



HIS MAJESTY SENDS CONDOLENCES TO PRESIDENT OF CHILE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Gabriel Boric of the Republic of Chile for victims of wildfires that broke out in central Chile. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to President Gabriel Boric, families of the victims and the people of Chile, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. — **ONA**



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OPENING OF DUQM REFINERY TO STRENGTHEN OMAN-KUWAIT TIES

The Royal presence of His Majesty the Sultan and Emir of Kuwait in Duqm to attract investment in the Sultanate

MUSCAT: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said that the Royal patronage of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, over the opening of the Duqm Refinery project reflects interest in investment in the Sultanate of Oman and the keenness to attracting investors to achieve the objectives of the Oman Vision 2040. The move aims to enhance economic diversification policies and diversify sources of income.

He added that the Royal presence of the two leaders at this major event will enhance the efforts made to attract investment to the Sultanate of Oman in general and to the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (SEZAD) in particular.

He explained that the opening of the Duqm Refinery will open up investment vistas in other areas based on the refinery's products. It paves the way for investments in the fields of petrochemicals that maximize the use of the natural resources of the Sultanate of Oman, Al Yousef said.

He pointed out that the Duqm Refinery is a tributary to the industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman, as it is one of the heavy industries in terms of investment value and production capacity.

He added that the Duqm Refinery also contributes to the establishment of many converting industries with high added value.

Al Yousef further said that the



Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. — **ONA**

Duqm Refinery has enriched the local markets through contracts and purchases. The services that were agreed upon amount to more than USD 2.4 billion, and national companies operating in the field of construction and supplies benefited from these services.

The minister stressed that the Duqm Refinery represents the success of the economic partnership with the State of Kuwait to establish this project, which is a model that promotes the establishment of other partnerships for investment in diverse economic sectors.

Al Yousef concluded that the Sultanate of Oman owns three refineries in addition to the Duqm Refinery, (Sohar Refinery - Mina Al Fahal Refinery - Salalah Refinery), noting that everyone is hopeful given the economic, investment and social importance that such refineries represent for each country.

These refineries are also one of the most important support projects that countries rely on to achieve diversification in national revenues, as these refineries refine and process oil and transform it into high-quality products. These refineries adopt the latest technologies to preserve health and the environment from pollution in cooperation with the authorities concerned. — **ONA**

Duqm Refinery is the largest investment of its kind between Oman and Kuwait

MUSCAT: A number of ministers stressed that the Duqm Refinery is the largest investment of its kind between two Gulf countries represented by OQ - the global integrated energy group - and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. The project is an ideal example of the convergence of economic interests.

Abdulsalam Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), said that the Royal patronage of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, over the opening of the Duqm Refinery, the



largest joint venture between the two countries, embodies the unlimited support of the two leaders for investment and economic partnership between the two countries. "We are proud of the success of this partnership, the level it has reached, and the incentive it offers for other investment partnerships," he added. Al Murshidi said that the

Duqm Refinery in the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (SEZAD) is the largest joint investment between two GCC countries in the refineries and petrochemicals sector. This project, he noted, culminates the bilateral relations between the two countries, embodies the depth of the economic relations between them, and links common interests with more joint investments.

He expressed his aspiration that the Duqm Refinery will open broader prospects for investors from Arab and foreign countries to invest in the Sultanate of Oman, especially in the SEZAD. **>A5**

PUBLIC PROSECUTION

Over 17% increase in number of lawsuits last year

MUSCAT: The Public Prosecution Department on Monday reported that the number of lawsuits filed at its units during 2023 grew by 17.2 percent (to a total of 37,836) as against the figure registered in 2022.

This was unveiled during an annual conference of Public Prosecution titled "Procedural Justice". The conference tackled various topics of relevance to annual statistical indicators of lawsuits, the number of defendants and the type of rulings issued.

Attorney General Nasr Khamis Al Sawa'ee spoke about data on crimes related to public funds and money laundering during 2022 and 2023. Statistics showed that, in 2022, sixty-two lawsuits about those crimes were filed against employees who either acted beyond the discretions endorsed for their jobs or failed to meet the standards when performing their duties, he said.

He added that the number of



such crimes grew to 105 in 2023.

Yet, he affirmed, Oman globally ranks among countries that have the lowest crime rate, compared to countries with which Oman is similar in terms of economic, geographical and social structures.

Dr. Ahmed Said Al Shukaili, Assistant Attorney General and Official Spokesman of the Public Prosecution department, said that the majority of lawsuits filed during 2023 were crimes of misdemean-

our (35,777), followed by felonies (3,777) and crimes pertaining to violations of administrative procedures (282 cases).

Al Shukaili pointed out that 96.9 percent of the cases were sealed and that only 3.1 percent of them remained unsettled.

Giving a breakup, Al Shukaili said that the majority of the lawsuits were filed in the Governorate of Muscat (16,534), followed by North Al Batinah Governorate

35,777

the majority of lawsuits filed during 2023 were crimes of misdemeanour (35,777), followed by felonies (3,777) and crimes pertaining to violations of administrative procedures (282 cases)

(5,913 cases) and Dhofar Governorate (3,922 cases).

In terms of peak rates during 2022-2023, Al Dhahirah Governorate saw a surge in cases (56 percent), followed by Al Wusta Governorate (55 percent), Al Shukaili observed.

He explained that premeditated murder crimes went down to 7 during 2023, compared to 13 in 2022. A total of 219 lawsuits were filed about public funds and

money laundering in 2023, compared to 154 such cases in 2022, said Al Shukaili, noting that regained funds during 2023 stood at OMR3,432,637.

Al Shukaili pointed out that the number of lawsuits on felonies filed at the Public Prosecution Department in 2023 rose by 399 to a total of 1,777 cases, an increase of 29 percent over the figure of 2022 (1,378 felonies).

He explained that felonies constituted 4.7 percent of the total number of lawsuits filed at the Public Prosecution Department in 2023. Statistics show that the crime of issuing bad cheques topped the list of most common crimes committed in 2023 (8,461 cases), followed by labour law violation crimes (7,571 cases), crimes related to the violation of expatriate residency law (6,263 cases), the violation of the Consumer Protection Law (3,340 cases) and fraud crimes (3,202 cases), said Al Shukaili. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Tracking chip installed on whale

1 A tracking chip was installed on the Arabian Sea humpback whale. **>A5**

WORLD Death toll in Chile wildfires rises to 112

2 The death toll from wildfires raging in Chile has climbed to 112. **>A7**

SPORTS Impressive victory for Ahmad Al Harthy

3 Asian Le Mans Series leaders Ahmad Al Harthy, Deletraz and Mazepin claimed their 2nd win. **>A8**

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TIMINGS

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Asr.....3:38pm
Maghrib.....6:01pm
Isha.....7:13pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:28am

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EXPRESS

تطبق الشروط والأحكام

Khoula Hospital gets global accreditation for baby care

Many steps were taken, including creating a child-friendly environment by providing special rooms for children and mothers for breastfeeding

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Khoula Hospital, represented by the obstetrics, gynecology and neonatal departments, obtained the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) from the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund for supporting breastfeeding for healthy generations.

It is the first child-friendly government hospital in the Sultanate of Oman to obtain this accreditation in more than 20 years.

The celebration was held under the auspices of Dr. Said Harib Al-Lamki, MoH Undersecretary for Health Affairs in the presence of Dr. Rashid Al-Abri, Director General of Khoula Hospital and representatives from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF.

Dr. Salima Al-Mamari, MoH Director of Nutrition Department stressed that Khoula Hospital has met the BFHI requirements of the WHO and UNICEF aiming to motivate hospitals to implement ten steps encouraging mothers to successful breastfeeding.

Dr. Rashid Al-Abri, Director General of Khoula Hospital, stressed in his speech that ob-



taining this accreditation is an achievement for the hospital and reflects its commitment to providing optimal health care for children and improving the quality of their lives and their families.

He said that this achievement was the result of efforts undertaken over the past year to improve children's care in the hospital, based on their rights and a commitment to providing better health care to them.

He added that many measures have been taken for this achievement, including creating a child-friendly environment by providing special rooms for children and mothers to breastfeed, training employees on the needs of children and mothers, and providing support services to breastfeeding mothers, including counseling services and psychological support.

He stressed that the honour for Khoula Hospital is a new beginning, and we will continue to work to improve children's care in the hospital with utmost care.

For her part, Dr. Salima Al-Mamari, Director of the Nutrition Department at the Ministry of Health, indicated that the Baby-Friendly Hospitals Initiative is one of the best and most important programmes to support breastfeeding at health institutions.

She added that the General Directorate of Khoula Hospital have made persistent efforts to implement ten steps of the child-friendly hospital initiative in the relevant departments and witnessed great cooperation from medical teams to develop health care services for the community.

She stated that the national team from the Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Health conducted the first visit to evaluate the child-friendly hospital initiative last October, which included meetings, visits, and continuous follow-ups.

She explained that obtaining the accreditation certificate by the Khoula Hospital came after the completion of the evaluation processes by the national team, as the BFHI relies on adopting ten steps for the success of breastfeeding. The hospital has successfully passed the policy implementation test, applied for the international and local code and received an evaluation grade of more than 80 percent in the initiative's indicators.

It is noteworthy that the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) is a global accreditation programme, launched in 1991 by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund. The Ten Steps to successful breastfeeding are:

- 1- Having a written infant feeding policy that is routinely communicated to staff and parents, comply fully with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.
- 2- Ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge, competence and skills to support breastfeeding
- 3- Discuss the importance and management of breastfeeding with pregnant women and their families.
- 4- Facilitate immediate and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact and support mothers to initiate breastfeeding as soon as possible after birth.
- 5- Support mothers to initiate and maintain breastfeeding and manage common difficulties.
- 6- Do not provide breastfed newborns any food or fluids other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
- 7- Enable mothers and their infants to remain together and to practice rooming-in 24 hours a day.
- 8- Support mothers to recognise and respond to their infants' cues for feeding.
- 9- Counsel mothers on the use and risks of feeding bottles, teats and pacifiers.
- 10- Establishing supportive groups to provide ongoing support and care for mothers after discharge.

NAMIBIA

His Majesty sends condolences

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Nangolo Mbumba of Namibia on the death of President Hage Geingob.

His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt condolences to President Mbumba, the family of the deceased and the people of Namibia. -ONA

NEW ZEALAND

HM sends greetings to New Zealand

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Cindy Kiro, Governor General of New Zealand on her country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sen-

timents and best wishes of good health and happiness to Governor-General Cindy Kiro. His Majesty also wished the people of New Zealand further progress and prosperity.

-ONA

SEZAD

Duqm Airport-Ras Markaz road project to be ready by mid-2025



DUQUM: The dualisation of the main road from Duqm Airport roundabout to Ras Markaz (54 km long) constitutes a step forward in the establishment of a strategic road network within the masterplan of the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (SEZAD).

Eng. Abdullah Salim Al Hakma-

ni, Manager of Technical Affairs at SEZAD, said that the project cost stands at OMR57 million.

He affirmed the completion of more than 27 percent of the 54-km road from Duqm Airport roundabout to Ras Markaz, noting that the whole project is expected to be completed by mid-2025. -ONA

OVER 159,000 VISITORS

Al Buraimi winter event stimulates tourism in the region



Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 159,000 people visited Al Buraimi Winter event in its first edition, according to statistics issued by the Al Buraimi Governor's office.

Salem bin Namshan Al Kaabi, Director of the Events and Awareness Department at the Al Buraimi Governor's Office, said: "During the first ten days of the event, a large number of tourists from in-



side and outside the Sultanate of Oman visited the festival. The numbers began to gradually rise from the first day of the event."

Al Kaabi added: "The total number of visitors reached 159,013, belonging to various age groups. 20 small and medium enterprises, 9 communities, 35 productive families, 20 restaurant owners took part in the events."

The Director of the Events and Awareness Department at Al

Buraimi Governor's Office stated that the sessions included a group of recreational and cultural activities, daily performances, theatre events, the heritage village, and a number of corners for small and medium enterprises, restaurants, productive families, competitions, and accompanying activities.

