around The Wicket show, “If he [Smith] wants to open the batting and they give him the chance, he’ll be the No. 1 Test opener within 12 months. He’s that good a player. If you can bat at three, you can bat anywhere in the order. Technically, he’s good enough; he lets the ball go well, he’s got a great eye, got beautiful hands.”

“Yes, he might nick the occasional one or might get LBW, but tell me someone who doesn’t. So if he opens the batting, he’ll be the best opener within 12 months. [And] don’t be surprised if he breaks Brian Lara’s 400 record because he’s that good, and now he’s got the whole day,” Clarke added.

Clarke also went on to consider skipper Pat Cummins’s remarks about the batting order



being successful in their current positions. With that in mind, he backed young all-rounder Cameron Green to do the job in the opening slot.

“It sounds from what Patty says, he wants the least amount of disruptions as possible. Marnus has been brilliant; Smith’s four; Travis Head five; Mitch Marsh six. So that tells me that Cameron Green at this stage is probably the likeliest to come in and opening the batting,” Clarke said.

While Clarke believes Smith is one of the possible candidates to do the job for the country, former Australia batter Callum Ferguson also believes that Smith could take up the challenge despite never opening in Test or first-class cricket. **-ANI**

PREMIER DIVISION LEAGUE

Majees CC beat Zawawi Powertech

MUSCAT: Majees CC beat Zawawi Powertech in the Premier Division League 2023-24 at the Oman Cricket Academy Turf 1.

Zawawi Powertech posted a paltry 132, bundled down courtesy of Zeeshan Maqsood’s 3 wickets and 2 wickets each for Ubaidullah and Jan Shafiq. Kalaiaarasan was the top scorer for Powertech scoring 44. In response, Majees CC chased down the target in 29.5 overs with Dhanuska powering a half-century and Skipper Aamir Kaleem contributing with 36 runs to claim victory by 3 wickets.

Brief Scores : Zawawi Powertech 132/10 in 38.4 overs (Kalaiaarasan 44(63); Zeeshan Maqsood 3/10) lost to Majees 133/7 in 29.5 overs (Dhanushka 51 (55), Aamir Kaleem 36(40); Yashas GL4/45) by 3 wickets.

ABL Task beat PDO in the B Division League 2023-24 powered by Al Ansari Group of Companies at Municipality Grounds Amerat.



PDO managed to gaze to 177 courtesy of Abdul Naveed scoring 32. Pranav Dave of ABL Task scalped 4 wickets while Charles Jacob and Nobish Gopi picked 2 wickets each.

In response, ABL Task chased the target with just 1 wicket remaining, Vijayanand scored 60



while Nidhin Mohan scored quickfire 28 to ensure the victory for ABL Task.

Brief Scores: PDO 177/10 in 28.5 overs (Abdul Naveed 32(31); Pranav Dave 4/29) lost to ABL Task 178/9 in 26.5 overs (Vijayanand 60(50); Umair Hassan 4/49) by 1 wicket.

FORMER MANCHESTER UNITED STAR

Roy Keane lambasts young forward Rasmus Hojlund for his performance

WIGAN: The former Manchester United star Roy Keane lambasted young forward Rasmus Hojlund for his performance in the Red Devils 2-0 victory against Wigan in the FA Cup.

Manchester United clinched a comfortable 2-0 victory against Wigan but Hojlund once again failed to feature on the scoresheet.

Portuguese right-back Diogo Dalot and midfielder Bruno Fernandes spearheaded Manchester United in the next round of the tournament.

Hojlund had a good number of chances that were begging to be put away in the first half, but Hojlund’s lack of sharpness in the front cost the visitors an early lead.

The most obvious chance that the young Danish striker missed



was a header from a point-blank spot. He went on to miss another golden opportunity when he failed to find the back of the net from just five yards away from the goal.

