

**OMAN VISION 2040  
IMPLEMENTATION UNIT  
HOLDS HIGH-LEVEL MEETING**

Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit held a meeting with editors-in-chief editors and directors-general of national media organisations in Oman. **>A2**



**HM THE SULTAN RECEIVES WRITTEN  
MESSAGE FROM UAE PRESIDENT**

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The message was handed over to Sayyid Khalid Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court when he received in his office Mohammed Nakhira Al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman. **>A4**



Founded 1975 · Volume 48 No. 58 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

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# HM TO VISIT EGYPT ON SUNDAY

HM's visit reflects the keenness of the two countries' leaderships to enhance ties

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on an official visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt this Sunday, according to a statement issued by the Diwan of Royal Court on Wednesday. The statement reads as follows: "In continuation of the historical relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on an official two-day visit to Egypt with effect from Sunday, 21 May 2023, in response to an invitation from President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of Egypt. The visit reflects the keenness of the two countries' leaderships to enhance joint ties. The visit will explore areas of the existing cooperation between the two countries in various spheres that serve the joint interests.



**FILE PICTURE:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik with Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of Egypt, in Muscat last year.

The two leaderships will hold a session of consultation and co-ordination on matters that serve the joint Arab action, in addition to discussing the latest developments at the regional and international arenas. During the visit, His Majesty

the Sultan will be accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid

Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al

His Majesty's visit to have positive impact on Oman-Egypt relations **>A6**

Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Abdullah bin Nassir Al Rahbi, Ambassador of Oman to Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan wherever he might be and guard him as a treasured source of pride and inspiration to his nation!" — **ONA**

## SAYYID FAHD RECEIVES MEMBERS OF GCC FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC COOPERATION COMMITTEE



His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, yesterday received the members of the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee who are taking part in the committee's 119th meeting, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman. HH Sayyid Fahd expressed the Sultanate of Oman's appreciation for all efforts exerted in economic, investment and business fields that contribute to the march of joint GCC economic action. **>A4**

DELEGATED BY HM THE SULTAN

## Sayyid Asa'ad to lead Oman's delegation to Arab Summit

**MUSCAT:** Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, will leave on Thursday to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to lead the Sultanate of Oman's delegation to the 32nd Arab Summit, due to be held in Jeddah on Friday. HH Sayyid Asa'ad is accompanied by an official delegation comprising Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Al Sa'eedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Abdullah Nasser Al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to



Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League, HH Sayyid Turki Faisal Al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman

to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the two advisors at the office of HH Sayyid Asa'ad.

— **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

### OMAN Jeddah Summit

**1** The Sultanate of Oman participated in the ministerial meeting, which precedes the 32nd Arab Summit. **>A3**

### WORLD Record by Sherpa

**2** Nepali climber Kami Rita Sherpa scaled Mount Everest for the 27th time on Wednesday. **>A6**

### MARKET Bidding companies

**3** The Tender Board has determined the criteria for exempting bidding companies from providing temporary bid security. **>B1**

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

## Campaign to eradicate Aedes mosquito launched

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** An intensive campaign has been launched by the Muscat Municipality in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and other competent authorities to combat the Aedes Aegypti mosquito in Muscat. The drive aims to eradicate mosquito and its breeding sites through investigation and exploration in the wilayat of Seeb, Muttrah and Bausher and focus on fighting incubators that help in the growth of mosquito larvae. The Aedes aegypti mosquito multiplies through female mosquitoes that lay eggs in stagnant water, causing spread of infections of Dengue fever, yellow fever, and the Zika virus. Dengue fever is one of the viral diseases transmitted by the female Aedes aegypti, the symptoms of which are (fever, headache, severe



fatigue, skin rash, digestive upset, joint and muscle pain).

**Preventive measures** Preventive measures include installing nets that prevent insects from entering through home windows, getting rid of old tyres and containers and small pots in which water collects. Prevention can also be done by constantly cleaning fountains and sealing leaks from sewage vents,



and taking care of regular maintenance of drinking water coolers and cleaning them.

**Methods of control** The methods of combating Aedes aegypti by the task forces include engineering, biological and chemical control. Engineering control gets rid of the causes of mosquito breeding, such as cleaning and drying basins, fountains, food and drink bowls of animals or birds,

and getting rid of the accumulation of waste and building materials inside the house. The teams also use pesticides as chemical control for the breeding grounds of the larvae. A number of modern devices and equipment are used, such as thermal (smoke) and cold (micro-spray) fogging machines, and pyrethroid pesticides, which are approved by the World Health Organization, in addition to silicone oil, which acts as a surface insulator above the water.

**Need for cooperation** Muscat Municipality urges community members to allow task teams to enter homes, facilities, residential units so that they can carry out operations.

**Awareness efforts** These efforts stem from Muscat Municipality obligation to maintain the health and safety of com-

munity members and to combat sources of pathogens, as well as to strengthen the preventive and awareness aspect in preventing the spread of diseases. Muscat Municipality stresses the need to exert integrated efforts to make this campaign a success, and calls on not to spread rumours and join hands with work teams to achieve the ultimate goal of this campaign. Municipality also calls on all citizens and residents in the areas of South and North Mabelah, North and South Hail, South Al-Mawaleh, Al Khoud, Sur al Hadid, and the wilayats of Muttrah and Bausher to cooperate with the control teams and facilitate their entry into homes, noting that the campaign began from May 17, 2023 and last till May 28, 2023 during the morning (from 7 am to 11 pm), and the evening period (from 3 to 6 pm).

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PUBLIC AWARENESS

## Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Unit holds high-level press meeting



**MEETING:** The meeting was attended by Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information. - ONA

**MUSCAT:** Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit held a meeting with editors-in-chief editors and directors-general of national media organisations in Oman.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information.

Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, gave a visual presentation on Oman Vision 2040, follow-up and im-

plementation mechanisms and the role of the departments concerned in achieving the vision according to its objectives and indicators.

The meeting stems from the deep conviction in the media as a partner in consolidating public awareness about Oman Vision 2040 and phases of its accomplishment.

Oman Vision 2040 comprises four basic pillars, 12 national priorities, 12 strategic approaches, 75 strategic objectives, and 68 national and international performance indicators.

Oman Vision 2040 constitutes an opportunity to enhance partnership and cooperation between various parties with the prime aim of promoting innovation and development in various spheres. The realisation of its goals requires joint efforts from all government and private establishments and civil society institutions in the country. -ONA

STAR VISION

## SQU inks pact to launch first Omani AI model to space



**MUSCAT:** Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) signed an agreement of cooperation with Chinese satellites and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies company Star Vision, to launch the first Omani AI model to space. The agreement was signed by Dr. Ghazi Ali Al Rawas, Dean of Research at SQU and Star Vision's Co-founder Fan Lianghua. -ONA

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# Oman’s constructive role for the success of GCC march praised

Sayyid Fahd expressed Oman’s appreciation for all efforts exerted in economic, investment and business fields that contribute to the march of joint GCC economic action

**MUSCAT:** His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, yesterday received the members of the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee who are taking part in the committee’s 119th meeting, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman.

HH Sayyid Fahd expressed the Sultanate of Oman’s appreciation for all efforts exerted in economic, investment and business fields

that contribute to the march of joint GCC economic action.

He underscored the importance of topics addressed by the ministerial committee’s meeting and its role in enhancing joint GCC action to keep pace with developments of concern to the region during this period.

The agenda of the committee’s meeting, including the process of completing the requirements for the GCC Customs Union and acti-



vating the GCC Common Market was reviewed.

It also discussed tackling challenges hindering the achievement of GCC unity. Moreover, the meeting touched on aspects

related to the programme of realizing economic unity among GCC states by 2025.

The members of the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee expressed their



thanks for the Sultanate of Oman’s hosting of the current meeting and its sound preparation which resulted in reaching positive outcomes. They also lauded the constructive role of Oman for the success of the GCC march.

The meeting was attended by Sultan Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance and Jassim Mohammed Al Budaiwi, Secretary General of the GCC. -ONA

UAE AMBASSADOR

## Written message from UAE President received

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The message was handed over to Sayyid Khalid Hilal Al Bussaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court when he received in his office on Wednesday Mohammed Nakhira Al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the distinguished relations between Oman and the UAE. -ONA



MEETING

## Royal Office Minister meets top EU official for Middle East

**MUSCAT:** Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu’amani, Minister of the Royal Office received here on Wednesday Sven Koopmans, the European Union’s (EU) Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process and his accompanying delegation.

**Appreciation**

Koopmans expressed his appreciation for the Sultanate of Oman’s stance on regional and international issues and its active role in tackling those issues, notably the Middle East’s peace process.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the march of



relations between Oman and the EU in different fields and means of enhancing them to serve mutual interests. They also discussed several matters of common concern. -ONA

# Archaeological sites in Taqah

Lying 30 kilometres away from Salalah is Taqah which is known for its breathtaking landscape during Khareef season. But apart from that tourists visit this place for the archaeological sites and geological diversity. Taqah has many archaeological sites, including Samaham, which is one of the oldest cities, dating back to the third millennium BC. It has its port, which is one of the oldest in the Arabian Peninsula from where local goods and products are exported to the world. Taqah Fort is built in Arab Islamic style in terms of shape, design and decor.

The castle is one of the most popular landmarks in the Dhofar region. Built in the 19th century it

was later renovated and reopened as a museum in 1994. The rooms in the castle display cultural artefacts thus illustrating the traditional Omani way of living. It also contains ancient weapons, cookware, handicrafts, and some other interesting exhibits.

The terracotta potteries and porcelain bowls and plates that were obtained through trade with China, India, Europe and Zanzibar are not to be missed. The white sandy beaches of Taqah are stunning. Wadi Darbat is located in the east of the wilayat of Taqah at a distance of 7 kilometres, where Sidr trees and many large shady trees are spread on its sides. Wadi Darbat is well connected to the historical area of Samaham.



