



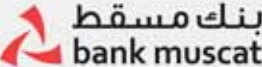
HIS MAJESTY SENDS GREETINGS TO URUGUAY PRESIDENT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou of the Republic of Uruguay on the occasion of his country's Independence Day. His Majesty extended his sincere congratulations and best wishes to the president and to the friendly people of Uruguay. — **ONA**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Oman's gold imports increase by 41%

1 Oman's total imports of gold saw an impressive 41 percent jump to reach OMR176.59 million by the end of May of this year compared to about OMR125.10 million recorded during the same period in 2023. **>A2**

OMAN Oman-Europe trade tops OMR878mn

2 Trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and Europe increased by 9.5 percent to OMR878.40 million by the end of May 2024, compared to OMR802.20 million by the end of May 2023, according to preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCST). **>A3**

WORLD India launches its reusable rocket

3 India launched its first reusable hybrid rocket 'RHUMI-1', developed by the Tamil Nadu-based start-up Space Zone India with Martin Group, from Thiruvudandhai in Chennai on Saturday. The rocket, carrying 3 Cube Satellites and 50 PICO Satellites, was launched into a suborbital trajectory using a mobile launcher. **>A7**



HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN RETURNS HOME

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik returned home on Saturday, after a private visit to the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom. May the Almighty Allah grant His Majesty good health and well-being! -**ONA**

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY AIMS TO BOOST DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Floats tender to manage and track its vehicle fleet by using modern technology

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality is moving forward on the path of digital transformation by automating its operational processes.



Taking advantage of modern technologies, the municipality is trying to improve its services by enhancing operational efficiency and sustainability.

The new system, for which the

tender has been floated, will help the municipality in incorporating advanced technologies to manage and track its vehicle fleet.

This project will be implemented in cooperation with the Oman

Energy Association (OPAL) as it is the body that determines the specifications and procedures for the fleet management and vehicle tracking system in the oil and gas sector.

This project is part of a digital transformation strategy that aims to digitise municipal operations and services, and enhance sustainability and innovation in the municipal work system according to the government's initiative of transforming its cities into smart and sustainable cities.

Digitised fleet management and tracking system will help in automation in sale, purchase and maintenance of vehicles, equipment registration and work operation. **>A3**

NIZWA

Four killed, one injured in floods

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a tragic incident, four people lost their lives, and one was seriously injured after a group of hikers was caught in flash floods in Wadi Tanuf, Nizwa.

According to a statement from the Royal Oman Police (ROP), five members of a 16-person multinational hiking group were swept away by the sudden heavy rains. Among the deceased were one Omani citizen and three individuals of Arab nationalities. One hiker remains in critical condition.

The ROP said that police aircraft were deployed to transport the injured to Nizwa Hospital for urgent medical care.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority calls on people to follow safety guidelines and check the weather conditions before going out for hiking, and to register the location and participant data via the application to ensure their safety.

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of August 24, 2024



Deaths
40,334
Injured
93,356

VISION 2040

Times of Oman to host 'Business Leadership Summit & Awards'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Times of Oman has launched the Business Leadership Summit & Awards 2024, based on the theme 'Redefining Leadership for Business Excellence'. The prestigious event, organised by Muscat Media Group and Gulf Leaders Circle, will bring together over 200 senior government officials, leading CEOs, top business owners, SMEs and business experts to discuss leadership strategies driving business success and sustainability.

Scheduled on 30th October at St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, the Summit will offer insightful discussions, networking opportunities and recognition of leadership achievements through the coveted Times of Oman 'Business Leadership Awards'. The Summit is supported by Oman American Business Council (OABC) and Oman Banks Association.

On the event, Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali, CEO of Muscat Media Group, stated, "As a leading media organisation for over five decades, we remain dedicated to advancing Oman's economic



BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

progress and social development. Our live platforms are designed to unite key stakeholders, fostering knowledge sharing, idea exchange and collaboration to collectively work

toward the nation's strategic goals, in alignment with Vision 2040."

"Last year, we organised the highly successful Gulf Business Summit 'Building Bridges'

aimed at promoting cross border economic co-operation. This year we are bringing the Business Leadership Summit & Awards focusing on key topics including navigating economic uncertainty, embracing digital transformation, fostering innovation and creativity, building sustainable business models, enhancing organisational agility, cultivating talent and leadership development, integrating ESG principles for long-term success and expanding global market reach," he added.

During the Summit, the Times

of Oman Business Leadership Awards will also be presented to exceptional achievers in Oman's business landscape, honouring outstanding companies, visionary business owners, exemplary CEOs and innovative SMEs. Recognising leadership excellence across industries, these awards will highlight achievements that drive economic growth, foster innovation and inspire others in the pursuit of business excellence.

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PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:14pm
Asr.....3:41pm
Maghrib.....6:37pm
Isha.....7:50pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:29am

Oman’s total import of gold records 41 percent increase

The total weight of gold imported by the Sultanate of Oman by the end of May 2024 amounted to about 8,443 kilograms

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's total import of gold recorded a 41 percent increase to reach OMR176,591,960 by the end of May of this year compared to the same period in 2023, which recorded about OMR125,100,929.

The total weight of gold imported by the Sultanate of Oman by the end of May 2024 amounted to about 8,443 kilograms, compared



to 5,675 kilograms in the same period in 2023, according to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The United Arab Emirates came first in the list of countries exporting gold to the Sultanate of Oman at the end of May 2024, with a value of OMR170,395,964,

followed by Hong Kong with OMR3,173,485, followed by Turkey with OMR1,420,125, then the Kingdom of Bahrain with OMR680,688, and Russia with OMR314,625.

On the other hand, statistics showed that the total value of the Sultanate of Oman's gold exports

recorded at the end of May of this year a value of OMR 14,690,377, with a decrease of 23 percent compared to the same period in 2023, where the value of exports recorded OMR 18,990,963.

The total weight of gold exported by the end of May of this year amounted to about 510 kilograms,

compared to 924 kilograms by the end of May 2023.

The United States of America came at the forefront of the countries importing gold from the Sultanate of Oman by the end of May 2024, with a value of OMR7,228,175, followed by the United Arab Emirates with OMR 8,004,272, then Hong Kong with OMR 603,488 then the Republic of India with OMR 475,584, and then the Kingdom of Bahrain with OMR 203,601.

Statistics showed that the total value of re-exports from the Sultanate of Oman of gold recorded at the end of May of this year a value of OMR52,682,300, an increase of 826 percent compared to the same period in 2023, when the value of re-exports recorded OMR 5,690,737.

The total weight of gold re-exported by the end of May of this year amounted to about 2,084 kilograms, compared to 1,247 kilograms by the end of May of 2023.

Iran came at the forefront of the countries to which gold was re-

ported from the Sultanate of Oman by the end of May of 2024, with a value of OMR41,594,815, followed by Turkey with OMR3,833,541, then the United Arab Emirates with OMR 3,346,732, then the United States of America with OMR 3,183,838 and then the Republic of India with OMR 723,374.

It is noteworthy that the average price of a gram of 24-karat gold rose by the end of the second quarter of this year to OMR29 and 950 baisas, compared to OMR26 and 400 baisas at the end of the first quarter of this year. The average price of a gram of 21-karat gold rose to OMR25 and 833 baisas, compared to 22 Omani riyals and 717 baisas, and the average price of 18-karat gold reached OMR22 and 33 baisas, up from 19 Omani riyals and 350 baisas.

The total number of institutions and establishments operating in the retail sale of gold and jewelry reached 771 institutions by the end of the second quarter of 2024, including 536 in the Governorate of Muscat.

SALALAH

Omani Culinary Arts Festival kicks off

2023/2024 SESSION

Outstanding General Education Diploma students honoured by education ministry



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani Culinary Arts Festival, organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in the Wilayat of Salalah, has kicked off in conjunction with the Dhofar Khareef Season 2024.

The festival, which will run until August 26, includes various activities, including live shows by a number of Omani and Gulf chefs, in the presence of many cooking enthusiasts and influencers from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to a number of sections such as the Little Chef Corner, traditional music folklore shows, and various competitions, as well as a corner for farmers and local products, another for gifts and souvenirs, and restaurants

serving traditional Omani foods.

The festival comes within the framework of the "Food Tourism and Omani Culinary Arts" programme, through which the ministry seeks to introduce Omani cuisine as one of the means to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability and activate the role of tourism in strengthening local communities and providing business opportunities for small and medium enterprises.

It is noteworthy that the Omani Culinary Arts Festival aims to promote tourism and enhance food tourism, especially Omani culinary arts and Omani cuisine locally, regionally and globally through forums, festivals and events specialized in the field of food and culinary arts.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education held a ceremony to honour outstanding students of the General Education Diploma for the academic year 2023/2024 under the auspices of Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, and in the presence of Dr. Madiha bint Ahmed Al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education, the ministers and members of the State Council, Undersecretaries, teachers, and parents of the honoured students.

The ceremony was held at the Grand Events Hall at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center.

The ceremony included the Ministry's speech, delivered by Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, in which he said: "This ceremony comes to honour the distinguished students in the General Education Diploma, its equivalent levels and international qualifications in the schools of the Sultanate of Oman for the academic year 2023/2024. Today, it is our duty to congratulate and celebrate them for what they have achieved to deserve such an honour."

He emphasised that "one of the goals of Oman Vision 2040 is to strengthen the national partnership between the government sector and the private sector so that we can all be one hand in building this country and serving its generations, and this ceremony today is nothing but an authentic model that confirms the seriousness of this partnership and its successful achieved results, as our annual ceremony comes with the generous support of Occidental Oman Company, and we truly have to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to them for supporting the youth of the country."

He added: "In this regard, we call on our distinguished students who have successfully passed this



stage to continue their excellence in the upcoming educational stages, and to strive to achieve success no less than what they have achieved at this stage.

"We also call them to invest their excellence in what supports our country and achieves its goals, and we can only extend our highest expressions of thanks and gratitude to everyone who contributed to reaching this goal and everyone who persevered towards it from parents, school administrations, teachers, and everyone who contributed to this excellence."

Nasser Al Maskari, Director of Social Responsibility at Occidental Oman, delivered the sponsoring company's speech, saying: "At Occidental Oman, through our social responsibility strategy, we attach great importance to supporting and investing in education, as it is a sustainable investment that has a positive impact on successive generations.

"This exclusive sponsorship that we are providing today for the honoring ceremony of outstanding students holding a general diploma is not the first, and will not be the last, as the beginning of



this project was limited in its first years to schools in the concession areas due to the privacy enjoyed by these areas, and then this honor was generalised to include schools in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

"Our partnership with the Ministry of Education is a long-standing partnership that has been strengthened in many community projects that have had a positive impact on society, and which directly aim to develop the education system in the Sultanate."

After that, students Abdul Aziz Al Zadjali from South Al Batinah Governorate and Elaf Al Darmaki from Muscat Governorate gave a speech on behalf of the distinguished students, saying: "This moment is the beginning of a new journey of challenges and achievements. We promise to continue to seek knowledge, filled with hope and ambition, to achieve our dreams and goals, and will remain on the straight path."

"This moment has come to water long years of fatigue and diligence, and to drown hearts with success that we will never forget throughout our lives. Yesterday we were planting the seedlings, and today we are reaping the fruits. We will work on achieving our dreams and goals in order to achieve the vision for our country, which we all seek to be a destination for progress, advancement and a lighthouse of cultural excellence.

"We have a vast future ahead of us full of opportunities, challenges, academic study, and a bright university life. Let us face it with the same spirit, let us maintain optimism and ambition, let us renew our determination to work hard to achieve our dreams towards a bright future full of achievements for our beloved country, Oman."