Keane didn’t hold back while assessing the performance of the 20-year-old and said as quoted

from Goal.com, “You’re too kind, you’re too kind, I’d be fuming with him. Tonight, they [Man United] brought their habits from the Premier League in terms of missing chances, and not being clinical. I want to see that side of United tonight. With the striker, he’s missing his chances, so we can say unlucky, oh dear. Create opportunities, put them in the back of the net, stop messing about.”

Keane’s comments came after former football stars Wright and Roberto Martinez turned to be sympathetic towards the striker.

“I heard Ally [McCoist] say you feel for him, and as a striker you do. But there are some of the chances that we’ve seen in this game you have to take them,” Wright said at half-time.

-ANI

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ing focus on safety, the vehicle ensures complete peace of mind with an advanced safety technology package that includes Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS) / Traction Control (TRC) / Brake Assist System (BAS) / Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD) / Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) among many others. In Oman, every Lexus vehicle comes with special benefits and privileges such as Manufacturer's Warranty of 4 years/100,000 Kms (whichever is earlier) and 1st year 2 free pickup and drop for service and 24 hours on road assistance from e-Fetch.

Maisarah's minor savings account empowers young individuals

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rah's commitment to financial literacy, demonstrating that the account isn't just about deposits and withdrawals. "We are excited to launch the Minor Savings Account and provide young individuals with the tools and resources they need to develop a strong financial foundation," said Amor Said Mohamed Al Amri, DGM and Head of Maisarah Retail Banking. "We believe that financial literacy is essential for success in life and we are committed to empowering young people to make informed financial decisions as well as achieve their goals." The Minor Savings Account is a Sharia-compliant solution (based on Mudarabah principles) specially crafted to cater to the unique needs of minors aged between 13 and 18 years, providing them with a safe and accessible platform to manage their funds while learning the essential principles of money management. With no minimum balance requirement, competitive profit payments based on monthly average balance, flexibility in chang-

ing withdrawal limits as per the request of the father/ guardian as well as a customized debit card, young account holders enjoy the benefits of an innovative product whilst being assured of monthly financial assistance through social protection program. In addition, parents or guardians can actively participate in their child's financial journey by monitoring account activities and transactions. This feature promotes responsible money management and transparent communication. Maisarah will also issue a supplementary debit card with the minor's name with no restriction on the father/ guardian to deposit or withdraw money at any time and free standing instructions. The Minor Savings Account can be opened by the minor's father/ guardian with a copy of a passport or national ID, birth certificate, and proof of address (electricity/water bill). The father/legal guardian will also have to provide ID (if Omani). Expatriates will have to provide copies of the resident card and the passport visa page.