MINISTRY OF CULTURE



Registration opens for Child Culture Award

**MUSCAT:** The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth on Wednesday announced the start of registration for the Child Culture Award. Registration for the award, which is launched for the first time, will last until 31 July.

The award comprises two competitions codenamed “Oman Speaks” and “Speak so I See You”.

The award will be contested by children and personnel operating in the field of child culture.

The contest seeks to hone children’s cultural and literary abilities.

It will motivate writers and intellectuals to enrich the Arab children’s library with literature focusing on human values. — ONA

NCSI

Over 44,000 tourists visited Al Jabal Al Akhdar

**MUSCAT:** The number of visitors to the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate during the past four months of 2023 has reached 44,678 visitors, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The number of Omani citizens who visited the wilayat of Jabal Al-Akhdar reached 8581, the number of Saudi tourists reached 1144, the number of Kuwaiti visitors reached 414, the number of Emirati visitors reached 240, the number of Bahraini visitors reached 161, and the number of Qatari visitors reached 175.

— Times News Service

HEALTH CHALLENGES

SQU inks cooperation pact to combat cardiovascular diseases

**MUSCAT:** Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), represented by the Medical Research Centre, and leading international pharmaceutical company Novartis, on Wednesday signed an agreement of cooperation on combating cardiovascular diseases.

Cardiovascular diseases are considered among the top health challenges on the global scale.

The agreement aims to limit the spread of cardiovascular diseases and their associated risk factors in the Sultanate of Oman. Focus will be given on treating high blood cholesterol cases.

The two sides target utilising advanced technologies and shar-



ing best practices to develop innovative solutions related to improving the process of handling cardiovascular diseases.

The agreement was inked by Ghazi Ali Al Rawas, Dean of Research and Dr. Mohammed Ezz Eldin, Regional Director of Novartis for the Gulf.

— ONA



**INDIAN SCHOOL AL MAABELA**  
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**TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT**

Indian School Al Maabela announces the following tender:

| Tender No    | Description of Works                        | Grade                                                 | Tender Fee | Submission                  |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|              |                                             |                                                       |            | Last Date                   | Place                     |
| ISAM/ 6/2023 | Construction of KG classrooms at IS Maabela | Grade-1 and above registered with Chamber of Commerce | RO 200/-   | 08.06.2023 before 5.00 p.m. | Indian School Al Maabela. |

The interested contractors, who are qualified for executing such type of works, are invited to obtain the full tender documents including BOQ from the office of **ISAM** along with the non-refundable tender fee as cited above, from 21.05.2023 onwards between 8.00 a.m and 3.00 p.m.

Companies can drop the filled in tender documents in the tender box kept in school office accompanied by a tender bond of one percent (1%) of the total tender amount, issued by any local bank in Oman. The bond must be valid for one hundred and eighty days from the date of submission. Tenders received without the tender bond are liable to be rejected.

Tenders must be submitted in plain envelope sealed with red wax (without showing any identity of the company on the envelope). Tenders should be addressed to “**The Chairperson, Purchase Subcommittee, ISAM**” and should be submitted on or before **08.06.2023 before 5.00 p.m.**

The School is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender and reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.



**Sultanate of Oman**  
**Ministry of Health**  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTHSERVICES

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Ministry of Health - Directorate General of Health Service AL Dhahira Governorate of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tender: -

| Tender Ref | Description                 | Last date for Collection of tender Document | Closing Time/ Day/ Date                | Eligibility                                        | Tender Fee (Non-Refundable) |
|------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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Notes:-

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- The DGHS is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

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# HM’s visit to have positive impact on Oman-Egypt ties

It is worth mentioning that Oman and Egypt signed a number of MoUs during the visit of the Egyptian President to Oman in June 2022

**MUSCAT:** The Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt continue promoting their distinguished relations in various political, economic and cultural areas. They also back all matters that serve the joint interests of their peoples.

The official visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Egypt this Sunday carries a great significance, as His Majesty’s talks during the visit with President Abdul Fattah el Sisi will have a positive impact on the bilateral relations between the two countries.

It is worth mentioning that Oman and Egypt signed a number of MoUs and executive programmes during the visit of the Egyptian President to Oman in June 2022.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicate that the volume of trade exchange between Oman and Egypt increased in 2022, amounting to approximately OMR393.628 million, compared to OMR217.742 million in 2021.

The value of Omani exports to Egypt increased from OMR157.515 million in 2021 to OMR298.077 million in 2022, while the value of Omani imports from Egypt amounted to OMR95.551 million in 2022, compared to OMR60.227 million in 2021.

Statistics show that the balance of trade between the two countries in 2022 was in favour of Oman, amounting to OMR202.526 million.

Abdullah Nassir Al Rahbi, Ambassador of Oman to Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League said that the official of His Majesty the Sultan to Egypt comes after less than one year from the Egyptian President’s visit to Oman, which reflects the attention that Oman’s government attaches to Egypt.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Al Rahbi pointed out that Oman and Egypt celebrated last November, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between them. This period, the ambassador explained, witnessed events that underlined the depth and strength of this relation, most importantly Oman’s support for Egypt following the Arab boycott after it signed the Camp David Accords.

He affirmed that the two coun-



tries share common principles, including non-interference in the affairs of others, paying attention for the regional security and stability and playing an important role in this aspect.

Al Rahbi affirmed that investment indicators between Oman and Egypt began to improve over the past 3 years, stressing the need for cooperation in the economic field to meet the historical relations between the two countries.

The ambassador called upon Egyptian investors to utilise the investment opportunities available in Oman, particularly in the economic zones and ports.

He pointed out that a number of Egyptian investors have started to invest in various fields, such as the manufacture of fertilizers and plastics in the free zones, in addition to the tourism area. There are also talks with some investors in the areas of food security, he added.

The ambassador also talked about the cultural cooperation between Oman and Egypt, pointing to the Egyptian teachers who contributed to the educational march in Oman since the dawn of the blessed renaissance. He also touched on the cooperation between Oman and Egypt in areas of media and higher education.

Khalid Mohammed Radi, Ambassador of Egypt to Oman said that the upcoming historic first visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Egypt and his meeting with President Abdul Fattah el Sisi will advance the deep-rooted relations between the two countries towards broader horizons.

The ambassador said in a statement to ONA that the visit will review various bilateral matters and international issues of common concern. The visit, he affirmed, represents a qualitative shift in the march of Omani-Egyptian relations.

The Egyptian Ambassador added that His Majesty the Sultan and the Egyptian President will discuss means of promoting relations on the political, economic, commercial, cultural and social levels. The meeting will also cater to Omani-Egyptian coordination on various regional and international issues. He added that the region needs more coordination and cooperation to insure peace, security and stability.

He pointed out that the previous visit of the Egyptian President to Oman marked a turning

point for the two countries’ relations. The visit included the signing of several agreements covering various areas, such as maritime navigation, investment, trade, industry, combating monopoly, providing the means for free competition, industrial development, investment promotion, the environment, vocational and technical training and higher education.

He also said that signing these agreements has set the foundation to enable extensive mutual cooperation. This, he said, is reflected on the increasing volume of trade exchange between the two countries as business and economic relations between Oman and Egypt saw a major development in 2022.

Ambassador Radi indicated that the volume of intra-trade between Oman and Egypt increased by 52 percent compared to 2021. The volume of trade exchange reached 1.09 billion Egyptian Pounds. Egyptian exports to Oman stood at \$433 million while Egyptian imports from Oman stand at \$760 million. The figures, he affirmed, reflect the keenness of the two countries to develop mutual relations.

He said that exports from Oman to Egypt include metal ores, fish, aluminium and its related industries and organic chemical products. Meanwhile, Oman imports from Egypt some agricultural products, furniture, electrical appliances and dairy products, among other products.

According to the directives of the two countries’ leaderships, he said, officials from both countries are working jointly to develop relations in various fields. This move is reflected on economic, commercial and investment fields. He added that the volume of Egyptian investments in Oman is close to \$2 billion.

He said that Oman’s investment-encouraging and positive milieu, in addition to its regulations and facilities provided for foreign investors, all encourage investors to come to Oman.

The ambassador stressed that the upgrades in Oman’s credit rating is an indication of the efforts exerted under the Royal directives of His Majesty, which made Oman an oasis of security and stability. The Sultanate of Oman, he underscored, is a hub for foreign investors, including Egyptians.

Further, Ambassador Radi noted that the number of Egyptian companies in Oman is on a con-

tinuous rise, reaching near 1,900 companies. The number echoes the advance relations between the two countries.

The visit of His Majesty the Sultan, he further said, is a message which further increases motivation to enhance relations on various levels, especially in economic, commercial and cultural spheres.

The ambassador described the mutual cultural relations as immense and diverse. Those relations, he added, cover a spectrum of fields, such as arts, literature, translation, cinema and the theatre.

He reiterated that the two countries share similar political views on various regional and international issues. This stems from shared values that are based on establishing principles of security, peace and adhering to the international law.

The Egyptian ambassador lauded the Sultanate of Oman’s distinguished diplomacy in dealing with various issues in the region.

He pointed out that Oman spares no effort in supporting peace efforts in various parts of the region. Khalid Mohammed Radi, the Ambassador of Egypt to Oman highlighted the care and attention received by the Egyptian community in Oman from the government and the people. He said that the Egyptian community is taking part in various development programmes in Oman and contributes positively to the country’s development in various fields.

On his turn, Dr. Salim Sleem Al Junaibi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in Al Wusta, Member of the Omani-Egyptian Business Council, said that the visit of President Abdel Fattah El Sisi to Oman in June 2022 contributed to strengthening bilateral cooperation in various business, economic and investment fields.

Al Junaibi told ONA that the number of Egyptian companies investing in Oman during 2020 stood at 744 with a total capital of \$1.856 billion. Omani investments in Egypt stood at \$68.8 million during the financial year 2020/2021 compared to \$15.8 million during the financial year 2019/2020, he added.