The honouring ceremony included a national anthem performed by students of the Directorate-General of Education in Muscat, and a visual presentation containing photos and videos of programmes and initiatives such as the Chinese Language Bridge Programme, the Summer Programme for Learning German, and the French Language Programme.

At the end of the ceremony, the outstanding students were honoured by the Minister of Finance, the patronage of the ceremony, and commemorative photos were taken.

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AL KHABOURAH LINK

Rubber-modified asphalt used to build road

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has successfully implemented a pilot project using rubber-modified asphalt in the construction of Al Khabourah dual link project.

This innovative approach utilises recycled tyres, thereby reducing environmental pollution caused by tyre waste.

Rubber-modified asphalt is known for its flexibility, resistance to cracking, erosion, and thermal effects, leading to an extended lifespan for the road.

RAINS LASH AL DHAHIRAH GOVERNORATE

The wilayats of Al Dhahirah Governorate witnessed heavy to moderate rainfall on Saturday, which caused valleys to overflow. In the Wilayat of Ibri, Dank and Yanqul heavy rains were recorded. -ONA



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Trade between Oman and Europe tops OMR878mn

The total exports from Oman to the European countries saw jumped 63% to reach OMR197.26 million by the end of May 2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and Europe increased by 9.5 percent to OMR878.40 million by the end of May 2024, compared to OMR802.20 million by the end of May 2023, according to preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The data further indicates that the total exports from the Sultanate of Oman to the European countries saw a massive jump of



TRADE VOLUME: The total imports of the Sultanate of Oman from European countries by the end of May 2024 decreased by 1.5 percent to OMR620.344 million. -ONA

63 percent to reach OMR197.26 million by the end of May 2024, with the total weight of these exports reaching 444.48 kilograms.

Huge jump
This marks a huge jump from

OMR120.38 million in exports recorded in May 2023, which had a total weight of 269.4 million kilograms.

The total imports of the Sultanate of Oman from European countries by the end of May

2024 decreased by 1.5 percent to OMR620.344 million with a total weight of 845.71 million kilograms compared to the end of May 2023, when the total imports amounted to OMR630.05 million for a total weight of 940.37 kilograms.

The total re-exports from the Sultanate of Oman to European countries also witnessed a huge jump of 17.4 percent to OMR60.79 million with a total weight of 6.1 million kilograms. This is higher from OMR51.8 million in May 2023, which had a total weight of just over 2 million kilograms.

Germany comes first
The Federal Republic of Germany ranked first among European countries in trade exchange with the Sultanate of Oman, with the total Omani exports to Germany reaching OMR9.19 million by the end of May 2024 compared to the imports from that country worth OMR88.56 million. The value of re-exports to Germany amounted to OMR19.84 million.

Belgium comes second
The Kingdom of Belgium was the second largest trade partner of Oman, with total Omani exports to it amounting to OMR6.43 million, compared to imports worth OMR100.91 million. The total value of re-exports in Belgium amounted to OMR2.35 million.

- With DNA inputs

Efficient System Management of fleet

< FROM A1 The system will use advanced technologies such as the GPS and sensors to collect and analyse precise data about the vehicles' location, fuel consumption and fleet performance.

It will help in reduction of costs and improve operational efficiency, maintenance, and vehicle routing. With the flexibility, the system can adapt to future changes, guaranteeing its high performance.

The gains from the partnership between Muscat Municipality and "OPAL" will enhance the quality of vehicle tracking and help the supplying companies with a qualification certificate of the Oman Energy Association (OPAL).

The system also provides higher levels of safety by continually monitoring the condition of vehicles and advises intervention when needed.

The system also provides vital data that will help in making strategic decisions regarding vehicle replacement, daily operations, and maintenance and effective utilisation of resources.

It will be a prudent investment for financial savings and enhance the overall efficiency of fleet management. The fleet management system offers great added value because it is based on automation and advanced technology.

DIVERSE ARRAY OF TALENT

Indian virtuoso to grace Royal Opera House Muscat's 2024/25 season

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat unveiled its highly anticipated 2024/25 season on Sunday, 18 August, via their official YouTube channel.

The season is set to feature a diverse array of international talent, reaffirming the venue's status as Oman's leading cultural hub.

Among the highlights of the upcoming season is an extraordinary concert scheduled for 30 & 31 October 2024, starring one of India's most revered classical musicians, Nishat Khan.

Nishat Khan, a master of the sitar, will lead the first half of this two-part concert. The sitar, known for its distinctive, lingering tones, is an instrument deeply rooted in Indian classical music, and Khan is among its foremost exponents.

Descended from seven generations of virtuosos, he has graced the world's most prestigious stages, including a notable performance of his sitar symphony Gate of the Moon at the Royal Albert Hall during the BBC Proms in 2013. His accolades include a Radio Mirchi Music Award for 'Song of the Year' in 2019.

The concert's second half will feature the European Philharmonia, conducted by Walter Proost, adding a rich symphonic layer to



INDIAN MAESTRO: Nishat Khan, a master of the sitar, will lead the first half of this two-part concert.

the evening's offerings.

Khan's illustrious career began at the tender age of seven. By sixteen, he was performing ragas at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, with the legendary Ravi Shankar in attendance.

His lineage traces back to the Mughal courts, with his father and mentor, Ustad Imrat Khan, serving as a lifelong inspiration.

Widely regarded as the fastest sitar player alive, Khan's performances are known for their hypnotic intensity and emotional depth, often stretching for hours.

In addition to his classical roots, Khan has ventured into scoring Bollywood films and collaborating in the visual arts, notably with British artist Anish Kapoor.

His versatility as a musician has seen him share the stage with artists across various genres, from violinist Vanessa Mae to flamenco guitarist Paco Peña.

His explorations have extended into Gregorian chant, western classical music, and abstract jazz, collaborating with luminaries such as John McLaughlin, Philip Glass, Evelyn Glennie,

and Django Bates.

Despite his forays into diverse musical territories, it is Khan's profound connection to the North Indian classical tradition and his exceptional gift for improvisation that continue to solidify his reputation as a true maestro.

His upcoming performance at the Royal Opera House Muscat promises to be a spellbinding experience, showcasing the depth and breadth of his extraordinary talent. Book your tickets now on the Royal Opera House Muscat website or at the box office.

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COMMENTARY

Arabs of the twenty-second century



SADIQ MOHAMED SAID AL-LAWATY

We Arabs in the third decade of the twenty-first century, are living through the worst period in history, as we see the occupying entity so-called Israel with its seven million settlers, is capable of humiliating us, even though our number exceeds four hundred million people. Despite its occupation of beloved Palestine, since 7 October 2023, Israel has begun committing the most heinous crimes of genocide in Gaza, destroying the infrastructure over the heads of its residents, and depriving them of food, water and electricity. As a result many children are dying of hunger, while the governments of 22 Arab countries act as if the matter does not concern them and as if the people of Gaza are not part of the Arab nation?

In this article I would like to highlight the impressions and reactions of our brothers who will succeed us a hundred years from today towards this shameful position of our governments.

I quote here the statistics of the killings and destruction committed by the occupation forces since its war on Gaza on 7th October 2023 until mid-December 2023, that is, in just nine weeks. As Israel killed more than 31,000 Palestinians in Gaza since the start of its operation, including more than 13,000 children, 9,000 women, another 7,000 people are missing, presumed dead under the rubble of destroyed buildings. By mid-December, Israel had dropped 29,000 shells on Gaza, destroying or damaging 70 per cent of homes, hundreds of cultural sites, and dozens of cemeteries searching for their dead. Experts say the scale and pace of destruction in Gaza is among the most severe in modern history.

Today, eight months after the date of aforementioned statistics, the situation has become completely different, as the number of martyrs has reached 41,000 and 90,350 wounded, most of them

children and women, as a result of the brutal aggression on Gaza until yesterday, 21 August 2024. It is ridiculous to hear that President Biden, who is complicit in genocide, does not agree with the number of victims.

I am pleased to quote below the statistics of casualties, destruction and siege from an American newspaper. As usual, all American media without exception, are in solidarity with and support everything Israel does against the Palestinians in general, and Gaza in particular, including the genocide against its oppressed people. We Arabs in general realize that the financial power of the Jews is what controls the media in the United States, so their absolute support for Israel does not bother us. America is Israel, and vice versa. Recently, several videos have emerged from America, including more than one video of Bernie Sanders, the senior U.S. senator from Vermont, who is Jewish, suggesting that America is ruled by Jewish lobbyists, as well as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). But this time, Foreign Affairs magazine took an unusual path, deviating from Jewish desires, and wrote the bitter facts in its issue dated 23rd June 2024, where it stated the following:

Quote: "After nine months of Israel combat operations in the Gaza Strip, Hamas is not defeated and is not close to being defeated either. Israel invaded the Gaza Strip with about 40,000 soldiers, forcibly displaced 80% of the population, killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, dropped at least 70,000 tons of bombs on the Strip, damaged more than half of its buildings, and restricted the region's access to water, food and electricity, leaving the entire population on the brink of starvation" Unquote.

Israel continues its land, sea and air battles, and America and the Western countries do not want this war to stop, because they have a hidden and dark agenda that they want Israel to achieve and this is what the Arab rulers who recognize the state of Israel asked US president Joe Biden to achieve, which is to eliminate all resistance movements in the region, even if this leads to the killing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese. Believe me, they will fail. Some Arab rulers cannot tolerate the existence of resistance in the region because they know that their people are with the resistance, and with all armed resistance movements to liberate lost Palestine, even though they recognize the existence of Israel. The war continues and the devils support the Zionist entity with weapons, equipment and financial aid to kill the oppressed Palestinian people who are deprived of their most basic rights, to



After nine months of Israel combat operations in the Gaza Strip, Hamas is not defeated and is not close to being defeated either. Israel invaded the Gaza Strip with about 40,000 soldiers, forcibly displaced 80% of the population, killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, dropped at least 70,000 tonnes of bombs on the Strip, damaged more than half of its buildings, and restricted the region's access to water, food and electricity, leaving the entire population on the brink of starvation

the point that they cannot find food, water, or even a shroud, or land in which to bury their dead.

The question that the Arab people will ask a century from now, in August 2124, is: Where were the Arab Rulers, their armies equipped by America and the West, their oil and gas, their billions and investments, and finally The Arab League that is supposed to unite its members and defend their legitimate causes? Wasn't Gaza in 2024 part of the Arab world? Didn't the Arab rulers see what was happening to the innocent Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank? The horrific scenes of killing and destruction coming from Gaza made a non-Arab or even non-Islamic country like South Africa not tolerate such horrific crimes against the Palestinians and file a genocide case against Israel before the International Court of Justice? But it seems that the Arab

rulers were not interested at all as if Gaza was in Africa? Then the Arabs of the twenty-second century ask: Were the Arab rulers without conscience? As everyone knows, the people of Gaza are Arabs, speak the same language, and follow the same religion. Is it reasonable for them to remain silent and close their eyes and ears to the screams of the children of Gaza, as if the matter did not concern them, but rather concerned South Africa? The Arabs of the 22nd century add: There is no doubt that the Gaza issue had been a major dilemma for Arab rulers in the third decade of the 21st century, and by their silence, they became part of genocidal war on Gaza in the eyes of their own citizens. The Arabs continue in their talk, saying: Just as the Arabs in the 21st century were shocked and suffered from the killing and destruction that the Arab people were subjected to in Gaza, we, the Arabs of the 22nd century, suffer and grieve over Gaza, even though all the disasters occurred a hundred years ago. They wondered: Did these rulers not feel the revolution and turmoil that was happening in the consciences of their people? Or did the rulers not care but knew that America alone was capable of harming them and not their citizens because they were well controlled and could not harm? This is true, and even the citizens did not want to harm their rulers. But certainly the Arabs wanted to see at least some action on the part of the rulers to pressure their ally and guarantor of their thrones, America, to stop the Israeli massacres against their brothers in Gaza. This is how the Arabs in the next century, 2100 AD, liberated from all foreign control, will imagine the conditions that prevailed in Gaza and the Arab countries.