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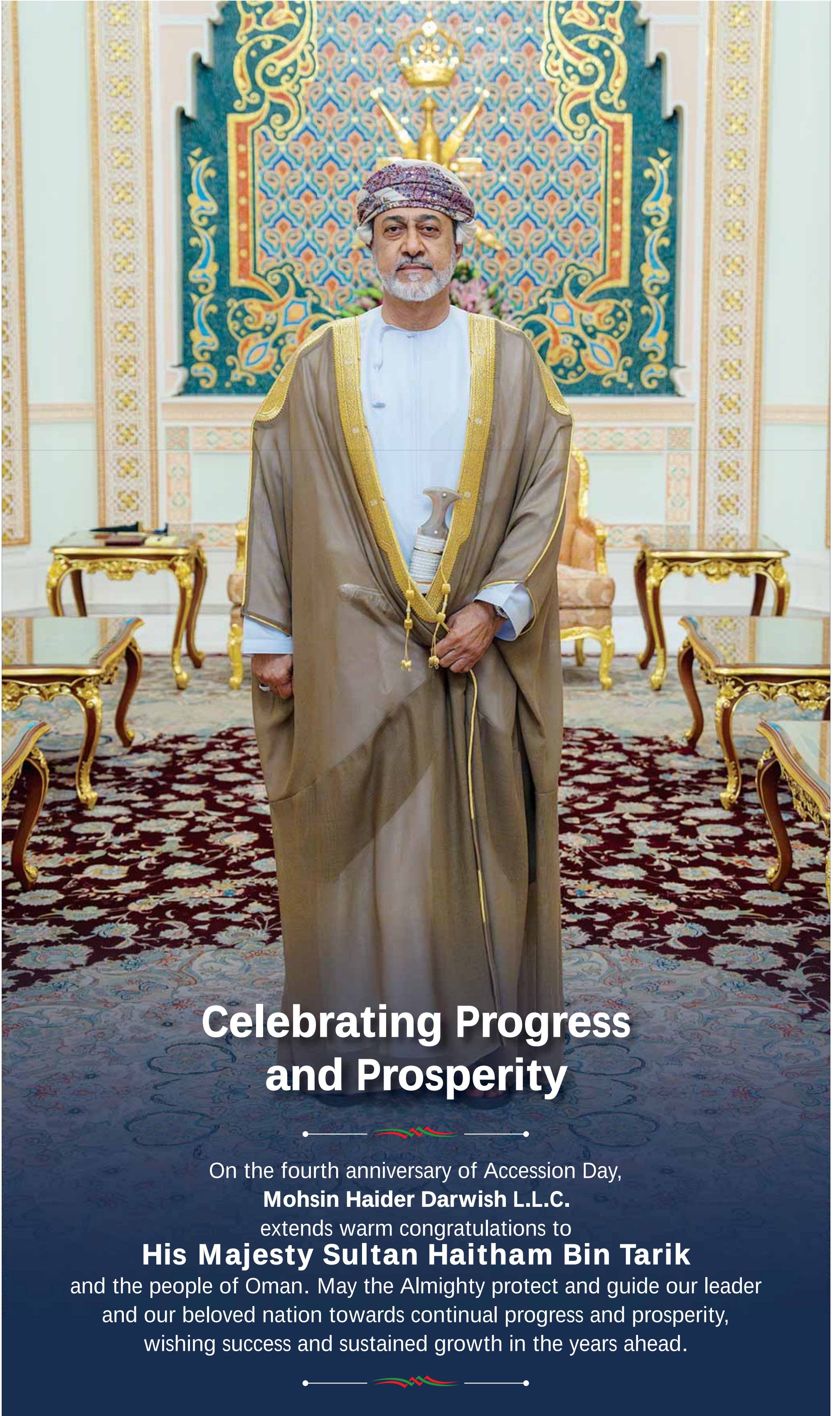
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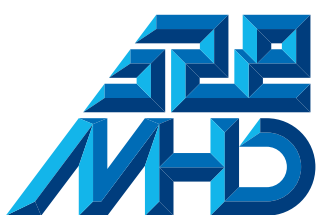


Celebrating Progress and Prosperity

On the fourth anniversary of Accession Day,
Mohsin Haider Darwish L.L.C.
extends warm congratulations to

His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik

and the people of Oman. May the Almighty protect and guide our leader
and our beloved nation towards continual progress and prosperity,
wishing success and sustained growth in the years ahead.



محسن حيدر درويش ش.م.م.
MOHSIN HAIDER DARWISH L.L.C.





Our sincere congratulations and warm wishes are extended to

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq

– May the Almighty protect and preserve him –
and the Omani people on the anniversary
of His Majesty's accession to the throne.

We express our unwavering commitment to steadfastly
follow under his wise and visionary leadership, working
towards a brighter future for Oman and its people.

Greetings

Warm felicitations to His Majesty
SULTAN HAITHAM BINTARIK
and the people of Oman on the
occasion of the 4th Anniversary
of His Majesty's accession
to power on 11th January





His Majesty’s stress on economic diversification, welfare of youth

Ever since His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik ascended to the throne on January 11, 2020, development of the Sultanate of Oman, its people and particularly youth have been his top priorities. His Majesty the Sultan has also embarked on a journey to diversify the oil-based economy and improve the living conditions of socially weaker sections of society.

