



HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREETSPRESIDENT OF TAJIKISTAN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Turik has sent a cable of greetings to President Emomali Rahmon of the Republic of Tajikistan on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Emomali Rahmon. His Majesty also wished the people of Tajikistan further progress and prosperity.— **ONA**



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ANNOUNCEMENT

3-day weekend break in Oman on Prophet's birth anniversary



Times News Service

MUSCAT: With September 15 confirmed as a holiday, a three-day weekend is in the offing next week.

"On the occasion of Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) birth anniversary, it has been decided that Sunday, 15 September (11 Rabi' Al Awwal 1446 AH) will be an official holiday for employees

of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other legal entities and establishments of the private sector," Oman News Agency (ONA) said on Sunday.

The Ministry of Labour explained that the employers may engage employees on the afore-said holiday, if deemed necessary due to the nature of their work, provided they compensate the workers for the holiday.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman Embassy takes part in festival

1 The Sultanate of Oman's Embassy in the Netherlands took part in the annual Embassy Festival, held in The Hague. During the event, Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Salim Al Harthy, envoy of Oman, received at the Omani corner, Mayor of The Hague, some ambassadors of the participating countries. **>A3**

WORLD

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi arrives in India

2 Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived in New Delhi on Sunday on his first official visit to India. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, received the Crown Prince upon his arrival. **>A6**

SPORTS

Sabalenka wins US Open women's title

3 The No. 2 seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus defeated No. 6 Jessica Pegula from the US 7-5, 7-5 in the US Open women's singles final, clinching her third Grand Slam title on Saturday. Sabalenka extended her winning streak to 12 matches and it was her first US Open singles crown. **>A8**

NEW REGULATIONS SET FOR SEAMLESS AIR TRAVEL IN OMAN

The CAA has urged airlines to observe transparency in advertising ticket fares, flights, and services

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With the new Passenger Rights Protection Regulation (PRPR) announced by Oman's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), flyers can look forward to a seamless travel experience.

In the newly issued regulations, the CAA has urged airlines to observe transparency in advertising ticket fares, flights, and services provided by them.

It also advised them not to add any undisclosed fees to the air ticket or services.

According to the new regulations, air carriers are also obligated to limit overbooking. Accord-



ing to the rules, the air carriers may prevent some passengers from travelling if the flight is overbooked.

The Passenger Rights Protection Regulation also said that in the event of a flight cancellation or delay, the air carrier is obligated to provide care and support to the passengers.

According to rules, the CAA said refreshments and beverages should be served by the airline at the second hour if the flight is delayed. "An appropriate meal should be provided if the delay exceeds three hours

beyond the originally scheduled time of departure. Further, hotel accommodation and transportation to and from the airport should be provided if the delay exceeds six hours beyond the original scheduled time of departure," the CAA said.

When a domestic flight is cancelled while the passenger is at the airport, the air carrier shall deal with the passenger, the CAA said. Elaborating further it said that if the alternative flight is in a higher class, the air carrier shall bear the difference of fare if any. **>A5**



AL MOUJ MUSCAT SELL-OUT SUCCESS OF ITS ICONIC BUSINESS PARK

A significant milestone with the sell-out of both phases of the eight buildings of Al Mouj Business Park.

Al Mouj Muscat has set a new benchmark for corporate offices with the launch and sell out of its stunning Business Park. Positioned at the intersection of nature and quality design, this premier business destination boasts 39,000 sqm of flexible workspace spread across eight Grade A office buildings. With its award winning design and infrastructure, the Business Park redefines the standard for premium office environments in Oman.

Nestled in a breathtaking oceanfront and golf course setting, Al Mouj's Business Park comprises two interconnected precincts—Business Park South and Business Park North. Together, they offer an unparalleled work environment where your business can thrive in an environment like no other. Whether you are a multinational corporation or an emerging enterprise, these spaces provide the flexibility to grow and evolve while enjoying the benefits of a prestigious location.

2 State-of-the-art business park destinations

8 World-class mid-rise premium office buildings

A Grade-A office design

Al Mouj Muscat's commitment to excellence extends beyond just office space. It's about creating a destination where innovation flourishes, ideas are exchanged, and businesses are empowered to reach new heights. The success of the Business Park, now fully sold out, is a testament to the vision and quality that Al Mouj Muscat delivers.



With both business park phases sold out, Al Mouj Muscat continues to push the boundaries of what a business destination can offer. Stay tuned for more exciting developments from Oman's premier lifestyle and business community.

MEETING

His Majesty receives written message from Emir of Qatar

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.

The message was handed over to Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court when he received in his office here on Sunday Sheikh Mubarak bin Fahad Al Thani, Ambassador of Qatar to Oman.

During the meeting, the Ambassador conveyed greetings and best wishes of Sheikh Tamim to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people.



In his turn, Sayyid Khalid asked the Ambassador to convey greetings and best wishes of His Majes-

ty the Sultan to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the people of Qatar. -ONA

CONVEYS GREETINGS

His Majesty receives written message from Bahrain King

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The message was handed over to Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court when he received in his office here on Sunday Dr. Juma bin Ahmed Al Ka'abi, Ambassador of Bahrain to Oman.

During the meeting, the Ambassador conveyed greetings and best wishes of King Hamad to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people.



In his turn, Sayyid Khalid asked the Ambassador to convey greetings and best wishes of

His Majesty the Sultan to King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa and the people of Bahrain. -ONA

Oman joins world in effort to reduce air pollutants

The event highlights the importance of maintaining air quality and the health of human beings on the planet



MUSCAT: Represented by the Environment Authority, the Sultanate of Oman is participating in celebrations marking the International Day of Clean Air themed "For Blue Skies", which falls on 7 September every year.

The event highlights the importance of maintaining air quality and the health of human beings on the planet. Air pollution causes premature deaths at an estimated annual rate of 7 million deaths.

The celebration also underlines

the efforts of the countries of the world to build a global community that seeks to reduce air pollutants and encourage cooperation at national, regional and international levels. Oman is taking measures to improve air quality by cutting down polluting emissions, developing environment-friendly infrastructure and monitoring and con-

trolling air quality using various technologies.

Oman is also raising public awareness and developing education and international and regional cooperation in a manner that ensures its commitment to sustainable development and plans for balancing social, economic and environmental aspects.

It is worth noting that Oman has issued laws and regulations aimed at combating air pollution.

The steps included the issuance of environmental regulations to control air pollutants emitted from fixed sources and setting mandates for technical obligations governing the establishment of projects. -ONA

MEETINGS

Oman, UK discuss matters of mutual interest in meeting



MUSCAT: Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Za'abi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison Maria Eagle, Minister of State for Defence Procurement and Industry of the United Kingdom (UK).

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views and discussed several matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by senior officers of the Ministry of Defence and the Sultan's Armed Forces, as well as the Military Attaché of the British embassy in Muscat.

SAF Chief of Staff receives British official

Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison today Maria Eagle, Minister of State for Defence Procurement and Industry of the United Kingdom (UK).

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views and reviewed several topics of common concern.

The meeting was attended by several senior officers at the COSAF. -ONA

OMAN BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION

OBA elects new Board of Directors



MUSCAT: The general assembly of Oman Basketball Association (OBA) on Sunday elected Eng. Khalfan Saleh Al Naabi as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Basketball Association 2024-2028 after he earned 6 votes out of the total number of candidates who contested the position of OBA Chairman. The election was held with the participation of 9

clubs comprising general assembly members eligible to attend the meeting and vote.

Abu Bakr Ahmed Al Jahwari won the position of Deputy Chairman, while the following were elected as members of the OBA board: Said Ahmed Al Habsi, Hiba Said Al Na'abi, Ahmed Mubarak Al Rotani, Alaa Aabid Al Hadhrami and and Salim Suhail Al Yaf'ee. -ONA

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FORUM

Forum reviews ways of expanding job opportunities, upgrading skills

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Labour on Sunday organised a professional qualifications forum in Muscat.

The forum reviewed ways of expanding employment opportunities and upgrading methods.

During the forum, working papers presented by academics, officials and decision-makers highlighted pillars of sustainable education and means of guiding society towards embracing knowledge and competitive national capabilities.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development.

Professional qualifications enhance job opportunities and reflect the keenness of the labour market on accommodating specific skills and knowledge that enable individuals to adapt to the challenges of modern times.

Global standards

These qualifications constitute standards of their holders and a means for accessing global standards, skills, knowledge, specialisations that qualify them to professionally undertake any jobs or missions. -ONA



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Tejarah Talks to discuss challenges in agrifood sector

Agrifood systems are under pressure as the world grapples with feeding a growing population and adapting to climate-related challenges

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The next Tejarah Talks session, titled ‘Agrifood: Cultivating Opportunity’, will be held at 7:30pm, on 24 September 2024 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event will focus on the challenges and opportunities within the agrifood sector as it faces rising global demand, climate change and the need for sustainable practices.

Agrifood systems are under pressure as the world grapples with feeding a growing population and adapting to climate-related challenges.

The FAO estimates over 800 million people globally are undernourished, while food production systems are increasingly vulnerable to environmental changes.

The latest OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook projects that global demand for food will increase significantly in the next decade, adding urgency to the need for innovation and adaptation in agriculture.

The 24 September Tejarah Talks will cover how digital technology is being used to improve agricultural processes and boost productivity, helping enhance Oman’s long-term food security.

Experts will also discuss the resilience of food supply chains, strategies for climate-smart farming, shifting consumer preferences and the role of public-



Maymuna Al Adawi, Director, PPP, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Tejarah Talks organiser.

private partnerships in advancing sustainable agrifood initiatives.

Maymuna Al Adawi, Director, PPP, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Tejarah Talks organiser, said: “Oman’s agrifood sector is key to our economic and environmental future. We need to explore new strategies and partnerships to build resilient food systems that can meet domestic as well as global needs.”

She added: “Attracting young Omanis into the agrifood sector is essential for the country’s fu-

ture food security and economic growth. Currently, the average age of farmers globally is over 60 and the sector faces challenges in attracting younger generations. There is an urgent need to engage youth with modern, tech-driven opportunities in agriculture that offer rewarding careers and drive innovation – a theme our panel will be tackling.”

The evening’s discussions will be moderated by Jamal Al Asmi, Executive Producer, Reality CG.

Joining Al Asmi will be Dr. Masoud Al Azri, Director General, Marketing, Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources; Sayyid Fahar Al Said, Co-founder and CTO, YUZU Agriculture; and Moza Al Kharusi, Head, Research Facilities, Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

They will share insights into the integration of technology in agriculture and the potential for the sector to drive sustainable economic growth.

Supported by Jindal Shadeed, Nortal, Apex Transgulf Manufacturing, MHD and Oman FM, September’s Tejarah Talks aims to bring together industry leaders, policymakers and innovators to discuss the future of Oman’s agrifood sector and explore opportunities for collaboration.

For more information or to register, visit: <https://shorturl.at/MPnPv>

HM greets leader of Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Kim Jong-un, First Secretary of the Workers’ Party, First Chairman of the National Defence Commission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,

Supreme Commander of the Korean People’s Army on his country’s Independence anniversary.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Kim and his country’s people. -ONA



COMMENTARY

Omani graduates chasing fewer jobs



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

The employment market in Oman is squeezing out graduates where tens of thousands of applicants chase very few jobs.

With more students graduating, the very tight job market is missing out a lot of unemployed graduates where they see very few openings. It is not untypical for a company looking to employ a dozen graduates to get up to 5,000 applicants.

Statistics show that there are over 50,000 job seekers for every advertised job. Taking in consideration that the population of Omani nationals in the country is less than three millions, the ratio of job seekers and vacancies is very high.