Moreover, Dr. Ahmed Ridha, Deputy Head of the Egyptian side in the Omani-Egyptian Business Council said that the council is working towards boosting bilateral relations and augmenting trade exchange and investments between the private sectors of the two countries. He added that His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Abdul Fattah el Sisi directed during their meeting in 2022 to study the establishment of a joint investment fund to invest in feasible projects in various vital sectors.

Dr. Ahmed Ridha said that the proposed capital for the fund stands at \$100 million. Both the Omani and Egyptian governments will provide \$40 million, while the remaining \$20 million will be provided by businesspeople from both countries. - ONA

Printed and published by:  
Muscat Media Group  
Post Box: 770,  
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali  
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali  
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali  
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**ADVERTISING:** Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com  
**CIRCULATION:** Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

## ON ADRIATIC COAST

# Flooding in Italy kills at least five



**ROME:** Italian authorities on Wednesday said at least five people had been killed in the northern regions of Emilia-Romagna and Marche.

The area along the country’s Adriatic coast has been hit by heavy storms since Tuesday, leaving a trail of death and damage.

Fire service officials say the provinces of Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini and Bologna — particularly the cities of Faenza, Cesena and Forlì — are the worst affected.

“The city is on its knees, devastated and in pain. It’s the end of the world,” Forlì mayor Gian Luca Zattini wrote on Facebook.

The official death now stands at five — three in Forlì, one in Cesena, and one in the coastal town of Cesenatico. The fire service says it has deployed 400 firefighters and responded to 600 calls since Tuesday morning.

Emergency teams have rescued drivers who were stranded in their vehicles and people who were

trapped in their homes by the water.

Crews rescued dozens of people trapped on the roofs of their houses in the city of Cesena, where the Savio river had overflowed its banks.

## Formula One Grand Prix cancelled

The floods have forced the cancellation of this weekend’s Grand Prix at Imola. The Santerno River runs right next to the track. F1 said that the decision was reached after talks with local government officials.

“The decision has been taken because it is not possible to safely hold the event for our fans, the teams and our personnel and it is the right and responsible thing to do given the situation faced by the towns and cities in the region,” F1 said in a statement. “It would not be right to put further pressure on local authorities and emergency services at this difficult time.” - DW

## KEY MEETINGS

# Indian PM Modi to visit Japan and Australia

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a three-nation tour during which he will take part in G-7 Summit in Japan and the Quad Leaders’ Summit in Australia.

The Prime Minister will visit Hiroshima in Japan from May 19 to 21 for the G-7 Summit under the Japanese Presidency. He is visiting Japan at the invitation of Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. During the Summit, Prime Minister will speak at G-7 sessions with partner countries on subjects such as peace, stability and prosperity of a sustainable

planet; food, fertiliser and energy security; health; gender equality; climate change and environment; resilient infrastructure; and development cooperation.

The Prime Minister will also hold bilateral meetings with some of the participating leaders on the sidelines of the Summit.

From Japan, the Prime Minister will travel to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, where he will host the third Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC III Summit) jointly with Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea James Marape on May 22. - ANI

## WORLD RECORD

# Mount Everest: Nepali sherpa sets record with 27th climb

**KATHMANDU:** Nepali climber Kami Rita Sherpa scaled Mount Everest for the 27th time on Wednesday.

It means he has reclaimed his own world record for the most summits of the world’s highest peak.

“He successfully reached the summit this morning guiding a Vietnamese climber,” said Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks, his expedition organiser.

On Sunday another climber Pasang Dawa Sherpa had tied the record when he reached the top for the 26th time.

## Kami Rita Sherpa and Mount Everest

The 53-year old has been working as a guide for over two decades. Growing up he watched his father and brother don the climbing gear to join expeditions as mountain guides.

He climbed Everest for the first time in 1994 while working for a commercial expedition.

Dubbed the “Everest man,” he scaled the peak almost every year since then, except in 2014, 2015 and 2020 when climbing was halted for various reasons.



In 2019, Rita reached the summit twice in a span of six days.

He first broke the world record in 2018 when he ascended Everest for the 22nd time.

“These records were made not with an intention to make them but during my work as a guide,” Rita said as he headed to base camp.

## Kenton Cool — The non-Nepali record holder

Earlier on Wednesday, British mountain guide Kenton Cool reached the peak for the 17th time and extended his own record for the most summits by a non-Nepali.

The 49-year-old climbed the mountain for the first time in 2004

and his 16th climb last year gave him the record for most summits by a non-Nepali.

He said that he was “surprised” by the attention.

“In reality, it’s not that amazing,” he said, pointing out that many sherpa guides had stood on the peak more often than him.

Climbing contributed to \$5.8 million (€ 5.3 million) to state coffers in 2023 — \$5 million of which comes from Mount Everest alone, according to government data

## Sherpas — the backbone of Nepal's climbing economy

Nepal is home to eight of the world’s 10 highest peaks and welcomes hundreds of adventurers each spring.

Climbing contributed to \$5.8 million (€ 5.3 million) to state coffers in 2023 — \$5 million of which

comes from Mount Everest alone, according to government data.

Nepali guides, usually the ethnic Sherpas, are considered the backbone of the climbing industry and bear huge risks to carry equipment and food, fix ropes and repair ladders.

This year, authorities issued 478 permits to foreign climbers, the most ever, for people to climb Everest.

## Dangers of the Everest

A Moldovan climber died while hiking up to the Everest peak on Wednesday said Nepali officials.

It took the number of fatalities on the mountain this year to five — following the deaths of three Nepalis and a US mountaineer.

The Himalayan nation has been criticized for allowing too many climbers, many of whom are inexperienced, to try and scale Everest.

Dangerous overcrowding, especially at a bottleneck called the Hillary Step, just below the summit, happens very often.

In 2019, nine exhausted climbers died at the congested spot while waiting in a queue. So far, 320 people have died while hiking on the mountain, said officials. - DW



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# UN projects \$3bn for aid in Sudan

Ramesh Rajasingham, head of the UN office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva said that close to 25 million people, “more than half the population of Sudan, need aid and protection”

**KHARTOUM:** The UN humanitarian response plan is seeking close to \$3 billion (€ 2.7 billion) to provide urgent aid to people affected by the crisis.

Ramesh Rajasingham, head of the UN office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva said that close to 25 million people, “more than half the population of Sudan, need aid and protection”

“This is the highest number we have ever seen in the country,” he said.

**Sudan’s highest humanitarian appeal**

A few months ago it was predicted that \$1.75 billion would be needed for humanitarian assistance.

In a revision of the response plan issued after the bloody conflict erupted on April 15, the UN said that \$2.56 billion would be needed for aid inside Sudan.

In a joint appeal, the UN’s refugee agency said it was seeking another \$470 million for more than 1 million people who have fled the country, or are expected to do so in the next six months.

The current finding requirements, Rajasingham said, is the “highest for any humanitarian appeal for Sudan.”

**The deteriorating situation in Sudan**

Last week, the World Health Organization said that the death toll

in ongoing clashes in Sudan has risen to 604 people and over 5,000 have been injured.

The UN migration agency said the numbers of those who were internally displaced by the nearly month-long fighting has risen to 700,000.

The figures were on top of 3.7 million people who were already internally displaced before the conflict began, according to the UN agency.

**Since April 15, Sudan has been rocked by clashes.**

The conflict is between the Sudanese Armed Forces units loyal to Abdel-Fattah Burhan, the army general and their rival Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo’s Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the country’s main paramilitary force.

In December 2022, the military forces and civilian representatives signed a transition deal, which pushed to bring the RSF within the Sudanese military.

Dagalo, whose paramilitary is thought to be 100,000-man strong, does not favor such a restructuring.

Provocation and accusations from both sides erupted into the ongoing violent conflict. —DW



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## Chinese fishing vessel capsizes in Indian Ocean

**BELJING:** A Chinese fishing vessel capsized in the central part of the Indian Ocean on Tuesday and all 39 people on board are missing, CGTN reported.

According to the news report, the crew members included 17 Chinese nationals, 17 from Indonesia and five from the Philippines. So far, no missing person has been found, as per the CGTN report. A search is being conducted to find the missing crew members. The Chinese deep-sea fishing vessel capsized in the central Indian Ocean at about 3am. According to CGTN report, Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered all-out rescue efforts after a deep-sea Chinese fishing vessel capsized in the Indian Ocean. Xi directed the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Chinese Ministry of Transport and Shandong Province to immediately activate the emergency response mechanism. —ANI



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VS



Royal Challengers Bangalore

6pm, Hyderabad

POINTS TABLE

| TEAM | P  | W | L | NR | NRR    | PTS |
|------|----|---|---|----|--------|-----|
| GT   | 13 | 9 | 4 | 0  | +0.835 | 18  |
| CSK  | 13 | 7 | 5 | 1  | +0.381 | 15  |
| LSG  | 13 | 7 | 5 | 1  | +0.304 | 15  |
| MI   | 13 | 7 | 6 | 0  | -0.128 | 14  |
| RCB  | 12 | 6 | 6 | 0  | +0.166 | 12  |
| RR   | 13 | 6 | 7 | 0  | +0.140 | 12  |
| KKR  | 13 | 6 | 7 | 0  | -0.256 | 12  |
| PBKS | 13 | 6 | 7 | 0  | -0.308 | 12  |
| DC   | 13 | 5 | 8 | 0  | -0.572 | 10  |
| SRH  | 12 | 4 | 8 | 0  | -0.575 | 8   |

CSK: Chennai Super Kings, DC: Delhi Capitals, GT: Gujarat Titans, KKR: Kolkata Knight Riders, LSG: Lucknow Super Giants, MI: Mumbai Indians, PBKS: Punjab Kings, RCB: Royal Challengers Bangalore, RR: Rajasthan Royals, SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad

Liam Livingstone's blitz of 94 goes in vain for Punjab Kings after Rilee Rossouw's explosive innings power Capitals to 213/2

**DHARAMSALA:** Sensational hitting from Rilee Rossouw during his unbeaten 82 off 37, coupled with notable contributions from the other top-four batters led Delhi Capitals to a 15-run win over Punjab Kings on Wednesday and in the process severely hurting the latter's playoff chances.

