



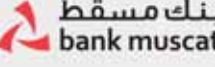
HIS MAJESTY GREETES PRESIDENT OF UAE

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to Sheikh Mohammed. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty for the people of the UAE to achieve aspirations of progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of Sheikh Mohammed. — **ONA**



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JOINT GCC ACTION SOUGHT TO KEEP PACE WITH CHALLENGES



On behalf of HM the Sultan, Sayyid Fahd led Oman's delegation at 45th GCC Summit

KUWAIT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the 45th GCC Summit, which was held yesterday at Bayan Palace in the State of Kuwait. Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, delivered a speech in his capacity as Chairman of the current GCC summit, reading as follows: "The Gulf Cooperation Council embodies a splendid representation of unity and a brilliant manifestation of the strength of union, cohesion and integration. It denotes an authentic reflection of our firm conviction in the need to consolidate joint GCC action for the sake of keeping pace with challenges arising from the accelerated pace of regional and international events and their repercussions and to upgrade areas of cooperation to meet the aspirations of our peoples."

Al Sabah added that, though more than four decades have elapsed since the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the GCC remains steadfast in its unity, firm in its positions, solid in its will and resolute in its quest to establish the pillars of international security and peace. Al Sabah underscored the GCC's unwavering historical position supporting the brotherly Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian land, gain all their political rights and establish their own independent state on their land within the 1967 borders, with Al

Quds A'Sharqiyah (East Jerusalem) as its capital, in accordance with international references, laws and resolutions. Meanwhile, HH Sayyid Fahd delivered a speech at the session reading as follows: "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Your His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, Your Majesties and Your Highnesses, Leaders of the GCC States. May peace, mercy and blessings of All the Almighty Be Upon You! I am greatly honoured to convey to you the greetings and best wishes of His Majesty the Sultan for the success of this summit. I am glad to take this opportunity to congratulate His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait on assuming the chairmanship of the current session of the GCC Supreme Council Leaders. We hereby express our appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us, wishing that the current session of the GCC be a success. We would also like to express

our thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar for the successful management of the 44th GCC session. We would like to observe that the regular convening of such meetings would augment solidarity among the GCC peoples, enhance the GCC Council's position within the international community and promote the GCC's ability to address common challenges and achieve more progress and prosperity for all its member states. We in the Sultanate of Oman affirm our determination to pursue joint efforts in all areas of cooperation to consolidate security and stability in our region and support positive interaction with current issues. On this occasion, we would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the GCC Secretary-General and the working team at the GCC General Secretariat for their good preparation for this summit. We wish you success in meeting the aspirations of the GCC leadership for a better future. May the Almighty Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you!" **>A4**

STATE COUNCIL

State draft budget 2025 reviewed

MUSCAT: The State Council on Sunday hosted the Ministry of Finance, as the latter reviewed the state draft budget 2025. During the meeting, Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council said that the Council enriches the economic development draft laws with many constructive studies and ideas, in a manner that pushes the comprehensive development forward in the Sultanate of Oman. Meanwhile, Abdullah Salim Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance gave a presentation about the country's financial and economic indicators and the government's efforts to improve them, the credit rating of the Sultanate of Oman, the expected results of the state general budget for the fiscal year 2024, in addition to the estimates of the



draft state general budget for the fiscal year 2025, and the development of public debt. The meeting touched on the developments in the global and local economy in 2024, and indicators of growth in all sectors of economic diversification during the current year in various development sectors. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN RAM launches new training programme

1 The Royal Academy of Management (RAM) launched an executive programme in resilience and risk management, aiming to develop national competencies to address future challenges and risk management. **>A2**



OMAN Emirates to operate A350 to Muscat

2 One of the largest airlines in the world, Emirates plans to introduce A350-900 in the Dubai-Muscat route soon, Sir Tim Clark, President of Emirates, said. **>A3**

MARKET Passenger traffic via Oman airports rises

3 The number of passengers travelling through Oman's airports by the end of October 2024 increased by 4.1 percent to reach 12,158,086 (onboard 90,846 flights), data issued by the NCSI shows. **>B1**



BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

INTEGRATED GAS COMPANY NAMED TIMES COMPANY OF THE YEAR – OIL & GAS

Integrated Gas Company earned top honours as the Times Company of the Year – Oil & Gas at the prestigious Times Business Leadership Summit, held at The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat recently. The award celebrated the company's pioneering achievement in completing Oman's first local natural gas spot sale - a landmark development in the Sultanate's energy market. The accomplishment underscores Integrated Gas Company's commitment to advancing Oman's oil and gas sector through innovative trading models that bring both flexibility and efficiency. By adopting this groundbreaking approach, the company not only reaffirms its leadership but also establishes a new benchmark for future developments in Oman's energy market. His Excellency Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, presented the award to a senior representative of the company.



BANK MUSCAT WINS TIMES COMPANY OF THE YEAR – BANKING AWARD

Bank Muscat was awarded the prestigious Times Company of the Year – Banking title at the recent Times Business Leadership Summit, held at The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat. The accolade acknowledges Bank Muscat's exceptional financial performance, forward-thinking banking solutions, and consistent leadership in Oman's financial sector. With a commitment to unparalleled customer service and a focus on sustainable growth, Bank Muscat has set a high industry standard. The award was presented by His Excellency Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, to a senior representative of the bank, underscoring the bank's pivotal role in driving economic progress and innovation within the Omani banking industry.



PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:01pm
Asr.....3:04pm
Maghrib.....5:25pm
Isha.....6:39pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:14am

UAE EMBASSY CELEBRATES 53RD UAE NATIONAL DAY



The UAE Embassy on Sunday held a reception to mark the 53rd anniversary of the UAE National Day. The ceremony was attended by a number of Their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers, a number of honoured members of the State Council, Their Excellencies the Undersecretaries and members of the Shura Council, a number of heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the Sultanate of Oman and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. - ONA

Royal Academy launches programme to train citizens

This programme is strategically aligned with the National Risk Register by the Secretariat-General of the National Security Council, and is in line with future aspirations of national cadres



MUSCAT: As part of its strategic programmes and initiatives for 2024, the Royal Academy of Management (RAM) yesterday launched an executive programme in resilience and risk management, aiming to develop national competencies capable of addressing future challenges and formulating effective strategies for crisis and risk management.

This programme is strategically aligned with the National Risk Register by the Secretariat-General of the National Security Council, and actively supports national efforts to tackle this critical issue in line with future

aspirations.

It is delivered in partnership with the Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College of the United Kingdom, bringing global expertise to strengthen resilience and risk management capabilities

Dr. Fathiya Al Rashdi, Vice President for Programme Affairs at the Royal Academy of Management, stated that the programme is a strategic initiative designed to empower the national specialised cadre competencies, fostering enhanced national resilience and

developing adaptive executive capacities capable of effectively managing risks and emergencies. It also focuses on the development and implementation of flexible policies to ensure business continuity within the public sector. She further clarified that the primary objective of the programme is to bolster the sustainability of operations in critical sectors across Oman by cultivating advanced skills in emergency planning and risk management, thereby ensuring a high level of preparedness to address crises

and unforeseen challenges

Dr. Fathiya pointed out that the programme addresses the growing need for developing cadres capable of dealing with contemporary challenges and proactively ensuring business continuity. She added, "Through this programme, we aim to create a community of qualified Omani leaders to ensure the continuity of work and deliver effective performance despite challenges, contributing to institutional excellence and supporting sustainable development, as envisioned by the Sultanate of Oman."

The programme is structured around three core modules, each designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of risk management while strengthening business continuity within institutions.

The first module focuses on corporate risk management, while the second module delves into crisis management and emergency planning. The third module centres on business continuity in the public sector.

The programme is designed for 25 participants working in risk management, emergency planning, and business continuity at the managerial or department head level – and equivalent positions – within public sector institutions. The programme will offer a comprehensive mix of intensive learning sessions, interactive workshops, hands-on training, and site visits, addressing real-world challenges while drawing insights from both local and international experiences. - ONA

RAO celebrates graduation of officers



MUSCAT: The Royal Army of Oman (RAO) on Sunday celebrated the graduation of batches of cadet officers' course, specialised university officers' course, transformative course and paramedic course from Sultan Qaboos Military College, the Royal Army of Oman's Academy.