As we stand now, there are no signs that the employment will pick up for the rest of the year. Next year might be a rollover of this year. We need to work much harder to support the

rate of employment for 2025 to be different. Job scarcity also effect the private sector. Companies are worried about the sustainability of business recovery. Less people employed simply means less spending. The private sector needs graduates to get jobs to stay afloat. As more shops pull down their shutters, the economy cannot support the private sector.

There are side effects of having thousands of young people doing nothing at home. Being idle attracts a lot of mischief. They get into depression, to start with. A fair number of them, never recover from it. To forget their miseries, some even get into drugs. The worse scenario is that long time employment leads to crimes when young people look for money. Typically, many graduates get rejected so many times that they lose all hopes of ever getting employed. This may well lead to all kinds of psychological problems and instability in young their lives.

So what is exactly causing high unemployment in the country? Is it low profitability of the hiring companies? Or the economy is very sluggish to support companies and organisations? A report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) blames regulations if a country persistently has low employment rate. Oman, like the rest of the Gulf countries, has been

heavily depending on foreign labour for a number of years. So it is easy to blame regulations for not reserving enough jobs for the nationals. However, in the last five years, Oman has consistently changed employment regulations by reserving some jobs specializations to Omani nationals. But so far it has not been working like it was expected. There are many reasons for that, including a cover up tactics by employers to get around the system by manipulation of job positions. But the biggest factor behind the inability of any country not to raise enough jobs for their nationals is that there is no expansion of the economy. This happens when business owners do not expand and sit on their laurels. Or just simply, they are too cautious to venture further afield. This leads to the stagnation of the economy where any country cannot move forward economically. However, to achieve the equilibrium between business expansion and employment, a third factor is important. It is to seriously open up for foreign investments. It is very obvious that local companies can no longer generate enough jobs for the nationals. So, Oman needs to overcome all obstacles that prevent more foreign companies to set up businesses to give the country a chance to generate more jobs.

THE HAGUE

Oman embassy in Netherlands takes part in annual festival



THE HAGUE: The Sultanate of Oman’s Embassy in the Netherlands took part in the annual embassy festival, held in The Hague. During the event, Sheikh Dr.



Abdullah Salim Al Harthy, Ambassador of Oman to the Netherlands received in the Omani corner, Mayor of The Hague, some ambassadors of the par-

ticipating countries and senior visitors.

During their visit, they got acquainted with the tourism and heritage landmarks in Oman. -ONA



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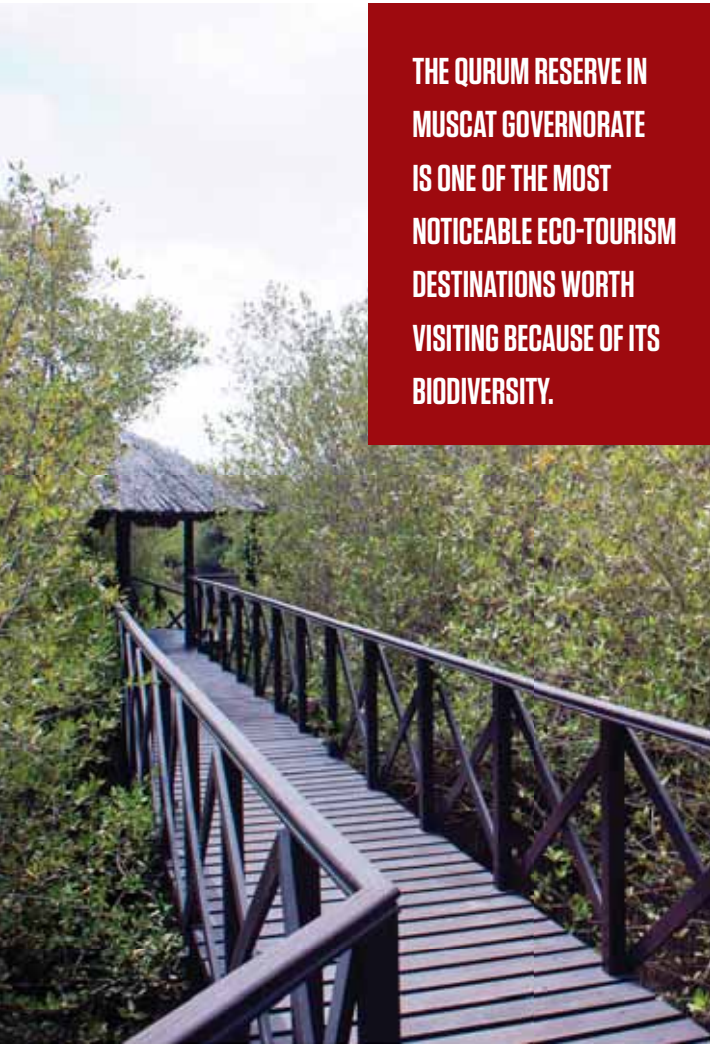
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QURUM NATURAL RESERVE

SHOWS OMAN’S COMMITMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION



THE QURUM RESERVE IN MUSCAT GOVERNORATE IS ONE OF THE MOST NOTICEABLE ECO-TOURISM DESTINATIONS WORTH VISITING BECAUSE OF ITS BIODIVERSITY.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Qurum Natural Reserve is the most important and oldest reserves in the Sultanate of Oman, as Royal Decree No. (38/75) declared it in 1975. It covers an area of 1,045,775 square meters. This reserve proves the Oman's deep commitment to protect the environment and natural resources.

The reserve contributes significantly to keep biodiversity, as it provides a haven for many rare organisms and plants. It is located in Bawshar in Muscat Governorate. It forms part of the Wadi Adai area, and is considered one of the few areas that hold *Avicennia* (mangrove trees).

The Qurum Natural Reserve gained global recognition when it was classified as the first reserve of global importance in Oman in 2013. It was after the Sultanate joined the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands under Royal Decree No. (64/2012).

Biodiversity:

The reserve's establishment aimed to ensure the preservation of its natural value and biodiversity, the mangroves' protection, Protecting resident and migratory birds and their habitats, and Ensuring sustainable and environmentally sound management of the surrounding area by preparing the reserve to be a destination for community members that aims to promote eco-tourism.

The reserve is a vital habitat for *Avicennia marina* mangroves, the only species adapted to the Omani environment. The mangrove forests extend an area of approximately 60 hectares. Where tall,

healthy trees grow along the coasts in the eastern and western water channels. While some natural seedlings appear on the beach near the mouth of the Western Water Channel, where high trees reach a height of between 7 and 8 meters. The reserve also includes 26 species of halophytic plants that have adapted to the Omani climate.

The reserve is a vital haven for wildlife and marine life. It contains 27 species of crustaceans, 48 species of molluscs, and 40 species of fishes. Additionally, shellfish shrimp and crab. The most noticeable features of the reserve is that it is a shelter for 304 species of birds, including endemic and migratory species from Africa and Russia.

The Environmental Importance:

As well as, its great importance to offer habitats for many marine and wildlife organisms, the Qurum Reserve is classified as a wetland, and it is one of the richest and most various ecosystems. Mangrove forests play a vital role as a natural security against floods, act as a barrier zone between the open ocean and the land, it contributes to protect coasts from erosion and mud increase that threaten marine life. Vegetation also stabilizes sediments, enhance the beach stability and cohesion.

The Qurum Reserve in Muscat Governorate is one of the most noticeable eco-tourism destinations worth visiting because of its biodiversity. The reserve provides visitors with a unique opportunity to explore its natural beauty and learn about wetland environments, including mangrove environments. Visitors can enjoy various activities such as boating, walking on boardwalks extending within the mangrove forests, and watching birds and marine life. The reserve is an important destination for educational tourism, as students and those interested benefit from studying this unique environment and learning about its importance. Muscat Governorate supports the competent authorities' efforts to ensure this valuable ecosystem's sustainability, promote sustainable tourism, and provide a great tourism experience that contributes to preserve the environment for future generations.

Wetlands (Ramsar):

It is worth noting that the Ramsar Convention that Oman joined in 2013, is an international agreement aimed to protect wetlands from current and future deterioration. This convention pursues to enhance the basic ecological functions of wetlands and develop their economic, cultural, scientific and recreational roles, and is called by the "Ramsar" city in Iran.

Wetlands include regions where water is the main factor that affects the environment, the plants and animals found there. These lands include natural and artificial swamps, nearby coastal areas, islands, and parts of the marine environment whose depth exceeds six meters. It also includes environments of rivers, lakes, mangroves and coral reefs.

PASSENGER RIGHTS PROTECTION REGULATION

Airline must pay passenger compensation equal to 50% of original ticket total value

<FROM A1 Also, if the alternative flight is in a lower cabin, the air carrier shall reimburse the difference between the ticket value and lowest reservation booking designators (RBD) on which the passenger travelled.

In addition, the airline shall pay the passenger a compensation equal to 50 percent of the total value of the original ticket.

PRPR also said the air carrier should notify the passenger of the cancellation of the international flights within a period not exceeding 14 days from the scheduled time of departure.

The air carrier should also explain to the passenger his rights to

care and support.

Alternative flights

“They should also offer the passenger the available alternative flights and pay the passenger a compensation equal to OMR108 for all flights over a distance not exceeding 1,500 kilometres, OMR173 for all flights over a distance between 1,500 and 3,500 kilometres and OMR260 for all flights exceeding 3,500 kilometres.

It also said that the distance between the departure airport and the final destination is taken into account while calculating the distance for determining the amount of compensation.

PAKISTAN SCHOOL SALALAH

Pakistan envoy visits school in Salalah

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ambassador of Pakistan to the Sultanate of Oman, Imran Ali Chaudhary, visited Pakistan School Salalah along with the Chairman Board of Directors Ameer Hamza, Senior Principal Abdul Rahim and Board Member Muhammad Irshad.

The guests were warmly welcomed by SMC President Adeel, SMC Member Khurram Toor, and Principal Pakistan School Salalah Shahid Iqbal.

The Kindergarten toddlers presented bouquets to the dignitaries.

During his visit, the His Excellency the Ambassador of Pakistan inaugurated the new junior block and the new school library.

The visit also included a tour of the school, a meeting with the

faculty and a session with parents.

Various queries addressed

He addressed various queries from the parents.

The President of SMC Pakistan School Salalah gave a presentation on school's development plans and its commitment to continuous improvement.

Upgradation plans

During the visit, discussions were held regarding upgradation plans for the upcoming academic years.

The key areas for both structural and academic improvements were highlighted, with a particular focus on enhancing students' skills and overall development. The visit reflected hope and dedication towards achieving educational reforms and the betterment of students.



Oman's health sector provides huge investment opportunities

The Ministry of Health is continuing to exert its efforts for boosting investment in the healthcare sector as part of economic diversification



care sector as part of economic diversification.

A growing population

Rashid bin Saleem Al Aghbari, advisor for investment at the Ministry of Health, said, “The health sector in the Sultanate of Oman is witnessing an increasing demand due to the growing population. This provides ample opportunities for investments in hospitals and health centres as well as in improvement of health services.”

“These investment opportunities would enhance the partnership between the government and



the private sector and would provide investors with diverse options to develop new health projects,” he further added.

The Sultanate of Oman is also working to attract therapeutic tourism which would increase the opportunities of investment in hospitals and health centres, he said.

He pointed out that more investments in the health sector would require improvement in the regulatory environment of the health sector. This could be through the facilitation of the procedures and development of the private regu-

latory policies besides offering incentives to encourage investment in the healthcare sector.

Mega investment projects

He said that the Sultanate of Oman is extending due efforts for development of the health sector through the execution of several mega investment projects.

He added that several private projects were launched in 2023 and 2024. These include two factories for producing medicine in Dhofar and Muscat governorates, a healthcare services hospital in North Al Batinah Governorate and



multi-specialty hospital in Muscat among others.

He also pointed out to the cooperation and partnership between the government sector and the private sector in the health sector for development of health infrastructure and systems. This reflects the Sultanate of Oman efforts for achievement of Oman Vision 2040 in terms of improving the quality of health services and enhancement of the role the private sector in developing this vital sector.