Al Kaabi pointed out that the Al Buraimi winter event contributed greatly to stimulating tourism and economic activity, through increas-

ing the occupancy rate in hotels in the governorate, and increasing purchasing activity in its markets.

The Buraimi Winter festival is the first leg of events organised in the Wilayat of Al Buraimi. The second leg will begin on 7 February in the Wilayat of Mahdha, followed by the Wilayat of Sunaynah. A number of activities approved by the Buraimi Governor's Office will be organised during the winter period, according to an approved time plan.



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India and Oman trusted allies in an
evolving landscape: Top economist

In an exclusive
interview with *Times
of Oman*, Sanjeev
Sanyal, a leading
Indian economist
and member of the
Economic Advisory
Council to the Prime
Minister of India,
reinforced India's
enduring friendship
with Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Renowned Indian economist and key advisor to the Prime Minister of India, Sanjeev Sanyal, has underlined the steadfast nature of the historic bond between India and Oman.

In an exclusive chat with *Times of Oman* recently, Sanyal highlighted the critical role of India-Oman's trusted alliance and explored diverse avenues for collaboration between the two nations against the backdrop of evolving global dynamics.

Sanyal, the Principal Economic Advisor to the Government of India, reinforced India's enduring friendship with Oman and highlighted the critical role of their trusted partnership in the midst of global transformations.

"Oman is an old friend, and that



relationship remains in place," said Sanyal, underscoring the historical depth of the bond between the two nations.

He pointed to the current global scenario where established multilateral and geopolitical frameworks are being scrutinised, stressing the need for India to align with dependable partners during this transitional phase.

Sanyal outlined various potential areas for cooperation between India and Oman, ranging from security arrangements in the Indian Ocean to energy security, tourism, and space exploration.

He acknowledged the changing dynamics in the global context and stressed the importance of forging alliances with reliable partners, citing Oman as a steadfast companion on India's journey.

"As we navigate this uncertain environment, we need trusted partners and friends, and Oman is certainly a country we look to as an old friend on this journey," affirmed Sanyal.

In his role as a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India, Sanyal expressed optimism about the extensive possibilities for collaboration between the two nations.

He specifically highlighted the challenges facing the security of the Indian Ocean and underscored Oman's pivotal role as a key partner in addressing these concerns.

Sanyal also identified energy security, tourism, and space exploration as promising areas for bilateral cooperation.

The 53-year-old best-selling

India-Oman lecture series explores
5,000 years of shared history

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of India in Muscat organised the third lecture in the series "From Mandvi to Muscat: Indian Community and the shared history of India and Oman" at the embassy hall on Sunday.

Renowned historian, economist, and member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Economic Advisory Council, Sanjeev Sanyal, delivered the lecture titled "Mandvi to Muscat: Five thousand years of exchange."

The captivating lecture shed light on the historic ties between India and Oman, exploring ancient maritime connections, shipbuilding traditions, and trade.

Sanyal shared insights into the Government of India's project to reconstruct an ancient stitched ship based on a 4th-5th century AD concept.

The ambitious plan involves sailing the ship from Mandvi to Muscat, a project announced during the



The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from the Indian community, Omanis of Indian origin, scholars, and distinguished guests. Paresh Shah from the Shah Nagardas Family shared a narrative of his family's history, underscoring their contributions to the historical relations between India and Oman.

In the culmination of the

programme, Ms. Anisha Parjit, founder of the Oman Book Lovers Club, engaged in a thought-provoking interview with Sanyal. The interview delved into the profound insights of the accomplished author, shedding light on his role as a prominent figure in the Economic Advisory Council and his contributions as a best-selling author.

author, renowned for his contributions in the financial sector, spent two decades at Deutsche Bank, where he served as Global Strategist & Managing Director until 2015.

Recognised as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in 2010, Sanyal's diverse

expertise includes environmentalism and urban theory. He was awarded the Eisenhower Fellowship in 2007 for his work on urban dynamics, and has held positions as a Visiting Scholar at Oxford University, an Adjunct Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, and a Senior

Fellow of the World Wide Fund for Nature.

As India seeks to navigate the uncertainties of the global landscape, Sanyal's insights shed light on the multifaceted potential for collaboration between India and Oman, emphasising the enduring strength of their friendship.

Oman participates in
global forum on ethics
of artificial intelligence



LJUBLJANA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, is currently taking part in the Global Forum on the ethics of artificial intelligence 2024.

The two-day event is organised by Slovenia, under the patronage of the UNESCO.

Oman's delegation to the forum is led by Majid Said Al Bahri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

During the event, Al Bahri reviewed efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in the field of artificial intelligence governance and national initiatives in this field.

He also shed light on the most prominent efforts and initiatives of the Ministry of Education in the field of linking artificial intelligence with education, and the ministry's plans related to artificial intelligence through the Executive Programme for Artificial Intelligence in School Education.

In the 1st day of the forum, high-level decision-makers, industry leaders, representatives of scientific and research institutions, and non-government organizations will share their insights and good practices about the governance of AI at global, regional and national levels. -ONA

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OMAN INNOVATION FESTIVAL INAUGURATED

The activities of the Oman Innovation Festival in its first edition were launched at the Muscat Innovation Complex under the slogan of 'Knowledge, Partnership, and Sustainability' on Monday. Organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation, the activities of the festival will continue for five days under the patronage of HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs. -ONA



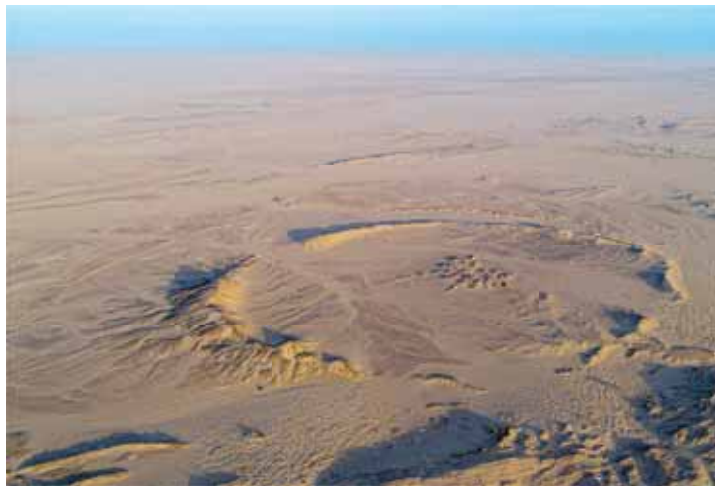
MAHUT

endowed with rich natural and mineral resources

MAHUT: The Wilayat of Mahut in Al Wusta Governorate is famous for its diverse topography and wetland reserve which accommodates several tourism sites and fascinating beaches such as Barr Al Hikman. Barr Al Hikman beach is called "The Maldives of Oman". It has various islands, including Mahut historic island, A'ab Island and Ma'aul Island among others. Mahut is also famous for mangrove trees and the mesquite trees which are found in the desert and wadis. It also possesses a meteor crater with a diameter of approximately one kilometre dating back to sixty million years ago. The Wilayat is also famous for oil and mineral resources, craft industries, fisheries and animal wealth. Sheikh Humaid bin Dhafer Al Bat'hari, Wali of Mahut, said that the Wilayat of Mahut has received proper government attention for vital projects such as internal road projects, lighting

Mahut is also famous for mangrove trees and the mesquite trees which are found in the desert and wadis

projects, slaughterhouses and parks among others. He said that the project for construction of Al Khaluf Fishing Port, announced last year, is one of the vital projects for the benefit of fishermen and persons working in the fishing sector. Work is going on for the construction of a new hospital in Mahut, he added. The Special Economic Zone Duqm is a true and a key addition to Al Wusta Governorate, he said. -ONA



Tracking chip installed on Arabian Sea humpback whale to monitor threats

The Arabian Sea humpback whale can be distinguished from other whales by the shape, colour and pattern of a mole on the tail. It is considered one of the rarest as only 100 whales were spotted

DUQM: The Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission has listed the Arabian Sea humpback whale among the most



five groups at risk of extinction. This means that “saving a single whale has a significant impact on the genetic diversity and population recovery of this species.” In January 2021, the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Authority and the Port

of Duqm, succeeded in liberating and saving the humpback whale, which was more than 15 metres long, from fishing nets in Duqm. Eng. Aida Khalaf Al Jabri, marine environment specialist at the Environment Authority, confirmed that the Authority pays a

great attention to marine life and mammals with the aim of preserving them from extinction, including the Arabian Sea humpback whale. She said that in December 2023, the Environment Authority (EA) began developing the Arabian

Sea humpback whale project. It succeeded in installing a satellite tracking chip and a sound recording device for eight hours on the back of the Arabian Sea humpback whale using a drone. The device was able to record an audio clip of this type of whales.



She explained that the project helps with satellite telemetry and mapping of the distribution of threats and risks. She added that there is cooperation between the Environment Authority and the Port of Duqm to protect and preserve this type of whale and other marine mammals. The Arabian Sea humpback whale can be distinguished from other whales by the shape, colour and pattern of a mole on the tail. It is considered one of the rarest as only 100 whales were spotted.

-ONA

SIMEC 2024

Oman takes part in Saudi meeting stressing importance of fish wealth



RIYADH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources is currently taking part in Saudi International Marine Exhibition (SIMEC 2024). The event aims to support aquaculture and fisheries techniques and seeks to highlight the importance of fisheries. Oman's participating delegation is led by Eng. Yaqoub Khal-

fan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries. The exhibition seeks to discuss the main topics and issues in the field of aquaculture and fisheries on the international scene. The event is an opportunity to exchange knowledge that contributes to developing the industry and enhancing the technology used in this vital sector. -ONA

LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM



Workshop organised

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, the National Programme for Fiscal Sustainability and Financial Sector Development on Monday organised a workshop to discuss means of promoting the scheme of laws and legislations in the Sultanate of Oman within the framework of joint efforts with the Oman-Britain Strategic Consultative Group. The workshop aimed to study the current situation of the legislative system in the Sultanate of Oman, and to discuss the possibility of developing it according to the experience of the UK Smarter Regulation Directorate (SRD) in a manner that meets the national policies. The event was attended by



Nassir Khamis Al Jashmi, Chairman of Tax Authority, Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Head of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, Lord Grimstone from the UK, Dr. Liane Saunders, the British Ambassador to Oman and some representatives of relevant government units. -ONA

SEZAD

Lucrative opportunities offered

< FROM A1 He further said that SEZAD now has an integrated infrastructure for investment, in addition to its role as a promising industrial centre and enabler around which lucrative opportunities are established in the upstream and downstream industries, petrochemicals and logistics. This reflects additional value to the SEZAD. For his part, HH Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al Sabah, CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), said that the refinery is an ideal example of the convergence of economic interests between the two countries, especially since the State of Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman share a common history and heritage. He pointed out that the success of this strategic project will enhance the prospects for future cooperation between the GCC countries in development and economic projects that contribute to the stability of energy supplies to the world. He added that the project of Duqm Refinery provides safe guarantees due to the strategic location of the Sultanate of Oman,



which facilitates the smooth storage of petroleum products and their export to the world. Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, said that the opening of the Duqm Refinery aims to achieve a set of national priority goals for Oman Vision 2040, especially in the economic and development axis. He added that the Duqm Refinery is one of the largest projects that will make Duqm one of the largest industrial and economic centers in the region, and one of the most prominent development tributaries in the Sultanate

of Oman. He explained that this project offers diverse direct and indirect opportunities for growth and development projects related to the refinery. He added in a statement to ONA that the priority of the private sector, investment and international cooperation is one of the priorities of Oman Vision 2040, which the project will contribute to achieving its goals. He pointed out that the Duqm Refinery is a joint project between the Omani OQ Group and the KPC, and the largest investment project between two Gulf countries in the refinery and petrochemical sector. The project contributes to the development of a large number of local small and medium enterprises by assigning contracts for the supply of goods and services to the refinery. He affirmed that the refinery generates a large number of direct and indirect job opportunities as well as training opportunities coupled with employment. This reflects positively on the priority objectives of the labour market and employment, and contributes to building empowered national capabilities. -ONA

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Eight arrested for vandalism

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has arrested eight expats for vandalising and stealing electric cables from a factory in North Al Batinah Governorate. “The North Al Batinah Governorate Police Command arrested eight people of Asian nationality for vandalising and stealing electric cables from a factory. The legal procedures were completed against them,” ROP said.