And I say with all humility and appreciation to our Arab brothers in the twenty-second century: First: I thank you for your good feelings, your deep anger, and your understanding of us, the oppressed Arabs, who were unable to provide any significant assistance to our brothers in Gaza. Second: We Arabs in the twenty-first century, have ignored our rulers and the Arab League, knowing full well that they are useless. However, despite all the destruction and sacrifices that have occurred in the afflicted Gaza Strip, many positive steps have been achieved, thanks to the steadfastness of the resistance movements and their supporters from the Axis of Resistance, who have succeeded during the past ten months in returning the Palestinian cause to the forefront and to the eyes of the world. The people of the world have realized that there is an oppressed group of people who have

been expelled from their homeland of Palestine since the Belfour Declaration in 1917 and they are struggling to regain their usurped rights and these are not terrorists as described by the United States, Israel and their agents. Today, the Palestinian cause has emerged with all its force at the forefront of the international community's priorities, after Israel, through its lies over decades, its repeated attacks, and the efforts and money of its supporters from the evil countries in the West, were able to draw the curtain on the Palestine cause. Thank God, their efforts were in vain, and the oppressed Palestinians achieved miracles through their sacrifices. Another positive step being that the resistance of the Palestinian people has stopped other Arab countries with an American orientation from recognizing Israel which were lining up to recognize the Zionist entity. Today, the Palestine cause has become a top priority for the world, the United Nations, the Security Council, International Justice Councils and the peoples of the world, not to mention that the peoples of America and Europe are repeating the scenes from the Vietnam era in demonstrating against the Israeli genocide in Gaza. Everyone in the world, except the leaders of the United States, Britain and the European Union, feels that there is an oppressed and helpless group of Palestinian people whose country has been occupied since 1948, and that the Middle East will not witness security and peace if the Palestinians are ignored for their legitimate rights. What happened at the United Nations General Assembly, where all countries except the United States and Israel, voted in favour of establishing a Palestinian state, came in light of the steadfastness, resistance and great sacrifices of the people in Gaza. At the top of the list of positives is ending the suffering of the Palestinian people, even if some of the known devils may not like that, and giving them their rights, even if they are incomplete, to establish the State of Palestine on the lands occupied in 1967. It is expected that the process of establishing the Palestine state will begin after the end of the Israeli aggression on Gaza.

I thank the readers for reading the article, and I do not forget to thank my free Arab brothers in the next century 2124 AD for their solidarity with the Palestinian people and the oppressed Arabs in the twenty-first century.

This article was published in the Times of Oman's sister publication Al-Shabiba on 19.8.2024. This article has been translated from Arabic into English by the author.

Dhofar sees a massive 63% jump in industrial licence applications

This was announced by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion in a press statement issued on Saturday

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of industrial licence applications in Dhofar Governorate increased by 63 percent to 3,095 during the first half of 2024 compared to 1,897 applications during the

same period of 2023. This was announced by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion in a press statement on Saturday. The Ministry further said that additionally, 5,348 certificates of origin were issued in the first half of 2024 compared to 3,963 certificates during the same period in 2023, reflecting a 34.9 percent increase. Regarding commercial registrations in Dhofar Governorate, the number reached around 2,560 registrations during the first half of 2024, compared to 2,846 registrations during the same period in 2023, bringing the total number of registrations in the governorate to 73,520 by the end of the first half of 2024. The number of foreign investment registrations amounted to 253 during the first half of 2024 compared to 744 during the same period in 2023, bringing the total



number of registrations to 11,480. Meanwhile, the number of active licences in Dhofar Governorate reached approximately 127,399 by the end of the first half of 2024. **Increase in industrial licence applications** Mohammed bin Khalifa Al-Badhrani, Director General of the Directorate General of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion in Dhofar Governorate, stated

that the governorate witnessed an increase in industrial licence applications, with 1,676 new applications during the first half of 2024 compared to 1,184 applications during the same period in 2023. Al-Badhrani attributed this increase to the investment-friendly environment in Dhofar Governorate, as well as the facilities and incentives offered to investors. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, in collaboration with relevant authorities, has enabled investors to use the latest smart applications to facilitate investment procedures. Al-Badhrani further added that the highest licenced commercial activities in Dhofar Governorate include the construction and contracting sector, export and import offices, along with a notable increase in licences for restaurants and cafes, vehicle mechanics, and retail clothing stores.

Empowering private sector in investments Al-Badhrani emphasised that the Directorate General of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion in Dhofar Governorate is working to enhance the investment climate with the aim of empowering the private sector to attract foreign investments and highlight key investment opportunities in the governorate. Among the most important current investment opportunities are the establishment of a sodium silicate manufacturing project in the Raysut area of Salalah, a steel plant in Salalah for the production of light structural steel billets, and a project for dolomite calcination units in Salalah within the mining industry. **Diverse investment opportunities** Al-Badhrani pointed out that investment opportunities in Dhofar

Governorate are diverse, including fields such as fibreglass boat manufacturing, cement paper bag production, and the manufacturing of formations used in water and soft drink packaging. The agricultural sector in Dhofar also flourishes during the Khareef (monsoon) season due to seasonal rains, which boost food security and positively contribute to the local economy. **Khareef season as an investment stimulus** Al-Badhrani explained that the Khareef season presents a significant investment opportunity, as the governorate experiences notable growth in commercial activities during this period. The retail sector, in particular, benefits from the influx of tourists and residents, which stimulates sales and business activities, supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as artisanal industries.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Meeting discusses exchange of expertise

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The joint committee between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation held its second meeting on Thursday last week in the Nizwa Hall at the Ministry's General Diwan. The committee was chaired by Prof. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambo-saidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Education and Dr. Bakhit bin Ahmed Al Mahri, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation. **Information in various aspects** The meeting discussed aspects of joint cooperation and exchange of expertise and information in various aspects between the two ministries in the field of controls and conditions for accepting students in educational specialisations and educational qualification pro-

grammes, and the involvement of experts and curriculum specialists in the ministry in joint committees with the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation. The meeting also addressed the creation of postgraduate programmes and studies that are compatible with the new curricula and study paths to prepare specialised teachers, and the extent of readiness for the outputs of the vocational and technical education path in coordination with educational institutions to accommodate these outputs to continue university studies in these specialisations according to priority. It discussed the development of a description of the new study materials for the academic year 2024/2025 that are compatible with the offered study programs, and participation in determining the elective materials for grades (9-12) that are compatible with the needs of higher education institutions and the labour market.

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**PAKISTAN SCHOOL MUSCAT****ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER**

PSM intends to offer Annual Contract for the year 2024 – 2025. The contractors with relevant experiences are invited for following bidding:

Tender No.	Tender's Name	Tender Collection Date & Time	Final Submission Date & Time
2024/012	Group Medical Insurance for Staff	August 25, 2024, to September 01, 2024 09:00 AM to 01:00 PM Working Days/Hours	Before and Until 10:00 am September 02, 2024

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

Admin Office
Pakistan School Muscat
P.O. Box 987, P.C. 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman; Tel: 24702489
In case of any query you may contact 00968 93690691
Email: tulalb@pakistanschool.edu.om, bodschairman@gmail.com
The tenders shall be submitted in Original and complete with all relevant documents. Tenders not in compliance with tender's requirements shall not be considered. Tender Documents shall be submitted in sealed envelope with clearly mentioned Tender Number/name, Company Name and POC's Number/name. The sealed envelope shall be dropped in the Tender Box available at Admin Office on or before the date mentioned above and addressed to:

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

**شركة إسمنت عمان****Oman Cement Company (S.A.O.G.)**

P.O. BOX 560, RUWI, POSTAL CODE 112, SULTANATE OF OMAN
(Factory Al Mefah West, Bausher, Tel. # 00968 24437070 ext. 102, Fax # 00968 24437777)

TENDERS

The company invites offers for the following tender:

Sl. #	Tender ID	Description	Tender Fee	Deadline for Purchasing of Tenders	Deadline for Submission of Offers
1	1561000191-24	Supply & Erection of complete Bag Filter assembly	RO. 52.500	05th September 2024 1500 Hours	10th September 2024 2359 Hours
2	1580000279-24	Maintenance of Weighbridge at factory site.	RO. 52.500	05th September 2024 1500 Hours	10th September 2024 2359 Hours
3	1650000222-24	Supply of Grinding Media on CFR or DDP basis	RO. 52.500	05th September 2024 1500 Hours	10th September 2024 2359 Hours
4	1550000072-24	Supply Of Water Tanker	RO. 52.500	05th September 2024 1500 Hours	10th September 2024 2359 Hours

Tender documents can be obtained by paying the below amount online to the Company's account detailed below:

Account name: Oman Cement Company SAOG
Bank Name: Bank Muscat SAOG
Account number: 0423 01086 3070 017
Account Type: OMR
SWIFT Code: BMUSOMRX

Copy of deposit transaction of a non-refundable amount of writing on the above as tender fees to be emailed to CFOSecretary@omacement.com & Treasury@omacement.com with the Subject showing "Tender No." and "Tender Description" enabling the Company to provide tender document through email to your company. The above payment is a non-refundable amount. Contact details: Office number: +968 22705601, Mobile number: +968 97932277.

The last date for submission of offers is on Tuesday, 2359 hours detailed date on the above table, accompanied by a bid bond issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 1%) of the total tender value. The bid bond must be valid for 120 days from the last date of submission of offers and the ORIGINAL bid bond must be submitted on the tender box at the reception on our Administration Building, Al Mefah West factory Site, Bausher, Muscat, Oman.

Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by a tender bond will NOT be considered. This publication is part of the tender documents.

**THE ROYAL GUARD OF OMAN****Tenders Advertisement**

The Royal Guard of Oman, invites tenders for the following:-

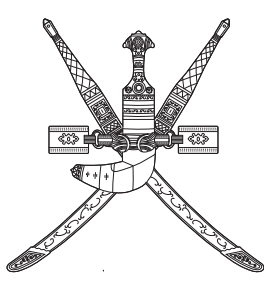
Tender Reference	Subject	Grade	Tender Document Value	Submission Date
04/2024	Maintenace in Al Zulfa Masjid At Seeb	III & above	R.O. 50/- non-refundable	14th October 2024
05/2024	Maintenace in Al Husn Mess At Seeb	III & above	R.O. 60/- non-refundable	14th October 2024
06/2024	Supply of Tyres for the year 2025	III & above	R.O.25 /- non-refundable	07th October 2024

Specialized Companies registered with the Procurement and Contracts Directorate of the General Directorate of Finance, Royal Guard of Oman and the General Secretariat of Tender Board - Sultanate of Oman, can collect the tender document from the Tender Committee Secretariat, Royal Guard of Oman, Seeb during working hours from **Sunday 25thAugust to Thursday 05th September 2024.**

Wax-sealed Tenders addressed to the Chairman - Tender Committee should be submitted to RGO before 1200 hours on the submission date along with a Tender Bond the name of the Royal Guard of Oman equivalent to 1% (One Percent) of the value of the Tender from any registered Bank in the Sultanate of Oman,. The tenderer shall not reveal his identity other than the tender title and the address mentioned below.