The ceremony was held at the military parade ground in Al Murtafaa Garrison under the patronage of Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office.

The ceremony began with the graduates' giving the military salute to the chief guest.

Then, the RAO band played the Royal Anthem, after which the commander of the column asked Gen. Al Nu'amani permission to inspect the front row of the parade. The graduates performed a military show in slow motion and normal march.

They passed in front of the dais of the celebration square, led by the banner of Sultan Qaboos Military College. Then, the column

advanced forward in parade form.

After that, Gen. Al Nu'amani handed the Sword of Honour to RAO's cadet officer Aiman Khalid Al Mazahmi, who won first place at the level of the batch of cadet officers. This was followed by the Sultan Qaboos Military College's banner changing hands, with the graduating batch handing the flag over to the current batch undergoing training at the college, who vowed to keep the flag fluttering high as ever.

Then, the Flag Anthem was played, and the bearers of the flag roamed the rows of their batch.

The graduates chanted the RAO anthem. They performed the Oath of Loyalty, proclaiming allegiance and chanting thrice "Long Live His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme commander".

The column of graduating officers performed the military salute. Then, the band played the Royal Anthem and the commander of the column asked chief guest's permission to dismiss. - ONA

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Salalah tourism shines the way to prosperity



I was privileged to visit Salalah last week and I thoroughly enjoyed myself walking around in the area of Hawana where the government allotted facilities specially for visitors and tourists.

Two words came up in my mind. "Heaven on earth" as I enjoyed the mild weather, the beach and the beautiful surroundings around me. Salalah has a natural setting not just the mild weather, but the compelling beauty to relax any visitor.

Many connect this southern city with Khareef but actually Salalah has its unique privileges throughout the year in all four seasons. Currently, it is summer in Salalah but the weather does not exceed 30 degrees. In the winter, which is Khareef, the temperatures are much cooler there.

But it is more than that. The efforts of the Department of



Tourism, Salalah Municipality and resorts owners like Hawana are commendable and should be encouraged to spread in other areas of the country. That brings the subject of Oman's capital city of Muscat where tourism facilities need to match what we have in the south of the country.

Currently, Muscat is cool again and we can see the signs of frost up in the mountains as the temperature in December starts to drop. Though we have a good number of hotels around the city, but the number of visitors is still not on the high side. In my humble opinion, that is clearly not enough just to have good rated hotels and expect tourists to come in a good number.

Now we have more people walking in the streets of Muscat during the evening and the beaches are full of cars at the sidewalks. The sun is still bright

but not hot and the air is cool as it blows from different directions. But they are hardly any tourists. We need to have all season tourist attractions in our capital city and other areas of Oman. Not just Salalah.

Three million tourists a year visit Oman. That is not enough. The statistics show most of them go to Salalah. They use Muscat as a transit only. Not enough of them go to other cities, ether. If the promoters of Salalah get it right, then that should encourage other promoters to cover the rest of the country. The rewards from tourism income are good if we get it right.

Someone was asking 'how is Salalah promoters getting it right all the time?'

When I go there, I see thousands of tourists from Europe walking about. From the beaches all the way to the markets, restaur-

ants and shops. Local businesses get a big boost throughout the year. Not just from the hotels. Not to mention our national flights of Oman Air and Salam Air which are almost fully booked throughout the year.

Without any doubt, the economy is booming there throughout the year. It is set to grow further year by year just because some people are doing the right thing there in that southern city of our country. They deserve the credit for making this city a great tourism attraction. The question remains what does it take for that effort to spread the rest of the country? Perhaps a little imagination or learning from them?

Tourism obviously is a major income for most countries of the world and Oman has the potential to upgrade the facilities countrywide to make it a success. Salalah is a good example.