In one of the recent cabinet meetings, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to develop infrastructure for camel races, which is one of the major sporting events to which a large number of citizens are linked. The directives include furnishing main racecourses in the governorates of Oman in coordination with offices of governors and Oman Camel Racing Federation to activate tourism activities.

His Majesty has been stressing on making Oman a logistics hub due to its strategic location between the western and eastern part of the world. The government of Oman has made substantive efforts to woo investors and the hard work is bearing fruits as the special economic and free zones in Duqm, Salalah and Sohar have attracted billions of investments.

His Majesty has always laid stress on the development of Omani youth and giving gainful employment to them so that they can become partners in the country's progress. Several schemes have been launched to sharpen their skills so that they become on par with their peers around the world. Right from the budding stage to the university level, stress is on research and innovation. In today's changing world, if one cannot embrace cutting-edge technologies, there are chances that the country is going to lag in the development index.

In affirmation of his Royal attention to the care and welfare of



youth— including proper grooming of youth, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives in the recent cabinet meeting to carry out a project for establishing an integrated Sports City capable of hosting regional and international tournaments and competitions.

As part of His Majesty's constant care and follow-up of the educational system—its development and upgrading to meet the goals of Oman Vision 2040, and

to efficiently groom generations of citizens and prepare them to possess skills in various fields, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to the Council of Ministers to go ahead with the application of the system of “Vocational and Technical Education”, which aims to enable students of Grades 11 and 12 to choose educational tracks within a range of professional and technical fields, including engineering and industrial specialisations.

The Council of Ministers approved the plan following the study presented by the Ministry of Education, which included new educational tracks and curricula designed to keep pace with the requirements of sustainable development and future skills.

The new restructured “Vocational and Technical Education System” would begin to be implemented from the next academic year.

His Majesty the Sultan also

commended the status of teachers and their active role in the up-bringing of generations of Omani citizens, instilling in them sublime values and virtues. To honour their contributions, the Council of Ministers approved the allocation of “Omani Teacher's Day”—which falls on 24 February every year—as an official holiday for all teachers and occupants of relevant supporting jobs in public and private schools. The power of

Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Cloud Computing, Internet of Things and data science have taken the world by storm and changed the course of world and Oman is proud that its youth are not far behind the rest of the world. Many young graduates are making their mark in the computer field. Cyber threat has become one of the biggest security risks in today's world and many Omani computer specialists are keeping the country safe from malwares round the clock even though the country faces millions of cyber attacks in a year.

Keeping in mind the power of technology, His Majesty has prioritised spending on the education of youth by giving grants and foreign scholarships. These steps are showing good results and many Omanis are now managing their own companies and are in top managerial sections in both private and public sectors.

Both His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Her Highness the Honourable Lady As-sayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed Al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, have appreciated the role of Omani women in the country's progress. Thanking Omani women for their great contribution to the nation's development, they are keen to see more women reach top strata in scholarly and practical domains. They always applaud Omani women's accomplishments and their contributions to society in different arenas. As Oman marks the fourth anniversary of HM's accession to power on 11 January, may this country which is an oasis of peace, continues to maintain its higher growth trajectory and extend its helping hand in adjudicating disputes in the world marred by mistrust and dispute.



**Congratulations to
HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK
May Allah protect him and the people of Oman on the
4th Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession**



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Dr. Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany visited the German University of Technology (GUTech). >A4



OMAN TO MARK ANNIVERSARY OF HM'S ACCESSION TO POWER ON 11 JANUARY

The Sultanate of Oman will celebrate the annual anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's accession to power in the country on 11 January (Accession Day). Since His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik assumed the leadership of the country, the Omani economy has witnessed remarkable growth at various levels, with fiscal surpluses made in State Budget. >A8



We extend our sincere congratulations and best wishes to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** may God protect him, on the anniversary of his accession to the leadership and reins of power of the country. May the God Almighty grant His Majesty robust health and well-being, and may Oman and its people experience continued prosperity and growth under his wise leadership