Kings got close to the finish line in the end thanks only to a belligerent 94 off 48 from Liam Livingstone, but he fought a lone battle, and the loss kept them on eighth spot with 12 points.

Kings will now have to depend on many other results going their way to stay alive in the playoffs race because they have only one match to go, and three teams are already above 14 points, which is the most Kings can get to.

Kings were behind the asking rate right from the start because their only other batter who scored

over 25 was Atharva Taide, who struggled for fluency and retired out on 55 off 42 balls.

Livingstone's pursuit of boundaries in the end kept Kings' slim hopes alive, whether they needed 79 off 24 or 38 off 12.

In the last over too, when they needed 23 from the last three balls, they got a lifeline when Ishant Sharma sent down a no-ball which Livingstone sent for six, making it 16 required from three with a free hit coming.

But Livingstone failed to connect with the subsequent full toss and holed out to long-off on the last ball as they ended at 198/8.

Capitals' consolation win was built around the top-order as they scored 213/2. Rossouw's 37-ball innings was studded with six fours and six maximums. He was provided good support by Prithvi Shaw who slammed a half-century

(54) off 38 balls. Skipper David Warner missed a half-century (46) and a late 14-ball 26 by Phil Salt guided Delhi to a formidable total.

Warner and Shaw came flying out of the blocks. The opening pair stitched together a 94-run stand with Warner getting out to a spectacular catch by Dhawan off Sam Curran. Rossouw's carnage spared none and he punished Kagiso Rabada for two sixes and a four, collecting 17 runs in the 12th over as he reached his half-century in only 25 balls.

Salt struck two sixes and a four in Nathan Ellis's 19th over and then with Rossouw Capitals hammered 23 runs in the last over from Harpreet Brar.

Speaking after the victory, Rossouw, who was named the player of the match, said: "It was long overdue. I am chuffed it did come, and with the win. It is a good wicket, which suits our game. It is just natural the batting on this wicket. Credit to Livi [Livingstone], he played an unbelievable knock."

**Brief scores:** Delhi Capitals 213/2 (Rilee Rossouw 82 n.o., Prithvi Shaw 54, David Warner 46; Sam Curran 2/36) beat Punjab Kings 198/8 (Liam Livingstone 94, Atharva Taide 55; Ishant Sharma 2/36, Anrich Nortje 2/36). - Agencies



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## OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by July 2023 reaching \$73.19, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.33 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$74.52. - **ONA**

# MARKET

## BUSINESS & FINANCE



## MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) lost 14.6 points, comprising a drop of 0.31 per cent to close at 4695.16 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4709.72 points.

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# Tender Board exempts bidders from submitting temporary bid security

This exemption will reflect positively on the competitiveness of companies in government tenders and is part of the exerted efforts of the Tender Board to improve the business environment and to address the companies' financial liquidity challenges

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Tender Board has determined the criteria for exempting bidding companies from providing temporary bid security (bid guarantee), as a condition for taking part in the tender, as this exemption will reflect positively on the competitiveness of companies in government tenders.

The decision stipulated that companies should be exempted from providing the one percent temporary bid security when submitting their bid for a period of one year.

This exemption aims at facilitating bidding procedures for tenders, increasing the number of companies taking part in the government tenders, and raising

the capabilities of the small and medium enterprises to compete for government tenders as well as encouraging competition in the tendering process in order to obtain the best bids.

To ensure the seriousness and the capabilities in implementing the bids, the participating company in the tender must sign a document confirming its commitment to the submitted bid proposal for the determined period of the adopted bidding strategy.

The Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik stipulated that companies should be exempted from providing the one percent temporary bid security when submitting their bid for one year.

This exemption aims at facilitating bidding procedures for ten-



ders, increasing the number of companies taking part in the government tenders, and increasing the capabilities of the small and medium enterprises to compete for government tenders as well as encouraging competition in the tendering process to obtain the best bids.

To ensure the seriousness and

the capabilities in implementing the bids, the participating company in the tender must sign a document confirming its commitment to the submitted bid proposal for the determined period of the adopted bidding strategy.

In accordance with Article 28 of the Tenders Law, the bid-offer that is less than 20 percent of the

other submitted bids and then the estimated cost of the bid, will be excluded as it proves that it does not meet the terms of the bid and is unable to implement it.

Companies that withdraw before the end of the specified validity period of the tender will be deprived of participating in government tenders for one year.

Government entities must notify the General Secretariat of the Tender Board within 10 working days about companies that withdraw from tenders during the validity period of their bids.

### Two cases

The temporary bid security must also be provided in two cases, which are: Tenders whose estimated cost exceeds OMR3 million, and whose annual economic return exceeding above 10 percent of the estimated cost of the tender. And the international tenders are submitted by international companies that do not have headquarters offices in Oman, except the companies which are participating in tenders for the supply of medicines and medical supplies.

### Advanced model

The General Secretariat of the Tender Board works to manage and implement government procurement in accordance with an advanced model in organising and managing tenders and providing services with transparency and professionalism to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction while ensuring the proper and efficient use of public money in accordance with best practices and principles of transparency, equal opportunities, equality and freedom of competition.

### FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

## GCC Financial, Economic Cooperation Committee holds meeting in Muscat

**MUSCAT:** The GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee held its 119th meeting at Muscat under the chairmanship of Sultan Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance.

The meeting dealt with several topics related to joint financial and economic cooperation and the GCC Common Market.

Al Habsi underscored in his speech the importance of unifying efforts and boosting joint GCC economic action in a bid to achieve the desired economic integration.

He also reiterated the importance of facilitating the activation of financial and economic agreements signed between GCC states to press ahead with achieving goals that enhance economic and



social development.

On his turn, Jassim Mohammed Al Budaiwi, Secretary General of the GCC, expressed his appreciation for the Sultanate of Oman's

support and care for the march of joint GCC action. He also expressed his gratitude for Oman's efforts in promoting GCC cooperation to achieve further integration

in different spheres.

Moreover, the meeting discussed a number of submitted proposals and took necessary decisions. -**ONA**

### CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY



## CMA organises workshop on Risks Management and Organisational, Regulatory and Institutional Requirements

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Capital Market Authority (CMA) conducted a workshop on Risks Management and the Organisational, Regulatory and Institutional Requirements, which comes as part of its efforts to enhance the anti-money laundering and combating financing terrorism system in its regulated sectors.

It was given by Ahood Issa Al Balushi - Certified FATF Assessor and attended by compliance officers and those related to companies regulated by the CMA in both capital market and insurance sectors.

During the workshop, the attendees were introduced to the organisational and regulatory requirements following the FATF recommendations and the Law of Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing No. (30/2016) and instructions issued by the CMA on the imple-

mentation of this law to the capital market institutions (Decision No. 80/2021) and insurance and takaful companies, brokers and agents (Decision No. 81/2021).

The workshop shed light on the institutional requirements that should be met by the licensed entities concerning the implementation of a risk-based approach which is the basis of the institutions' due diligence procedures towards the clients including client identification and verification by official documents, as well as verification of the identity of the person acting on behalf of the client.

Other institutional requirements include record-keeping and mechanisms for reporting suspicious financial transactions. Such procedures enhance the anti-money laundering and combating financing terrorism system in such institutions and contribute to decreasing their risks level.

### OMAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

## ODB wins Digital Excellence Award from ADFIAP

**ALMATY:** Oman Development Bank (ODB) won the award of Excellence in Digital Services during its participation in the 46th meeting of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP). The meeting is currently being held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

ODB's delegation is led by Eng. Mohammed Abu Bakr Al Ghasani, Chairman of ODB Board of Directors.

The award affirms ODB's efforts in digital transformation, which seeks to digitise internal operations and all services rendered to beneficiaries. The aim is to provide high levels of quality and speed



that meet the government's aspirations and goals.

Through this participation in the ADFIAP meeting, the bank endeavours to maximize benefits from the association, which boasts

extensive experience in the field of development financing.

Oman Development Bank's participation also stems from its keenness to engage in cooperation and exchange of expertise with

banks and financing institutions.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Al Ghassani conferred with representatives of a number of development banks, including the Development Bank of Kazakhstan, India's SMEs development bank and the Eurasian Development Bank. The meeting focused on means of benefiting from the banks' expertise in human resources development, financing SMEs and maximising their developmental weight.

The meeting also touched on legislations and policies needed to address the challenges involved in the collection of loans granted by development banks. -**ONA**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

The trading value stood at OMR3,943,558, comprising a rise of 3.5 per cent



**MUSCAT:** Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) lost 14.6 points, comprising a drop of 0.31 per cent to close at 4695.16 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4709.72 points.

The trading value stood at OMR3,943,558, comprising a rise of 3.5 per cent, compared to the last session, which stood at OMR3,810,435. The report released by MSX

pointed out that the market value went down by 0.707 per cent to reach about OMR23.65 billion. The report added that the value of shares bought by non-Omani investors reached OMR409,000, comprising 10.38 per cent.

The value of shares sold by non-Omani investors reached OMR325,000, comprising 8.24 per cent. The net non-Omani investment increased by 2.14 per cent to OMR85,000. — **ONA**

OOKLA SPEEDTEST GLOBAL INDEX

India jumps 4 spots globally for median mobile speeds: Report

**NEW DELHI:** India jumped four spots in rank globally for median mobile speeds, moving up from 64th position in March to 60th position in April. Overall, India has shown improvement in its global ranking for median fixed broadband speeds, moving from the 84th spot in March to the 83rd spot in April, according to a report from Ookla Speedtest Global Index.

Ookla also recorded progress with a 36.35 Mbps median mobile download speed in April, which is better than the 33.30 Mbps speed in March. The overall fixed median download speed in India saw a slight increase from 50.71 Mbps in March to 51.12 Mbps in April.

According to the April Speedtest Global Index, Senegal registered the highest increase in rank and gained 16 spots globally, with Qatar ranked No.1 for over-

all global median mobile speeds. For overall global fixed median speeds, Bahrain registered the highest increase in rank, jumping by 14 spots globally, with Singapore sustaining its rank No.1 this month as well in overall global fixed median speeds.