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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DISC/2024/019	UNE LOT 12E/2023	14/02/2024	06/03/2024	OMR 52,500/-
DISC/2024/020	NE LOT 01B/20	14/02/2024	06/03/2024	OMR 525/-

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- Every company wishing to participate in this tender must attach with its bid a bid bond in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman. Any bid that does not contain the bid bond will be disqualified.
- The original bid bond must be submitted in an envelope sealed with red wax and addressed to the chairperson of the minor tender committee and written on outside the Tender name and the Tender number and it should be paced in the tender box in Nama dhofar services in Salalah before 10:00 am of the last day for submitting Bids.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "supplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The Tender fees are not refundable. However, Tenderers who are holding riyada card issued from public authority for SME development will be exempted from providing the tender fee and the Bid bond.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION'S POSTPONEMENT

Senegal restricts mobile internet amid protests

DAKAR: Protesters gathered on Monday outside Senegal's parliament in Dakar to decry the presidential election's postponement, after authorities restricted mobile internet access on Sunday evening ahead of the demos.

President Macky Sall announced on Saturday that the vote would be postponed to an unspecified date amid a row over the can-

didate list, prompting angry protests. The vote had been scheduled for February 25, campaigning was about to begin.

Lawmakers are investigating two judges on the country's Constitutional Court, whose integrity in the election process has been questioned.

Senegal's Ministry of Communication, Telecommunications and

Digital Economy said on Monday that internet was cut "due to the dissemination of several hateful and subversive messages relayed on social networks in the context of threats and disturbances to public order."

Authorities also suspended mobile data last June, amid similarly high tensions in the country.

Meanwhile, protesters rallied

outside parliament in the capital Dakar, as a debate started on Sall's contentious decision to postpone the vote, and consequently, extend his current term.

Security forces used tear gas to disperse the protesters. Several could be heard chanting "Macky Sall dictator." The Reuters news agency said arrests were made.

— DW

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SAUDI ARABIA

World Defence
Show kicks off

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia kicked off Sunday the second edition of the World Defence Show in the capital Riyadh, with Chinese defense delegation and Chinese Air Force attending.

Organised by the Saudi General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI), the five-day event is expected to showcase the kingdom's commitment to becoming a global hub for the defence industry.

The show is attended by 773 exhibitors representing more than 75 countries, alongside numerous government entities and leading local and international companies in the defence and security sector.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, also vice chairman of GAMI's board of directors inaugurated the event. GAMI Governor Ahmad Al-Ohali highlighted the support to enhance the kingdom's strategic independence, which aims to localise 50 percent of its military procurement by 2030, adding that localisation rates at the end of 2022 have increased from 4 percent to 13.6 percent.

A total of 73 Chinese exhibitors, ranging from sea, land, air and electronic defense equipments, participated in this year's defence show and took an exhibition area of more than 4,500 square meters, ranking second in terms of number of exhibitors and exhibition area after Saudi Arabia. — Xinhua

India, Switzerland discuss
ways to boost bilateral ties

Both the leaders also exchanged perspectives on regional and international issues, including the conflict in Ukraine

NEW DELHI: India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday met his visiting Swiss counterpart Ignazio Cassis and held discussions for further strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.

Both the leaders also exchanged perspectives on regional and international issues, including the conflict in Ukraine.

The meeting, following the 75th-year celebrations of the India-Switzerland friendship treaty last year, delved into various aspects of cooperation and collaboration, EAM Jaishankar said in a post on X, following his meeting

with Cassis.

"Pleased to welcome Foreign Minister @ignaziocassis of Switzerland this afternoon. Discussed further strengthening of our bilateral ties after celebrations of the 75th year of the India-Switzerland friendship treaty last year," said EAM Jaishankar in a post on X, following his meeting with Cassis.

During the discussions, both ministers explored avenues for

strengthening the existing ties between India and Switzerland.

Apart from bilateral matters, the leaders "exchanged perspectives on key regional and international issues, including the conflict in Ukraine," the EAM posted.

EAM Jaishankar expressed gratitude for a gift from the Swiss Foreign Minister - a 'Mission to the Sun' Swatch. He seized the opportunity to highlight India's commitment to space exploration,

maiden solar mission of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) came on the heels of the historic lunar landing mission -- Chandrayaan-3.

Notably, Swiss Foreign Minister Cassis is on a day-long visit to India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) earlier said.

After India, Cassis will also travel to China, South Korea, and the Philippines.

He began his Asia tour with a working visit to New Delhi. His last visit to India was to mark the 70th anniversary of Swiss-Indian friendship in 2018. — ANI

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PM ALICHAN SMAILOV

Kazakh govt quits amid attempt to pass reforms

ALMATY: The government of Kazakhstan under Prime Minister Alichan Smailov resigned on Monday, the president's office announced. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev accepted the decision and named Deputy Prime Minister Roman Sklyar as Smailov's acting successor.

"The members of the government of Kazakhstan will continue carrying out their functions until the new executive is approved," the statement from the president's office said.

Why did the Kazakh government resign?

The presidential statement did not give a reason, but Tokayev has recently been pushing for sweeping reforms to attract foreign capital into the economy.

Government reshuffles are not uncommon in the Central Asian country where much of the power is in the hands of the president.

Kazakh political scientist Talgat Kaliyev told Spanish news agency EFE that President Tokayev had repeatedly expressed his disappointment with the cabinet. "The resignation is connected to the future economic development of Kazakhstan," Kaliyev told EFE. "The president criticized the government for its inability to propose an effective economic strategy." — **DW**

It's time to recognise Palestine state, says Palestinian official

The official spokesman for the Palestine said that the countries of the world are required to take practical and quick steps to get out of the current crisis that is ravaging the Middle East and the world

RAMALLAH: The official Palestinian spokesman for the presidency Nabil Abu Rudeina on Monday said that it is time to recognise the Palestine state and obtain full membership by a decision of the UN Security Council, because 'it is the only way to achieve security and stability for all.'

Abu Rudeina added that it is necessary to establish a clear mechanism and commit to specific steps and international guarantees within a specific time frame to recognise the Palestinian state, because positive statements alone are no longer enough, and 'this is the appropriate and decisive moment to spare the region from the scourge of endless wars.'

The US must force Israel to stop its aggression and war against the Palestinian people, because the alternative is chaos, playing with

fire, and crossing red lines in an already turbulent region that is vulnerable to a comprehensive explosion, he added. The official spokesman for the presidency said that the countries of the world are required to take practical and quick steps to get out of the current crisis that is ravaging the Middle East and the world, provided that these steps are taken in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy to end the occupation and establish the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital on the 1967 borders, and not to 'divide matters or allow displacement.'

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh Monday said that the Ministry of Finance is making all the preparations to pay employees' salaries within the next two days.



Shtayyeh explained in his speech at the beginning of the weekly Cabinet session today in the city of Ramallah, that there has not yet been an agreement between Norway and Israel to transfer the clearing funds, and that Israel rejects that Norway transfers the funds to the Palestinian Authority, and "therefore, the idea of transferring the funds to Norway does not solve the problem, but it takes the money out of Israel's hands."

Regarding the aggression against Gaza, the Prime Minister said that the crimes in Gaza are entering their fifth month, and

despite the decision of the International Court of Justice, "the killing has not stopped, and the starvation has not stopped, and the number of victims between dead, missing and wounded has reached approximately 100,000 most of whom are children, women, and the elderly."

He called on the UN Security Council and its members to work to stop the genocide and to adopt calls for an immediate halt to the aggression.

In the same context, Shtayyeh called on the Red Cross to repeat the rescue attempt and reveal the fate of the child Hind Rajab, 6,

who lost members of her family in Israeli targeting of a vehicle seven days ago, and she is still among the bodies of the slain people, as well as revealing the fate of the ambulance crew that went to rescue her in the Tal al-Hawa area; paramedics Youssef Zaino and Ahmed Al-Madhoun.

Regarding the Rafah crossing, the Prime Minister said that Israel is trying to move the Rafah crossing to another place, and "we say that the Rafah crossing is the gateway to the Palestinian-Egyptian border, and it is an Egyptian-Palestinian affair, and we have had an agreement with the European Police since 2005 to manage the crossing, even if Israel replaces it. It will remain an Egyptian-Palestinian affair, and we will reopen it if Israel closes it."

Shtayyeh welcomed the important development in considering a number of colonists as terrorists in the United States, expressing his hope that all countries would follow this trend.

He called for imposing sanctions not only on a small number of colonists, but on the entire colonial project, boycotting colonial goods, and asking colonists with dual American, European, and other nationalities to leave the colonies, because their presence is illegal and illegitimate.

— WAF

UNCREWED MISSION

ISRO to launch female robot astronaut into space ahead of Gaganyaan mission

NEW DELHI: Woman robot astronaut 'Vyommitra' will fly into space ahead of ISRO's ambitious 'Gaganyaan' mission, which will be India's first human-manned space flight carrying Indian astronauts into space.

Disclosing this in New Delhi during an interaction with the media, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science and Technology and Space, Jitendra Singh, said, "The uncrewed 'Vyommitra' mission is scheduled for the third quarter of this year while a manned mission 'Gaganyaan' is scheduled to be launched next year, that is 2025."



It is pertinent to mention that, in the run-up to the launch of India's first-ever manned space flight named 'Gaganyaan', the first Test Vehicle Flight TV D1 was accomplished on October 21 last year.

This was meant to qualify the crew escape system and parachute system. The human rating of the launch vehicle is complete. All the propulsion stages are qualified. All the preparations are in place, Singh said.

While the uncrewed unmanned robot flight 'Vyommitra' will take place this year, 'Gaganyaan' will be launched next year, he said.

The Gaganyaan project envisages a demonstration of human space capabilities by launching a crew of astronauts into an orbit of 400 kilometres and then bringing these astronauts safely back to earth by landing them in India's sea waters. — **ANI**

'BLATANT AGGRESSION'

16 killed, 25 injured in US airstrikes in Iraq

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi government said on Saturday that the US airstrikes on the paramilitary Hashd Shaabi forces in western Iraq killed 16 people, including civilians, and injured 25 others.

Calling the airstrikes "blatant aggression," government spokesman Basim al-Awadi told the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) that "the US administration violated Iraq's sovereignty when its aircraft conducted airstrikes on the positions of our security forces in the Akashat and al-Qaim areas, as well as neighboring civilian places."

Al-Awadi also denied reports that claimed there was coordination between the government and the US administration about the airstrikes, stressing that these reports are "a false claim aimed at misleading international public opinion and evading legal responsibility for this crime," according to the INA.



He also said that the government believes that the presence of the international coalition forces on Iraqi soil has become a threat to security and stability in Iraq and a justification for involving Iraq in regional and international conflicts.

Al-Awadi warned that the recent airstrikes put security in Iraq and the region on the brink of the abyss, adding, "Iraq renews its refusal to make its lands an arena for settling scores." — **Xinhua**

INTERIOR MINISTRY

Death toll in Chile wildfires rises to 112; 40 fires still active

VALPARAISO: The death toll from intense wildfires raging in central Chile has climbed to at least 112.

The Interior Ministry said late on Sunday that the medical examiner's office had received 112 dead victims, 32 of whom have been identified, and that there are 40 fires still active in the country.

The AFP news agency reported that some of the dead were seen lying on the road, covered by sheets.

"I've been talking to residents here over the last hour or so and everybody's been saying that they keep finding bodies and these are bodies that have not been included in the official death count," journalist John Bartlett, who is near the city of Valparaiso, told DW on Sunday.

Chile's forestry authority registered 159 fires across the country on Sunday, covering an area totaling almost 28,000 hectares.

Officials said that thousands of houses have been damaged or destroyed, including more than 3,000 in the Valparaiso region alone, home to some 1.8 million people.