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Emirates to operate brand new A350 aircraft on Muscat route

The first of the 65 Airbus A350-900 to join the Emirates fleet was unveiled at an exclusive event at Dubai Airport

Times News Service

DUBAI: One of the largest airlines in the world, Emirates plans to introduce A350-900 in the Dubai-Muscat route soon. Speaking to Times of Oman on the sidelines of the official inauguration of Emirates’ first A350-900 in Dubai, UAE, Sir Tim Clark, President of Emirates, said: “There are a lot of things going on at the moment and Emirates is in an expansionist mode. We’ve got an awful lot of work to do over the next 10 or 15 years.”

The first of the 65 Airbus A350-



900 to join the Emirates fleet was unveiled at an exclusive event at Dubai Airport. The first scheduled flight on this aircraft type will be to Edinburgh on January 3, 2025. In the months to follow, customers can look forward to experiencing the Emirates A350 in existing GCC points like Bahrain, Muscat and Kuwait, Lyon and Bologna in Europe, and Colombo, Mumbai and Ahmedabad in West Asia in addition to new travel opportunities that are up to 15 hours from Dubai- to be announced in 2025.

The Emirates A350 features three spacious cabin classes, accommodating 312 passengers in 32 next-generation business class lie-flat seats, 21 premium economy seats and 259 generously pitched economy class seats. **Onboard products** The latest onboard products reflect the airline’s commitment to delivering a premium passenger experience while optimising operational efficiency. The Emirates A350 is the first new aircraft type to join Emirates’



fleet since 2008. Sir Tim Clark also hinted that Emirates wanted to scale up the India operations but couldn’t do so because of the current agreement. “The big constraint is the size of our aircraft given the number of seats we are allowed to use. So, we’re having to mix and match. Sometimes we put an aircraft and are not allowed to sell some of the seats,” Sir Clark said, adding that the airline’s demand for a doubling of seat capacity between Dubai and India as the travel demand had tripled in this market since

2015 when the agreement was last drawn. He said there should be 1,40,000 seats permitted by the airlines on both sides instead of the current 65,000 seats. On the non-availability of the aircraft in the market hampering expansion plans, Sir Clark said Emirates was a “frustrated entity” and finds its “wings clipped” during an expansionist phase due to the Covid-19 supply chain issues and delays in the deliveries of Boeing 777-9s. “We need airplanes, and we need them now,” he said.

The airline, he said, has been held back by the aftermath of COVID and supply chain disruptions, leading to a delay in aircraft deliveries. “As you know, we’ve had our wings clipped because of COVID and supply chain delays. We are a frustrated entity because we need airplanes, and we need them like now,” Clark commented. Emirates had originally planned to receive more aircraft by this point, particularly the Boeing 777X, which would have allowed them to take delivery of 85 new planes by now. However, with the arrival of the A350s, Clark said that the airline is focused on ramping up its network and growing, though not necessarily at a rate beyond what they had originally planned. With the airline now poised for rapid growth, Clark also addressed Emirates’ financial position. He made it clear that the airline does not need external funding at this point, ruling out plans to raise money through a sukuk or bond. “We have plenty of money,” he said, offering reassurance as the airline focuses on expanding its fleet and operations.

JOBS

Labour ministry announces 1,179 vacancies in govt units

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour on Sunday announced the availability of 1,179 vacant jobs in a number of government units for holders of different educational qualifications. The ministry explained that the employment opportunities are available as follows: 1,011 for holders of Bachelor’s degrees, 38

for holders of post-General Education Diplomas (GED) and 130 for holders of GED and pre-GED qualifications. Registration to the abovementioned jobs will be open for a period of two weeks from the date of this announcement, the ministry affirmed.



-ONA



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45TH GCC SUMMIT

GCC remains steadfast in its unity



<FROM A1 On his turn, GCC Secretary General Jassim Mohammed Al Badiwi said, "We call upon the international community to take decisive measures to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank who are being subjected to an ongoing war waged by the Israeli occupation forces. The impacts of this war have extended to Lebanon, leading to a dangerous military escalation."

The GCC Summit discussed a number of strategic issues, including regional security affairs, GCC economic integration, mechanisms for developing the Gulf common market and cooperation in the fields of technology and digital transition.