According to a statement, Ookla's Speedtest Global Index ranks mobile and fixed broadband speeds around the world monthly. The data for the Global Index comes from the hundreds of millions of tests taken by real people using Speedtest every month to test their Internet performance.

Ookla provides solutions for both crowdsourced and controlled network testing, along with comprehensive global insights on network conditions, quality of experience and quality of service, and consumer experience. — **ANI**

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| Index             | High     | Low      | Value    | Prev. Value | Diff   | Diff% |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|--------|-------|
| MSX 30 INDEX      | 4734.83  | 4,695.16 | 4,695.16 | 4,709.72    | -14.57 | -0.31 |
| FINANCIAL INDEX   | 7653.70  | 7600.19  | 7600.19  | 7630.44     | -30.25 | -0.40 |
| Industry Index    | 6,160.09 | 6,045.51 | 6,045.51 | 6,045.51    | 39.04  | 0.65  |
| Services Index    | 1,713.35 | 1,700.38 | 1,705.26 | 1,707.85    | -2.60  | -0.15 |
| MSX Shariah Index | 476.95   | 470.25   | 471.14   | 472.04      | -0.90  | -0.19 |
| MSX TR INDEX      | 6,224.89 | 6,172.74 | 6,172.74 | 6,191.88    | -19.15 | -0.31 |
| FINANCIAL TR IDX  | 8,337.46 | 8,279.18 | 8,279.18 | 8,312.13    | -32.95 | -0.40 |
| SERVICES TR IDX   | 1,883.53 | 1,869.27 | 1,874.62 | 1,877.48    | -2.86  | -0.15 |
| INDUSTRIAL TR IDX | 6,580.51 | 6,458.11 | 6,499.81 | 6,458.11    | 41.70  | 0.65  |

Trading Summary

| Volume     | Turnover  | Trades | Market Cap     | Up | Down | Equal | Sec. Traded |
|------------|-----------|--------|----------------|----|------|-------|-------------|
| 10,880,478 | 3,943,558 | 588    | 23,646,647,583 | 10 | 16   | 20    | 46          |

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

| SECURITY NAME                                         | VOLUME    | TURNOVER  | TRADES    | OPEN PRICE | HIGH  | LOW   | CLOSE PR | PREV. CLOSE | DIFF. IND. | DIFF % | LAST PR | LAST BID | LAST OFFER | PRE. VALUE | MARKET CAP   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------|-------|----------|-------------|------------|--------|---------|----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| REGULAR MARKET                                        |           |           |           |            |       |       |          |             |            |        |         |          |            |            |              |
| OM00000002176 JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS                  | 289,339   | 81,727    | 29        | 0.280      | 0.300 | 0.280 | 0.294    | 0.280       | 0.014      | 5.000  | 0.294   | 0.282    | 0.308      | 0.100      | 36,720,000   |
| OM00000002226 ALJAZEERA SERVICES                      | 13,058    | 3,299     | 3         | 0.252      | 0.258 | 0.252 | 0.258    | 0.252       | 0.006      | 2.381  | 0.258   | 0.255    | 0.258      | 0.100      | 15,790,702   |
| OM00000003224 RENAISSANCE SERVICES                    | 272,590   | 103,135   | 17        | 0.372      | 0.382 | 0.372 | 0.380    | 0.372       | 0.008      | 2.151  | 0.380   | 0.380    | 0.380      | 0.100      | 89,835,800   |
| OM00000001087 OMAN UNITED INSURANCE                   | 6,000     | 1,590     | 1         | 0.265      | 0.265 | 0.265 | 0.265    | 0.265       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.265   | 0.264    | 0.265      | 0.100      | 26,500,000   |
| OM00000001525 OMAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE               | 67,870    | 7,534     | 6         | 0.111      | 0.111 | 0.111 | 0.111    | 0.111       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.111   | 0.114    | 0.111      | 0.100      | 27,622,350   |
| OM00000001539 OMIVEST                                 | 117,830   | 45,006    | 18        | 0.388      | 0.390 | 0.382 | 0.382    | 0.382       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.382   | 0.384    | 0.382      | 0.100      | 255,315,502  |
| OM00000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO.                       | 7,500     | 555       | 4         | 0.073      | 0.074 | 0.073 | 0.074    | 0.074       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.074   | 0.074    | 0.074      | 0.100      | 9,018,750    |
| OM00000001749 OMAN CEMENT                             | 25,000    | 8,100     | 3         | 0.324      | 0.324 | 0.324 | 0.324    | 0.324       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.324   | 0.302    | 0.328      | 0.100      | 107,202,758  |
| OM00000002796 BANK MUSCAT                             | 1,441,196 | 388,611   | 24        | 0.270      | 0.270 | 0.269 | 0.269    | 0.269       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.269   | 0.268    | 0.269      | 0.100      | 2019,220,810 |
| OM00000003026 OMAN TELECOM                            | 119,595   | 117,889   | 26        | 0.988      | 0.996 | 0.984 | 0.984    | 0.984       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.984   | 0.984    | 0.988      | 0.100      | 738,000,000  |
| OM00000004788 MADINA TAKAFUL                          | 28,403    | 2,386     | 5         | 0.085      | 0.085 | 0.084 | 0.084    | 0.084       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.084   | 0.084    | 0.085      | 0.100      | 14,700,000   |
| OM00000002168 AL ANWAR CERAMIC                        | 319,300   | 85,715    | 53        | 0.295      | 0.318 | 0.290 | 0.291    | 0.292       | -0.001     | -0.342 | 0.291   | 0.291    | 0.291      | 0.100      | 64,020,000   |
| OM00000001483 NATIONAL BANK OMAN                      | 232,712   | 65,159    | 4         | 0.280      | 0.280 | 0.280 | 0.280    | 0.282       | -0.002     | -0.709 | 0.280   | 0.280    | 0.285      | 0.100      | 455,264,980  |
| OM00000003398 SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK                | 100,250   | 10,426    | 3         | 0.104      | 0.104 | 0.103 | 0.103    | 0.104       | -0.001     | -0.962 | 0.103   | 0.103    | 0.104      | 0.100      | 472,776,416  |
| OM00000003968 OOREDOO                                 | 1,723,458 | 632,340   | 58        | 0.370      | 0.370 | 0.366 | 0.366    | 0.370       | -0.004     | -1.081 | 0.366   | 0.366    | 0.366      | 0.100      | 238,245,588  |
| OM00000004248 SMY POWER HOLDING                       | 36,961    | 3,216     | 5         | 0.087      | 0.087 | 0.087 | 0.087    | 0.088       | -0.001     | -1.196 | 0.087   | 0.088    | 0.088      | 0.100      | 17,368,297   |
| OM00000001517 HSBC BANK OMAN                          | 41,785    | 6,393     | 2         | 0.153      | 0.153 | 0.153 | 0.153    | 0.157       | -0.004     | -2.548 | 0.153   | 0.153    | 0.157      | 0.100      | 306,047,857  |
| Total                                                 | 17        | 4,842,647 | 1,573,079 | 261        |       |       |          |             |            |        |         |          |            |            |              |
| Parallel Market                                       |           |           |           |            |       |       |          |             |            |        |         |          |            |            |              |
| OM00000008447 OMAN REIT FUND                          | 987,897   | 79,001    | 23        | 0.079      | 0.080 | 0.079 | 0.080    | 0.076       | 0.004      | 5.263  | 0.080   | 0.080    | 0.080      | 0.100      | 37,694,911   |
| OM00000003521 GULFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING        | 73,500    | 14,214    | 11        | 0.194      | 0.194 | 0.190 | 0.193    | 0.189       | 0.004      | 2.116  | 0.193   | 0.189    | 0.207      | 0.100      | 39,176,384   |
| OM00000002366 AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO. | 4,000     | 384       | 2         | 0.085      | 0.087 | 0.085 | 0.087    | 0.085       | 0.002      | 2.105  | 0.087   | 0.086    | 0.088      | 0.100      | 2,910,000    |
| OM00000004725 SEMI CORP SALALAH                       | 455,500   | 46,991    | 30        | 0.102      | 0.106 | 0.102 | 0.102    | 0.100       | 0.002      | 2.000  | 0.102   | 0.100    | 0.102      | 0.100      | 97,368,239   |
| OM00000001722 ALANWAR INVESTMENT                      | 845,461   | 76,900    | 30        | 0.091      | 0.091 | 0.090 | 0.090    | 0.089       | 0.001      | 1.124  | 0.090   | 0.092    | 0.090      | 0.100      | 18,000,000   |
| OM00000008868 THE PEARL REIF                          | 37,683    | 4,522     | 2         | 0.120      | 0.120 | 0.120 | 0.120    | 0.119       | 0.001      | 0.840  | 0.120   | 0.120    | 0.000      | 0.100      | 50,972,425   |
| OM00000008710 BARKA DESALINATION                      | 21,000    | 2,856     | 2         | 0.136      | 0.136 | 0.136 | 0.136    | 0.135       | 0.001      | 0.741  | 0.136   | 0.136    | 0.138      | 0.100      | 10,270,992   |
| OM00000001418 RAYSUT CEMENT                           | 66,024    | 11,974    | 14        | 0.176      | 0.176 | 0.171 | 0.173    | 0.173       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.173   | 0.161    | 0.173      | 0.100      | 34,900,000   |
| OM00000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE                          | 7,000     | 406       | 1         | 0.088      | 0.088 | 0.088 | 0.088    | 0.088       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.088   | 0.088    | 0.088      | 0.100      | 17,814,487   |
| OM00000001707 OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY                    | 407,370   | 798,624   | 83        | 1.990      | 1.995 | 1.990 | 1.990    | 1.990       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 1.990   | 1.950    | 1.950      | 0.100      | 174,915,000  |
| OM00000003141 BARKA WATER AND POWER                   | 143,600   | 10,339    | 4         | 0.072      | 0.072 | 0.072 | 0.072    | 0.072       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.072   | 0.066    | 0.072      | 0.100      | 11,520,000   |
| OM00000003281 TAAGEER FINANCE                         | 2,573     | 226       | 1         | 0.088      | 0.088 | 0.088 | 0.088    | 0.088       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.088   | 0.088    | 0.091      | 0.100      | 23,217,483   |
| OM00000004420 BANK NIZWA                              | 320,711   | 29,826    | 17        | 0.093      | 0.093 | 0.093 | 0.093    | 0.093       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.093   | 0.090    | 0.093      | 0.100      | 208,038,632  |
| OM00000004776 TAKAFUL OMAN                            | 58,196    | 2,980     | 4         | 0.050      | 0.050 | 0.050 | 0.050    | 0.050       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.050   | 0.050    | 0.050      | 0.100      | 12,500,000   |
| OM00000007910 AMAN REAL ESTATE                        | 15,000    | 1,440     | 1         | 0.096      | 0.096 | 0.096 | 0.096    | 0.096       | 0.000      | 0.000  | 0.096   | 0.096    | 0.096      | 0.100      | 19,200,000   |
| OM00000002267 GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS                  | 32,500    | 7,345     | 5         | 0.226      | 0.226 | 0.226 | 0.226    | 0.227       | -0.001     | -0.441 | 0.226   | 0.225    | 0.226      | 0.100      | 10,343,070   |
| OM00000001160 NATIONAL GAS                            | 17,139    | 1,765     | 3         | 0.103      | 0.103 | 0.103 | 0.104    | 0.104       | -0.001     | -0.962 | 0.103   | 0.102    | 0.106      | 0.100      | 8,755,000    |
| OM00000008934 ABRAL ENERGY SERVICES                   | 499,398   | 145,223   | 48        | 0.295      | 0.295 | 0.290 | 0.290    | 0.294       | -0.004     | -1.361 | 0.290   | 0.289    | 0.294      | 0.100      | 223,358,000  |
| OM00000005963 PHENIX POLSALAH                         | 1,674,240 | 112,199   | 16        | 0.087      | 0.087 | 0.086 | 0.087    | 0.088       | -0.001     | -1.471 | 0.087   | 0.085    | 0.086      | 0.100      | 97,368,239   |
| OM00000002275 SHELL OMAN MARKETING                    | 863       | 738       | 6         | 0.848      | 0.860 | 0.848 | 0.860    | 0.880       | -0.020     | -2.273 | 0.860   | 0.848    | 0.860      | 0.100      | 81,700,000   |
| OM00000001020 OMAN CHROMITE                           | 335       | 1,273     | 2         | 3.800      | 3.800 | 3.800 | 3.800    | 3.900       | -0.100     | -2.564 | 3.800   | 3.800    | 4.000      | 1.000      | 11,400,000   |
| OM00000004825 ALBATINAH POWER                         | 174,721   | 5,250     | 6         | 0.030      | 0.031 | 0.030 | 0.030    | 0.031       | -0.001     | -3.226 | 0.030   | 0.030    | 0.031      | 0.100      | 20,246,623   |
| OM00000004833 AL SUWADI POWER                         | 166,500   | 4,996     | 5         | 0.030      | 0.031 | 0.030 | 0.030    | 0.031       | -0.001     | -3.226 | 0.031   | 0.030    | 0.031      | 0.100      | 21,435,190   |
| OM00000001092 AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING            | 11,500    | 597       | 2         | 0.046      | 0.046 | 0.044 | 0.044    | 0.046       | 0.000      | 4.348  | 0.044   | 0.044    | 0.045      | 0.100      | 3,740,000    |
| OM00000001301 DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT             | 100       | 6         | 1         | 0.058      | 0.058 | 0.058 | 0.058    | 0.064       | -0.006     | -9.375 | 0.058   | 0.058    | 0.065      | 0.100      | 4,680,300    |
| Total                                                 | 25        | 6,023,809 | 1,359,335 | 319        |       |       |          |             |            |        |         |          |            |            |              |