The coastal region west of the capital Santiago is the worst affected, where authorities have introduced a curfew starting at 9:00 p.m. Saturday (0000 GMT Sunday).

The fires forced authorities to close the road linking Valparaiso to Santiago on Friday, as a huge mushroom cloud of smoke impaired visibility.

The wildfires are now reported to be lapping the outer edges of



victims, having declared a state of emergency to free up relief funds on Friday.

Authorities warned of "complicated" conditions as they continued to battle fires.

The military has been deployed to help firefighters stem the spread of fires, while helicopters dumped water to try to douse the flames from the air.

Temperatures in the area hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) over the weekend.

Interior Minister Carolina Toha warned of an even higher death toll, adding that more than 300 people were still missing.

Toha said there was evidence that the fire near Valparaiso was started deliberately.

Journalist John Bartlett told DW that authorities have launched investigations into how the fires began.

"There seems to have been four or five individual points from where the fires started, which does seem to point to them being started intentionally," he said.

The Interior Ministry also said it had "serious information" that the fires had been started deliberately. In the Maule region to the south, a person was arrested for starting a fire while welding.

In the Southern Hemisphere during the summer months, major forest fires are a frequent occurrence.

Last year, more than 425,000 hectares of land were destroyed in the centre and south of Chile. At least 26 people were killed. — **DW**

the cities of Vina del Mar and Valparaiso, coastal cities popular with tourists.

President Gabriel Boric, who traveled to the disaster zone Sunday to meet with victims, called it the "worst tragedy our country has experienced" since an earthquake in 2010 left more than 520 people dead.

"The most important thing now is to save lives and put out the fires," he said, offering his support to victims at a hospital in the city of Vina del Mar.

The president announced two days of national mourning starting on Monday in honor of the

SPORTS

Omani drivers excel in Dubai

Ahmad Al Harthy claims victory in LMP2 class in round three of Asian Le Mans Series; Al Faisal Al Zubair finishes runner-up in GT class at the same race

MUSCAT: It was a Super Sunday for Omani drivers – Ahmad Al Harthy and Al Faisal Al Zubair – as the duo climbed podium with their respective team-mates in LMP2 and GT class respectively in the third round of the Asian Le Mans Series (ALMS) at the Dubai Autodrome in Dubai, UAE, on Sunday.

Al Harthy drove with Louis Deletraz and Nikita Mazepin for 99 Racing to his second victory in the series and the third podium finish. The No.99 Oreca 07-Gibson trio head to the Abu Dhabi finale next weekend with a 20-point lead.

For Al Faisal Al Zubair, who was competing in the GT class, it was a narrow finish in the end as they took the second spot. Al Zubair along with his team-mates, Fabian Schiller of Germany and China's Anthony Liu guided the Al Manar Racing by Getspeed Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo to the podium.

Exceptional performance by Al Harthy

Delivering an outstanding display during the opening stint of the four-hour contest, having qualified on the front row, Al Harthy challenged hard for the lead early on before being forced to mount a stirring recovery after contact from a rival.

Driving impeccably, and producing some outstanding, determined overtaking, Al Harthy battled back with aplomb from sixth place and worked his way through to the lead on lap 23. Following similarly strong stints from Mazepin and Deletraz, the 99 Racing squad celebrated the win by 3.5 seconds.

The weekend started well in



pre-event practice and Al Harthy went on to deliver a fantastic performance in qualifying on Saturday to secure a target front row slot for round three with a time of 1m48.919 seconds (178.2 km/h) – a mere 0.046 seconds shy of pole position.

Speaking after the victory, Al Harthy said: "It's always great to win, but to have fought back

so strongly after the contact and to have extended our lead in the championship is fantastic. Everyone at the team did an amazing job all weekend here in Dubai, and Nikita and Louis both drove an incredible race. Our car was strong and the strategy worked well, and I was very happy with my pace personally as well."

He added: "We're in a great posi-

tion in the championship and have a good lead ahead of the final two ALMS races in Abu Dhabi next weekend, but there's a lot of racing to go and a lot that can happen. We'll keep our heads down and work as hard as ever to ensure we have the best car and set-up for Yas Marina and, hopefully, be able to continue our great momentum and push for the title."

Al Faisal's Al Manar Racing misses top spot

Al Zubair along with his team-mates, Schiller and Liu guided the Al-Manar Racing by Getspeed Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo to second place in the GT class.

After Lui had earned the trio a fine pole position for Sunday's 4H of Dubai, the crew battled hard with the pace-setting Pure Rxcing

team of Klaus Bachler, Joel Sturm and Alex Malykhin in a Porsche 911 GT3 R and finished a nail-biting contest just 0.775 seconds behind the new championship leaders after 112 laps of racing.

The result means that the Pure Rxcing team leads the GT Teams Trophy on 58 points and Al-Manar Racing by Getspeed are well-placed in third on 43 points behind Saintéloc Racing (44pts).

Al Zubair and Schiller have 43 points apiece in the GT Drivers' Trophy and hold third position, a mere point behind second-placed Christopher Haase, Gilles Magnus and Alban Varutti heading to the final two races at Yas Marina in Abu Dhabi.

Speaking after the awards ceremony, Al Zubair said: "The race was great overall. We started on pole after Anthony's superb lap in qualifying. We went into the race and Anthony had a great opening to make a nice gap for us, which we lost, unfortunately, in the pits.

"Because they (Pure Rxcing) undercut us and gained two laps. That was unfortunate. Sturm passed me after gaining six seconds on a full course yellow.

"We have no idea now. That was also unfortunate. But the race was a good one and we should be happy with P2. It's not the same as first place. We hope to improve on that in the next two races."

The Al-Manar Mercedes finished the first practice session on Friday in second position behind the AF Corse Ferrari 296 GT3. Liu used the time to acclimatise to the car and the crew ran for 39 laps with a best run of 1min 59.016sec.

Schiller finished the second 37-lap practice stint on Saturday morning with the car down in third place behind the GR Racing Ferrari and the Triple Eight JMR Mercedes. Al-Manar Racing's best lap was 1min 58.479sec.

A superb qualifying session by Liu saw the Al-Manar Racing Mercedes top the times with a best run of 1min 58.280sec. That was 0.544 seconds quicker than the best effort by the Pure Rxcing Porsche 911. Optimum Motorsport's McLaren qualified in third and the second of the Getspeed cars was sixth.

The season-ending fourth and fifth rounds of the 2023/2024 Asian Le Mans Series will take place on Saturday, 10 February, and Sunday, 11 February, at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit.

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by April 2024 reaching \$77.40, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.59 from the price of Friday, which was \$78.99. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,548.84 points, down by 0.24 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.38 per cent at 441.07 points. Muscat Thread Mill, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Anwar Investment, down 3.95 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman oil exports reach 310.3mn barrels by the end of December

Oil exports constituted 81 per cent of the total oil production which stood at 382,770,200 barrels

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's total exports of oil by the end of December 2023 stood at 310,331,200 barrels with an average oil barrel price of \$82.3, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).
Oil exports constituted 81 per cent of the total oil production

which stood at 382,770,200 barrels.
In general, the total oil export decreased by 2.4 per cent compared with December 2022 when the export stood at 317,977,900 barrels in parallel with a decline in production by 1.8 per cent when it reached 388,434,800 barrels in 2022.
The total production of crude oil production decreased by 3.9

per cent to stand at 297,293,600 barrels by the end of December. Meanwhile, the production of condensates registered a rise of 8.3 per cent to stand at 85,476,600 barrels. The average daily production of oil stood at 1,048,700 barrels till the end of December 2023.
China topped the list of countries importing Oman's oil with total exports standing at 285,642,500 barrels, comprising a rise of 10 per cent compared with December 2022. It was followed by Japan with 9,385,900 barrels (19.8 per cent down), Korea with 5,214,600 barrels (56.8 per cent down) and India with 2,716,200 barrels (91.3 per cent down). Exports to other countries stood at 7,371,800 barrels, up by 127.1 per cent. - **ONA**



INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERINGS

Mena region witnesses 48 IPOs raising \$10.7 billion in 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle East and North Africa (Mena) markets saw 48 initial public offerings (IPOs) in 2023, raising \$10.7 billion in total. Five listings, mainly in the energy and logistics sectors, contributed 58 percent towards the total IPO proceeds raised, according to the EY Mena IPO Eye Q4 2023 report.
During the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023, 19 initial public offerings (IPOs) raised \$4.9 billion in proceeds. ADES Holding Company raised the most funds and contributed 25 percent of the overall IPO proceeds in the last quarter, followed by Pure Health Holding with 20 percent. All Q4 listing activity took place in the GCC region, with Egypt being the only non-GCC country that reported IPOs throughout 2023.

Investor confidence in the region continues, with 11 out of the 19 Q4 2023 IPOs recording a first-day gain in share price. At the end of 2023, 26 out of the 48 IPOs showed a positive return compared to their listing price, with Armah Sports Company achieving the highest gain at 72 percent.

Last year recorded a 6 percent decrease in the number of IPOs and a 51 percent drop in proceeds, compared to 2022. Notably, 2022 witnessed a significant number of IPOs, such as Americana Restau-



rants International (Americana), Saudi Aramco Base Oil Company (Luberef) and Arabian Drilling Company, which played a role in the decline seen in 2023.
The 2024 pipeline includes 29 companies across various sectors announcing their intention to list, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) leading the way in terms of expected volumes.
Outside the GCC, Egypt has four IPOs planned.
Brad Watson, EY Mena Strategy and Transactions Leader, said: "In 2023, there were a total of 48 IPOs raising \$10.7 billion, of which five listed companies contributed 58 percent toward the total IPO proceeds raised, mainly in the energy and logistics sectors. Investor confidence in the region

continues with 11 out of the 19 Q4 2023 IPOs recording a first day gain in share price."
"The 2024 pipeline includes 29 companies across various sectors, announcing their intention to list with the KSA and the UAE leading the way in terms of expected volumes," he further added.
Once again, KSA reaffirmed its dominance in terms of IPO activity in the region with 14 of the 19 listings in Q4 2023. ADES Holding Company marked the highest proceeds at \$1.2 billion, followed by SAL Saudi Logistics Services Company at \$0.7 billion. Both IPOs were listed on the Tadawul Main Market. The remaining 12 IPOs, raising \$140 million in total, took place on the Nomu - Parallel Market, which also witnessed the quarter's only direct listing in the MENA region - Almutjama Alraida Medical Co.
In 2023, the country's IPOs came from a variety of sectors, led by energy (36 percent), transportation (29 percent) and healthcare (10 percent).
Q1 2024 kicked off with two Saudi listings on Tadawul in January - MBC Group, raising \$222 million, and Avalon Pharma, raising \$437 million.
Gregory Hughes, EY Mena IPO and Transaction Diligence Leader, said: "The Middle East and North Africa (Mena) IPO market delivered a healthy number of IPOs

across various sectors in 2023, despite the subdued global economic backdrop and the rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. A number of reputable large state-owned companies listed in 2023, including the Dubai Taxi Co and OQ Gas Networks."
"As expected, 2024 started off positively with the MBC listing, Avalon Pharma and the announcements of several IPOs on the Mena markets including large private and state-owned names," he further added.
Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) welcomed three IPOs in Q4 2023, raising a combined total of \$1.8 billion. These included Pure Health Holding, valued at \$987 million, Investcorp Capital at \$451 million and Phoenix Group at \$371 million. Pure Health Holding reported the highest first-day gain of 76 percent. In addition, there was one new listing in the transportation sector on the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) - Dubai Taxi Company, worth \$315 million.
The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) saw the largest IPO in Oman to date with OQ Gas Networks SAOC raising US\$772m. Meanwhile, Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the country's sovereign wealth fund, is preparing to launch multiple IPOs and list state assets to strengthen its capital markets.