He said that the last few years saw execution of vital investment

projects in the health sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The year 2023 saw the announcement of several projects and investment opportunities in the health sector coupled with initiatives for empowerment of human resources (HR) and further improvement of health services.

He said that the mega investments and new opportunities reflect the increasing care and attention accorded by the government of Oman for boosting the health sector and making it more attractive to foreign and local investments. — OMA

COMPETITION

Oman Sail youth team achieves strong results at Suleymanpasa Optimist Cup in Türkiye

MUSCAT: Oman Sail's youth sailing team delivered an impressive performance at the International Suleymanpasa Optimist Cup in Tekirdag, Türkiye, with one sailor breaking into the top 10 and four others securing spots in the top 20. Competing against 274 sailors from 12 nations, including a strong local Turkish contingent and teams from Southern Europe, North Africa, and West Asia, the Omani sailors proved their mettle during five days of intense racing.

Leading the charge for Oman was Tamim Sulaiman Al Balushi, who finished in 10th place, followed closely by teammate Saud Talib Al Shaqsi in 11th. Both sailors have been standout performers this year, with Al Shaqsi earning a team gold medal at the 2023 Arab Games.

Joining them in the top 20 were fellow team gold medallist from the Arab Games, Firas Haitham Al Nabhani, who placed 16th, and Hood Saad Al Nofali, a gold medallist at the 2024 Gulf Youth Games, who finished 19th.

Another notable performance came from Khamis Nasser Al Mashikhi, a gold medallist at the 2024 Gulf Youth Games, who ended the competition in 32nd place.

The competition was fierce, with host club sailor Boran Öden clinching the gold medal after winning three out of six races. Fellow Turkish sailor Hayrettin Eren Çakir secured silver, while Bulgaria's Georgi Karagiozov took home bronze. Of the top 50 sailors, 33 hailed from Türkiye, including five of the top 10, showcasing the strength of the home team.

Commenting on the team's



performance, Abdul Aziz Al Shidi, Acting Director of Sailing at Oman Sail, expressed satisfaction with the squad's development. “Our sailors have shown tremendous progress, competing well against more experienced athletes. Participation in such international events is crucial to our performance pathway, providing invaluable experience in challenging conditions,” he said. “We now turn our focus to Mussanah Race Week and aim to finish the season on a high note.”

Oman Sail's Assistant Youth Head Coach, Sultan Abdul Aziz Al Zadjali, echoed these sentiments, highlighting the significance of having four sailors in the top 20. “It speaks volumes about the quality of our youth sailors and the overall growth of the sport in

Oman,” he noted. “To compete against a strong Turkish fleet, many of whom were racing in familiar waters, and still achieve such positive results is a great accomplishment.”

Next on the calendar for Oman's youth sailors is the 13th edition of Mussanah Race Week, set to take place from 1-8 October 2024 at Barceló Mussanah Resort. Sailors from across the region will compete in multiple classes, including Optimist, ILCA 4, ILCA 6, ILCA 7, and the Para Inclusive RS Venture Connect class. With preparations already underway, Oman Sail's Sailing Schools in Mussanah, Sur, and Al Mouj Muscat are focused on refining the team's technical and tactical skills in anticipation of the upcoming competition.



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INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE

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Oman and Brazil explore ways to boost trade ties

The two sides reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation in various fields, marking the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties between the Sultanate and Brazil

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Federative Republic of Brazil on Sunday held in Muscat a session of political talks. During the session, the Omani



side was headed by Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, while the Brazilian side was headed by Mauro Vieira, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The two sides reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation in various fields, marking the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between Oman and Brazil. They also explored means of boosting economic and trade partnerships. The session highlighted the importance of focusing on mutual investments in the fields of renewable energy and agriculture.

Both sides underlined the importance of utilizing the strategic location of the two countries in augmenting trade exchange and growing the volume of joint investments. Moreover, the two sides touched on regional and international developments, as well as the joint efforts that are exerted to consolidate security and stability in the region and the world at large. The Brazilian minister lauded the role undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in enhancing regional stability. He also expressed his country's

keenness to boost relations on all levels in a bid to achieve joint development and prosperity. Sayyid Badr commended the efforts exerted by Brazil in adopting several international topics that benefit humanity. Further, the two sides underscored the importance of promoting political dialogue and constant coordination in international fora. The session was attended by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthi, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs and several officials from both sides. — OMA

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NORTHERN VIETNAM

Typhoon kills 14

HANOI: At least 14 people have been killed and nearly 200 injured after Typhoon Yagi made landfall in northern Vietnam, authorities said on Sunday, as recovery and relief efforts continued. The deaths included four people in one family killed early today when their house collapsed, the Search and Rescue Operations Department of Vietnam's Defence Ministry said in a report.

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh convened a video conference with representatives from 26 provinces and cities affected by adverse weather condition to discuss the typhoon's impacts. Authorities reported to Chinh that over 3,000 houses have been damaged, 120,000 hectares of rice paddy fields inundated and more than 1,000 fisheries destroyed and swept away. — OMA

FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled arrives in New Delhi

NEW DELHI: Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived in New Delhi on Sunday on his first official visit to India, the Ministry of External Affairs said. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, received the Crown Prince upon his arrival. He was also accorded a ceremonial welcome after he landed here in the national capital. "A new milestone in a historic relationship. His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived in Delhi on his first official visit to India. Warmly received by @CimGOI @piyushgoyal and ac-



corded a ceremonial welcome," MEA spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X. In the pictures shared by Jaiswal, Piyush Goyal can be seen greeting Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al

Nahyan, and the former receiving a ceremonial welcome. Notably, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan is on an official India visit from September 9-10 at the invitation of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi. On September 9, the Crown Prince will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and hold discussions on a wide range of areas of bilateral cooperation. He is also scheduled to call on President Droupadi Murmu. He will also visit Rajghat to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. On September 10, the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince will visit Mumbai to participate in a Business Forum, in which business leaders from both countries will participate. "India and UAE share historically close and friendly ties. In recent years, the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between

India and UAE has deepened in a wide range of areas, including political, trade, investment, connectivity, energy, technology, education, and culture," the MEA stated. "The Crown Prince's visit will further reinforce strong India-UAE bilateral relations and open avenues for partnership in new and emerging areas," it added. In February this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited UAE. He held discussions with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the India-UAE bilateral relationship and witnessed the exchange of eight agreements.

PM Modi and President Al Nahyan welcomed the MoU for creation of an intergovernmental framework between India and the UAE on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), which reflected the lead taken by the UAE and India in furthering regional connectivity. The two leaders further endorsed the efforts from both sides to strengthen the strong economic and commercial cooperation and explore new areas of collaboration. They welcomed the strong growth witnessed in the UAE-India trade relations since the entry into force of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. — ANI

MUSEUM SPOKESMAN



Protesters close off Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum

AMSTERDAM: Climate protesters from the Extinction Rebellion (XR) group on Saturday blockaded Amsterdam's famous Rijksmuseum, prompting the art gallery to close its doors "until further notice." XR said the aim of the protest was to force the museum to cease its ties with its main sponsor, the ING bank, which it says helps finance projects that harm the climate. It said the protest would continue until its demands were met. A museum spokesman said it closed the site to ensure the safety of visitors, staff and art works in the collection. "Any action that jeopardizes this is unacceptable," the spokesman told Dutch news agency ANP. Among the works in the museum's collection is the "Night Watch," one of the best-known paintings of the 17th century master Rembrandt van Rijn.

Yellow protest
Yellow-clad protesters previ-

ously chained themselves to the entrance of the museum, lighting yellow torches and preventing people from entering it. "It's incomprehensible that the Rijksmuseum can allow itself to be financed by ING, the largest financial driver of the climate crisis," an XR spokesman told ANP. The spokesman said the museum was allowing a major polluter to "hide its face behind famous works of art from Dutch history." A spokesman for the bank responded by saying, "If XR has a problem with ING's financing policies, they should turn to us directly and not to the Rijksmuseum. We are always open to dialogue." XR, which was founded in 2018, is noted for dramatic public actions that it says aim to instill a sense of urgency in decision-makers regarding the warming of the planet. Its critics say the group often alienates even those people who sympathize with its views because its protests tend to cause considerable disruption.

ANNUAL STUDY

Time to criminalise environmental and climate damage, says survey

BRUSSELS: A new survey of 22,000 people, drawn primarily from the G20 group of 19 major economies and the European Union and African Union, reveals deep-seated concern about the planet's current state. This unease extends to overwhelming public support for criminalising large-scale environmental and climate damage. The question of criminalisation was asked for the first time in the Global Commons Survey, an annual study conducted by Ipsos UK and commissioned by the Global Commons Alliance and Earth4all.

The widespread backing of criminalising damage to nature from 72% of respondents was just above the 69% who believe Earth is close to a climate and nature tipping point. Only 13% of respondents were skeptical about the science of climate change. Nonetheless, there remains a disconnect between these serious concerns and a "lack of ambition" in government policy, said Owen Gaffney, co-lead of Earth4Life, a collective of economic thinkers, scientists and advocates. Gaffney sees the survey results as a "strong mandate" for the political and economic transformation necessary to protect nature and the climate. The study's release is timed, he said, with major polls such as the US presidential election on the horizon. Of the 22 countries surveyed, respondents from those classified as emerging economies feel more "personally exposed to climate change compared to those in Europe and the US" and carry "the highest levels of concern and urgency regarding climate action," the report said. "If you're living in Mexico, Brazil, India, China, Indonesia or South Africa, you face more personal environmental and climate risks, and you're more concerned about the state of the planet," said Gaffney, who is also an analyst at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Stockholm Resilience Centre.



While people living in Brazil are near the sprawling Amazon rainforest that "is changing very quickly," Gaffney said, those in European countries such as Denmark or Sweden "are much less likely to feel exposed to environmental and climate risks." Based in Sweden, Gaffney said citizens feel more "insulated" from the extreme heat felt further south, including around the equator, where most emerging economies are located.

Most agree Earth is at a tipping point
A key question in the survey was whether the "Earth is close to environmental 'tipping points' where climate or nature, such as rainforests or glaciers, may change suddenly or be more difficult to stabilise in the future." Some 60% of Swedish citizens polled strongly agreed with the statement, the third lowest of 22 countries. In contrast, the figure went up to 86% for Kenya, with Indonesia, Mexico and Brazil not far behind. Gaffney noted that Saudi Arabia is an extremely hot country on the front line of climate change, yet ranked even lower than Sweden on this question, assumedly because it is a rich country that can afford adaptations like air conditioning, or even summer trips to Europe. Despite its strong embrace of renewable energy and green

policies, Germany had the highest number of respondents who were "unengaged" regarding the state of the environment and the need for political change. This might also relate to the recent rise of the climate-skeptic far right in the country and an accompanying "distrust in government," said Gaffney. The survey also gauged levels of planetary stewardship among citizens — that is, those who are driven by a strong sense of urgency and responsibility toward the environment and advocate for systemic change. Again, Gaffney said the idea of planetary stewardship was strongest among people in emerging economies like Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and Kenya.