CONTAINER THROUGHPUT IN APRIL

Container volumes rise by 13.34% at Saudi ports

**RIYADH:** Container throughput during April 2023 grew at an annual rate of 13.34 per cent from 601,429 TEUs to 681,663 TEUs as per monthly statistics released by the Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani).

Container data for last month further showed a 16.97 per cent surge in exported volumes at 208,738 TEUs compared to 178,450 TEUs in the previous year. Imports, on the other hand, inched up 3.12 per cent to 208,080 TEUs from 201,784 TEUs this year with transshipments scoring 264,845 TEUs in monthly quantity, a 19.73 per cent increase from 221,195 TEUs in April 2022.

The national maritime regulator also revealed a 6.63 per cent drop in cargo numbers at its ports, handling about 24,965,999 tonnes in contrast to 26,737,416 tonnes a year earlier. The total cargo count for April included around 543,496 tonnes of general cargo, 4,135,552 tonnes of dry bulk cargo, and 13,026,227 tonnes of liquid bulk cargo.

A similar decrease was also witnessed across the trade of food



**MAWANI STATISTICS:** Container data for last month further showed a 16.97 per cent surge in exported volumes at 208,738 TEUs compared to 178,450 TEUs in the previous year. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only.

commodities with a 1.26 per cent fall from 1,533,118 tonnes in 2022 to 1,513,729 tonnes in 2023. On the contrary, livestock figures climbed 2.63 per cent from 446,539 to 458,280 cattle heads.

Automobile units passing through Mawani's hubs in April 2023 were estimated at 91,083 vehicles, a sizable jump of 52.8 per cent from the 2022 level of 59,608.

This year-on-year growth figure was bettered only by last month's passenger traffic, which recorded an impressive 122.64 per cent leap from 38,706 pax to 86,175 pax. Besides hosting an increased flow of passengers, the Kingdom's ports also accommodated 983 vessels across its berths last month, a marginal uptick of 3.69 per cent from 2022's total of 948 vessels.

Following a robust approach set forth by the National Transport and Logistics Strategy (NTLS), the Saudi maritime sector is on track to establish a world-class logistics platform through the deployment of cutting-edge technologies that drives the Kingdom's journey towards new horizons while leading the global charge towards sustainability. — **SPA**

ECONOMIC WATCH

China, Central Asia gear up for greater success after decade of Belt and Road cooperation

**XI'AN:** Ten years into Belt and Road cooperation, China and Central Asian countries have made historic achievements. With an upcoming milestone summit, they will strive for greater success and inject more impetus into global development.

China proposed the idea of building an "economic belt along the Silk Road" in Kazakhstan in 2013, which, combined with the proposal of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, eventually became the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Over the past decade, Central Asian countries have become pioneers in promoting the BRI and have built the region into an example of high-quality BRI development. From fully loaded trains to humming production lines and natural gas pipelines, vigorous cooperation has resulted in common development.

As the China-Central Asia Summit is scheduled for May 18 and 19 in northwest China's Xi'an, the ancient Silk Road's starting point, experts believe the win-win cooperation between the two sides will open a new chapter.

Marking the BRI's 10th anniversary, a freight train left Xi'an on April 26 to carry more than 260 new energy vehicles to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, in 12 days. Currently, 17 railway routes connect Xi'an with Central Asian countries and many other Asian and European destinations, with more than 1,100 train trips made

China proposed the idea of building an "economic belt along the Silk Road" in Kazakhstan in 2013, which, combined with the proposal of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, eventually became the Belt and Road Initiative

in the first quarter of this year.

Roaring trains are the epitome of closer economic ties between China and Central Asian countries. In 2022, trade volume hit a historic high of \$70.2 billion, an over 100-fold increase since diplomatic ties were established about three decades ago.

Central Asian quality agricultural products, such as wheat, soybeans, fruits, dried fruits, beef and mutton, have been exported to China, bringing tangible benefits to ordinary people.

Getting enough water for four

hectares of farmland used to be a big problem for Kyrgyz farmer Evgeny Yakovlev living in a village called Kara-Oi. Thanks to China's support in reconstructing Kyrgyzstan's irrigation system, a new reservoir was built in the village by a Chinese company and the water supply was increased in an area of over 1,000 hectares.

A Chinese-built wind farm in Zhanatas, Kazakhstan, not only offered Maksat Abilgaziev, a 33-year-old resident, a new job with more than doubled income but brought the run-down town back to life with green investment and technology.

Several major projects have facilitated industrial upgrades and livelihood improvements in Central Asia, including the China-Central Asia natural gas pipeline, the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan highway, the Pengsheng Industrial Park and the Qamchiq railway tunnel.

The success of such projects serves as a vivid demonstration of China's genuine support for the development of neighbouring countries, said Ding Xiaoxing, director of the Institute of Eurasian Studies at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

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Life constantly amazes us, including the incredible range of sizes that it comes in. If the tiniest microbe was the size of the period at the end of this sentence, the largest living organism, a sequoia tree, would be the size of the Panama Canal.



LIFESTYLE

Surveying the body sizes of Earth's living organisms, researchers from McGill University and the University of British Columbia found that the planet's biomass -- the material that makes up all living organisms -- is concentrated in organisms at either end of the size spectrum.

The researchers spent five years compiling and analyzing data about the size and biomass of every type of living organism on the planet -- from tiny one-celled organisms like soil archaea and bacteria to large organisms like blue whales and sequoia trees.

They found that the pattern favouring large and small organisms held across all types of species and was more pronounced in land-based organisms than in marine environments. Interestingly, maximum body size seemed to reach the same upper limits across multiple species and environments.

"Trees, grasses, underground fungi, mangroves, corals, fish, and marine mammals all have similar maximum body sizes. This might suggest that there is a universal upper size limit due to ecological, evolutionary, or biophysical limitations," says lead author Eden Tekwa, a former postdoctoral fellow at University of British Columbia and now a research associate with McGill University's department of biology.