INTERIOR DESIGN FURNISHING

Al Habib participates at IDF Oman Expo

MUSCAT: Al Habib & Co. is starting the year with a first by participating at the 10th Interior Design Furnishing (IDF) Expo Oman which was inaugurated yesterday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre under the patronage of Her Highness Sayyida Meyyan bint Shihab Al Said, Chairperson of Oman Design Association.
Al Habib is a market leader in real estate services with over four decades of experience, expertise and knowledge in real estate management, brokerage, valuation, property development, facilities management, market research and interior fit-outs. Through its participation at the expo, the company aims to showcase its expertise and the

unique smart solutions it offers based on the client's aesthetical and functional needs.
It also showcases its history in interior fit-outs and the projects it has delivered, reflecting its committed attention to quality across various business interests and real estate sectors.
This step comes as part of the company's wider new plan to expand its presence and business lines. Key to this is the focus on sustainable business strategies, a continuation of its trust-based reputation, built on four main values: collaboration, empowerment, excellence, and responsibility.
The expo is a window into all design and interior solutions, products, and services, and will continue until February 7.

SHARES

Asian stocks slump as traders temper rate cut bets

SINGAPORE: Asian shares eased on Monday and the dollar was firm after a robust US jobs report dashed expectations of a near-term interest rate cut from the federal reserve, while stocks in china were volatile as investor sentiment remained shaky.
MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan

opens new tab fell 0.21 per cent having dropped more than 1 per cent earlier in the session, Reuters reported.
European bourses looked set for a muted open, with Eurostoxx 50 futures down 0.09 per cent, German DAX futures down 0.19 per cent and FTSE futures up 0.07 per cent. - **BNA**

FROM APRIL 28 TO MAY 2

Oman Sustainability Week to pioneer new era in eco-progress

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is poised to host Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) from April 28 to May 2 centred around the theme 'Sustainable Living in a Circular Society'. The landmark event is being held under the patronage of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and hosted by Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).
This national week-long series of events epitomises Oman's commitment to a sustainable future, aligning with the Sultanate's dedication to Oman Vision 2040, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the national Net Zero 2050 goal.
Dr. Ali Al Rajhi, Director General for Planning and Studies, Ministry of Energy and Minerals and OSW Steering Committee Chair said, "OSW 2024 is a crucial convening point in our mission to embed sustainability deeply within the fabric of our society. In a world where environmental stewardship is not just expected but demanded, this event amplifies our ongoing efforts to harmonize economic development with ecological balance. We are proud to showcase leading-edge practices and technologies that are pivotal in reducing emissions, preserving our natural resources, and pioneering the use of renewable energy. Oman



Sustainability Week is more than an event; it's a catalyst for change, galvanising action and fostering an exchange of knowledge that resonates with the global sustainability goals."
The week-long event is a holistic platform that brings together a wide spectrum of the economy, government, academia and wider society. It is a celebration of sustainable practices, innovation and collaboration. The events will feature an array of activities, each underpinning the nation's objectives for a sustainable tomorrow.
The OSW Expo, to be held from April 29 to May 1, will offer an ex-

ceptional platform for companies to showcase their sustainable products and services to a diverse audience. The Expo focuses on sectors like energy, power, water, waste, future mobility, environment and society aligning with the Oman Vision 2040 plan. It is an opportunity for businesses to network, present innovative strategies and engage with stakeholders in sustainability. The event is expected to attract industry professionals, providing a unique chance for exhibitors to maximise brand exposure, showcase technologies and explore new markets.
Held on April 28, will be the

OSW Awards, an integral event recognising contributions to sustainability in Oman's public and private sectors. Co-organised by Oman Environmental Services Holding Company - be'ah and the Center for Sustainability and Excellence (CSE), this focuses on assessing organisations in sustainability and corporate responsibility, guided by an internationally recognised framework. The OSW awards aligns with the Oman Sustainability Index (OSI) that is used to rate performance in environment, society and governance (ESG), encouraging businesses and entities to adopt responsible

and sustainable strategies as part of their corporate ethos.
The International Sustainability Resources and Technology Conference (ISRTC), scheduled on April 29 and 30, is a significant event within the OSW 2024. Programmed by The Economist and co-organised by be'ah, this conference offers an enriching opportunity to network with key decision-makers and explore the evolving environmental landscape in Oman and the MENA region. This year ISRTC will examine how the region can build an equitable and resilient net-zero future; how to achieve the national government policies and international commitments; and how to capitalise on new opportunities of economic diversification, better job creation and leadership in sustainable technologies, among other key themes.
The OSW Talks, scheduled from April 29 to May 1, will be focusing on educating and inspiring best practices, innovations and technologies in sustainability. These talks, designed for individuals from all spectrums such as, students, academia, policy-makers, professionals, businesses and corporates, aim to facilitate knowledge sharing and practical insights on achieving national objectives. All OSW Talks sessions are free to attend and all are CPD (Continued Professional Development) accredited.

The Site Visits on May 2 will offer participants a unique opportunity to visit key sustainable projects across Oman. These guided tours are designed to showcase real-world examples of sustainable development, allowing visitors to see firsthand the impact and progress of sustainability initiatives in the country. This experience provides valuable insights into the practical application of sustainable practices and innovations in Oman's diverse landscape.
OSW 2024 also encompasses several key initiatives, such as PDO Renewable Energy Award, Shell Nawafidh, Shell NXplorers and OQ Empowering Future Leaders. The PDO Renewable Energy Award is a collaborative initiative between PDO and the Ministry of Education, encouraging students to explore sustainable ideas. Shell Nawafidh focuses on engaging Omani youth with the future energy market, whereas Shell NXplorers introduces young people to energy transition challenges.
The OQ Empowering Future Leaders initiative is designed to cultivate leadership and professional skills in young people, through three key programmes: the Marefa Initiative, Al Nokhedha Programme and the Science of a Refinery project, each focusing on different aspects of career and personal development.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Muscat Thread Mill, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Anwar Investment, down 3.95 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,548.84 points, down by 0.24 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.38 per cent at 441.07 points. Muscat Thread Mill, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Anwar Investment, down 3.95 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sembcorp Salalah were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Ooredoo were the most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 769 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.64 million, with more than 18.77 million shares changing hands. Out of 41 traded securities, 13 advanced, 15 declined, and 13 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net buyers for OMR226,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR185,000, followed by GCC

& Arab investors for OMR40,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,293.41 points, down 0.51 per cent. Prices of Global Financial Investments, Al Sharqia Investment were up by 1.67 per cent, 1.49 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, United Finance, Al Madina Takaful, Bank Nizwa, Taageer Finance were down by 3.95 per cent, 1.72 per cent, 1.11 per cent, 1.04 per cent, 0.94 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,467.42 points, up 0.3 per cent. Prices of Muscat Thread Mill, Raysut Cement, Al Anwar Ceramics, Voltamp Energy, Galfar Engineering were up by 10.00 per cent, 4.84 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 1.35 per cent, 1.29 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Gulf Mushroom Products were down by 2.86 per cent, 0.43 per cent respectively.

— United Securities

CBO

Treasury bills worth OMR68mn issued

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR68 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday. The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR17 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.600 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.600 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.21429 per cent and 5.23523 per cent, respectively. The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR51 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached 98.662OMR for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR 98.660 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.36686 per cent and 5.43965 per cent, respectively.



The treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). -OMA

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,562.75	4,544.75	4,548.84	4,559.93	-11.10	-0.24
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,338.23	7,293.41	7,293.41	7,330.76	-37.35	-0.51
Industry Index	5,467.80	5,450.87	5,467.42	5,450.87	16.55	0.30
Services Index	1,615.77	1,609.27	1,614.41	1,610.20	4.21	0.26
MSX Shariah Index	442.77	440.35	441.07	442.77	-1.70	-0.38
MSX TR INDEX	6,016.73	5,992.99	5,998.38	6,013.02	-14.63	-0.24
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,007.36	7,958.45	7,958.45	7,999.21	-40.76	-0.51
SERVICES TR IDX	1,802.72	1,795.47	1,801.21	1,796.52	4.70	0.26
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	5,840.97	5,822.89	5,840.56	5,822.89	17.68	0.30
FIXED INCOME INDEX	989.44	989.44	989.44	989.44	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
18,772,802	3,641,152	769	23,772,886,297	13	15	13	41

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFR	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	88,768	14,410	11	0.164	0.164	0.161	0.164	0.160	0.004	2.500	0.164	0.160	0.164	0.100	36,080,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	199,000	12,244	9	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.001	1.667	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.100	12,200,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	149,951	10,134	12	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.067	0.001	1.493	0.068	0.067	0.073	0.100	6,120,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	57,440	4,627	7	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.080	0.080	0.082	0.100	16,170,484
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	2,627,417	818,954	79	0.313	0.316	0.310	0.316	0.313	0.003	0.958	0.315	0.315	0.319	0.100	205,698,377
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	1,000	272	2	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.000	0.000	0.272	0.272	0.280	0.100	27,200,000
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	724	767	3	1.060	1.060	1.060	1.060	1.060	0.000	0.000	1.060	1.059	1.090	0.100	73,140,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	236,401	256,575	36	1.090	1.090	1.083	1.086	1.087	-0.001	-0.092	1.086	1.086	1.086	0.100	814,500,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,193,795	321,171	58	0.270	0.270	0.268	0.269	0.270	-0.001	-0.270	0.269	0.269	0.270	0.100	2019,220,810
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,880,000	408,945	22	0.240	0.243	0.240	0.243	0.245	-0.002	-0.816	0.243	0.243	0.256	0.100	385,104,964
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	53,000	6,254	6	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.119	-0.001	-0.840	0.118	0.117	0.125	0.100	17,700,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,058,154	117,655	39	0.112	0.112	0.111	0.111	0.112	-0.001	-0.893	0.111	0.111	0.114	0.100	606,935,624
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	93,528	8,329	12	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.089	0.099	0.100	15,575,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	715	41	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.058	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.057	0.060	0.100	20,298,256
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	88,592	15,064	13	0.171	0.171	0.170	0.170	0.175	-0.005	-2.857	0.170	0.165	0.170	0.100	9,350,000
Total	15	7,532,485	1,990,441	310												

Parallel Market

OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	30,000	1,980	3	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.060	0.006	10.000	0.066	0.066	0.000	0.100	1,060,795
OM0000004925	ALBATAH POWER	100	2	1	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.022	0.002	9.091	0.024	0.024	0.000	0.100	16,197,298
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	100	3	1	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.002	8.000	0.027	0.027	0.000	0.100	19,288,971
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	366,260	46,390	43	0.123	0.130	0.123	0.130	0.124	0.006	4.839	0.130	0.131	0.130	0.100	26,000,000
OM0000008710	BAHKA DESALINATION	12,800	1,537	2	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.120	0.002	1.667	0.122	0.121	0.122	0.100	9,213,884
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	25,533	3,881	8	0.152	0.152	0.150	0.150	0.148	0.002	1.351	0.152	0.150	0.152	0.100	12,210,413
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	114,489	17,912	11	0.155	0.157	0.155	0.157	0.155	0.002	1.290	0.157	0.157	0.170	0.100	31,868,872
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	4,825,000	482,503	22	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.001	1.000	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	96,411,767
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	16,830	1,328	5	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.079	0.077	0.079	0.100	6,715,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	13,000	1,297	3	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.099	0.108	0.100	3,000,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,000	492	1	0.492	0.492	0.492	0.492	0.492	0.000	0.000	0.492	0.492	0.492	0.100	77,490,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	885	1,991	1	2.250	2.250	2.250	2.250	2.250	0.000	0.000	2.250	2.105	2.300	0.100	201,825,000
OM0000002272	OMAN OIL MARKETING	1,562	1,336	2	0.855	0.855	0.855	0.855	0.855	0.000	0.000	0.855	0.840	0.855	0.100	52,360,125
OM0000002580	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INV	2,575	1,097	1	0.426	0.426	0.426	0.425	0.425	0.000	0.000	0.426	0.426	0.438	0.100	23,750,000
OM0000003141	BAHKA WATER AND POWER	646,375	32,624	44	0.051	0.051	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.049	0.051	0.100	7,840,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	5,000	390	2	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.077	0.078	0.100	12,132,931
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	2,749,957	409,715	193	0.149	0.149	0.148	0.149	0.149	0.000	0.000	0.149	0.149	0.151	0.100	645,262,964
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	160,076	50,164	20	0.315	0.315	0.312	0.312	0.313	0.001	-0.319	0.312	0.312	0.313	0.100	240,302,400
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	4,900	1,150	3	0.235	0.235	0.234	0.234	0.236	-0.001	-0.426	0.234	0.234	0.240	0.100	10,730,197
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	8,549	908	3	0.107	0.107	0.106	0.106	0.107	-0.001	-0.935	0.106	0.103	0.106	0.100	27,966,514
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	928,274	88,197	42	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.095	0.100	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	326,000	18,059	21	0.057	0.057	0.055	0.056	0.057	-0.001	-1.754	0.056	0.055	0.060	0.100	81,905,682
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	184,900	9,196	12	0.050	0.052	0.048	0.048	0.049	-0.001	-2.041	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.100	10,667,520
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	145,260	10,774	7	0.075	0.075	0.073	0.073	0.076	-0.003	-3.947	0.073	0.073	0.075	0.100	15,038,000
Total	24	10,569,225	1,182,926	451												