Why the public wants to make 'ecocide' a crime
The most "surprising" result of the 2024 Global Commons Survey was a strong desire to criminalize those who cause severe damage to nature and the climate, Gaffney noted. Some governments are already taking notice by legislating against the most extreme environmental crimes that are classified as ecocide, akin to a war crime or genocide. The accusation was most recently leveled against the Russian aggressors in the war in Ukraine. In Belgium, ecocide was recognized as a federal crime ear-

lier this year, while in France, offenders can already be jailed for up to a decade. Similar bills have been proposed in Brazil, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru and Scotland, as noted by Jojo Mehta, co-founder and CEO of Stop Ecocide International, who collaborated on the survey. "We're seeing significant policy shifts in favor of ecocide legislation at the domestic, regional and international levels," she said, which include the European Union's new Environmental Crime Directive that targets damage to nature and includes crimes comparable to ecocide. This push for legislation has been driven in large part by "widespread civil society demand," as reflected in the latest Global Commons Survey. "People clearly understand that the most severe forms of environmental destruction harm all of us," Mehta said of the shifting opinions on criminalisation. She noted that the momentum will help achieve the ultimate goal of including ecocide in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and to ensure that "mass environmental destruction is treated as a serious international crime." She added that the best deterrent potential for environmental damage is "creating personal criminal liability for top decision-makers." — DW

200 schools in Gaza closed since last October: UNRWA

In some of these schools, UNRWA teams are working to return thousands of children to learning through recreational activities and psychosocial support

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said that it has “nearly 200 schools in the Gaza Strip, all of which have been closed since last October 2023, and many of which were used as shelters for displaced persons throughout the war.”

The UN agency indicated in a post on its account on the “X” platform, that “in some of these schools, UNRWA teams are working to return thousands of children to learning through recreational activities and psychosocial support.”

Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli entity has been waging a devastating war of extermination on the Gaza Strip, leaving more than 135,000 dead and wounded, most of them children and women, and more than 10,000 missing, amid massive destruction and deadly famine.

Health Ministry reports 69% of children in Gaza vaccinated against polio

The Ministry of Health announced on Sunday that 69% of children in Gaza, aged from birth



to 10 years, have received the first dose of the polio vaccine.

In a statement released today, the Ministry detailed that this achievement was reached within seven days of launching the first phase of the polio vaccination campaign.

The campaign, which is ongoing in the governorates of Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis, as well as surrounding areas, has so far administered the vaccine to 441,647 children, as of Saturday evening. This includes 49% females and 51% males.

The Ministry noted that the first phase of the vaccination campaign will continue in the Gaza

and North Gaza governorates.

Health teams from the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with UNRWA, the World Health Organization (WHO), and UNICEF, are persevering with the vaccination efforts despite the ongoing Israeli aggression and the significant challenges posed by the current security situation affecting the movement between vaccination centers.

85% decline in illiteracy rates in Palestine over past two decades

Palestine witnessed a dramatic decline in illiteracy rates over the past two decades, with a reduc-

tion of 85 percent, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

According to the latest data, illiteracy rates in Palestine are among the lowest globally, standing at 2.1% for individuals aged 15 and above in 2023. This contrasts with an illiteracy rate of 3.6% for the same age group among Palestinians in the 1948-occupied territories in 2017, as reported by the Galilee Society.

The data highlights a substantial decline in illiteracy rates since 1997. The illiteracy rate among Palestinians aged 15 and above fell from 13.9% in 1997 to 2.1% in 2023. This downward trend is evident for both genders, with the illiteracy rate among males dropping from 7.8% in 1997 to 1.1% in 2023. For females, the rate decreased from 20.3% to 3.2% over the same period.

Regionally, the illiteracy rate in the West Bank decreased from 14.1% in 1997 to 3.2% in 2023, while in the Gaza Strip it fell from 13.7% to 1.9% over the same timeframe.

Illiteracy rates by age and area

The PCBS report indicates that

the highest illiteracy rate is found among individuals aged 65 and above, with a rate of 20.4% in 2023. In contrast, the illiteracy rate for those aged 30-44 is the lowest at 0.7%, and the rate for individuals aged 15-29 is 0.8% for the same year. The illiteracy rate for those aged 45-64 stands at 2.2%.

In terms of geographical distribution, rural areas have the highest illiteracy rate at 2.6%, followed by refugee camps at 2.4%, and urban areas at 2.0% in 2023.

Occupation commits three massacres against families in Gaza over the past 24 hours

The Israeli occupation committed three massacres against families in the Gaza Strip over the past 24 hours, resulting in the killing of 33 civilians and the injury of 145 others, according to medical sources.

The number of people killed since the start of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip on October 7th, 2023, has risen to 40972. Some 94761 have been wounded.

Thousands of victims remain missing; either buried under the rubble or scattered on the roads, as rescue teams face tremendous difficulties in reaching them due to the continued Israeli attacks and the massive amount of debris.

Israeli occupation forces detain 35 Palestinians in West Bank

Over the past two days, Israeli occupation forces have detained at least 35 Palestinians from the West Bank, including former prisoners, and have summoned one woman for questioning.

A joint statement from the Palestinian Prisoners Society (PPS) and the Palestinian Authority's Commission for Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Affairs revealed that the detentions occurred across most West Bank governorates. — Wafa

Death toll in Kenya school dormitory fire rises to 21

NAIROBI: Authorities in Kenya confirmed on Saturday that 21 boys died in a fire that broke out in a school dormitory. An estimate from earlier this week put the death toll at 17.

The fire broke out at the Hillside Enderasha Academy in Nyeri county on Thursday around midnight. Over 150 pupils between the ages of 9 and 15 were sleeping.

Government spokesman Isaac Mwaura said at a press briefing that 19 bodies were recovered from the site of the fire and two boys died in hospital.

He said that 139 of the 156 boys who were in the dormitory at the time had been accounted for, adding that 17 children are still missing and 13 remain hospitalised.

“It is a catastrophe beyond our imagination,” he said.

Police said the 19 bodies were burnt beyond recognition. Forensic experts began conducting DNA tests on Saturday to identify the victims.

Police completely blocked off the site of the fire for investigations.

All of the victims were pupils at the school. Around 800 children in total are enrolled in the school.

Top national prosecutor Renson Ingonga instructed police to “assess whether or not the tragedy may have resulted from negligence and/or recklessness of any responsibility holders.”

“Any person found culpable towards the fire tragedy shall be expediently taken through the due process of a criminal trial.”

Meanwhile, another fire broke out on Saturday night at Isiolo Girls High School, around 140 kilometers (90 miles) to the northeast of the Hillside Enderasha Academy.

The Kenyan Red Cross said in a post on social media early Sunday that the fire had been contained and that three minor injuries had been recorded. — dw

MICROBLOGGING SERVICES

After Brazil’s X ban, what social media alternatives exist?

BRASÍLIA: As of August 31, X, formerly Twitter, is down some 21.5 million users — at least on paper. In an escalation of a long dispute with X owner Elon Musk, Brazil’s Supreme Court ordered the nationwide suspension of the social media platform.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes argued this was because Musk had failed to take sufficient action against the spread of hate speech and disinformation on the platform. Previously, the court had ordered Musk to block the accounts of particular users who were singled out for spreading false and misleading information, and to name a company representative for Brazil.

But Musk refused to comply, calling out efforts to “censor” political opponents. “The current Brazilian administration likes to wear the cloak of a free democracy, while crushing the people under its boot,” he wrote on X after the Brazilian ban on his platform went into effect. Before the shutdown, Brazil was the sixth-largest market for X, which according to Musk has around 600 million users per month. Now, individuals or companies in Brazil who circumvent the ban with virtual private networks, or VPNs, could face a daily fine of 50,000 reais (\$8,900/€8,007).

Many Brazilian users have already migrated to competing platforms — the decentralised platform Bluesky has seen a massive spike in popularity in Brazil since X was shut down.

Here are some of the most popular microblogging services currently online.

Bluesky

At first glance, Bluesky looks like a trimmed-down version of X — hardly surprising, considering it was launched by Jack Dorsey, co-founder and former CEO of Twitter. The social media platform has been publicly available since early 2024, after being invite-only for about a year.

Unlike X, Bluesky has a decentralised, federated design, meaning a network is able to run on many different sites instead of relying on a single one. This allows



users to move their accounts from one provider to another, for example. That includes exporting conversations and contacts, another major novelty Bluesky boasts compared to X. “Wherever you go, your friends and relationships will be there too,” a Bluesky blog post explained.

Posts on Bluesky are limited to 300 characters, allowing them to be slightly longer than posts on X. The network also allows users to customise their own feeds and thereby select the algorithms that steer this content. This contrasts with standard black-box algorithms that automatically curate a users’ feed without providing details on selection criteria.

Within days of X’s ban in Brazil, Bluesky reported 2 million new users. That’s a massive surge in

popularity, especially considering it had 8.4 million users prior to this weekend’s ruling.

Mastodon

Another popular decentralised network is Mastodon, created by German-Russian software developer Eugen Rochko. The platform consists of numerous independently run servers, or instances. Most servers target specific regions or topics of interest.

Anyone can set up their own server and lay out its rules of engagement. However, in order to be promoted by the Mastodon team, servers must agree to a basic set of rules, which include prohibiting hate speech, sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia.

Otherwise, Mastodon basically works like any other micro-



blogging platform. Users can post toots, like X’s posts, and other people can like, comment or share.

Mastodon is an open-source network, meaning that its source code is publicly available. The platform is almost exclusively financed by donations and is still fairly small, with just about a million active users per month.

Threads

Mark Zuckerberg is a household name in all things social media. The founder, chairman and CEO of Meta, the parent company of Facebook, introduced his own response to X in 2023. Threads is also text-based and decentralised, and has functions that roughly mirror those of X.

But critics have said the service is overly reliant on Instagram. Us-

ers can keep the same username on both platforms, but can neither create nor delete a Threads account without first creating or deleting an account on Instagram. To make up for this, Threads users have hundreds of millions of connections between users at their disposal as soon as they sign up.

True to its parent company’s legacy, Threads is also under fire for collecting sensitive personal data. In Europe, the service’s launch was delayed by about half a year as regulators were unsure whether it complied with the EU’s new digital market and digital service acts.

But that doesn’t appear to have affected its popularity: As of August 2024, Threads boasts around 200 million active users worldwide.

Confusing market, countless providers

There are many other microblogging services not listed here, including Tumblr, Plurk and Identica. And many social media services have also integrated micro-blogging functions on their platforms — just think of Google+, TikTok, LinkedIn or Telegram, whose founder and CEO Pavel Durov was recently charged with a wide range of alleged criminal activity on the app.

Weibo, akin to X

China has blocked many of these services and replaced them with similar micro-blogging platforms of its own. Weibo, akin to X, is one such global heavyweight with around 580 million active users — most of them Chinese — each month.

The Chinese government keeps a close eye on Weibo and in the past has blocked and deleted accounts because of what it deems as “harmful” content.

Even former US President Donald Trump has his own micro-blogging platform, which he announced after being banned from Facebook, Instagram and Twitter following his role in the 2021 attack on the US Capitol building. But Truth Social has not nearly enjoyed the success Trump promised: in 2023, the network cost Trump millions of dollars, and this year, it still only has about a million active users. — dw

SPORTS

ALL-ROUNDER

Moeen Ali retires from international cricket



LONDON: Moeen Ali, who last played for England in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, has retired from the international game. Moeen believed that the time was right for him after understanding that he was no longer in consideration for the side's future assignments.

The all-rounder has featured in 298 international matches from 2014-2024 for the English side in his cricketing career.

"I'm 37 years old and didn't get picked for this month's Australia series. I've played a lot of cricket for England. It's time for the next generation, which was also explained to me. It felt the time was right. I've done my part," Moeen Ali said in an interview with former England captain Nasser Hussain in the Daily Mail as quoted by the ICC.

Moeen believed that his call was keeping in mind England's needs, a team looking to rebuild ahead of their upcoming white-ball cycle which features the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.

"I could hold on and try to play for England again, but I know in reality I won't. Even retiring, I don't feel it's because I'm not good enough -- I still feel I can play. But I get how things are, and

the team needs to evolve into another cycle. It's about being real to myself," Moeen said.

Moeen made his international debut in 2014 against West Indies. He scored 6678 international runs and picked 366 wickets. He won the 2019 Cricket World Cup and 2022 T20 World Cup with the senior men's side.