No Tender will be accepted after the submission date. The Royal Guard of Oman reserves the right to accept or reject any Tender without giving reasons.

Tender Committee
P.O Box 381C.P.O
Postal Code 111



Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
327/2024	General maintenance work for daycare buildings in the eneral Directorate of Persons with Disabilities at Al Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board at the fourth degree	Sunday 15-9-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 6-10-2024 10:00 PM	10 R.O	25 R.O
328/2024	Supply and installation of waterproof ing for the building of Al-Wafa Center for the Rehabilitat ion of Persons with Disabilities at the Wilayat of Bidbid	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board at the fourth degree	Sunday 15-9-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 6-10-2024 10:00 PM	10 R.O	25 R.O

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), on Sunday 25/8/2024
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

www.mosd.gov.om

Indian PM arrives in Delhi after concluding visit to Poland, Ukraine

During his visit to Ukraine, PM Modi and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reiterated their readiness for further cooperation in upholding principles of international law, including the UN Charter

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived at Palam airport in Delhi on Saturday after concluding his two-nation visit to Poland and Ukraine. Prime Minister Modi's visit to Poland was the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 45 years. It was also the first Prime Ministerial visit from India to Ukraine. During his visit to Ukraine, PM Modi and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reiterated their readiness for further cooperation in upholding principles of international law, including the UN Charter, such as respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of states. They agreed on the desirability of closer bilateral dialogue in this regard. The Indian side reiterated its



principled position and focus on peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy, as a part of which, India has attended the Summit on Peace in Ukraine, held in Burgenstock, Switzerland, in June 2024. The Ukrainian side welcomed such participation by India and highlighted the importance of high-level Indian participation in the next Peace Summit. India and Ukraine signed four agreements during the visit. During his visit to Poland, PM Modi held bilateral discussions with his counterpart Donald Tusk. The two countries decided to elevate their ties to "Strategic Partnership". The two leaders expressed their deepest concern over the war raging in Ukraine including its terrible and tragic humanitarian consequences. They reiterated the need for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in line with international law, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. They also noted the negative impacts of the war in Ukraine with regard to global food and energy security, especially for the Global South. In the context of this war, they shared the view that the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. They underscored the importance of upholding international law, and in line with the UN Charter, reiterated that all states must refrain from the threat of or use of force against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state. Russia and Ukraine have been engaged in a conflict for nearly two-and-a-half years. India and Poland also reiterated their unequivocal condemnation

of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasised that no country should provide a safe haven to those who finance, plan, support or commit terrorist acts. Both sides stressed the need for firm implementation of relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, as well as the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. They also reaffirmed on the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). The two sides reinforced their commitment to a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific in accordance with the international law of the sea as reflected in UNCLOS and with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and freedom of navigation to the benefit of the maritime security and international peace and stability. — ANI



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Robert F Kennedy Jr suspends campaign and backs Trump

ARIZONA: Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suspended his independent presidential campaign on Friday, telling supporters that he would be endorsing Donald Trump's presidential bid. This follows days of speculation that his withdrawal and endorsement of Republican candidate Donald Trump was imminent. "I no longer believe that I have a realistic path of electoral victory," Kennedy said at a press conference in Arizona. There has also been speculation that Kennedy was seeking a Cabinet position with Trump in exchange for an endorsement after it was widely reported by US media outlets that he had been rebuffed by the Harris campaign. **Trump welcomes endorsement from 'Bobby'** Kennedy, a conspiracy-theory peddling anti-vaxxer, said that free speech, the war in Ukraine, and what he called a "war on our children" had prompted him to come out in support of former and would-be future Republican President Donald Trump, as he challenges Democratic nominee Kamala Harris, the current vice president, for the nation's top job. "These," RFK Jr. said, "are the



principal causes that persuaded me to leave the Democratic Party and run as an independent and now to throw my support to President Trump." Trump, appearing in Las Vegas, Nevada, spoke of, "a very nice endorsement from RFK Jr., ... Bobby." Kennedy said his name would remain on ballots in many states but added: "In about ten battleground states where my presence would be a spoiler. I'm going to remove my name, and I've already started that process, and urge voters not to vote for me." Hours after his announcement, Kennedy appeared on stage with Trump at a rally in Arizona where he was welcomed with cheers of "Bobby" from the crowd. — DW



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MANASSAS PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT

Nepali-origin woman missing in US

WASHINGTON: The husband of a 28-year-old Nepali American who has gone missing for more than three weeks has been charged in connection with her disappearance, police said. Manta Kafle Bhatt was last seen in public July 27 and spoke to a friend the next day, according to the Manassas Park Police Department (MPPD). She was then last seen by her husband, Naresh Bhatt, on July 31, and was reported missing by her husband August 5. Evidence of pooling blood and missing knives were among the chilling details presented in court Friday as the husband of the missing woman faced a charge of concealing a dead body. The development has come as a shock for those who were hoping to find 28-year-old Manta alive nearly a month after she was last seen by anybody except her husband. However, investigators have not called off the search for the mother of an 11-month-old who missed her baby's first birthday this week. — ANI



AL JAZEIRA SERVICES CO. SAOG
P.O. Box 2865, Ruwi, P.C. 112, Sultanate of Oman
Tel.: 24706499, Fax: 24703653

INVITATION TO ATTEND THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of **Al Jazeera Services Co. SAOG** ("the Company") has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting, which will be held at **3:00 PM on Wednesday, 11/9/2024**, via the electronic platform which can be assessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om). If the quorum requirement for holding the Extraordinary General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held at **3:00 PM on Monday 16/9/2024**, via the electronic platform which can be assessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om) to discuss the following agenda:

Extraordinary General Meeting Agendas:

- To consider and approve the reduction of the company's paid up capital from OMR 11,171,717 to OMR 7,820,202 by way of retrieving the amounts in excess of the company's need .
- To discuss and approve authorizing the company's board of directors, or any person to be authorized by the board to undertake the capital reduction procedures.
- To amend article (5) of the company's article of association after the registration of the capital with the registrar .

According to the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the Financial Services Authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- A legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCDC.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the Extraordinary General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the Extraordinary General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the Extraordinary General Meeting.

For further information, please contact Badriya AlAbri on telephone No. 24706499 or email: damacinv@omantel.net.om

Deputy Chairman	Legal Advisor	External Auditor
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19,000 orphaned children in Gaza due to Israeli aggression: UNICEF

UNICEF spokesman said that these children, who are often referred to as “unaccompanied children,” are suffering deeply as a result of the aggression, whether the father is in the south, and the son remains with his mother in the north, or vice versa, or his parents were killed during the aggression

GAZA: UNICEF spokesman Kazem Abu Khalaf revealed on Saturday the suffering of children who lost their parents in the Gaza Strip due to the ongoing Israeli aggression on the Strip for more than 10 months.

Abu Khalaf emphasised that these children, who are often referred to as “unaccompanied children,” are suffering deeply as a result of the aggression, whether the father is in the south, and the son remains with his mother in the north, or vice versa, or his parents were killed during the aggression.



Gaza, and therefore, the estimated number is 19 thousand unaccompanied children who may be orphans or whose parents were separated from them by the war.

It is worth noting that in cases where there is no family reunification, or the child has become an orphan, there is the extended family, whether cousins or maternal uncles and grandmothers or grandfathers, who take care of the children and provide care until things improve, and support is provided to them.

Around 100,000 people displaced from Deir al-Balah

Approximately 100,000 Palestinians have been displaced from eastern Deir al-Balah in central Gaza over the past two days due to ongoing and intense Israeli airstrikes on the city and its surroundings.

Local sources reported that 20 shelter centers have been rendered inoperative due to the heavy bombardment and evacuation orders issued by the Israeli occupation military.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the occupation authorities have issued 16 evacuation orders between July 1 and August 21. Additionally, approximately 213,000 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced from the beginning of August to the 16th of this month.

UN data indicates that 9 out of 10 people in Gaza have experienced displacement as a result of the Israeli attacks since the outbreak of the aggression in October 2023. The organisation’s statistics further reveal that most residents of Gaza are compelled to relocate at least once a month due to the ongoing onslaught.

WHO says gravely concerned over polio case in Gaza

The World Health Organization (WHO) has voiced its grave concern following the confirmation of a polio case in a 10-month-old infant in Deir al-Balah, Gaza.

This marks the first reported case of polio in Gaza in 25 years.

In a press statement issued today, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO, said WHO and partners have acted swiftly to collect samples from the infant and sent them to an accredited laboratory in the region.

The genetic sequencing confirmed that the virus is linked to the type 2 poliovirus variant detected in sewage samples from Gaza in June.

Tedros detailed that the infant, who is currently in stable condition, has suffered paralysis in the lower part of his left leg. He emphasized the heightened risk of the virus spreading in Gaza and the broader region, noting the critical need for immediate action.

In response to this concerning development, the Palestinian Ministry of Health, along with WHO and UNICEF, is mobilizing efforts to launch two rounds of polio vaccination campaigns over the coming weeks. The goal is to halt the transmission of the virus and prevent further cases.

ICC Prosecutor urges judges to urgently rule on warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant

The International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor on Saturday stressed the Court had jurisdiction to investigate Israeli nationals and urged the judges to urgently decide on arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his ‘Defence’ Minister, Yoav Gallant.

In Court filings made public Friday, Prosecutor Karim Khan urged judges weighing the arrest warrants sought against Israeli officials to not delay.

“Any unjustified delay in these proceedings detrimentally affects the rights of victims,” he said.

— WAF

GERMAN CITY

Several killed in stabbing

SOLINGEN: Three people were killed and five seriously injured in a knife attack in the western German city of Solingen on Friday. The police have launched a “major operation” to find the suspect, a police spokesperson said.

The suspect managed to escape in the turmoil and panic that initially spread after the crime, said a spokesperson.

According to media reports, a man stabbed passers-by at random with a knife at a festival celebrating the city’s 650th anniversary.

The local newspaper Solinger Tageblatt reported that three people had been killed and others were in a life-threatening situation.

— DW

‘RHUMI-1’

India launches its first reusable hybrid rocket

CHENNAI: India launched its first reusable hybrid rocket ‘RHUMI- 1’, developed by the Tamil Nadu-based start-up Space Zone India with Martin Group, from Thiruvudandhai in Chennai on Saturday.

The rocket, carrying 3 Cube Satellites and 50 PICO Satellites, was launched into a suborbital trajectory using a mobile launcher.

Data for research purposes

These satellites will be collecting data for research purposes on Global warming and Climate change. RHUMI Rocket is equipped with a generic-fuel-based hybrid motor and electrically triggered parachute deployer, RHUMI is 100% pyrotechnic-free

and 0% TNT.

The mission RHUMI is led by Anand Megalingam, the founder of the Space Zone, under the mentorship of Dr. Mylswamy Anadurai Former Director of ISRO Satellite Centre (ISAC).

To improve efficiency

The RHUMI-1 rocket combines the advantages of both liquid and solid fuel propellant systems to improve efficiency and reduce operational costs.

Space Zone India is an aerotechnology company in Chennai that aims to provide low-cost, long-term solutions in the space industry.

Space Zone India (SZI) provides hands-on training experi-

ence on Aerodynamic principles, Satellite Technology, Drone Technology and Rocket Technology.

It also creates awareness of the career options in this industry. SZI works with Private institutions, Engineering and Art and Science colleges, and Private and Government schools.