SOHAR INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

SITI ranked as first category institute

MUSCAT: Sohar Aluminium Company (SA) announced that its Sohar Industrial Training Institute (SITI) has been ranked as a first category institute. The recently acknowledged ranking came in accordance with the specifications of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation, represented in the provisions of the regulation organising private training, issued by Ministerial Decision No. (40/2021). Being a professional institute, SITI provides various training programmes and courses with competitive international standards in the technical and professional fields and personal skills development for employees, trainees, and contractors from within and outside Sohar Aluminium. Sohar Industrial Training Institute (SITI) consists of different well-equipped facilities, including 7 classrooms, a computer lab, a Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC) lab, a welding and fabrication workshop, an electrical and



mechanical training workshop, hydraulic and pneumatic training labs, instrumentation training lab, two meeting rooms, library, and a multi-purpose auditorium with a 200+ seating capacity. Along with state-of-the-art training facilities, SITI is proud of the credentials of its trainers who are highly qualified and specialised in their fields. SITI constantly strives to develop and improve the skills and knowledge of its training staff to ensure that the trainees receive

their optimum level of investment. It is worth noting that Sohar Industrial Training Institute was established in 2008 as a training centre and was later upgraded to an institute in 2016. The institute primarily focuses on delivering technical vocational training while also providing safety and soft skills training. Its mission is to make training accessible within the region by adapting and delivering training wherever required. Since its inception, the Institute



has been able to train many employees, contractors, and trainees at Sohar Aluminium. The institute also attracted several trainees from a group of private and public entities from within the Sultanate of Oman and other aluminium sector companies from outside the country. In addition, the Institute conducted different training programmes that targeted students and job seekers from schools, colleges, and universities, especially during the summer vacation. Recently, it hosted the vocational training programme "Work Experiences", which was organised by the Ministry of Education for school students.

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INTERIOR DESIGN FURNISHING EXHIBITION

IDF Oman 2024: Unveiling innovation and inspiration in interior design



Times New Service

MUSCAT: The much-anticipated 10th edition of Interior Design Furnishing Exhibition, IDF Oman 2024, powered by Jotun Paints, witnessed a spectacular inauguration ceremony led by Her Highness Sayyida Meyyan Bint Shihab Bin Tariq Al Said. Organised by Al Nimr International Exhibition Organisers, the grand opening took place yesterday, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event owes its success to the support of prestigious sponsors, including Asian Paints Berger (colour sponsor), RITVER (main sponsor), The Address & Build Station (diamond sponsors), Arina Home (platinum sponsor) and Muscat Lighting (lighting sponsor). IDF Oman stands as a comprehensive design and decor exhibi-



This trade fair shines a spotlight on the abundant investment possibilities available in Oman, while facilitating the enhancement of international trade relationships and fostering new business partnerships. Over the three-day event, investors and companies alike have the opportunity to explore the burgeoning market in Oman, connecting with key players in the industry such as interior designers, architects, and consultants.

This collaborative effort aims to showcase diverse products and services, optimising international trade relations and establishing valuable business partnerships. The 10th IDF Oman is not to be missed, running until February 7. Doors will be open daily from 2pm to 9pm at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) – Halls 4 & 5. Don't miss this golden opportunity to witness the latest trends in interior design and furnishing.



GRAMMYS 2024 WINNERS LIST:
**TAYLOR SWIFT TO MILEY CYRUS,
WOMEN DOMINATE
AWARD NIGHT**

- CHECK OUT THE FULL LIST OF WINNERS:
- Album of the year - *Midnights*, Taylor Swift
 - Record of the year - *Flowers*, Miley Cyrus
 - Song of the year - *What was I made for?*, Billie Eilish
 - Best new artist - Victoria Monet
 - Producer of the year, Non-Classical - Jack Antonoff
 - Songwriter of the year, Non-Classical - Theron Thomas
 - Best pop solo performance- *"Flowers,"* Miley Cyrus
 - Best pop duo/group performance- *"Ghost in the Machine,"* SZA featuring Phoebe Bridgers
 - Best pop vocal album- *"Midnights,"* Taylor Swift
 - Best dance/electronic recording- *"Rumble,"* Skrillex, Fred again.. and Flowdan
 - Best pop dance recording- *"Padam Padam,"* Kylie Minogue
 - Best dance/electronic music album- *"Actual Life 3 (January 1 - September 9 2022),"* Fred again..
 - Best rock performance- *"Not Strong Enough,"* boygenius
 - Best metal performance- *"72 Seasons,"* Metallica
 - Best rock song- *"Not Strong Enough,"* Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers and Lucy Dacus, songwriters (boygenius)
 - Best rock album- *"This Is Why,"* Paramore
 - Best alternative music performance- *"This Is Why,"* Paramore
 - Best alternative music album- *"The Record,"* boygenius
 - Best r&b performance- *"ICU,"* Coco Jones
 - Best traditional R&B performance- *"Good Morning,"* PJ Morton featuring Susan Carol
 - Best R&B song- *"Snooze,"* Kenny B. Edmonds, Blair Ferguson, Khris Riddick-Tynes, Solana Rowe and Leon Thomas, songwriters (SZA)
 - Best progressive R&B album- *"SOS,"* SZA
 - Best R&B album- *"Jaguar II,"* Victoria Monet
 - Best rap performance- *"Scientists & Engineers,"* Killer Mike featuring Andre 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane
 - Best melodic rap performance- *"All My Life,"* Lil Durk featuring J. Cole
 - Best rap song- *"Scientists & Engineers,"* Andre Benjamin, Paul Beauregard, James Blake, Michael Render, Tim Moore and Dion Wilson, songwriters (Killer Mike featuring Andre 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane)
 - Best rap album- *"Michael,"* Killer Mike
 - Best spoken word poetry album- *"The Light Inside,"* J. Ivy
 - Best jazz performance- *"Tight,"* Samara Joy
 - Best jazz vocal album- *"How Love Begins,"* Nicole Zuraitis
 - Best jazz instrumental album- *"The Winds of Change,"* Billy Childs
 - Best large jazz ensemble album- *"Basie Swings the Blues,"* The Count Basie Orchestra directed by Scotty Barnhart
 - Best latin jazz album- *"El Arte Del Bolero Vol. 2,"* Miguel Zenon and Luis Perdomo
 - Best alternative jazz album- *"The Omnichord Real Book,"* Meshell Ndegeocello
 - Best traditional pop vocal album- *"Bewitched,"* Laufey
 - Best contemporary instrumental album- *"As We Speak,"* Bela Fleck, Zakir Hussain, Edgar Meyer, featuring Rakesh Chaurasia
 - Best musical theatre album- *"Some Like It Hot,"* Christian Borle, J. Harrison Ghee, Adrianna Hicks and NaTasha Yvette Williams, principal vocalists; Mary-Mitchell Campbell, Bryan Carter, Scott M. Riesett, Charlie Rosen and Marc Shaiman, producers; Scott Wittman, lyricist; Marc Shaiman, composer and lyricist (Original Broadway Cast)
 - Best country solo performance- *"White Horse,"* Chris Stapleton
 - Best country duo/group performance- *"I Remember Everything,"* Zach Bryan featuring Kacey Musgraves
 - Best country song - *"White Horse,"* Chris Stapleton and Dan Wilson, songwriters (Chris Stapleton)
 - Best country album- *"Bell Bottom Country,"* Lainey Wilson
 - Best American roots performance- *"Eve Was Black,"* Allison Russell
 - Best Americana performance- *"Dear Insecurity,"* Brandy Clark featuring Brandi Carlile
 - Best American roots song- *"Cast Iron Skillet,"* Jason Isbell, songwriter (Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit)
 - Best Americana album- *"Weathervanes,"* Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit
 - Best Bluegrass album- *"City of Gold,"* Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway



From Singer Taylor Swift creating history at the Grammys 2024 by becoming the first person to win Album of the Year four times to Miley Cyrus winning the award for Record of the year, women dominated the 66th Annual Grammy Awards.



- Best traditional blues album- *"All My Love for You,"* Bobby Rush
- Best contemporary blues album- *"Blood Harmony,"* Larkin Poe
- Best folk album- *"Joni Mitchell at Newport (Live),"* Joni Mitchell
- Best regional roots music album- *"New Beginnings,"* Buckwheat Zydeco Jr. and the Legendary IIs Sont Partis Band *"Live: Orpheum Theater Nola,"* Lost Bayou Ramblers and Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (tie)
- Best gospel performance/song- *"All Things,"* Kirk Franklin; Kirk Franklin, songwriter
- Best contemporary Christian music performance/song- *"Your Power,"* Lecrae and Tasha Cobbs Leonard
- Best Gospel album- *"All Things New: Live in Orlando,"* Tye Tribbett
- Best contemporary Christian music album- *"Church Clothes 4,"* Lecrae
- Best roots Gospel album- *"Echoes of the South,"* Blind Boys of Alabama
- Best Latin pop album- *"X Mi (Vol. 1),"* Gaby Moreno
- Best musica urbana album- *"Manana Sera Bonito,"* Karol G
- Best Latin rock or alternative album- *"Vida Cotidiana,"* Juanes *"De Todas Las Flores,"* Natalia Lafourcade (tie)
- Best musica Mexicana album (INCLUDING TEJANO)- *"Genesis,"* Peso Pluma
- Best tropical Latin album- *"Siembra: 45° Aniversario (En Vivo en el Coliseo de Puerto Rico, 14 de Mayo 2022),"* Ruben Blades con Roberto Delgado and Orquesta
- Best global music performance- *"Pashto,"* Bela Fleck, Edgar Meyer and Zakir Hussain featuring Rakesh Chaurasia
- Best African music performance- *"Water,"* Tyla
- Best global music album- *"This Moment,"* Shakti
- Best reggae album- *"Colors of Royal,"* Julian Marley & Antaeus
- Best new age, ambient or chant album- *"So She Howls,"* Carla Patullo featuring Tonality and the Scorchio Quartet
- Best children's music album- *"We Grow Together Preschool Songs,"* 123 Andres
- Best comedy album- *"What's in a Name?,"* Dave Chappelle
- Best audiobook, narration and storytelling