As a youngster Moeen tended towards batting, but in the England shirt, he developed his bowling well enough to become their leading bowler in 2 Tests. He finished with 204 Test scalps, making him just the third England spinner behind Derek Underwood (297) and Graeme Swann (255).

Nasser Hussain has praised Moeen Ali, calling him an inspirational figure both on and off the field, after the allrounder announced his retirement from international cricket.

Moeen made history as the first British Asian to captain England in a T20I match against Australia in 2020 and has been an influential vice-captain to Jos Buttler.

Despite participating in the T20 World Cup earlier this year, Moeen was not selected for the upcoming series against Australia, leading to his decision to retire. **-ANI**

Sabalenka beats Pegula, captures US Open crown

With this title, Sabalenka can also be crowned the queen of hard courts

WASHINGTON: A stellar Aryna Sabalenka captured the women's crown at the 2024 US Open on Saturday, defeating American Jessica Pegula, 7-5, 7-5.

Up 3-0 in the second set, Sabalenka was forced to fend off a furious comeback bid from the Buffalo, N.Y., native, who won five straight games to threaten a third set. But Sabalenka snapped back with four consecutive games of her own to win her first US Open singles trophy.

With the title, Sabalenka can also be crowned the queen of hard courts. Her prior two major titles were won on Australian Open cement, in January of this year and in 2023. Outside the majors, 11 of 13 of Sabalenka's titles have been won on hard courts. And the No. 2 seed is on a 12-match hard-court winning streak, having taken the Cincinnati Open two weeks ago—beating Pegula in the final there, not incidentally.

That's a lot of winning. But Sabalenka may well have felt an eerie echo entering Arthur Ashe Stadium on Saturday.

The No. 6-seeded Pegula, age 30, has had to contend with her own version of great-but-not-glorious Grand Slam results.

She'd stalled out in major quarterfinals six times over the course of her career before beating No. 1 seed Iga Swiatek this tournament to secure her first quarterfinal win at a Slam.

That victory pushed her late-summer win-loss record to 15-1—the one loss handed to her by Sabalenka in Cincy. Before that,



Pegula successfully defended her title at the WTA 1000 tournament in Toronto.

The match—held under a closed roof due to rain—started with a couple of easy service holds, with each player contributing an ace. Sabalenka was the first to show her nerves, slipping to 15-40 when serving at 1-1.

Pegula broke with a rocketing return, grabbing the set's first advantage. But then she showed nerves too and dropped her own serve to level the score, 2-2.

With the match's early-stage awkwardness dispelled, the players seemed to settle into their games. And the players know each other's games well.

Sabalenka, who was world No. 1 after last year's US Open, came in with a 5-2 edge over Pegula. The American's highest ranking was world No. 3, also achieved last fall.

Sabalenka, fair to say, has the more impressive CV. And her power—very much on display early on in this final—has been another thing to fear this fortnight. The No. 2 seed also displayed a willingness to approach the net, throw in drop shots and otherwise wrong-footing Pegula with both pace and guile.

At the 30-minute mark, Pegula was serving down 2-5—and serving well, with four aces on the match, compared to Sabalenka's three. The American looked relieved to pull out that game, with a pretty forehand approach to the net.

Would Sabalenka, serving at 5-3, feel the pressure? Yes, she would. Pegula earned herself a chance to break, failed to convert, and then earned another one. Sabalenka looked frustrated when she slapped back Pegula's return, sending a forehand sailing.

And so the first set was back on track, with Pegula serving at 4-5. The American made quick work of her service hold.

Twice in the next game, Sabalenka blew chances to close it out with double faults. Finally, a skidding, 113 mph serve led to a Pegula error—and the American was faced with the task of holding her serve at 5-6. Sabalenka kept up the pressure to earn her two set points. She missed out on both of them. And then two more. For her part, Pegula stayed steady—until she double faulted to give her opponent her fifth chance. Sabalenka seized it to take the set, 7-5. **-Agencies**

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GOLD DEMAND SURGES

The global shift towards gold as a hedge against macroeconomic risks is being reflected in India. The uncertainty surrounding the US election and potential rate cuts has driven up demand for safe-haven assets like gold.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,772.88 points, up by 0.25% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.15% at 438.58 points. Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, up 27.27%, was the top gainer while Salalah Mills, down 6.03%, was the top loser.

Oman, Brazil explore cooperation in agriculture, water resources

During the meeting, the two sides highlighted possible investment opportunities and partnerships in projects of food security

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and the Federative Republic of Brazil explored means of expanding cooperation in the fields of agriculture, fisheries and water resources.

This came when Dr Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

yesterday received Mauro Vieira, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

Moreover, during the meeting, the two sides highlighted possible investment opportunities and partnerships in projects of food security. They also underscored the importance of exchanging expertise and best practices to boost food security and sustainable development. -ONA



ECONOMIC PLANNER

China to lift foreign investment access restrictions in manufacturing sector

BEIJING: Restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing sector will be lifted with the release of the 2024 version of the negative list for foreign investment access, China's top economic planner announced.

Negative list

Jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, the negative list, effective 1 November 2024, reduces the number of restrictions from 31 to 29, achieving zero restrictions on the manufacturing sector.

The release and implementation of the 2024 version of the national negative list is an important step in building a new system of higher-level open economy, China's news agency (Xinhua) reported an NDRC official as saying.

The NDRC will work with the MOC and other departments and regions to further implement the system of pre-establishment national treatment plus a negative list, as well as the negative list for foreign investment access, and ensure the timely rollout of the new opening measures. -ONA

BLOCKS 3&4

Tethys August oil production in Oman hits 239,943 barrels

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before government take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore the Sultanate of Oman, in August 2024 amounted to 239,943 barrels of oil, corresponding to 7,740 barrels of oil per day.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for the month of August 2024 was \$82.50 per barrel.

The OSP, as published by the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.

Tethys Oil, through its wholly owned subsidiary Tethys Oil Block

3 & 4, has a 30 percent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East with 20 percent and the operator CC Energy Development (Oman branch) holding the remaining 50 percent.

Tethys Oil is an oil exploration and production company with 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 21.7 million barrels of oil (mmbbl) and net working interest 2C Contingent Resources of 15.5 mmbbl and had an average oil production of 8,818 barrels per day during 2023.



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

Milano hosts annual traders meet in Oman

MUSCAT: Milano, a leading brand in bath and home solutions under the Danube Group, recently held its highly anticipated annual Traders Meet at the Sheraton Muscat.

The event welcomed around 500 traders from across the region, celebrating Milano's impressive growth and reaffirming its commitment to strengthening partnerships with its extensive trader network.

Milano has established itself as a trusted household name in Oman, known for its range of high-quality and affordable products, including sanitaryware, doors, electrical items, and hardware solutions. While the brand has a strong presence in urban and suburban areas, it is also expanding its reach to traders in more remote regions such as Ibri, Ibra, Duqm, Nizwa, Sinaw, Al Ashkhara, Izki, Jalan Bu Ali, Al Kamil, Sur, Quriyat, Shinas, Wadijizi, and Liwa. This expansion reflects Milano's dedication to making its products accessible to a broader customer base.

During the event, Anis Sajjan, Vice Chairman of Danube Group and the visionary behind Milano, spoke about the brand's deep connection with Oman.

"Milano found its wings in Oman, where it has grown to become a trusted and beloved name for high-quality, affordable home solutions. Our traders have been the driving force behind this success, and their dedication and commitment have been pivotal in helping us expand our footprint," said Anis Sajjan. "With their support, we have not only captured urban markets but are also reaching more remote regions, ensuring that every customer can experience the quality and affordability that Milano stands for."

To recognize the invaluable contributions of its traders, Milano announced an exclusive incentive: a trip to Sri Lanka for those who achieve their sales targets by December 2024. This initiative



continues Milano's tradition of rewarding its top-performing partners, following previous trips to Switzerland and Italy. These incentives are designed to motivate traders and foster a strong sense of community and loyalty within

Milano's network.

"Our traders are the backbone of Milano's growth. These trips are a small token of appreciation for their hard work and dedication, and they reflect our commitment to celebrating our partners' suc-

cesses," added Anis Sajjan.

The event also marked a new chapter in Milano's leadership with the introduction of Sahil Sajjan as the new Director of Milano. Sharing his enthusiasm and vision, Sahil Sajjan stated, "I am honored to take on this role and work closely with our incredible team and our dedicated traders, who are the cornerstone of Milano's success. Together, we aim to push boundaries, bring innovative solutions to the market, and continue to strengthen Milano's presence both regionally and globally."

In a strategic move to enhance its market appeal, Milano also announced Bollywood actress Chitrangda Singh as its new brand ambassador. This aligns with the brand's efforts to elevate its image and connect with a broader audience.

The Traders Meet not only celebrated these significant milestones but also reinforced Milano's commitment to growth, innovation, and its enduring partnerships with traders. As Milano continues to expand its footprint, it remains dedicated to achieving new milestones alongside its valued partners.

OFFICIAL DATA

Saudi Arabia non-oil economy grows 4.9% in second quarter of 2024

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's non-oil activities expanded 4.9 percent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2024, driven by gains in the financial and insurance sectors, official data showed.

According to data from the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT), and published by Arab News, the financial, insurance, and business services sectors surged 7.1 percent in the second quarter compared to the same period last year.

Non-oil activity also rose 2.1 percent compared to the previous quarter, reflecting the Kingdom's efforts to broaden its economic base.

The non-oil sector's growth aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a strategic plan aimed at reducing the country's reliance on oil revenues.

The report further revealed that Saudi Arabia's seasonally adjusted gross domestic product increased by 1.4 percent in the second quarter compared to the first. However, GDP saw a slight year-on-year decline of 0.3 percent in the same period, largely due to an 8.9 percent drop in oil activities following the Kingdom's decision to cut crude output in line with OPEC+ agreements.

To stabilize the market, Saudi Arabia reduced oil production by 500,000 barrels per day in April 2023, a cut that has been extended until December 2024.

GASTAT also noted that the Kingdom's GDP at current prices reached SR1.02 trillion (\$270 billion) in the second quarter.

"Crude oil and natural gas activities achieved the highest

The financial, insurance, and business services sectors surged 7.1 percent

contribution to the GDP at 23.2 percent, followed by government activities at 16 percent, and wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, and hotels activities with a contribution of 10.1 percent," stated GASTAT.

Government activities increased by 3.6 percent year-on-year and by 2.3 percent quarter-on-quarter.

Meanwhile, electricity, gas, and water activities saw an 8.9 percent rise year-on-year, while wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, and hotels grew by 6.8 percent.

The report also highlighted that government final consumption expenditure rose by 10.9 percent year on year and 4.3 percent quarter on quarter.

In the second quarter, gross fixed capital formation increased by 3.2 percent compared to the same period last year.