"Life constantly amazes us, including the incredible range of sizes that it comes in," says co-author Malin Pinsky, an associate professor in the department of ecology, evolution, and natural resources at Rutgers University. "If the tiniest microbe was the size of the period at the end of this sentence, the largest living organism, a sequoia tree, would be the size of the Panama Canal."

"As for humans, we already know we comprise a relatively small biomass, but our size among all living things reveals our place in the global biome. We belong to the size range that comprises the highest biomass, which is a relatively large body size," says Tekwa.

Predicting the effects of climate change

Cataloguing which body sizes are most common is a key step towards understanding the world around us, say the authors. These results also have important implications for predicting the impacts of climate change and human activity on the planet's biomass.

"For example, fish biomass is probably half of what it was before humans arrived, but it gets harder and harder to infer those patterns as we go farther back in time," says Tekwa. "We need to think about how the distribution of body size biomass will change under environmental pressures." -ANI

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# Inter reach Champions League final for first time in 13 years

Lautaro Martinez's goal seals victory over arch rivals AC Milan at San Siro on Tuesday

**MILAN:** Inter Milan reached the Champions League final for the first time in 13 years as Lautaro Martinez's 74th minute goal sealed victory over fierce rivals AC Milan in an all-Italian clash at San Siro on Tuesday night. Three-time winners Inter, who led 2-0 after the first leg, won the second leg 1-0 for an aggregate 3-0 victory. They will face either Manchester City or Real Madrid in Istanbul on 10 June after a disciplined display ensured their progress. Heavily backed at a feverish San Siro as the designated home team, Simone Inzaghi's Inter were made to absorb early pressure as a determined start by Milan ensured the match began at a frenetic pace. Theo Hernandez fired marginally over with a ferocious strike and Brahim Diaz was denied by Andre Onana as Stefano Pioli's side attempted to undo the damage done by conceding two goals inside 11 minutes last week when Edin Dzeko and Henrikh Mkhitaryan scored. The talented Rafael Leao, absent for Milan in the first leg because of a thigh injury, displayed flashes of inspiration on his return but shot agonisingly wide of the far post after driving in from the left. Inter asserted themselves as the first half progressed and the tie would have been effectively over before the interval had it not been for Mike Maignan's stunning reaction save from Edin Dzeko's close-range header. Inter had starved Milan of encouragement in a largely uneventful second half, before Martinez squeezed the ball under Maignan and into the bottom corner with 16 minutes remaining



to send the Inter fans into raptures. The full-time whistle was greeted by a deafening noise as Inter's first shot at Champions League glory since their 2010 success was confirmed. The Nerazzurri will be playing in their first final since 2010, when they defeated Germany's Bayern Munich to win the title. After reaching the final on Tuesday, Inter vice-president Javier Zanetti was quick to state his preference of avoiding record 14-time champions Real. "I would like to avoid Real Madrid because the competition seems made for them," former captain Zanetti said. The journey of Inter to final saw them finish second to Bayern Munich in a group which also contained Barcelona, before going on to beat Portuguese clubs Porto and Benfica and prevailing in the first Milan derby in European competition for 20 years. "In the next few days we will realise what we did," manager Simone Inzaghi said. "For us it was a dream but we have always believed in it. "It was an extraordinary path and winning a derby in the semi-final like this brings great satisfaction. "Madrid and City are two of the best teams in Europe." World Cup winner Lautaro Martinez, who scored the only goal in Tuesday's second leg to begin the celebrations among the Inter supporters, echoed his manager's sentiments. "It is an incredible joy, I am delighted. I thank my family. This sport is the most beautiful thing in the world," Martinez said. "Playing in the Champions League final is a dream." - Agencies

EMILIA ROMAGNA GRAND PRIX

## Imola F1 race called off due to flooding

**ROME:** The Emilia Romagna Formula One Grand Prix at Imola, Italy, scheduled to be held on the weekend has been cancelled after Formula One, the local authorities and the promoter in Imola agreed that it was not safe to proceed because of the risks of flooding caused by severe weather. F1 said calling off the race was "the right and responsible thing to do". The FIA said in a statement on its website: "Following discussions between Formula 1, the President of the FIA, the competent authorities - including the relevant Ministers, the President of the Automobile Club of Italy, the President of Emilia-Romagna Region, the Mayor of the City and the promoter - the decision has been taken not to proceed with the Grand Prix weekend at Imola. F1 president and chief executive officer Stefano Domenicali said:



"It is such a tragedy to see what has happened to Imola and Emilia Romagna, the town and region that I grew up in, and my thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the flooding and the families and communities affected. "The decision that has been taken is the right one for everyone in the local communities and

ple have been killed and authorities have warned people to move to higher ground. The track was evacuated on Tuesday as a result of the risk of flooding from the Sarnano river, which runs next to the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari. F1 personnel were forbidden from entering the circuit on Wednesday as heavy rain had continued overnight and into the morning. The Emilia Romagna GP had been scheduled to be the sixth race of the season and was the first of three events on consecutive weekends, followed by Monaco and Spain. F1 will look at options for rescheduling the race but it is considered unlikely to make a return because of the crowded schedule. There had been plans for a record 23-race calendar in 2023 but the cancellation means that the schedule will be reduced to 22. - Agencies

ZIMBABWE TO HOST 10-NATION QUALIFIER

## Scotland's squad for World Cup Qualifier named

**EDINBURGH:** Cricket Scotland on Wednesday named their 15-member squad for the ICC Men's World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe, which is set to commence on June 18. Scotland have retained much of the same squad that lifted the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 title in February. Scotland have made two changes to the squad that last played in Nepal, with Alasdair Evans and Adrian Neill returning by replacing Liam Naylor and the retired Kyle Coetzer. Evans was one of the 14 contracted men's players for 2023-2024 announced last week and is in line to play his first ODI since 2021.



"I think there's a good mixture in this squad of youth and senior players who've been around a while - the likes of Richie and George, as well as some exciting young talent in Jack Jarvis and

Chris McBride," interim head coach Doug Watson said in an official statement released by Cricket Scotland. Scotland will be hoping to carry their form over from League 2 to the Qualifier where they will battle nine other teams for two spots in the Cricket World Cup later this year. The bottom five from the Super League - West Indies, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Zimbabwe and Netherlands - will join League 2 top three Scotland, Oman and Nepal as well as playoff finalists United States and UAE to take part in the Qualifier in Zimbabwe. **Squad:** Richie Berrington (captain), Matthew Cross, Alasdair Evans, Chris Greaves, Jack Jarvis, Michael Leask, Tom Mackintosh, Chris McBride, Brandon McMullen, George Munsey, Adrian Neill, Safyaan Sharif, Chris Sole, Hamza Tahir, Mark Watt. - ANI

ANNOUNCEMENT

## Italy captain Bonucci to retire from football at the end of next season



**ROME:** Italy and Juventus captain Leonardo Bonucci says he will retire from football at the end of next season, BBC reported on Wednesday. The 36-year-old has won eight Serie A titles over two spells at the Italian club and made his 500th appearance against Sevilla last week. He also has 120 international caps and was part of the Italy side that beat England to win Euro 2020 in July 2021. "Wearing this shirt has been like living a dream for 12 years," he told Juventus' YouTube channel. "Everything I've done has been for a shirt that for me is like a second skin. There's still a little boy inside who is so happy to wear this shirt and take to the field in it because it was his dream - a dream come true." Bonucci, whose contract expires next season, began his career at Inter Milan in 2005, where he won his first Serie A title in 2005-06. The defender also had spells at Treviso, Pisa, Genoa and Bari before joining Juve in 2010, becoming part of a famous Juve backline along with Andrea Barzagli, Giorgio Chiellini and goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon that dominated Italian football for a decade. The Turin giants won nine successive titles between 2011-12 and 2019-20, with Bonucci claiming eight of those after spending one season at AC Milan in 2017-18. Bonucci made his Italy debut in March 2010 and captained the side for the first time four years later. He represented the Azzurri at two World Cups and three European Championships, finishing runner-up at Euro 2012 before lifting the trophy nine years later following a penalty shootout win over England at Wembley. "When I stop playing next year, it will be the end of a defensive era - a way of defending Italian style," he added. "It's a source of pride to be up there with the greatest. I hope lots of future defenders will see us as idols - just as we did with (Franco) Baresi, (Alessandro) Nesta, (Paolo) Maldini and (Fabio) Cannavaro." - Agencies

# ROUND-UP

## Lulu’s Mango Mania Fest to delight senses with juicy mango magic

From the common to the rarest, more than 60 varieties of the luscious tropical fruit from different parts of the world will be on display during the festival

**MUSCAT:** The much-anticipated Lulu Hypermarket Mango Mania Festival 2023 is here to whisk you away on a journey down memory lane. The mango fest, which will be held from May 17 to 27, is organised every year for customers to indulge in a burst of juicy goodness in summer.

The festival was inaugurated by Amit Narang, the Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, at Lulu Hypermarket Bausher, in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, Lulu staff and customers.

“India with its extensive varieties of mangoes is a food lover’s delight. Mango Mania, Lulu’s annual event has showcased not only mangoes but several other mango delicacies, which I am sure will delight the citizens of Oman,” said Amit Narang while inaugurating the event.

From the common to the rarest, more than 60 varieties of the luscious tropical fruit from different parts of the world will be on display during the festival. Lulu has

flowed in mangoes from across the world, namely India, Yemen, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Kenya, Uganda, and, not to forget, local delicacies from Oman.

There will also be amazing deals and offers on freshly imported selection of mangoes.

Customers will also be able to relish some of the special mango treats in the hot food, bakery, sweets and pickles section. Special mango preserves, smoothies, pulps, juices and jams will also be available during the promotion.

Shabeer K A, Regional Director – Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, said “Lulu is happy to organise Mango Mania Fest, which has become a popular event among our customers over the years, especially for lovers of this exotic fruit. It is a unique opportunity for shoppers to experience the best varieties of the sweet, succulent, refreshing and mouth-watering mangoes and mango products flown in from different parts of the world. We hope this fest would be a treat for the customers looking for a burst of juicy goodness this summer.”