In 2023, through mission ‘Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Students Satellite Launch - In 2023’ over 2,500 students from government, tribal, and public schools across the country, contributed in designing and construction of a student satellite launch vehicle. The vehicle could carry a payload of 150 Pico satelling research experiment cubes.

— ANI



PRESIDENTIAL POLL



Venezuela’s Supreme Court backs Maduro’s disputed election win

CARACAS: Venezuela’s Supreme Court has confirmed President Nicolas Maduro’s victory in last month’s presidential elections even though the opposition has cried foul play in the elections.

The Supreme Court, which has a record of never ruling against the government, said voting figures showing Maduro had lost by a landslide in the July election were forged.

In its ruling, the court said it had “indisputably certified election material and validates the results of the July 28, 2024, presidential election issued by the National Electoral Council (CNE),” naming Maduro as the winner.

Later on Friday, Attorney General Tarek Saab announced that opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, Maduro’s election contender, had been summoned to testify on his role in publishing election data after the vote.

What is the controversy?

Maduro, who was seeking a third term of six years, claims he has defeated opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia by more than 1 million votes. But the main opposition has accused Maduro of vote rigging.

Gonzalez Urrutia uploaded an image to social media saying “void” after the court announced its ruling.

Sovereignty of the people

“The sovereignty of the people is not transferable,” he said.

The court’s ruling is the latest attempt made by Maduro to pacify the protests and neutralise the international criticism he has been receiving since Venezuela’s opposition called out the voter fraud.

UN questions court’s position

The impartiality of the court was questioned by the UN Human Rights Council on Thursday in an online post.

“We warn about the lack of independence and impartiality of the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) and of the National Electoral Council (CNE) which have played a role in the state’s repressive machinery,” the post quoted a UN fact-finding panel as saying.

“The Government exerted undue influence over TSJ decisions,” said panel chair Marta Valinas. The court’s certification of Maduro’s win contradicts the findings of experts from the United Nations and the Carter Center who were invited to observe the election. — DW



Sultanate of Oman
MINISTRY CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

Tender. No.	Project Category	Location	Grade in Tender Board Registration	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
16/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance & Operation of Electro-mechanical services, Civi, Cleaning and pest control services to Sultan Qaboos Sports Complexat Bausher for the period 2025-2023	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
17/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance and operating services to Seeb Sports Stadium (including sports hall at seeb sports club fo' the period 2025-2026	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
18/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance and operating services to Al Amal Sports Club for the period 2025-2026	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
19/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance and operating services to Ibra sports complex for the period 2025-2026	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
20/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance and operating services to Ibra sports complex for the period 2025-2026	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
21/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance and operating services to Khasab Sports Complex (including sports centre at Lima) for the period 2025-2026	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
22/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance and operating services to Salalah sports complex for the for the period 2025-2026	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
23/2024	Services	Cleaning services to entire Camps and facilities to Ministry's various buildings at Muscat Governorate for the period 2025	Excellent Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
24/2024	Services	Maintenance of landscaping works to Ministry's Campuses in Muscat Governorate for the period 2025	First Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
25/2024	Electromechanical and Telecommunicati ons Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance & Operation of Electro-mechanical and Air-conditioning units to Ministry's various buildings in Muscat Governorate for the period 2025	First Grade	07/09/2024	07/10/2024
26/2024	Construction and Maintenance	Restructure & setup of new Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth office at Al-Khuwair	Excellent Grade	31/08/2024	09/09/2024
27/2024	Construction and Maintenance	Construction, completion and maintenance of Guard Residence at Al Khuwai	Third Grade	31/08/2024	09/09/2024

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

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Indian School Sohar



Indian School Al Seeb

The internet abbreviation ICYMI is useful to update a friend who joined the conversation a bit late. What does it stand for?

What is the name of Oman's traditional manmade irrigation system?

Can you match wits with the participants?



Be sure to answer the audience question of the week



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G20 MERCHANDISE TRADE
G20 merchandise export growth flattened in Q2-2024, as measured in current US dollars, following a rise in the previous quarter, OECD preliminary estimates showed recently. This slowdown was largely driven by a decrease in exports from the European Union. -WAM

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



INDIA'S GOLD PRICES SURGE
Domestic gold prices have risen by 10 per cent on a year-to-date basis on the back of the strength in global gold prices, which have surged by 18 per cent year-to-date, driven by robust central bank purchases, heightened geopolitical risks, and growing expectations of a monetary policy pivot from the US Federal Reserve.

MSX trading value rises by 12.4% to OMR9.5mn in weekly trading



The market capitalisation of the Muscat Stock Exchange rose by the end of the week to OMR24.42bn, recording weekly gains of OMR27.2mn

MUSCAT: The value of trading at Muscat Stock Exchange (MSE) rose during the week to OMR9.5 million compared to OMR8.5 million in the previous week, recording a rise of 12.4 percent, benefiting from investors' interest in shares of leading companies and the bonds and sukuk market.

During the week, the bond and sukuk market recorded a remarkable rise, exceeding OMR775,000, compared to OMR169,000 in the previous week.

The week's trading also showed investors' interest in the shares of a number of leading companies, such as Bank Muscat, OQ Gas Networks, Bank Nizwa, Omantel, and Abraj Energy Services, which came at the forefront of the most traded companies in terms of trading value, accounting for 68 percent of the total trading value.

Bank Muscat came next with a trading value of OMR1.6 million, OQ Gas Networks trading was valued at OMR1.5 million, Bank Nizwa OMR1.2 million, Omantel OMR1.1 million and Abraj Communications Services came next with trading valued at OMR963,000.

The number of executed transactions during the week increased by 7.1 percent from 2,463 to 2,639.



This rise was supported by investors' interest in the shares of OQ Gas Networks, Renaissance Services, Galfar Engineering & Contracting, Abraj Energy Services, Bank Muscat, Omantel and Bank Sohar International, which together witnessed the execution of 1,593 transactions, representing 60.3 percent of the total number of transactions executed during the past week.

The market capitalisation of the Muscat Stock Exchange rose by the end of the week to OMR24.42 billion, recording weekly gains of OMR27.2 million.

At the level of indices, the industrial sector index recorded the best performance, rising by 12 points and closing at 5,872 points, benefiting from the rise in the shares of Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Mills, Voltamp Energy, Building Materials Industry, and Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles.

The services sector index also recorded a positive performance, rising by less than one point, benefiting from the rise in the share

of Al Nahda Services, which recorded the best rise in the regular market.

The Sharia index also recorded a positive performance, maintaining its previous level of 441 points, while the financial sector index suffered losses of 80 points, affected by the decline in the shares of many banks and investment companies. The main index recorded a decline of 18 points and closed at 4,674 points.

MSX also witnessed a decline in the prices of 37 securities, compared to 22 securities whose prices rose and 24 securities remained unchanged at their previous levels. Dhofar Power Generation Company recorded the best rise, rising by 9.2 percent and closing at 71 baisas. Al Maha Ceramics Company rose by 4.6 percent and closed at 157 baisas. Oman Flour Mills Company rose to 499 baisas, rising by 3.9 percent.

Al Nahda Services Company recorded a rise of 3.6 percent and

Omani stock market experiences headwinds despite regional optimism

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market experienced a downturn during the week, extending its uncertain trajectory from the past two months, according to an industry expert.

This contrasts with the positive sentiment in other markets in the region that were buoyed by the potential for a Federal Reserve rate cut next month.

"While such prospects have uplifted GCC markets, Oman has grappled with declining oil prices over the past two weeks, coupled with a general decline in financial stocks, further weighing on market performance," said Zakariya Al Julandani, Founder of Sumou.

"As the market navigates these challenges, its future direction remains uncertain amid the interplay of regional optimism and local pressures," he further added.

Sectoral performance varied during the week. The financial sector was a notable laggard, declining by 1.05 percent, with stocks such as the National



Bank of Oman (NBO), Oman Arab Bank, and Al Anwar Investment dropping by 1.82 percent, 4.70 percent, and 1.32 percent, respectively.

Conversely, the services sector remained largely stable, with a slight gain of 0.1 percent.

Abraj Energy Services and OQ Gas Networks, two of the most traded stocks this week, saw minor declines of 0.33 percent and 0.70 percent. However, these were balanced by gains in stocks like Renaissance Services and Ooredoo, which rose by 3.64 percent and 1.41 percent, respectively.

The industrial sector exhibited resilience, recording a modest increase of 0.21 percent. This was driven by noteworthy performances in Oman Flour Mills, up 3.96 percent, Voltamp Energy, up 2.31 percent, and Al Maha Ceramics, which climbed by 4.67 percent.

Despite a mixed stock market performance, Oman's broader economic indicators reflect strength. Oil exports rose slightly to 179.36 million barrels in July and the trade balance recorded a surplus exceeding OMR2.9 billion in May.

"These encouraging economic signals highlight Oman's economic resilience, and could support a stronger stock market," Zakariya Al Julandani said.

ECONOMY

US Fed chief strongly signals rate cut in September, shifts focus from inflation to unemployment

NEW DELHI: US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell gave a strong indication that it was time for the US central bank to reduce interest rates as inflation rates were aligning with its target.

Addressing the much-awaited Jackson Hole Symposium on Friday, Powell said that "the time has come for policy to adjust" but stopped short of giving a hint on the quantum of interest rate cut.

"The time has come for policy to adjust. The direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks," Powell said.

Faced with high inflation during the Covid-19 pandemic, the US monetary policy committee, as part of its commitment to restoring price stability, raised the policy rate by 425 basis points in 2022 and another 100 basis points in 2023. It held the policy rate at its current restrictive level since July 2023.

For much of the past three years, inflation ran well above Fed's 2 percent goal, and labor market conditions were extremely tight. The summer of 2022 saw the peak of inflation in the US, and since then it witnessed a 4-4.5 percentage point decline in inflation from its peak.

"Our restrictive monetary policy contributed to a moderation in aggregate demand, which combined with improvements in aggregate supply to reduce inflationary pressures while allowing growth to continue at a healthy pace," Powell said.

"After a pause earlier this year, progress toward our 2 percent objective has resumed. My confidence has grown that inflation is on a sustainable path back to 2 percent," he said.

Consumer prices in the US rose 2.9 per cent over the 12 months to July, the smallest annual increase since March 2021, as against 3 per cent in June. Raising interest rates is a monetary policy instrument that typically helps suppress demand in the economy, thereby helping the inflation rate decline.

In the latest meeting held on July 30-31, 2024, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 5.25 to 5.5 per cent. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the interest rates were near zero.

Raising interest rates is a monetary policy instrument that typically helps suppress demand in the economy, thereby helping the inflation rate decline. The majority of the Fed members, in the latest monetary policy meeting, indicated a policy rate cut in the September meeting, according to the Fed minutes released this week. But not everything is fine in the US labour market.

Powell said that the labor market has cooled considerably from its formerly overheated state, but is still on the higher side. -ANI

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

Ibri Industrial City sees investments surpass OMR14 million by mid-2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The total investments in Ibri Industrial City reached more than OMR14 million by the end of the first half of 2024, marking a significant milestone in its development.

The industrial city, which operates under the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madaayn), has successfully localized 14 projects. Among these, one project has entered the production phase, four are currently under construction, and nine have been allocated land for future development. The workforce within the industrial city has also grown, now totaling 20 employees.

Salah bin Nasser Al Alawi, Director General of Ibri Industrial City, said that Madaayn has completed the infrastructure project in the industrial city, which is the first phase of this vital project in Al Dhahirah Governorate, as the total area allocated for Ibri Industrial City is 10 million square meters, adding that 3 million square meters of it have been developed as a first phase, which included road works, service network works such as sewage, rainwater networks, communications, protection wall works from valley water, and the use of sustainable alternative energy in lighting poles.