With continued investments in key sectors such as financial services, infrastructure, and energy, Saudi Arabia remains focused on achieving the goals set out in its Vision 2030 blueprint. -WAM

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, up 27.27%, was the top gainer while, Salalah Mills, down 6.03%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,772.88 points, up by 0.25% from previous close. The Shariah Index ended up by 0.15% at 438.58 points. Al Omaniya Non convertible Bonds 2020, up 27.27%, was the top gainer while, Salalah Mills, down 6.03%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 466 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO1.54 million, with more than 6.81 million shares changing hands. Out of 52 traded securities, 14 advanced, 18 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 182K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 107K, followed by foreign investors for RO 75K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,801.85 points, up 0.42%. Prices

of Muscat Insurance, Al Madina Investments, Ominvest, Oman United Insurance, National Bank Oman were up by 6.67%, 6.00%, 2.86%, 2.80%, 1.85% respectively. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, Oman & Emirates Investment were down by 2.00%, 1.32% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,833.91 points, down 0.5%. Prices of A'Saffa Foods were up by 1.32% respectively. Prices of Salalah Mills, Al Anwar Ceramics, Galfar Engineering, Oman Chromite, Al Maha Ceramics were down by 6.03%, 3.80%, 1.48%, 0.74%, 0.64% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.51% before closing at 1,849.51 points. Prices of Shell Oman Marketing, Al Jazeera Services, Sharqiyah Desalination, Abraj Energy were up by 6.67%, 1.90%, 1.46%, 1.01% respectively. Prices of Musandam Power, Majan College, Al Maha Markting, Barka Water & Power Company, Al Suwadi Power were down by 5.92%, 3.67%, 2.80%, 1.52%, 1.30% respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,778.51	4,764.28	4,772.88	4,760.85	12.04	0.25
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,813.10	7,775.10	7,801.85	7,769.33	32.52	0.42
Industry Index	5,867.39	5,833.91	5,833.91	5,862.97	-29.06	-0.50
Services Index	1,865.07	1,849.51	1,849.51	1,859.07	-9.57	-0.51
MSX Shariah Index	438.88	437.61	438.58	437.93	0.65	0.15
MSX TRI INDEX	6,641.37	6,621.60	6,633.55	6,616.82	16.73	0.25
FINANCIAL TRI IDX	8,876.49	8,833.32	8,863.70	8,826.75	36.95	0.42
INDUSTRIAL TRI IDX	6,769.58	6,730.95	6,730.95	6,764.47	-33.52	-0.50
SERVICES TRI IDX	2,170.30	2,152.19	2,152.19	2,163.32	-11.13	-0.51
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
6,813,836	1,537,732	466	24,588,610,944	14	18	20	52

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

SNSECURITY NAMEVOLUME TURNOVER TRADES OPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PR.PREV. CLOSEDIFF. RD.DIFF. %LAST PDLAST BDLAST OFRPREV. VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	7,000	5,600	1	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.750	0.050	6.667	0.800	0.000	-0.825	0.100	76,000,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	148,550	53,060	27	0.354	0.360	0.352	0.360	0.350	0.010	2.857	0.360	0.360	-0.360	0.100	240,611,553
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	9,000	2,236	3	0.246	0.257	0.246	0.257	0.250	0.007	2.800	0.257	0.246	-0.260	0.100	25,700,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	19,153	5,267	2	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.270	0.005	1.852	0.275	0.275	-0.290	0.100	447,135,248
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	100	39	1	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.380	0.005	1.316	0.385	0.380	-0.392	0.100	46,200,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,037,259	309,619	44	0.295	0.300	0.295	0.300	0.297	0.003	1.010	0.300	0.295	-0.300	0.100	231,060,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,445,289	205,681	38	0.142	0.143	0.142	0.142	0.141	0.001	0.709	0.142	0.133	-0.150	0.100	791,968,970
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	10,000	1130	1	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.109	-0.124	-0.100	0.100	16,950,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	175	70	1	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.000	0.000	0.399	0.395	-0.399	0.100	132,018,211
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	12,000	888	3	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	-0.079	0.100	6,660,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,188,036	311,224	29	0.263	0.263	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.261	0.261	-0.263	0.100	1,951,663,236
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	141,085	10,914	5	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.077	-0.078	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000004735	SEMBOORP SALALAH	21,400	2,334	3	0.110	0.110	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.000	0.000	0.109	0.109	-0.112	0.100	104,048,343
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	20,783	1,666	6	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.079	-0.082	0.100	14,000,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	356,230	27,074	16	0.076	0.077	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.076	-0.076	0.100	51,291,445
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	193,518	195,276	22	1.007	1.010	1.004	1.004	1.006	-0.002	-0.199	1.004	1.004	-1.006	0.100	733,000,000
OM0000003969	COREDOO	108,554	31,164	6	0.287	0.288	0.287	0.288	0.289	-0.001	-0.346	0.288	0.287	-0.288	0.100	187,471,938
OM0000009072	QQ GAS NETWORKS	929,562	137,326	110	0.148	0.148	0.147	0.147	0.148	-0.001	-0.676	0.147	0.147	-0.147	0.100	636,601,716
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	295,480	121,220	19	0.414	0.414	0.408	0.408	0.411	-0.003	-0.730	0.408	0.408	-0.415	0.100	96,455,280
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	26,461	2,032	2	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.076	-0.082	0.100	54,294,882
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	20,678	1,551	3	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.076	-0.001	-1.316	0.075	0.075	-0.078	0.100	9,140,625
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	35,750	6,342	6	0.179	0.179	0.177	0.177	0.184	-0.007	-3.804	0.177	0.178	-0.177	0.100	38,940,000
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	21,406	5,780	6	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.287	-0.017	-5.923	0.270	0.270	-0.278	0.100	19,005,300
Total	23	6,047,469	1,437,501	354												

Parallel Market

OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	1,244	398	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.300	0.020	6.667	0.320	0.000	-0.320	1.000	3,528,015
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	8,304	440	1	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.050	0.003	6.000	0.053	0.045	-0.053	0.100	4,505,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	10,000	2,150	2	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.211	0.004	1.896	0.215	0.215	-0.215	0.100	13,158,919
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	1,020	142	1	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.137	0.002	1.460	0.139	0.000	-0.139	0.100	13,594,500
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	70,287	8,181	5	0.107	0.108	0.107	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.935	0.108	0.106	-0.108	0.100	241,590,927
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	900	106	2	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.117	0.001	0.855	0.118	0.117	-0.118	0.100	59,956,218
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	5,929	1,038	2	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.170	-0.192	0.100	5,676,276
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	33,900	3,695	6	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.000	0.000	0.109	0.108	-0.109	0.100	1,786,958
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	1,784	285	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.150	-0.155	0.100	352,448,620
OM0000002372	OMAN OIL MARKETING	500	395	1	0.790	0.790	0.790	0.790	0.790	0.000	0.000	0.790	0.780	-0.804	0.100	46,407,250
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	13,644	773	5	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.056	-0.057	0.100	83,368,283
OM0000008447	OMAN RET FUND	101,470	6,899	17	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.067	-0.068	0.100	13,600,000
OM0000005669	JABAL REIF	1,000	101	1	0.100	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	-0.105	0.100	17,754,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	356	995	1	2.795	2.795	2.795	2.795	2.799	-0.004	-0.143	2.795	2.700	-2.795	0.100	250,711,500
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	2,494	388	3	0.156	0.156	0.155	0.155	0.156	-0.001	-0.641	0.155	0.155	-0.170	0.100	8,525,000
OM0000001029	OMAN CHROMITE	475	270	1	3.600	3.600	3.600	3.600	3.627	-0.027	-0.744	3.600	3.600	-3.740	1.000	11,880,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	54,346	4,925	6	0.092	0.092	0.091	0.091	0.092	-0.001	-1.087	0.091	0.091	-0.101	0.100	7,735,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	231,920	30,856	14	0.134	0.134	0.133	0.133	0.135	-0.002	-1.481	0.133	0.133	-0.135	0.100	26,997,197
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	10,426	2,717	7	0.275	0.275	0.280	0.280	0.264	-0.004	-1.515	0.280	0.241	-0.259	0.100	41,600,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	179,000	26,844	18	0.150	0.150	0.147	0.147	0.150	-0.003	-2.000	0.147	0.147	-0.150	0.100	245,403,270
OM0000003930	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	1,850	1,924	1	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.070	-0.030	-2.884	1.040	1.000	-0.000	0.100	71,760,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	6,000	630	1	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.109	-0.004	-3.870	0.105	0.105	-0.110	0.100	9,450,000
OM0000001889	SALALAH MILLS	9,575	4,678	2	0.499	0.499	0.499	0.499	0.531	-0.032	-6.026	0.499	0.000	-0.499	0.100	24,391,569
Total	23	751,784	98,638	99												



LIFESTYLE

HOW INFECTIONS AFTER HIP REPLACEMENT INCREASE RISK OF DEATH: STUDY



About 1 in 7 Canadian adults live with osteoarthritis, a number that is expected to grow as baby boomers age and life expectancies increase. Joint replacement procedures can lessen pain and improve quality of life for people who are dealing with this progressive disease

According to new research, patients who experience a periprosthetic joint infection (PJI) following a total hip replacement have a five-fold greater risk of death within a ten-year period.

The findings of the research were published in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery.

Researchers from ICES, Sunnybrook Research Institute, and the Department of Surgery at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto examined the long-term (10 year) mortality risk of PJI for 175,432 adults receiving their first hip replacement in Ontario, Canada. This is one of the largest studies to date of patients with PJI following total hip arthroplasty (THA). ICES and Arthritis Society Canada provided funding for this study.

About 1 in 7 Canadian adults live with osteoarthritis, a number that is expected to grow as baby boomers age and life expectancies increase. Joint replacement procedures can lessen pain and improve quality of life for people who are dealing with this progressive disease.

“Most hip replacement surgeries are very successful, but unfortunately, about one to two percent of patients develop infections of the prosthetic joint. It is well established that such infections impact patient health over the long-term, but this research provides compelling evidence that it can even lead to death,” said lead author Dr. Raman Mundi, an assistant professor in Temerty Medicine’s Department of Surgery and a surgeon-scientist in the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

The researchers found that among adults receiving their

first hip replacement from 2002 to 2021, 868 patients (0.5%) required further surgery for a PJI within one year of hip replacement.

Patients with a PJI within the first year had a significantly higher 10-year mortality rate than those who didn’t develop an infection (11.4 per cent versus 2.2 per cent)

“Our findings underscore the need for arthroplasty surgeons and infectious disease experts to work together on prevention efforts and follow best practice guidelines for patient care,” said senior author Dr. Bheeshma Ravi, an adjunct scientist with ICES, surgeon-scientist with the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and assistant professor of surgery at Temerty Medicine.

The authors provide several reasons for why they believe the association between PJI and mortality is likely causal and not correlational.

First is that the association was quite strong, with the authors controlling for variables such as age, sex, income and health status. Second is that there is precedent that major orthopaedic events (for example, hip fractures) can directly increase risk of mortality. And finally, this study builds on existing evidence that used smaller cohorts of patients and shorter follow-up times.

“Ultimately, we need to develop effective strategies to prevent and cure these infections to reduce the long-term risk to patients,” added Ravi.