- recording- *"The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times,"* Michelle Obama
- Best compilation soundtrack for visual media- *"Barbie: The Album"* (Various Artists)
- Best score soundtrack for visual media (includes film and television)- *"Oppenheimer,"* Ludwig Goransson, composer
- Best score soundtrack for video games and other interactive media- *"Star Wars Jedi: Survivor,"* Stephen Barton and Gordy Haab, composers
- Best song written for visual media- *"What Was I Made For?"* from *"Barbie: The Album,"* Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell, songwriters (Billie Eilish)
- Best music video- *"I'm Only Sleeping"* (The Beatles), Em Cooper, video director; Jonathan Clyde, Sophie Hilton, Sue Loughlin and Laura Thomas, video producers
- Best music film- *"Moonage Daydream"* (David Bowie), Brett Morgen, video director; Brett Morgen, video producer
- Best recording package- *"Stumpwork,"* Luke Brooks and James Theseus Buck, art directors (Dry Cleaning)
- Best boxed or special limited edition package- *"For the Birds: The Birdsong Project,"* Jeri Heiden and John Heiden, art directors (Various Artists)
- Best album notes- *"Written in Their Soul: The Stax Songwriter Demos,"* Robert Gordon and Deanie Parker, album notes writers (Various Artists)
- Best historical album- *"Written in Their Soul: The Stax Songwriter Demos,"* Robert Gordon, Deanie Parker, Cheryl Pawelski, Michele Smith and Mason Williams, compilation producers; Michael Graves, mastering engineer; Michael Graves, restoration engineer (Various Artists)
- Best engineered album, non-classical- *"Jaguar II,"* John Kercy, Kyle Mann, Victoria Monet, Patrizio "Teezio" Pigliapoco, Neal H Pogue and Todd Robinson, engineers; Colin Leonard, mastering engineer (Victoria Monet)
- Best engineered album, classical- *"Contemporary American Composers,"* David Frost & Charlie Post, engineers; Silas Brown, mastering engineer (Riccardo Muti and Chicago Symphony Orchestra)
- Producer of the year, classical-Elaine Martone
- Best remixed recording- *"Wagging Tongue (Wet Leg Remix),"* Wet Leg, remixers (Depêche Mode)
- Best immersive audio album- *"The Diary of Alicia Keys,"* George Massenburg and Eric Schilling, immersive mix engineers; Michael Romanowski, immersive mastering engineer; Alicia Keys and Ann Mincieli, immersive producers (Alicia Keys)
- Best instrumental composition- *"Helena's Theme,"* John Williams, composer (John Williams)
- Best arrangement, instrumental or a cappella- *"Folsom Prison Blues,"* John Carter Cash, Tommy Emmanuel, Markus Illo, Janet Robin and Roberto Luis Rodriguez, arrangers (The String Revolution featuring Tommy Emmanuel)
- Best arrangement, instruments and vocals- *"In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning,"* Erin Bentlage, Jacob Collier, Sara Gazarek, Johnaye, Kendrick and Amanda Taylor, arrangers (saje Featuring Jacob Collier)
- Best orchestral performance- *"Ades: Dante,"* Gustavo Dudamel, conductor (Los Angeles Philharmonic)
- Best opera recording- *"Blanchard: Champion,"* Yannick Nezet-Seguín, conductor; Ryan Speedo Green, Latonia Moore and Eric Owens; David Frost, producer (The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; The Metropolitan Opera Chorus)
- Best choral performance- *"Saariaho: Reconnaissance,"* Nils Schweckendiek, conductor (Uusinta Ensemble; Helsinki Chamber Choir)
- Best global music performance- *"Rough Magic,"* Roomful of Teeth
- Best classical instrumental solo- *"The American Project,"* Yuja Wang; Teddy Abrams, conductor (Louisville Orchestra)
- Best classical solo vocal album - *"Walking in the Dark,"* Julia Bullock, soloist; Christian Reif, conductor (Philharmonia Orchestra)
- Best classical compendium- *"Passion for Bach and Coltrane,"* Alex Brown, Harlem Quartet, Imani Winds, Edward Perez, Neal Smith and A.B. Spellman; Silas Brown and Mark Dover, producers
- Best contemporary classical composition- *"Montgomery: Rounds,"* Jessie Montgomery, composer (Awadagin Pratt, A Far Cry and Roomful of Teeth). -ANI

SPORTS

FIFA World Cup 2026: MetLife Stadium in New Jersey to host final on 19 July

MEXICO: MetLife Stadium in New Jersey will host the 2026 FIFA World Cup final on 19 July, while Azteca Stadium in Mexico City will stage the opening group game on 11 June.

Mexico is one of three countries co-hosting the expanded 48-team tournament along with USA and Canada which will last a record 39 days.

They have hosted two World Cups in 1970 and 1986, while the US hosted in 1994.

Canada are first-time hosts and their opening game is in Toronto on 12 June.

The United States will play their opening match at So-Fi Stadium in Los Angeles also on 12 June.

The Azteca was the venue for Argentina striker Diego Maradona's famous 'Hand of God' goal in the 2-1 win against England in the 1986 quarter-finals and has a capacity of 83,000.

MetLife Stadium, home to American football teams the New York Giants and New York Jets, is based in New Jersey's East Rutherford and can hold 82,500 fans. It was one of the host stadiums for the 1994 World Cup.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino, alongside comedian and actor Kevin Hart, rapper Drake and celebrity Kim Kardashian, announced the plans on Sunday and also revealed the third-place play-off match will take place in Miami. The quarter-finals onwards will be held in US cities, with Los Angeles, Kansas City, Miami and Boston hosting last-eight matches, while the semi-finals will be in Dallas and Atlanta. Dallas will host a record nine matches.

The draw for the World Cup is expected to take place towards the end of 2025.

The tournament will last 10 more days than the 2022 edition in Qatar.

In total, 16 cities have been chosen including Monterrey and Guadalajara in Mexico, and Vancouver in Canada. Philadelphia, Houston, Seattle and San Francisco are the other US host cities.

Only one city, Guadalajara, will not host a knockout game.

The governing body says teams will have three days of rest for 103 of the tournament's record 104 matches.

The new format will feature 12 four-team groups and a last-32 knockout round for the first time.

The tournament hosts will play the group stage in their own countries, with the US staying on the West Coast with two games in LA and one in Seattle.

Canada will play one group stage game in Toronto followed by two in Vancouver while Mexico will play twice at the Azteca and once in Guadalajara.

NEW ZEALAND VS SOUTH AFRICA: FIRST TEST

Ravindra hammers maiden double ton



MOUNT MAUNGANUI: Rachin Ravindra's maiden double century and six-wicket haul on debut by South Africa skipper Neil Brand were the highlights as the Proteas ended the day second of the first Test against New Zealand trailing by 431 runs at Mount Maunganui on Monday.

At the end of day two, SA were 80/4, with David Bedingham (29*) and Keegan Petersen (2*) unbeaten.

New Zealand started their day at 258/2, with Kane Williamson (112*) and Rachin Ravindra (118*) unbeaten at the crease.

Ruan de Swardt struck early for Proteas, getting the prized wicket of Williamson for 118 in 289 balls, with 16 fours, to end the 232-run partnership.

Daryl Mitchell joined Ravindra and brought up their 50-run partnership in 97 balls.

Brand removed Mitchell via caught and bowled dismissal for 34 in 75 balls, with three fours and a six. Wicketkeeper-batter Tom Blundell's stay at the crease was shorter as he was dismissed by Swardt for just 11 as NZ were 391/5.

Glenn Phillips joined Ravindra at the crease. With a single, Ravindra reached his maiden Test double ton in 340 balls, with 21 fours and a six. The duo also brought up their 50-run partnership.

Skipper Brand gave SA the breakthrough, removing Phillips for 39 in 42 balls, with two fours and two sixes. Brand soon managed to clean up Ravindra's stumps for 240 in 366 balls, with 26 fours and three sixes. Kiwis reached their 500-run mark in 143.1 overs thanks to a cameo by Matt Henry (27 in nine balls, with a four and three sixes), but Brand ran through the rest of the batting to end NZ's innings at 511 in 144 overs.

Pacer Kyle Jamieson started SA's downfall, getting skipper Neil Brand (4) and Raynard van Tonder (0) in the same over. Edward Moore was also dismissed by Matt Henry for 23, with four boundaries. SA were reduced to 30/3 in 15 overs. A 44-run stand between Zubayr Hamza and David Bedingham was broken when spinner Mitchell Santner removed the former for 22. -ANI

SPANISH LA LIGA

Injury-time goal helps Atletico hold Real in Madrid derby



MADRID: Atletico Madrid scored an injury-time equaliser to rescue a point from their derby with La Liga leaders Real Madrid on Sunday.

Brahim Diaz pounced on a heavy touch from Koke and clipped the ball past Jan Oblak from close range to give Real the opening goal.

Stefan Savic had a leveller ruled out for offside after heading in Antoine Griezmann's corner.

But Marcos Llorente did salvage a point when he headed in from Memphis Depay's flick-on with seconds left.

Brahim had been a last-minute addition to the team after Vinicius Jr was injured in the warm-up and thought he had scored the winner before the late equaliser.

He almost doubled their advantage but he curled a shot just wide after creating the chance with some clever footwork.

Atletico had chances too. Real Madrid keeper Andriy Lunin, who has recently taken Kepa's place in the team, made a brilliant save to keep out Axel Witsel's header and later stopped Griezmann's flicked effort.

This was the third meeting of the rivals in 2024, with Real winning 5-3 in extra time in the Spanish Super Cup and Atletico triumphing 4-2 after extra time in the Copa del Rey.

The draw for Carlo Ancelotti's side takes them two points clear of surprise package Girona, who drew 0-0 with Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Defending champions Barcelona are another six points back, while Atletico are 10 points off top. -Agencies

India drub England to level Test series

Brilliant bowling spells from Jasprit Bumrah and R Ashwin help the hosts overcome a fighting England to win the second Test by 106 runs



VISAKHAPATNAM: Brilliant bowling spells from Jasprit Bumrah and Ravichandran Ashwin helped India overcome a fighting England as they levelled the five-match series 1-1 with a 106-run win in the second Test at Visakhapatnam on Monday.

Looking to complete a 399-run chase that would have broken a host of records, England were bowled out for 292 to lose by 106 runs on the fourth day.

England made a strong start and reached 95-1, but the promoted Rehan Ahmed was trapped leg before by Axar Patel to signal a regular fall of wickets.

Opener Zak Crawley batting with grace for his 73. When he was given lbw to Kuldeep Yadav on review, the game slipped away.

Slim hope remained in the shape of Ben Stokes, only for the captain to be run out in wasteful fashion by a direct hit from Shreyas Iyer. At that point, with 179 required and only three wickets remaining, India could breathe easily.

Ben Foakes and Tom Hartley delayed India with a stand of 56, Hartley surviving two reviews that would have given Ashwin his 500th Test wicket. Fast bowler Bumrah was summoned and



pouched a return catch off Foakes and when Shoaib Bashir was caught behind off Mukesh Kumar, Ashwin was given another shot at the milestone. But Bumrah uprooted Hartley's off stump to end with three in the innings and nine in the match, leaving Ashwin on 499 wickets going into the third Test in Rajkot on 15 February.

Ultimately, the visitors were undone by a collapse of 6-68 in their first innings, when they were blown away by the brilliant Bumrah. It left them too much to do in the chase.

From 67-1 overnight, England started brightly, with Crawley driving Bumrah and Ahmed attacking Axar.

India retreated, there were gaps where England could score, but Ahmed's misjudgement in playing back to Axar opened the door.

There can be debate over whether England's aggression tipped into recklessness, though only Root's dismissal was ugly.

Perhaps affected by his finger, he was skittish for nine balls in which he hit two fours, a six and survived an lbw review. From the 10th he aimed a wild swipe at Ashwin and was caught at point.

Crawley was perhaps unlucky to be lbw on review to Kuldeep's fifth delivery of the day. Jonny Bairstow was pinned in front by Bumrah on the stroke of lunch.

Stokes fell in bizarre fashion. Called for a single by Foakes, Stokes dawdled and was beaten by a direct hit from Shreyas at mid-wicket. Foakes and Hartley showed spirit, Ashwin was given a long bowl in an attempt to reach his milestone, but eventually Bumrah needed only six deliveries of a new spell to produce the slower ball that out-foxed Foakes.

Mukesh became the first seamer other than Bumrah or Anderson to take a wicket in the series and the stage was set for Ashwin, only for Bumrah to whistle through Hartley's defensive grope.

England's main tormentor was the awesome Bumrah, whose ability to move the ball at high pace is threatening to become a decisive factor in the series. The tourists must ponder a way to counter his sensational skill during the break.

India have a proud home record. They have not lost a series at home for 12 years and remain favourites despite England's strong showing in the first two Tests. -Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Gunners beat Liverpool; ManU triumph

LONDON: Arsenal reduced Liverpool's lead at the top of the Premier League to two points after a deserved 3-1 victory in a tense encounter at Emirates Stadium.

The Gunners knew defeat was unthinkable and their cause was helped hugely by two errors from Liverpool's normally reliable keeper Alisson, who gifted Arsenal the goals that ensured three crucial points.