He explained in a statement to the Oman News Agency that the industrial city seeks to establish a group of industrial, commercial and service activities such as light and medium industries in various sectors, most notably the food industry and paper industries, as well as maintenance of equipment related to the oil and gas sector and other small and medium projects, in addition to establishing a commercial area, administrative offices, logistics warehouses, a commercial strip and a residential city for workers in the industrial city.



includes a fuel filling station, a rest stop, and a truck and car service station through an investor to establish services that can be used by companies, workers, nearby residential neighbourhoods, and

visitors to the international road leading to the Rub' al-Khali border crossing with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He stressed that within the framework of environmental sustainability and enhancing the green cover in the industrial city, approximately 500 trees from the Omani environment have been planted, in coordination with the Environment Authority in Al Dhahirah Governorate, and the city seeks to increase green spaces in the coming periods.

It is noteworthy that the Ibri Industrial City opened the infrastructure project in late February 2024, marking the opening of investment in it and benefiting from the strategic location at the intersection of active trade routes between the East and the West and its proximity to the border crossing with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

MARKET

Gold prices in India increase by 10% on a year-to-date basis: WGC

The reduction in import duty has ignited a resurgence in gold demand across India

NEW DELHI: Domestic gold prices in India have risen by 10 per cent on a year-to-date basis on the back of the strength in global gold prices, which have surged by 18 per cent year-to-date, driven by robust central bank purchases, heightened geopolitical risks, and growing expectations of a monetary policy pivot from the US Federal Reserve, according to the World Gold Council (WGC).

The reduction in import duty has ignited a resurgence in gold demand across India. Reports from the recently concluded India International Jewellery Show indicate a substantial increase in order bookings from retailers, particularly in preparation for the upcoming festive and wedding season.

Manufacturers have noted that



in some cases, orders have reached levels not seen in several years, underscoring the strong buying interest among jewellery retailers and consumers alike.

The trend of bar and coin buying has also remained robust, with both consumers and jewellers capitalising on the more attractive prices to stock up for future manufacturing needs.

Historical analysis suggests that Indian consumer demand, encompassing jewellery and bar and coin demand, could see an additional 50

tonnes or more in the second half of 2024. This potential increase is fuelled by a combination of an initial boost in consumer appetite due to the more attractive prices and a longer-term alignment of local prices with international rates.

In a notable shift, domestic gold prices, which had been trading at a discount to international prices for five consecutive months, have now started trading at a premium following the Union Budget announcement.

The discount had widened sig-

nificantly in July, reaching a peak of around USD 80 per ounce in the third week of the month, driven by subdued demand and an increased supply of gold through various preferential trade agreements and unofficial channels.

However, wholesalers who had inventory purchased under the old customs duty regime began selling gold at a premium to the landed cost to mitigate their losses, further supported by increased consumer demand.

While the premiums have mod-

erated recently, from USD 28 per ounce to around USD 5 per ounce, this shift highlights the changing market sentiment and the impact of rising international gold prices and potential inventory valuation adjustments. The changes introduced in the Union Budget, including a reduction in the long-term investment holding period and a lower tax rate, have made gold ETFs a more attractive investment option.

Data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) reveals that net inflows into gold ETFs in July amounted to Rs 13.4 billion (approximately USD 160 million), marking the highest monthly inflows since February 2020 and an 84 per cent increase compared to June 2024.

Despite these inflows, the total assets under management (AUM) for Indian gold ETFs grew marginally by 0.3 per cent from the previous month, reaching Rs 345 billion (USD 4.1 billion). This modest increase can be attributed to the 8 per cent fall in domestic gold prices following the import duty reduction. Year-to-date, net inflows into Indian gold ETFs have totalled Rs 45 billion (USD 543 million), with total AUMs rising by 48 per cent from a year ago.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has continued its gold purchasing

trend, although at a slower pace following a significant increase in June, when purchases reached 9.3 tonnes--the highest monthly total in nearly two years.

Year-to-date, the RBI's gold acquisitions have totaled 44.3 tonnes, surpassing the total purchases of the past two years combined. The RBI's gold reserves have now reached a record 849 tonnes, representing 8.8 per cent of total foreign reserves, compared to 7.5 per cent a year ago.

In July, gold imports remained steady at \$3.1 billion, maintaining the stable trend observed over the previous three months. Between April and July, imports averaged \$3.2 billion, with volumes ranging between 43 and 47 tonnes during this period. The gold import bill for July 2024 was 11 per cent lower than the previous year, with an estimated 26 per cent decrease in volume terms, around 47 tonnes.

Despite a surge in international gold prices, domestic gold prices in India have experienced a notable decline, primarily due to the 9 per cent reduction in import duty announced in the Union Budget 2024-25. This policy change has led to a 6 per cent decrease in the landed cost of gold, marking a shift in the domestic gold market dynamics. **-ANI**

UN TOURISM

Over 70 tourism projects in Latin America set to attract investment of \$5.2bn

MADRID: Between 2019 and 2023, the tourism sector in Latin America attracted 1,983 announced foreign direct investment (FDI) greenfield projects, with a total of \$106.7 billion in capital investments. This flow of capital has created nearly 260,000 potential jobs worldwide, underscoring the sector's significant role in economic development and job crea-

tion, according to UN Tourism.

Between 2019 and 2023, 212 tourism investment projects were announced in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a total of US\$20.5 billion in capital expenditure, expected to create more than 73,000 potential jobs.

UN Tourism Executive Director Natalia Bayona says, "Foreign direct investment is crucial for

the development of tourism in our member countries. These investments not only provide the necessary capital for infrastructure and services, but also bring innovation, technology and best practices that strengthen the competitiveness of the sector at a global level."

Tourism is increasingly emerging as a fundamental pillar for development in the region, offering

ample opportunities for economic growth and community empowerment. To harness this potential, UN Tourism has confirmed its plans to expand its series of Investment Guides and Investment Forums, each focused on a specific country in the region.

The guides identify key competitiveness factors to build an attractive value proposition for

investors, including information on green and sustainable investments, underlining a commitment to environmental responsibility.

According to Bayona: "Investments in the tourism sector are critical to driving economic growth and job creation.

"Through these investments, destinations can develop sustainable infrastructure and improve

the quality of life of local communities, promoting inclusive and resilient development."

The UN Tourism Investment Guides, part of the "Tourism Doing Business" series, are comprehensive documents designed to provide strategic support and information for potential investors and policymakers in the tourism sector. **-WAM**

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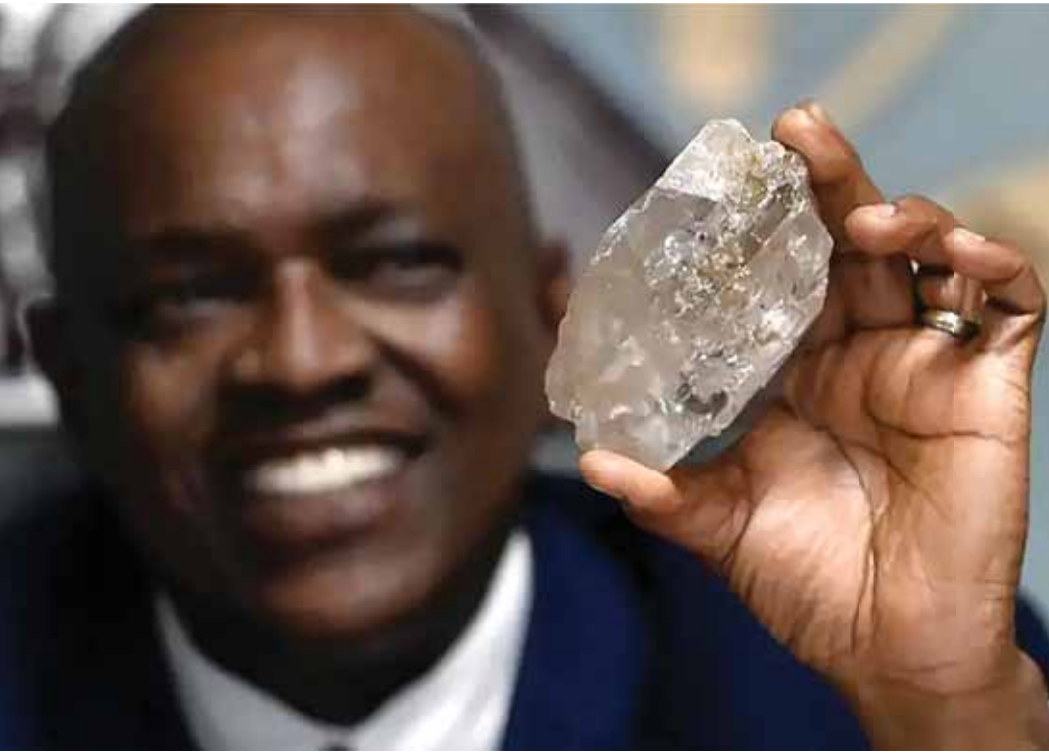




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GEMSTONE

Botswana unearths world's second-largest diamond



BOTSWANA: Canadian mining company Lucara Diamond Corp announced it had unearthed a massive 2,492-carat (or 498.4-gram) stone at its Karowe Diamond Mine in northeastern Botswana, with President Mokgweetsi Masisi posing with the giant diamond on Thursday.

It's most likely the second-largest diamond ever found within the Earth, after the 3,106-carat Cullinan diamond found in South Africa in 1905. A larger black diamond was also found above ground in Brazil in the late 1800s, but that is believed to have been part of a meteorite.

Lucara did not estimate the diamond's value or comment on its quality but called it "one of the largest rough diamonds ever unearthed."

New X-ray technology seeks to identify large diamonds before extraction

Lucara said that the diamond was detected and recovered using what it calls its "Mega Diamond Recovery X-Ray Transmission"

technology, which it installed in 2017. The idea is to identify large stones within the rock prior to mining, and then to avoid unknowingly damaging or breaking them into pieces during extraction, which used to be a common pitfall for the industry.

"We are ecstatic about the recovery of this extraordinary 2,492-carat diamond," Lucara President William Lamb said in the statement. "This find not only showcases the remarkable potential of our Karowe Mine, but also upholds our strategic investment in cutting-edge [X-Ray Transmission] technology. The ability to recover such a massive, high-quality stone intact demonstrates the effectiveness of our approach to diamond recovery and our commitment to maximizing value for our shareholders and stakeholders."

Tobias Kormind, managing director of 77 Diamonds, Europe's largest online diamond jeweler, told the AFP agency that, given this new technology, "we will likely see more where this came from" in the future.

Botswanan President Masisi among first to hold

President Mokgweetsi Masisi's government described the diamond as the second largest in the world, and Masisi posed with the gemstone on Thursday in his office in the capital Gaborone.

The diamond mining industry is crucial for Botswana, with the stones accounting for well over half the financial value of the country's total exports.

Lucara said in its statement that the diamond industry "delivers wide-ranging socio-economic benefits to the country that extend well beyond the mining sector," citing "critical areas such as education and healthcare" as beneficiaries.

This is the third very large diamond unearthed at the Karowe mine in recent years. The 1,758-carat stone unearthed in 2019 was previously the largest ever mined in Botswana and was named Sewelo, meaning "rare find" in the Setswana language. The Karowe mine also extracted a 1,174-carat diamond in 2021 using the same X-ray technology. **-BWB**



LIFESTYLE

HEALTHY EATING: WHY TEENS GORGE AND OLDER PEOPLE PECK

While young people can eat everything in sight, older people often lose appetite. It's important to know why to stay healthy at any age "Our body tells us more or less what to eat and when to eat, and maybe we should listen," said Susanne Klaus, a chief researcher at the German Institution of Human Nutrition.