“Joint replacement surgery is the mainstay of definitive management for millions of patients living with end-stage osteoarthritis. Although the risk of infection is quite low for the individual patient, given that tens of thousands of hip replacements are performed annually in Canada, and 70% are directly due to arthritis, it is crucial from a public health perspective to find strategies that reduce infection risk even further. Funding this research has allowed us to quantify this risk and provides necessary data to inform future prevention strategies,” said Dr Sian Bevan, Chief Science Officer at Arthritis Society Canada. - AMI

About 1 in 7 Canadian adults live with osteoarthritis, a number that is expected to grow as baby boomers age and life expectancies increase. Joint replacement procedures can lessen pain and improve quality of life for people who are dealing with this progressive disease

SPORTS

Captaincy-related decisions will be taken by coaches, selectors: PCB

Sources told Geo News that wicketkeeper batter Mohammad Rizwan is the top contender to replace Babar Azam for the white ball captaincy

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi confirmed on Saturday that decisions regarding the captaincy of the men's team will be made by coaches and selectors. On Friday, reports started to surface that Babar Azam could lose the white-ball captaincy. Sources told Geo News that wicketkeeper batter Mohammad Rizwan is the top contender to replace Babar Azam for the white ball captaincy. PCB is set to hold a "Connection Camp," where the future of the



Pakistan team will be discussed alongside possible captaincy shifts across all formats. During an inspection of the Gaddafi Stadium construction project, Naqvi revealed that the captaincy-related

decisions would be made by the coaches and selectors. "I have left these matters to them. A workshop

is scheduled for September 22, where everyone will be invited to give their suggestions, and deci-

sions will be made afterwards," Navi said. "I know that if there is any mistake, it falls on me. If the team does not perform well, if there is a selection mistake, or if the coach loses, it will all reflect on me," he added. Pakistan will host the ICC Champions Trophy next year, and India's participation remains uncertain. Naqvi confirmed that the PCB has been in touch with the India cricket board and said, "The Champions Trophy will be held in Pakistan. We are in touch with the boards of the teams participating in the tournament." Pakistan have had its struggles in terms of management and in the field of cricket. Pakistan hit rock bottom after dropping to eighth position in the latest ICC Test Rankings, their lowest since 1965. The series of setbacks continued for Pakistan following their historic whitewash against Bangladesh in their two-match home Test series. It was the first instance when Pakistan tasted the sour flavour of defeat against Bangladesh in red-ball cricket. Pakistan will be looking to bounce back in their upcoming home Test series against England. **-ANI**

OVER SCOTLAND

Cameron Green hits career best figures in T20I as Australia complete sweep



EDINBURGH: Cameron Green's power-packed performance with the bat and ball ensured Australia completed a 3-0 series sweep over Scotland. Sixes rained from Green's bat as he raced to his career-best T20I score of 62* in 39 deliveries. Before arriving at the landmark feat with the bat, Green made the ball obey his will and hit his career-best with the ball with figures of 3/35. While chasing a modest total of 150, Scotland rattled Australia early after Bradley Currie removed Jake Fraser-McGurk for a duck. Bradley then forced Travis Head (12) to return back to the dugout cheaply. With Australia reduced to 45/2 after the end of the power-play, Green and skipper Mitchell

Marsh joined hands to stabilise Australia's sinking ship. Marsh was a bit scrappy in his 31-run knock, but Green completely adjusted to the movement that Scottish pacers produced early in the chase. Mark Watt was introduced in the attack, and Green welcomed him with a drive down the ground for four before launching him for a maximum. The 61-run stand met its end in the 10th over after Marsh chopped the ball into the stumps off Jack Jarvis. Despite the loss of the skipper, Green and Tim David continued the assault, looking to wrap up the game completely. Green showcased the wide variety of his shots stored in his arsenal. David struck two fours be-

fore being holed by Christopher Sole's slower delivery. Green continued to lead the assault against Watt, and Aaron Hardie struck the winning runs, sealing a six-wicket win with more than three overs to spare. Earlier in the innings, Scotland were put to bat by Australia, and Brandon McMullen was the standout performer for the hosts. He led the charge with the bat and scored 56 in 39 deliveries. His crucial knock propelled the hosts' total to 149/9. Green left his mark throughout the first innings. He ended George Munsey's promising-looking knock on 25. He stung back by dismissing skipper Richie Berrington (8). He capped off his impressive display by picking Mark Watt's scalp. **-ANI**

YOUNGEST TO LEAD ICC

There are no concerns: PCB chief on Jay Shah becoming ICC chairman



LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi stated that there are no concerns about BCCI secretary Jay Shah becoming the International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman. At the end of the last month, Jay Shah was elected unopposed as the ICC Chairman. Shah was the sole nominee for the chairmanship after current chair Greg Barclay decided not to seek a third term. Naqvi opened up about Shah becoming the ICC chairman and the next Asian Cricket Council meeting. "We are in touch with Jay Shah; there are no concerns about his becoming ICC Chairman. The ACC meeting is on September 8 and 9," Naqvi said. Naqvi went on to confirm that he won't be present in the meeting and said, "I will not be able to attend the meeting, and Salman Nasir will attend. The meeting will finalise matters related to the new president." Shah will assume this role on December 1, 2024. He is the youngest person to lead the ICC. He also joins the likes of Jagmohan Dalmiya, Sharad Pawar, N Srinivasan, and Shashank Manohar as Indians who have led the ICC in the past. **-ANI**

ASIAN CHAMPIONS TROPHY



Malaysia hold Pakistan to a 2-2 draw in Moqi

MOQI [CHINA]: After Korea held Japan in a 5-5 goalfest in the opening match of the day, a late surge by Malaysia saw them hold Pakistan to a 2-2 draw in a closely fought match in the Asian Champions Trophy in Moqi, China, on Sunday. Playing under the guidance of newly-appointed Head Coach Tahir Zahan, Pakistan made a fine start to their campaign with an attacking first quarter. Though Malaysia was strong on their defence, not letting successful shots on goal, an infringement in the circle with seconds lefts on the clock for the first hooter saw Pakistan being awarded a penalty corner (PC). Despite four retakes, however, their star dragflicker Abu Mahmood could not breach the Malaysian rushers. It was not the case when they worked hard to earn a PC in the 24th minute, as per a press release. A few quick tips by Zaman to Mahmood ahead of the PC saw them come up with a variation in the penalty corner attack which led to Sufyan Khan scoring the goal and fetching Pakistan a crucial 1-0 lead. Only minutes before

this, Malaysia had a great chance to score from a PC but they squandered the opportunity with a poorly executed variation. Riding on the 1-0 lead, Pakistan returned from the 10-minute half-time break to score a stupendous field goal by Zikriya Hayat in the 32nd minute. A defensive error by Pakistan, five minutes later, saw them concede a PC. It was the experienced Faizal Saari who came up with a fine goal to narrow down the goal deficit to 1-2. Malaysia had a brilliant opportunity to score in equaliser in the 43rd minute when they earned another PC but the dragflick was blocked away by Pakistani rushers. Malays made another impressive attack in the final minute of the third quarter, but could not muster a goal. The final quarter was intense, with both teams playing on-par with each other. While Pakistan defended their 2-1 lead with all their might, Malaysian attack pushed aggressively for a goal. It did not help Pakistan's cause that they were a man down with Faizal Qadir getting a yellow card in the 45th minute. **-ANI**

UPCOMING TESTS IN ASIA

Tough challenge whenever you play in these parts of world: Kane Williamson

GREATER NOIDA : New Zealand player Kane Williamson is looking to familiarise himself with the Asian conditions once again as the Kiwis stand on the verge of playing six Tests on India's and Sri Lanka's soil over the next two months. In the last decade, New Zealand haven't played more than three Tests in the subcontinent in a single year. New Zealand will begin their eight-week trip in Asia with a one-off Test against Afghanistan and two Tests against Sri Lanka. They will conclude their tour with a three-match series against India. Williamson acknowledged the fact that the Kiwis don't usually

find themselves playing such a volume of Tests, considering they played six Tests in 2020 and 2021. "You know, such a volume of Test cricket that we don't usually get, and obviously in this part of the world," Williamson told reporters in Greater Noida. The inaugural World Test Champions record in Asia doesn't boast the success that they are capable of achieving with the talent they have in their set-up. New Zealand have tasted success 16 times in 90 Tests while playing in the subcontinent. In India, New Zealand's underwhelming record takes a further slump with a mere two wins in 36 red-ball



matches. Williamson emphasised the need for New Zealand players to switch and adjust their game,

which would help them thrive in the subcontinent. "I think it's absolutely about trying to adjust your game because

we're not here consistently in this format. We go through quite long intervals of not playing here. So, you know, it is trying to sort of familiarise yourself again, and for us, our last Test match was sort of six or eight months ago. So you know, as a team, it's really connecting with that again as a red-ball group and looking to apply our skills, our plans as well as we can," he added. Williamson, who is one of the most experienced players in the New Zealand set-up, has yet to have a full crack at the Asian conditions. In 22 innings, Williamson, a leading member of the 'FAB 4', averages 31.36 with only five fifty-

plus scores to his name. The seasoned star is looking forward to the experience and challenge with New Zealand playing their first-ever Test against Afghanistan. "It's really important that we look to grow as a unit. It's nice and clear on how we want to play over here. We always know that it's a tough challenge whenever you play in these parts of the world, slightly different from back home. But you know, always a great experience and playing against a really, really strong side," he noted. The one-off Test between New Zealand and Afghanistan will begin on Monday at Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex. **-ANI**

Bank Muscat continues to inaugurate new green sports fields to enhance local sport team’s infrastructure

The bank recently inaugurated the new Green Sports field for Al Wahra Sports and Cultural Team in the Wilayat of Ibri

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, continues to hand over Green Sports Fields across the Sultanate of Oman in line with its commitment to social responsibility programmes.

The bank recently inaugurated the new Green Sports field for Al Wahra Sports and Cultural Team in the Wilayat of Ibri at an event held under the patronage of Naser Khamis Humood Al Mamari, and in the presence of Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah Al Shezawi, Regional Manager – Al Dhahira, Bank Muscat and team members.

On this occasion, Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah Al Shezawi, Regional Manager – Al Dhahira, Bank Muscat, said: “The Bank’s landmark CSR programme, Green Sports, was continuing to achieve great success in creating sustainable green spaces across the Sultanate. The new facility would help the Al Wahra team



develop the skills of its team members as well as other sports and cultural entities affiliated to it. We are proud of the success the programme achieved since its launch in 2012

and the great turn out witnessed every year. I would like to take this opportunity to invite everyone in the community to make the best use of the new facilities.”

Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah Al Shezawi further added: “Recently the Bank celebrated the inauguration of a number of sports fields’ projects across Oman, including greening of

football pitches, water desalination and lighting. The Bank will continue enhancing its role in this regard; reaffirming its commitment to corporate social responsibility.”

Speaking on the occasion of the inauguration of the Al Wahra Sports and Cultural Team in the Wilayat of Ibri, Khalid Nasir Al Ghafri, Team Head, expressed his appreciation for completing their project which comes as part of Bank Muscat’s Green Sports programme. He said: “The lighting system project will help the team to further benefit for the field’s infrastructure and it will provide the needed support to organize various social and cultural activities. I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank Bank Muscat for continuing to implement this unique programme to support local sports’ teams and youth in the Sultanate.”

Bank Muscat’s Green Sports programme is one of the leading CSR programs in Oman, which provides support to local sports teams as part of the bank’s efforts to develop sports infrastructure and green spaces throughout the Sultanate of Oman. The support includes greening of football pitches, water desalination and lighting. The facilities developed as part of the programme are often used as a venue for other social activities by local communities, leading to stronger social bonding and positive behaviour among young people as well as the development of talented Omani youth.

It is a matter of great encouragement that the Bank Muscat’s Green Sports programme has so far benefitted 183 teams with over 50,000 team members across the Sultanate of Oman.

CAMPAIGN

STRATEGIC



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The campaign is valid up to 31st October 2024 (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.)

In Oman, Toyota range includes the all-new Camry, all-new Land Cruiser, Urban Cruiser and Corolla.

Since its debut in 1982 and evolution over nine generations, the Toyota Camry has been embraced around the world for its outstanding performance, alluring design and renowned quality and value.

The new Camry is equipped with a choice of two powertrain options, including a 2.5-liter four-cylinder in line VVTi-e engine that produces 201 hp and 240 nm of torque and is paired with an eight-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmis-

sion; and an electrified hybrid powertrain, which combines a petrol engine and two electric motors delivering a combined power of 226 hp. It is also paired with an Electronically Controlled Continuously Variable Transmission (ECVT) delivering heightened driving pleasure.

The legendary Toyota Land Cruiser is the perfect vehicle to navigate even the most challenging terrains. Powering the Land Cruiser is a choice of two powertrain options. The V6 twin-turbo 3.5-liter petrol engine achieves class-leading performance that surpasses a conventional V8, producing 409 hp and up to 650 nm. This is paired to a 10-speed automatic transmission. Also available is a naturally aspirated 4.0-liter V6 petrol engine that produces 271 hp and up to 385 nm paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission.