It sparked joyous scenes at the final whistle as Arsenal condemned Liverpool to only their second league defeat this season, their first since a highly controversial loss at Tottenham in late September.

Arsenal were rewarded for a lightning start when Bukayo Saka gave them a 14th-minute lead, turning home a rebound after Alisson saved from Kai Havertz.

The hosts dominated proceedings but a defensive shambles allowed Liverpool to restore parity seconds before the break, Gabriel turning the ball into his own net via his hand after a mix-up between keeper David Raya and William Saliba as they challenged Luis Diaz.

Liverpool carried more momentum after the interval with Alexis Mac Allister going close twice and Curtis Jones just off target before the Gunners were the next



beneficiaries of a calamitous error, this time between Alisson and Virgil van Dijk, that saw them restore their lead after 67 minutes. Alisson rushed from his goal and kicked fresh air as Van Dijk tried to deal with a long clearance, leaving Gabriel Martinelli with the simplest of finishes into an empty net.

And Liverpool's misery was compounded in the closing stages when defender Ibrahima Konate was shown a second yellow card for a foul on Havertz, before substitute Leandro Trossard added a third in stoppage time - Alisson once again at fault as he allowed a routine near-post shot through his legs.

Man United beat West Ham Rasmus Hojlund made it four

Premier League goals in as many games and Alejandro Garnacho scored twice as the Red Devils recorded a comfortable 3-0 victory against West Ham on Sunday.

Lisandro Martinez's worrying knee injury may rob Ten Hag of that position for an extended period but, after Hojlund marked his 21st birthday by opening the scoring and fellow youngster Garnacho added another two in the second half, the Dutchman was in a bullish mood.

Cunha hat-trick for Wolves Matheus Cunha scored a hat-trick as Wolves came from behind to stun Chelsea 4-2 and replace the Blues in the top half of the Premier League table on Sunday.



Cole Palmer gave Mauricio Pochettino's hosts a 19th-minute lead. But Wolves levelled less than three minutes later when Cunha's shot took a significant deflection off Thiago Silva and wrong-footed Djordje Petrovic.

The turnaround was complete shortly before the break, courtesy of another deflected shot, as Rayan Ait-Nouri met Pedro Neto's cutback and sent the ball in off Axel Disasi. Chelsea then fell two goals behind when the electric Neto beat Silva for pace and picked out Cunha for his second. The Brazilian then completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot after being brought down by Malo Gusto, sending Petrovic the wrong way with eight minutes remaining. -Agencies

This modern, all-electric reinterpretation of MG's classic 2-seater sports cars showcases MG's commitment to pioneering the future of electric mobility. In terms of power and performance, MG Cyberster is available in a single-motor model with 64 kWh battery capacity and a dual-motor model with the battery capacity of 77 kWh. The most powerful variant can accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h within 3.2 seconds. With the MG Cyberster leading the charge, the brand envisions the cultivation of a global community, a world where electrifying technology converges with environmental responsibility.

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ROUND-UP

BEC inaugurates state-of-the-art Carrier Experience Centre in Mabelah

This Carrier Experience Centre is a showcase of the world-leading quality, cutting-edge technology, and globally trusted reliability from Carrier that is available for Omani homes and residential buildings

MUSCAT: On February 5, 2024, in Muscat, Bahwan Engineering Company (BEC), with over 45 years of expertise in introducing market-leading, high-efficiency carrier air-conditioning solutions



in Oman, inaugurated the state-of-the-art Carrier Experience Centre in Mabelah. His Highness Faisal Abdul Rawoof Abbas Al Said honoured the occasion as the chief guest during the inaugural event. The ceremony drew attendance from media representatives and senior management officials representing both Carrier and BEC. “We take pride in being an Omani company that over the decades, has helped clients in a comprehensive range of market verticals such as healthcare, hospitality, banking, education, residential, commercial and government high rise buildings, airports, and other iconic projects in achieving faster returns on investment, lower operating costs, and higher operating efficiencies,” said a senior BEC management representative present on the occasion. “This Carrier Experience Centre is not just retail expansion, but a showcase of the world-leading quality, cutting-edge technology, and globally trusted reliability from Carrier that is available for Omani homes and residential buildings,” he added. Pioneering heating and cooling solutions since 1902, Carrier has a rich history of innovation. Founded by Willis Carrier, who developed

the first modern air conditioning system, the company has transformed the way the world lives today. Embracing the philosophy that ‘big innovations are not just for big buildings,’ Carrier provides expert solutions, including VRF, ducted, ductless, packaged products, and window room air conditioners, ensuring high efficiency and premium comfort in various settings such as homes, offices, apartments, retail, and other applications. “Carrier products with their high efficiency and sustainable design contribute directly to the objectives of Oman’s National Strategy for an Orderly Transition to Net Zero,” said Madhanagopal Chandrakumar, Chief Executive Officer of AHI Carrier. “As in other parts of the world, we have started to see effects of global warming in the region as well in the form of more tropical storms, more days with temperatures exceeding 45°C, and reports of increasing desertification. It is highly commendable that in the Government of Oman’s planned orderly transition, decarbonisation takes priority and would optimize for all five of the transition objectives,” added Chandrakumar. “Decarbonisation is where we add tangible value through engineered technical solutions and high efficiency equipment that in applications in the GCC, have reduced energy requirements by more than 40 percent contributing greatly to decarbonisation. We are also completely aligned with Carrier’s 1 gigaton goal where the objective is to help customers avoid more than 1 gigaton of GHG emissions by 2030. Our home and light commercial HVAC solutions imbibe our vision of sustainability and empower individual customers and end users to contribute towards a healthier planet,” Chandrakumar concluded. “I congratulate Bahwan Engineering Company who has been our channel partners in Oman for the past 45 years for establishing the Carrier Experience Centre which presents an exciting and highly efficient range of Carrier residential and light commercial products. Bahwan Engineering Company enhances our market-leading offerings with superior after-sales service and unparalleled customer support ensuring utmost customer satisfaction,” said Syed Jafar Imam, Head of Distribution Sales – Middle East, Carrier Products at AHI Carrier.

MAKES HISTORY



Malabar Gold & Diamonds opens new showroom in Sydney

MUSCAT: Scripting history as the first Indian International jewellery brand to begin operations in Australia, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally, has launched its new showroom in Australia at Sydney. The showroom marks Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ expansion into the 13th country of operations. Currently, the brand has an extensive retail presence of over 340 showrooms spread across India, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, KSA, Bahrain, Singapore, Malaysia, the USA, the UK, Canada & Australia. The new showroom was inaugurated by renowned Australian Cricketer rBrett Lee in the presence of Shamlal Ahamed, MD – International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mr. Asher O, MD-India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Ajith M, Regional Head – Far East & Australasia, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Ameer CMC, Head of Finance & Admin, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Faisal A.K, Head of Manufacturing, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Shaji Kakkodi, Chief Digital Officer, Malabar Group; representatives from the Sydney government, other senior management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers and well-wishers. Commenting on the occasion, Malabar Group Chairman, Ahammed said: “This is a proud moment for us as the first Indian

International jewellery retailer to begin operations in Australia. We have been a strong proponent of ‘Make in India; Market to the World’, showcasing the artistry of Indian jewellery on a global stage and expanding into Australia is another testimony of our commitment to this initiative. This is also a great success story leveraging the strong trade relationship and recent bi-lateral free trade agreement between Australia & India. Our growth plan in Australia will lead to significant investments into Jobs & local Economy in Australia over the next few years. “On behalf of Malabar Group, I would like to thank all our customers, management team members, shareholders, and other stakeholders for their invaluable contribution towards helping us craft this historic moment and move one step closer towards our goal of being crowned as the world’s No. 1 jewellery retailer.” Located at 109 Wigram Street in Harris Park within the Little India Precinct, Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ new outlet will be the largest jewellery showroom in Sydney. With an extensive collection of jewellery in 18K, 22K gold and diamonds, the showroom will showcase over 30,000 designs across bridal wear, daily wear and occasional wear. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has also facilitated a customised jewellery design facility at its showroom.

CHINESE AUTOMOTIVE BRAND

Chery’s philanthropy aligns with corporate development in 2023

MUSCAT: Chery is the first Chinese automotive brand to initiate an internationalisation strategy. In the more than 20 years of its “only exporting” journey, it has achieved remarkable performance, earning the trust of 12.9 million users worldwide and maintaining the title of China’s top passenger car exporter for 20 consecutive years. Currently, Chery has established 8 R&D centres and a network of 1,500 overseas dealers worldwide, with products sold in more than 80 countries and regions. As the global market continues to expand and the user base grows, Chery, in addition to providing new-generation automotive products and technology to global customers, plays an active role in environmental protection, disaster relief assistance, children’s education and the construction of a better international society on a global scale. In February 2023, two earthquakes with magnitudes of 7.8 struck the eastern region of Turkey, causing heavy casualties and property damage. After the earthquakes, Chery International promptly gathered information on the local disaster situation and activated the rescue mechanism within 30 minutes of the trem-



ors. To quickly deliver supplies to the affected areas, Chery actively arranged trucks, overcoming challenges such as adverse road conditions and aftershocks, transporting supplies from Istanbul to the disaster-stricken region. Chery has consistently been at the forefront in the face of every major disaster. Whether it was the summer floods in China’s Henan province in 2021, the floods in Peru in 2017, the earthquake in Ecuador in 2016, the earthquake in Chile in 2012, or the earthquake in Gansu, China, in 2023, Chery has extended support to the affected areas by donating relief funds and materi-

als. The aim is to help the affected regions overcome immediate challenges, providing assistance and care to residents during difficult times. According to incomplete statistics, Chery’s cash and material donations at various levels of emergency and disaster relief efforts have exceeded 1.2 billion Yuan. In April 2023, Chery announced the establishment of the Green Public Welfare Fund at the Shanghai Auto Show. Yin Tongyue, Chairman of Chery Automobile, Zhang Guibing, President of Chery International, and dealer representatives jointly initiated the establishment of this fund, marking a new

pinnacle in Chery’s global strategy for corporate social responsibility. In October 2023, witnessed by over 600 international media representatives and users from 40 countries and regions worldwide, Chery Automobile donated six million dollars to the Unicef (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund). This donation is intended to support Unicef’s global education projects. Additionally, Chery signed a memorandum of cooperation with the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources). The two parties will explore innovative action directions to promote ecological protection and restoration in fragile environments such as forests, wetlands, and oceans worldwide. In October, Chery organized over a thousand participants, including Chery’s domestic and international users, residents of Wuhu City, and Chery employees, to conduct a green riding activity in Wuhu, China. This activity aimed to actively promote Chery’s advocated green and eco-friendly concepts, encouraging low-carbon travel trends through practical actions. In Oman, Chery vehicles are distributed by Saud Bahwan Group.

SUPPORTING LOCAL SPORTS TEAMS

Bank Muscat inaugurates new Green Sports field in Bidiyah

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, continues to support youth sports teams through its annual Green Sports programme. Recently, the bank handed over the Green Sports field to the Al Etihad Sports and Cultural team from the Wilayat of Bidiyah, Al Sharqiya North Governorate. The event was held in the presence of Colonel Ibrahim bin Amer Al Hajri, Younus bin Amer Al Hajri, Head of Al Etihad Sports & Cultural Team, Bader bin Mohammed Al Hajri, Assistant Regional Manager



- North Al Sharqiya, Bank Muscat, and a number of officials and team members. During the ceremony, Bader Al Hajri said: “We are pleased to congratulate Al Etihad Sports

and Cultural team from Bidiyah for the completion of the lighting system project. Bank Muscat is keen to continue implementing the Green Sports programme and has announced earlier this year

the launch of the 13th edition of Green Sports. I would like to take this opportunity to wish the team members all the best.” Younus Al Hajri said: “I would like to thank Bank Muscat for continuing to implement the Green Sports programme to support local sports teams across the Sultanate. We are pleased to celebrate the inauguration of the lighting system project and we call on everyone in the community to make the best use of the new facility in the different sport, cultural and social activities.”



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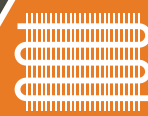


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