That makes sense. But the way our body demands energy of us isn't the same throughout our lifetimes.

From being spoon-fed by parents when we're infants to sneaking sugary sweets when we're children, to eating everything in sight as teenagers and then pecking on small, simple plates in later stages of life, our appetites change as the years roll on. Understanding why can help ensure good health in our later years.

The hunger hormones and how they work

At its core, eating food is functional: Without the energy we draw from it, we simply wouldn't survive.

Carbohydrates in our food are converted into energy while fats and amino acids help create the vital proteins and other structures that help the body function.

To ensure these processes run like clockwork, the body has special systems to ensure a regular energy supply.

"These [are self-regulating] mechanisms that drive hunger and satiety," said Klaus. "They're mainly signals from the stomach and intestine but also from hormones, such as leptin, which is secreted by adipose tissue [or body fat] and which signals to the main hypothalamus [a control center in the brain]. This is an autonomic system, like breathing."

These chemical drivers compelling us to seek (or stop seeking) food are sometimes called hunger hormones. Aside from leptin, ghrelin is perhaps the best-known hunger hormone.

Ghrelin is released into the bloodstream by the stomach and tells the brain to get us eating. When you're full, ghrelin release slows, giving a sensation of fullness.

Other hormones regulate feelings of fullness and emptiness, too. These include insulin and other pancreatic hormones that inhibit hunger, such as GLP-1, which the diabetes drug, Ozempic, mimics.

The mechanics of digestion

When these hormones prompt you to stick food in your mouth, the body uses digestive processes to, quite literally, eat away at your meal.

Mechanical digestion begins in your mouth, where you grind your food into smaller, mushier forms you can swallow. This process continues as this swallowed slurry is forced down the esophagus into your stomach — a process known as peristalsis.

Alongside this process is chemical digestion. This begins in the mouth where amylase enzymes in saliva begin to break down starches in food. More of these digestive enzymes are in the stomach to finish the job so water and nutrients can then be absorbed from the intestines into the bloodstream.

How your appetite changes as you age

This impulse for food hits overdrive when you reach adolescence. The body craves energy to fuel its most important growth stage — puberty — spurring it toward physical and sexual maturity.

But lifelong nutrition can be a challenge. For older people, there is a risk of the body becoming less effective at prompting the necessary intake of nutrients. Some studies have shown changes to hunger hormone secretion patterns in later life.

"When people age, on average, [they] lose muscle mass and muscle is the compartment which uses the most energy," said Klaus.

A major driver of muscle mass reduction is a failure to consume sufficient protein.

"Protein intake in later life is lower than what is recommended and even the recommendations, according to various scientific groups, should actually be higher for protein intake in later life, because it is very important to maintain muscle mass," said Daniel Crabtree, a late life-stage nutrition researcher at the University of Aberdeen.

Despite the advice, Crabtree said older people's protein intake does tend to be below what's recommended, and that can include physiological factors and other signs of an ageing body — from problems with your teeth to changes in taste or smell. -bw

We will never give up: Ronaldo after Al Nassr’s 1-1 draw against Al-Raed

Ronaldo scored Al Nassr’s lone goal in the 34th minute against Al-Raed

RAWALPINDI: After his side’s 1-1 draw against Al-Raed in the Saudi Pro League, Al Nassr striker Cristiano Ronaldo said that they won’t give up in their upcoming matches. Ronaldo scored Al Nassr’s lone goal in the 34th minute against Al-Raed. However, Ronaldo’s side failed to maintain the lead and conceded a goal in the 49th minute from the spot kick. Al Nassr failed to make a comeback in the game and had to share

points after the final whistle of the match. Recently, Cristiano Ronaldo broke the record for hitting the fastest 10 million subscribers on YouTube. Ronaldo has been known for making history on the football field. But his accolades have started to spread off the field as well. Ronaldo became the quickest to reach 1 million subscribers on YouTube after opening his channel on Wednesday. Taking to his official Instagram handle, Ronaldo said that his side will never settle and that their determination has no limits. “We will never settle. We will never give up. Our determination knows no limits,” Ronaldo wrote on Instagram. Meanwhile, on the field, Ronaldo has faced ups and downs in 2024. Ronaldo-led Portugal crashed out of the ongoing Euro 2024 after their disappointing loss



against France. Portugal kept the game 0-0 until the full time of the match, but in the penalties, they failed to save a single shot from the French players and lost by 5-3. The 2024 edition of the EURO Cup was disheartening for Ronaldo as he failed to score a single goal in the tournament after playing all five matches for the first time since making his debut in the tournament. While in the Saudi Pro League, Ronaldo has fared well with Al Nassr. He has netted 49 goals in 47 matches and registered 13 assists as well. Last week, Ronaldo featured in Al Nassr’s line-up in the final of the Saudi Super Cup against Al Hilal. Ronaldo featured on the scoresheet, but his effort wasn’t enough, with Al Nassr falling short in the final following a 4-1 defeat against Al Hilal in the Super Cup.

-ANI

OUT FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS

Real Madrid star Jude Bellingham ‘frustrated’ after sustaining right leg injury

NEW DELHI: Real Madrid ace Jude Bellingham has been left “frustrated” after he sustained a muscle injury in his right leg, which will keep him out for a couple of weeks. Bellingham suffered an injury in his right leg’s plantaris muscle while training before Los Blancos’ upcoming match against Real Valladolid in La Liga. Due to the injury, Bellingham has also been ruled out of England’s Nations League fixtures against Ireland and Finland. The 21-year-old took to Instagram and expressed his frustration and wrote, “Nothing I hate more than missing games but trying to see the positive side and maybe my body is telling me it needs a bit more rest after a busy year. I’m very frustrated but I’ll be supporting the lads like a fan until I can rejoin them again in my best and strongest form. Thanks for your messages of concern and support. Lots of love and Hala Madrid!” Speaking at the pre-match



press conference, Real Madrid’s head coach Carlo Ancelotti revealed that Bellingham’s injury isn’t “too complicated.” “[Bellingham] got a knock.

We’re evaluating it. It was quite clear in terms of the evaluation. We lacked balance at times, and we have to work on that. It isn’t too complicated. When the problem is clear, there’s a clear solution,” Ancelotti said as quoted from ESPN. Bellingham also sustained an injury in November last year. During Real Madrid’s encounter with Rayo Vallecano, Bellingham picked up a shoulder injury. During that period, the youngster wore a pad on his shoulder to prevent himself from aggravating the injury. Last season, Bellingham put a stupendous performance on display. In the 2023-2024 season, he scored 23 goals and attempted 13 assists after featuring in 42 matches. Los Blancos began their title defence with a 1-1 draw against RCD Mallorca. Real Madrid will continue the hunt for their first win of the season against Real Valladolid on Sunday.

UPCOMING T20I SERIES



Josh Hazlewood ruled out of Australia’s T20I series against Scotland due to calf strain

NEW DELHI: Seasoned pacer Josh Hazlewood will miss Australia’s upcoming T20I series against Scotland due to a calf strain that he sustained during training last week. The 33-year-old suffered a minor injury, and is expected to be available for Australia’s white-ball tour of England, which will kick off on September 11, per ESPNcricinfo report. Hazlewood’s latest setback opened a window of opportunity for Riley Meredith to make a return after three years of absence. Meredith last represented Australia in 2021 against the West Indies. He was involved with Somerset in white-ball cricket during the English season. In the T20 Blast, Meredith scythed 14 wickets at 22.78, and in three one-day cup games, the Australia pacer bagged six scalps. Overall, in T20Is, he has

eight wickets to his name in five matches after playing against the West Indies and New Zealand three years ago. Initially, Hazlewood was the sole pacer out of the three mainstays to feature in the T20I series against Scotland. Pat Cummins is missing the entire tour, while Mitchell Starc has been named in the squad for the ODI series against England. “The priority at the moment is to smash out some gym work and start reassessing in a few weeks a path forward. I’m just trying to fill up the bucket again after two years of non-stop bowling. [Hoping] come to that first Test [against India] in as good of a position as I have been in for a few years,” Cummins said earlier, as quoted from ESPNcricinfo. Before Australia’s tour of the UK, Hazlewood became the second quick to get ruled out of the T20I series against Scotland. **ANI**

PREMIER LEAGUE

Man City welcome back Gundogan, Slot’s home debut and pressure on Maresca in EPL

LONDON: Brighton and Manchester United kick off matchday two in the Premier League on Saturday in what looks to be just one of a host of interesting games, with some coaches already under early-season pressure to deliver. Brighton coach Fabian Hurzeler got off to a flying start, as the 31-year-old’s team won their opening game 3-0 away to Everton, and have since brought in Georgino Rutter and Brajan Gruda, who could start against Manchester United. The Red Devils looked improved in their opening game, but still huffed and puffed before a late goal gave them three points against Fulham. Aston Villa against Arsenal is probably Saturday’s stand-out game, and Arsenal could have Mikel Merino available if he completes his transfer from Real Sociedad in time. Bukayo Saka and Kai Havertz will continue to provide the spark for the Gunners against a rival that kicked off the season with a win away to West Ham. Villa missed out on a move for Joao Felix in the week as he transferred to Chelsea, and coach Unai Emery may feel he still needs another attacker to complete his squad. Manchester City cruised past Chelsea in their opening game and could welcome Ilkay Gundogan back, after Barcelona allowed him to return to the club he had left 12 months ago to ease their economic worries. Gundogan would slot straight back into the City midfield against Ipswich, with the newly-promoted



side enduring a baptism of fire on their return to the Premier League, having played and lost to Liverpool in their opener. Tottenham disappointed as they only drew away to Leicester City last Monday, and coach Ange Postecoglou needs new striker Dominic Solanke to find his Bournemouth form quickly. Everton travel to the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium after a chaotic opening day performance that has put the pressure on head coach Sean Dyche, and with the club again looking close to being sold, Dyche needs to get things right fast. Crystal Palace and West Ham meet after opening day defeats, but a question hangs over whether England international Marc Guehi will start for Palace, as he appears to be edging closer to a move to Newcastle United.