“Like every year, we have stacked up our aisles with a wide range of delicious mangoes from countries all over the world for this year’s fest. Each variety of mango has its own distinctive taste, texture, aroma, colour and size, making it suitable for consumers of all ages and nationalities,” he added.

Lulu constantly brings in innovative strategies and ideas to keep up with customers’ changing preferences and needs for every season and occasion. With a leading retail experience that includes the very best services, selection, quality, and value, shopping at Lulu has always been an enjoyable and rewarding experience.



### RECOGNITION

## Al Ahlia Insurance honoured with ‘Most Innovative Insurer of the Year’ award

**MUSCAT:** This prestigious accolade acknowledges the company’s commitment to providing innovative insurance products and services and continuous efforts to meet the evolving needs of customers.

Hosted by Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail Al Mashani, the event witnessed the presence of Badr Salim Al Maamari, Secretary General, Oman Tender Board as a chief guest. This event was attended by several senior government officials, private sector leaders and policymakers. Representing Al Ahlia Insurance, the prestigious award was received by Hanaa Al Hinai, CEO of Al Ahlia Insurance Company.

“At Al Ahlia, we have always believed in staying ahead of the curve and pioneering new ideas and technologies to improve our services. This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, who have worked tirelessly to bring about innovative solutions that make insurance more accessible, efficient, and customer-friendly,” said Hanaa Al Hinai, CEO of Al Ahlia Insurance.

“To keep pace with today’s technological evolution, the company remains committed to focusing on customer-centricity by providing seamless digital options, ensuring simple and fast access to insurance services and products. As we celebrate this milestone, we are committed to providing innovative



and effective insurance solutions that cater to the diverse needs of our customers.

“We would like to thank our customers for their continued trust and support. Driven to strive for excellence in all operations, we look forward to continuing our journey of innovation and growth.”

As the leading insurer in the Sultanate, the company has successfully implemented innovation and digitisation concepts in most of its operations.

Over the past few years, Al Ahlia

Insurance introduced new e-services for its valued customers, including WhatsApp, an online transfer policy, paperless insurance, one-click renewals, and an easy transactional website. In addition, the company developed smart and fully digitised processes by presenting self-service kiosks. These digital platforms are specially designed to enable customers to efficiently and simply purchase or renew any insurance policy without the need to physically visit branches.

### SKILLS COMPETITION

## OTE competition keeps Service Advisors’ skills on cutting-edge

**MUSCAT:** Building on the success of the maiden edition of its Skills Competition held last year, OTE Group invited its cadre of Service Advisors to compete for awards in yet another contest designed to constantly raise the bar on customer service standards championed by the group’s various automotive departments and its leasing arm VLC.

Launched for the first time in 2022, the Skills Competition is conducted in multiple stages over a period of four weeks. Vying for prizes, comprising trophies, gifts and certificates, are the majority of the group’s Service Advisors. Their role as ‘Customer Service Champions’ – liaising between customers and the technical teams – is pivotal to OTE’s goal of sustaining and building enduring customer loyalty across its automotive brands.

During the phased competition, the contestants showed off their tried-and-tested skills as Service Advisors. Overseeing the competition was a panel comprised of veterans drawn from the automotive sector.

In the first round, they were evaluated for their knowledge of the Six-Step Customer Care process – the essential toolkit of customer service champions.

Candidates who cleared this round were then invited to role-play their responsibilities when receiving customers with their vehicles, and at the time of delivery of the vehicles.

The role-plays helped evaluate



### The Skills Competition is conducted in multiple stages over a period of four weeks

their interpersonal skills, politeness, and overall approach towards the customers.

In the ultimate round, the finalists were assessed for their aptitude, interpersonal and communication skills, attention to detail, and ability to handle a customer’s queries, concerns and even distress over unmet expectations.

Emerging the winner in the 2023 Skills Competition was Usman Tufail Bajwa, who received

a trophy and a gift voucher for his outstanding performance.

First Runner-Up was Rahul Kumar, while Anish Mathew and Ahmed AL-Ghazali were named 2nd Runner-up winners. They too received individual trophies and gift vouchers. Other finalists were presented with Certificates of Appreciation for their efforts.

“This annual contest is an opportunity for our growing contingent of Service Advisors to constantly hone their skills and outshine their colleagues in customer service delivery,” said Dileep Kaul, Senior General Manager, OTE Group. “In an increasingly competitive marketplace, it’s our service standards that will give us an edge over the competition; hence the need to keep our Service Advisors performing at the top of their game.”



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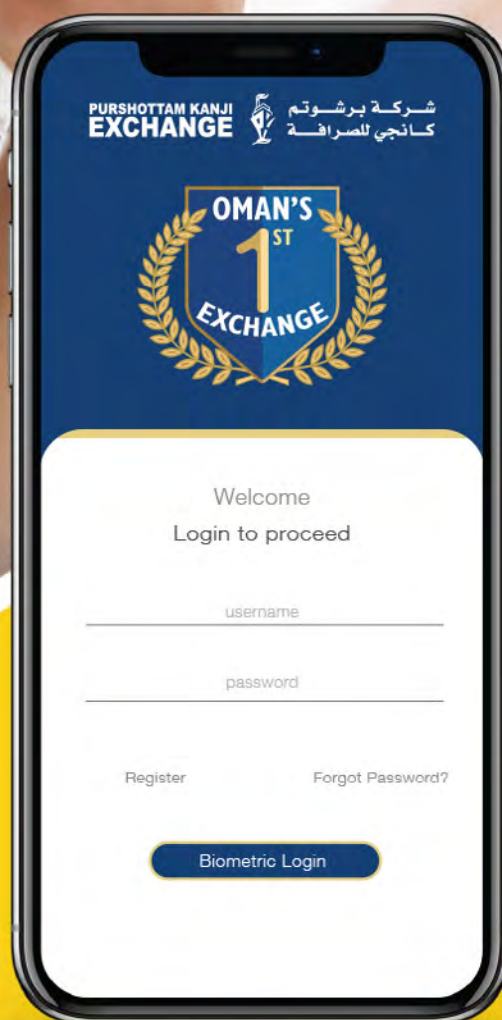
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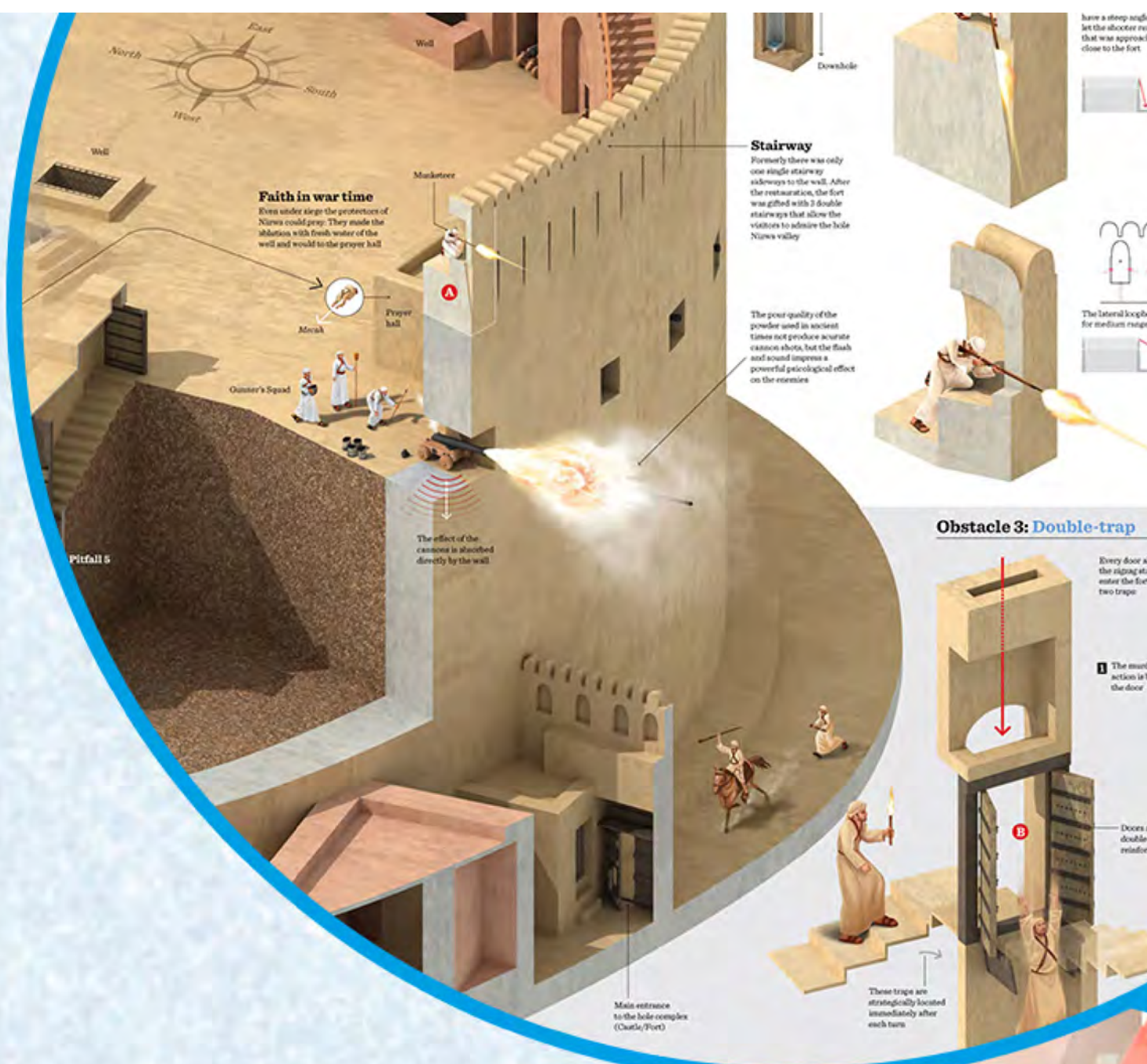
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