Boasting a sleek, crossover SUV-like design, the five-seater Urban Cruiser exudes style and sophistication and features a spacious and roomy cabin with ample space for both passengers and their luggage. The vehicle owes much of its smooth acceleration and dynamic

on-road performance to the new Neo Drive Powertrain, which is the first of its kind in the Toyota lineup. It features a 1.5-liter, 4-cylinder gasoline engine and Integrated Starter Generator (ISG) that functions as both an electrified generator and motor. Combined with a compact Lithium-Ion battery, the powertrain delivers 102 hp and 135 Nm of torque, with an average fuel consumption of 19.8 km/l and is paired with six-speed automatic transmission that offers enhanced performance during low-speed and stop-start conditions.

The Corolla which is a reliable partner for every journey is equipped with a perfect combination of power, fuel-efficiency, space and safety features. Powering the Corolla is a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 hp and 20.39 kg-m of torque. For more immersive driving experiences, the engine is paired to a Direct Shift CVT transmission. Customers looking for a more fuel-efficient option can choose the 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine Corolla that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque. This is paired with a CVT transmission.

BankDhofar expands reach in South Al Batinah with new Al Ghashab branch



MUSCAT: Reinforcing its efforts to be closer to its customers, BankDhofar recently celebrated the official opening of a new branch in Al Ghashab–Al Rustaq within Al Batinah South Governorate.

The strategic opening, marking the addition of the 128th branch to BankDhofar and Dhofar Islamic expansive network across the Sultanate of Oman. The branch’s official inauguration was held under the patronage of Sheikh Humaid bin Salim Al Tabaai - Deputy Waliof Al Rustaq and attended by key members of the executive management team, and notable community figures.

Talib Mohamed Al Hajri, AGM-Interior Branches at BankDhofar, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, “We are delighted to expand our presence in Al Batinah South Governorate. The inauguration of our 128th branch in Al Ghashab aligns with our strategy to bring our services closer to customers, inviting them to explore the offerings at the new branch. As part of our ongoing commitment, we anticipate further branch openings across various governorates, exemplifying our dedication to providing an exceptional banking experience.”

The inauguration of AlGhashab branch marks a milestone in BankDhofar’s expansion initiative, with several new branches planned for unveiling in the upcoming months. The bank’s expansion aims to cater to customers across the Sultanate, in addition to the comprehensive



services provided by its existing 128 branches. Situated conveniently for accessibility, Al Ghashab branch offers an extensive array of banking services, meticulously designed to ensure convenience and customer satisfaction.

BankDhofar customers may access financial services through its branches network across the Sultanate of Oman, including account management, deposits, loans, foreign exchange, trade finance, investment solutions, and more. In addition to a wide network of 360 ATMs, CDMs & FFM around the Sultanate that work round-the-clock with high efficiency. For added customer convenience, the Bank offers smart banking at the fingertips through its mobile banking App. Customers may conduct a wide range of

instant mobile banking services. The services include instant transfer 24/7 to any local bank account, cardless cash, and instant international money transfer service with Western Union, among other services.

BankDhofar is one of the leading financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman and is renowned for its commitment to innovation, customer-centricity, and sustainable growth. With a wide range of products and services catering to individuals, corporates, and businesses, BankDhofar strives to deliver banking solutions that meet the evolving needs of its diverse customer base.

The bank’s dedication to excellence and its strong values have established it as a trusted partner for financial success in Oman.

ROUND-UP

Alizz Islamic Bank celebrates graduation of 2nd batch of Manahil Alizz internship programme

The bank hosted a formal ceremony to celebrate the accomplishment of the second batch of the programme which consisted of 34 motivated and ambitious students from various universities and colleges across the Sultanate of Oman

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank recently celebrated the conclusion of its second edition of the Manahil Alizz Internship Programme. The bank hosted a formal ceremony to celebrate the accomplishment of the second batch of the programme which consisted of 34 motivated and ambitious students from various universities and colleges across the Sultanate of Oman. The ceremony was attended by



Ali Al Mani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank and other members of the bank's executive management team. Special guests were also invited including the families of the graduates to celebrate this remarkable achievement. The programme is designed to empower and prepare third year university and college students and augment their capabilities by equipping them with the essential skills and knowledge required to successfully enter and thrive in the job market for a period of 3 months. The programme aims to not only enhance their leadership, personal development and project management skills but also teach them how to overcome challenges in the business sector and find suitable solutions.

The selection process of the 34 interns involved nominations from their respective academic institutions and Alizz Islamic Bank meticulously prepared a suitable framework, comprehensive curriculum and high-level classes and sessions to enhance their educational skills using the latest modern techniques. This approach ensured that knowledge is accessible to all students, obtained flexibly and easily equip them to understand the corporate working environment, banking sector characteristics, nuances of Islamic banking and fostering innovative thinking that enables them to become decision-makers and effective initiators in addressing key industry needs. The programme which spanned

three months included a group of exceptional local and regional leaders as guest speakers, including members of the bank's executive management team. This provided a unique opportunity for participants to learn from diverse leadership styles and experiences, which is essential for future success. The programme's philosophy is based on the belief that personal growth is driven by the accumulation of experiences, whether from individuals, societies, or different organisations. On the occasion, Ali Al Mani, the CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank said, "We at Alizz Islamic Bank continuously strive to develop the future leaders of Oman which is why we ensure to focus on educating, training and developing, the future

generations. Most importantly, equipping them with the skills and capabilities needed to contribute their creative potential towards serving their communities. We take pride and value the significant praise and positive impact of the Manahil Alizz programme. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all of those involved in the success of this program including the colleges and universities for their valuable collaboration and trust in our programs." The Manahil Alizz internship programme now has more than 50 graduates well equipped to start facing various kinds of pressures they might face in the workplace. It also enhanced their skills and gave them the platform to gain insights into the operations of a corporate

entity through various learning sessions, projects, and mentorships. Alizz Islamic Bank continues to cater to the youth and works on developing impactful programs that will contribute to the nation in one way or another. The bank continues to promote innovation, leadership and collaboration as part of the overall strategic plan. Alizz Islamic Bank's Learning and Development Department plays a crucial role in the organisation's success by ensuring employees continuously acquire the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to perform their roles effectively and this extends to our external stakeholders and partners. Their role is integral to the Bank's growth and overall sustainability.

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Oman Urban Hackathon concludes

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality recently celebrated the conclusion of the Oman Urban Hackathon competition under the patronage of Her Highness Sayyida Meyyan bint Shihab Al Said and in the presence of Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Hamidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality. Muscat Municipality organised the competition in collaboration with Oman Think Urban. It was hosted at the Youth Centre from 1 September to 3 September. The event saw a broad response, with the participation of ten teams consisting of 33 young students and professionals in the fields of architecture and urban planning, who competed to develop innovative ideas aimed at revitalising the target sites with a focus on humanising the space and providing implementable designs. The participating teams were divided into two categories, with five teams each competing to design the City Amphitheatre site at Qurum Park and Al-Manuma Souq. Participants presented their ideas and designs to a judging panel of experts in the field, which included Professor Mahmoud Al-Wahaibi, founder of Oman Think Urban, Majda Al-Hinai, architect and visual artist, Dr Samia Al-Mabsali, lecturer in the engineering department at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Muscat, and Engineer Maryam Al-Balushi, architect and urban planner. Speaking about the competition, Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Hamidi said: "We were pleased to organise this distinguished competition, which provided Omani engineers and urban planners the



opportunity to showcase their talent and creativity in designing urban and sustainable sites that align with our goals towards building vibrant and prosperous projects. The hackathon was an inspiring platform for innovation, offering participants the opportunity to engage with the real challenges cities and communities face and to contribute to developing practical and implementable solutions and designs that enhance the quality of life in Muscat. "At Muscat Municipality, we seek to collaborate with public and private sector entities and introduce initiatives that contribute to achieving sustainable development goals and improving the level of urban planning in accordance with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040." The event began with the registration and first screening phase, which focused on a park redesign - the ten teams with the most creative and feasible pro-

jects qualified to participate in the hackathon. During the competition, participants went through multiple stages, including developing initial ideas, designing, presenting ideas, creating detailed plans and maps, and finally implementing the design with Muscat Municipality. **Criteria** The criteria for selecting winners were based on the originality and innovation of the idea, considering community opinions and desires, economic feasibility, ease of implementation, and the sustainability of building materials. The competition witnessed intense competition, with a team consisting of Muhannad Al-Harouni, Rashid Al-Musalhi, Zuhair Al-Sawafi, and Salim Al-Alawi winning the "Best Pitch" award. The team consisting of Wadah Al-Rashdi, Abdullah Al-Rashdi, Mundhir Al-Ajmi, and Muhaymin Al-Touqi won the first

prize for the City Amtheatre site at Qurum Park. At Al-Manuma Souq, the team of Rounaq Al-Ismaili and Shema Al-Balushi won the "Best Pitch" award, while the first prize went to the team of Abeer Al-Lawati, Zahra Al-Lawati, and Fatima Al-Sawai. Professor Mahmoud Al-Wahaibi said, "We are delighted to collaborate with Muscat Municipality on this initiative, which significantly contributes to enhancing the capabilities of Omani talents, developing the urban planning sector in Oman, and also engaging the community in urban development efforts." "The idea of the hackathon emerged from the community's need for outdoor spaces in different areas, optimising and developing the infrastructure in Muscat Governorate, and striving to apply modern urban planning principles and social sustainability foundations." The winning designs included social and commercial elements ensuring economic returns, such as shops, food stalls, zip lines, and city observation platforms. The projects also embraced renewable energy factors by utilising solar power, rainwater and wadis to create an environment harmonious with the city. The Oman Urban Hackathon was an innovative challenge aimed at redesigning key public sites in the Muscat Governorate while preserving architectural identity and urban fabric and applying social sustainability principles. Participants developed feasible ideas and designs focused on various social, service, and economic aspects.

INDIAN SCHOOL MULADHA



ISML hosts CBSE Oman Cluster Football Tournament

MUSCAT: The CBSE Oman Cluster Football Tournament 2024-25 for Boys - U14, U17 and U19 categories, a much-anticipated event in the sports calendar, came to an exhilarating conclusion on 4th September 2024 at the lush green ground of the host school, Indian School Muladha. The tournament brought together the best 35 football teams from 15 CBSE schools across the Sultanate of Oman, showcasing talent, teamwork, and a passion for the sport. The first day witnessed 20 exciting matches, followed by 12 more on the second day, bringing the total to 32 matches, including the semi-finals and finals. The finals of the U-14, U-17 and U-19 matches were played on 4th September 2024 evening which gave hair raising moments to the spectators. In the U-14 category, Indian School Al Ghubra clinched victory defeating Indian School Muscat by a narrow margin of 1:0. In the U17 category Indian School

Muladha and Indian School Muscat competed and Indian School Muscat became victorious scoring 1 goal. The finalists of U 19 category were Indian School Muscat and Indian School Wadi Kabir. Indian School Wadi Kabir emerged as the champions, defeating Indian School Muscat in a closely contested final with a score of 1:0. Trophies were awarded to the best goalkeepers and players in each category, recognizing their outstanding performances. The best goalkeepers, serving as the last line of defense and preventing opposing teams from scoring, were Rayan Singh of Indian School Al Ghubra (U-14), Noel of Indian School Muscat (U-17), and Kelvin Sibi of Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir (U-19). In the best player category, Iftakkar of Indian School Sur (U-14), Fabish Fanas of Indian School Muladha (U-17), and Akash Madhu of Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir (U-19) were celebrated for their exceptional skills.

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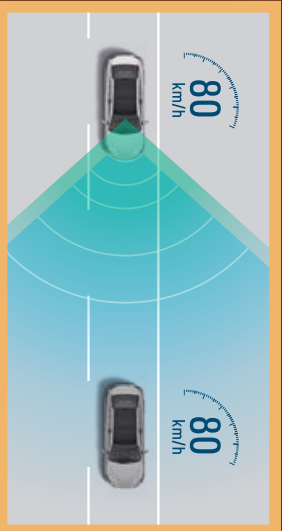
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Indian School Wadi Kabir



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