Leicester travel to Fulham buoyed by their opening day point at home to Tottenham, and with their hopes on veteran striker Jamie Vardy. Fulham played some good football at Old Trafford last week, but probably need a striker to complete their attractive football. Southampton dominated away to Newcastle on their return to the Premier League, but lost to their only shot on goal all game. Coach Russell Martin will hope for better luck at home to Nottingham Forest, who are likely to be direct rivals in the battle to avoid relegation. Chelsea will visit Wolverhampton on Sunday in another test for Enzo Maresca, whose side was outplayed by Manchester City and disappointed for long periods in their UEFA Conference League win at home to Swiss side Servette on

Thursday night. Maresca’s squad management has already come under scrutiny amid his treatment of Raheem Sterling and Ben Chilwell, and defeat to Wolves would pile pressure on the new Chelsea coach. Arne Slot is under no such pressure after his Liverpool reign got off to a winning start in Ipswich, and there are high hopes ahead of their home game against Brentford. Ivan Toney could return for Brentford after transfer interest from Saudi Arabia saw him left out of their win at home to Crystal Palace. Finally, Eddie Howe returns to Bournemouth again as Newcastle coach knowing his side needs to improve on their display against Southampton. Defender Fabian Schar is suspended after last weekend’s red card. **ANI**



SEASONED OPENER

Shikhar Dhawan announces retirement from international and domestic cricket

NEW DELHI: India’s seasoned opener, Shikhar Dhawan, on Saturday, announced his retirement from international and domestic cricket. The 38-year-old brought the curtains down on his illustrious career by taking to Instagram and sharing an emotional message to announce his decision. He thanked everyone who supported him in his remarkable career, which saw him earn various accolades. “I am standing at a point where when I look back, I only see memories and a new life when I look forward. It was always my dream to play for India, and I got to live it. I am thankful to a lot of people for that. First of all, my family, my childhood coaches and then my team that I played with for so many years. I got a new family, fame and love. But it is said that to move forward, you need to flip the pages,” Dhawan said in a video posted on his official Instagram handle. “I am announcing my retirement from international and domestic cricket. As I bid farewell to my cricketering journey, I have peace in my heart. I played a lot for my country. I only say this to myself, that you don’t need to be upset about not playing for your coun-

try again, but be happy that you had the opportunity to do so,” he concluded. In his illustrious career, runs effortlessly came off Dhawan’s bat. He represented India across all formats, but ODI was his forte. In 167 appearances, the south-paw produced swashbuckling performances and racked up 6,793 runs at an average of 44.1, including 17 centuries and 39 fifties. In the longest format of cricket, where he stitched up memorable partnerships with Murali Vijay, Dhawan garnered 2,315 runs in 34 matches at an average of 40.6. His

Test career was laced with seven tons and five half-centuries. In the T20I format, Dhawan made 68 appearances and scored 1,759 runs at an average of 27.9, including 11 fifties. In the domestic circuit, Dhawan played 122 First-Class cricket matches and handsomely scored 8,499 runs at an average of 44.26, including 25 centuries and 29 fifties. In List A, Dhawan played 302 matches and scored a whopping 12,074 runs at an average of 43.90. His remarkable statistics are further glistered by 30 centuries and 67 half-centuries.

IN PICTURES



Esala Perahera festival celebrated in Sri Lanka
Dancers perform during a procession celebrating the Esala Perahera festival in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Esala Perahera is one of the grandest Buddhist festivals in Sri Lanka, with a history of more than 1,000 years. *Xinhua*

19th China Commodities Fair held in Kazakhstan
Staff members in folk costumes are pictured during the 19th China Commodities Fair in Kazakhstan, in Astana, Kazakhstan. *Xinhua*



Masked dancers take part in parade in Kathmandu, Nepal
Masked dancers take part in a parade during the Khadga Jatra festival in Kathmandu, Nepal. *Xinhua*



Event for dogs, dog owners held at swimming pool in Seoul
Dogs have fun in a makeshift swimming pool in Seoul, South Korea. An event for dogs and dog owners to cool off amid the heat wave is held at a swimming pool in Seoul. *Xinhua*



World's largest gaming event kicks off in Germany
A man poses for photos during Gamescom 2024 in Cologne, Germany. Gamescom 2024 kicked off here attracting more than 1,400 exhibitors from 64 countries and regions. *Xinhua*



Uzbekistan hosts international grape festival to boost industry, tourism
People perform during the International Festival of Grapes and Winemaking in Tashkent region, Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan hosted the International Festival of Grapes and Winemaking in the Parkent district of Tashkent region to raise industry awareness and boost tourism. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Sohar International wins ‘Best Mobile Banking App Oman’ award

This accolade highlights the bank’s relentless commitment to digital innovation and its strategic focus on delivering an unparalleled customer experience

MUSCAT: Sohar International, Oman’s best bank, has once again affirmed its position as a leader in the digital banking landscape by winning the prestigious ‘Best Mobile Banking App Oman 2024’ award at the World Business Outlook Annual Awards 2024, held in Singapore.

This accolade highlights the bank’s relentless commitment to digital innovation and its strategic focus on delivering an unparalleled customer experience. The award serves as a testament to Sohar International’s successful digital transformation strategy, which has significantly enhanced its mobile banking app, integrating cutting-edge technologies that offer customers seamless and efficient solutions tailored to their evolving needs. As a result, Sohar International has set new bench-



marks in the industry, solidifying its leadership in the ever-evolving world of digital banking.

Commenting on this milestone, Ahmed Al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, stated: “Digital transformation at

Sohar International is not merely an initiative but a cornerstone of our strategic vision, reflecting the global shift towards digital banking. As the financial landscape rapidly evolves, particularly within Oman, we are assertively

positioning Sohar International as a leader and a game-changer, steering the future of digital banking in the Sultanate. Our commitment to innovation goes beyond keeping pace with global digital trends—it’s about redefining them.

By continuously expanding the horizons of what banking can deliver, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of becoming a world-class Omani services company that helps customers, communities, and people prosper and grow. This recognition not only highlights our unwavering dedication to digitalization but also underscores our alignment with Oman’s national digital goals, further solidifying our role in contributing to a digitally inclusive society.”

Sohar International’s strategic digital offerings extend beyond mobile banking, encompassing a comprehensive suite of services for both retail and corporate clients. As part of its ongoing commitment to innovation, Sohar International continues to set new standards in the banking industry, ensuring that its customers receive the highest level of service and support at every stage of their lives.

Sajeel Bashiruddin, Chief Digital Officer at Sohar International, commented on the recognition, stating: “This accolade highlights our steadfast dedication to digital innovation and our customer-first approach. The integration of Sohar International’s comprehensive digital ecosystem, which spans both financial and non-financial services, into our mobile banking app marks a significant milestone in Oman’s banking sector. Designed to address the evolving needs of our customers, this enhancement provides unparalleled convenience and efficiency for managing daily financial activities. Through the ‘My Life’ and ‘My Goals’ initiatives, users can seamlessly conduct their banking transactions and ac-

cess non-banking services, such as booking air travel, reserving hotels, purchasing gift vouchers, and more. This innovation reflects our commitment to driving digital transformation and elevating the customer experience.”

In addition to winning the ‘Best Mobile App Oman 2024’ award, Sohar International was honored as Oman’s Best Bank by the Middle East Euromoney Awards for Excellence this year. The bank also secured multiple accolades at the Oman Banking & Finance Awards 2024, further cementing its status as a top-tier financial institution. Among its other prestigious recognitions, Sohar International was awarded the ‘Highest Year-on-Year Growth in Total Assets among GCC Banks’ by Alam Al Iktisaad Awards and ‘Most Innovative Digital Bank for Ecosystem Services – Oman 2023’ by The Global Economics, UK.

As Oman’s leading digital bank, Sohar International remains committed to pushing the boundaries of innovation in the financial sector. The bank’s leadership is reflected in its continuous enhancement of digital touchpoints, offering cutting-edge solutions like AI-powered banking, advanced payment gateways, and digital POS systems. These innovations are designed to meet the diverse needs of its customers, ensuring that Sohar International consistently delivers superior service and convenience. As the bank continues to introduce new digital solutions, it solidifies its position as a pioneer in the industry, dedicated to enhancing the banking experience for all its customers.

HONOUR

Meethaq Islamic banking earns recognition as trusted institution in Islamic banking

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat has been honoured as a trusted institution in Islamic Banking in the Sultanate of Oman by the prestigious International Business Magazine Awards 2024.

This recognition underscores Meethaq Islamic Banking’s unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional Islamic banking solutions that cater to the diverse needs of customers.

Speaking on the occasion, Ali bin Ahmed Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager, Meethaq Corporate Banking, expressed his pride in receiving this prestigious award saying: “This recognition is a testament to Meethaq’s commitment to providing world-class Sharia-compliant products and services to both retail and corporate customers. We extend our gratitude to the International Business Magazine Awards team for acknowledging Meethaq’s leadership position in the Sultanate’s market. We remain steadfast in pursuit of excellence, continuously adapting to market trends and innovating to ensure our offerings align with the highest standards of quality and Shari’a compliance.”

In valuing Meethaq’s strong bond with its customers, Al Lawati added: “We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation and

support to all our valued customers for their confidence and belief in the Sharia-compliant services and solutions offered by Meethaq Islamic Banking. Meethaq is dedicated to delivering unparalleled value propositions and services that align with the evolving needs of its valued customers and contribute to enhancing their banking experience.”

Meethaq Islamic Banking remains committed to upholding its pioneering leadership presence in the Sultanate’s Banking Industry by offering a comprehensive range of value-added products and services. These Sharia-compliant solutions undergo rigorous Sharia-compliance certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board and adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Central Bank of Oman. This commitment to transparency and adherence to Islamic principles has solidified Meethaq’s position as a trusted financial partner in Oman.

Building upon its legacy of success, Meethaq Islamic Banking has continually expanded its footprint across Oman, currently operating 29 branches distributed across the Sultanate. Additionally, Meethaq offers its customers access to a dedicated network of over 50 ATMs/CDMs and provides free access to over 880 ATMs and CDMs of Bank Muscat.

PREMIUM LUXURY



Indulge in captivating luxury and prowess of ES range by Lexus

MUSCAT: Discover the Lexus ES range and experience one of the top-selling saloons in the premium luxury category. The Lexus ES is an everyday luxury car unmatched in its tech frameworks, ultimate luxurious interiors and delivers an exhilarating city-life experience. Indulge in sublime comfort, spaciousness and distinctive performance output.

The Lexus ES speaks an impressive design language, spelling remarkable efficiency from every angle. From the headlights to the sleek profile, the Lexus charmer is available in three powertrain options, the ES250, ES350 and the hybrid ES300h.

The engine power transmissions vary across trim levels. The ES consists of a 2.5L,16-Valve, DOHC, VVT-iE that produces 204 Hp @ 6600 rpm and 24.8 Kg.M torque @ 4000 - 5000 rpm. The

other variant is powered by a bigger 3.5L, 24-Valve V6, DOHC, VVT-iW delivering 298Hp @ 6500 - 6600 rpm and 36.3 Kg.M torque @ 4600 paired with Direct Shift 8-Speed Automatic Transmission. Choose from three driving modes ECO, Normal and Sport to match your journey.

The exceptional power of the ES300h, the hybrid, ceases the day with its auto charging capability through its electric engine simultaneously saving up the fuel during braking or decelerating. The hybrid is equipped to save fuel meanwhile eliminating the need to plug in a power cord.

The exterior boasts the new design front grille blended with the Bi-LED headlamps. It makes a powerful strike with a rear spoiler moonroof with tilt & slide, a unique power retractable outer

rear view mirror with auto tilt-down on reverse mode. An added side protection moulding and door handle garnish is available as part of the luxury chrome package.

The avant-garde interior fittings on the steering wheel don a 3-spoke leather & wood finesse with a wireless charging tray, head-up display, tri-zone air conditioning with driver, passenger & rear side wooden trims with ambient lighting and inner handle illumination, an interactive 12.3-inch touchscreen display. Feel welcomed by adjusting the legroom to your comfort with its 8-way power adjustable front seats’ cushion length & memory for the driver seat.

Lexus introduced a comprehensive set of safety features for an enabling a composed state of mind and make your journey pleasurable. The sedan is equipped advanced

technologies such as the Blind spot monitor, rear cross-traffic alert, all-speed adaptive cruise control alert, lane tracing assist, Pre-Crash Assist, SRS Airbag, Adaptive high-beam system.

Moreover, it offers advanced safety features such as the Electric Parking Brake w/Brake Hold, Auto Parking, Anti-Theft System, Auto Speed Sensing Door Lock Function, Child Restraint Seat Anchors on Rear, Pop-Up Hood, Tyre Pressure Warning System, Front & Rear Sonar-guided Parking Assistance System, Front Curtain Shield, Rear Airbags for both sides including knees, as well as an Adaptive Cruise Control option.

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