The summit also discussed projects on environmental and energy linkage among member states, as well as political issues, including developments in the Palestine cause, updates in the Lebanese Republic, the situation in Yemen, pending issues in Iraq and relations with regional and international powers.

Sayyid Fahd returns home

After the summit, HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers returned home yesterday evening after chairing the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the 45th GCC Summit, which was held in the State of Kuwait.

After the conclusion of the summit, HH Sayyid Fahd sent cables to the leadership of Kuwait, during which he expressed appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and his accompanying delegation.

HH Sayyid Fahd was accompanied by an official delegation comprising Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Al Sa'eedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Dr. Saleh Amer Al Kharousi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait and Abdullah Khalfan Al Balushi, Head of the Private Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers.

Earlier in the day, HH Sayyid Fahd was seen off at the Royal Airport by Sheikh Al Fadhl Mohammed Al Harthy, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Counsellor Abdullah Al Muhna, Charge D'affairs of Kuwait's embassy.

On his arrival in Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmed Al Jabir Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait led the welcoming party for HH Sayyid Fahd upon his arrival at the Amiri Airport.

HH Sayyid Fahd was also received by Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al Ahmed Al Sabah, Prime Minister, Jassim Mohammed Al Budaawi, GCC Secretary General and a number of officials in the State of Kuwait. -ONA



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AI, drones are redefining industries and economies

MUSCAT: In a world increasingly shaped by technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and drones are redefining industries and economies. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) these innovations are opening new frontiers - enhancing efficiency, driving growth and tackling some of society's most pressing challenges. Yet, as with any great leap forward, they also raise questions about ethics, privacy and regulation.

In the wake of the fourth industrial revolution, the MENA region is poised to become a global leader in AI and drone technology. The numbers speak for themselves - the regional AI market, valued at nearly US\$12 billion in 2023 is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 44.8% from 2024 to 2030. Meanwhile, the region's drone sector is projected to grow from US\$2 billion in 2024 to US\$6 billion by 2030.

In Oman, AI and drones are already making their mark. AI-driven systems are streamlining operations in sectors such as logistics, while drones are finding applications in agriculture, offering solutions for precision farming that reduce water consumption and boost crop yields.

Globally, drones have been



instrumental in disaster management, providing real-time mapping and search-and-rescue capabilities in the aftermath of earthquakes and floods.

But the rapid adoption of AI-powered drones also raises important considerations. How can data privacy be safeguarded in increasingly connected systems? And what frameworks are needed to guide the responsible use of autonomous technologies in diverse applications?

To explore these issues and opportunities, Tejarah Talks presents its final session of 2024: AI & Drones – Where Are They Taking Us? The event, taking place at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, 7:30pm Tuesday, 10 December promises an in-depth and thought-provoking discussion about Oman's role in this technological transformation.

Moderating the evening session is Jamal Al Asmi, Executive Producer, RealityCG who remarked: "AI and drones are reshaping the way we live, work and do business. In fact, these technologies not only promise to streamline sectors at the heart of Oman Vision 2040 but also drive sustainable growth and economic diversification."

Joining Al Asmi will be: Eng. Mubarak Al Farsi, Senior Airworthiness Inspector, Civil Aviation Authority who will address how Oman's regulatory frameworks are evolving to manage the rapid rise of drones.

Haidar Al Lawati, Senior Manager, Artificial Intelligence, Oman Data Park will offer insights into how AI is transforming industries across the country and Said Abdul Ghafoor Saifudeen, CEO, Star Drones, will share his perspective on how drone technology is driving change in Omani agriculture, logistics and beyond.

Organized by Oman Business Forum in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion, and sponsored by Jindal Shadeed, Nortal, Apex Transgulf Manufacturing, MHD, Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre and Oman FM.

3RD SESSION

Oman-Austria hold political discussion

MUSCAT: The 3rd session of political talks between the foreign ministries of the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Austria was held yesterday in Muscat.

The Omani side was headed by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, while the Austrian side was headed by Gregor Koessler, Director General of Political Affairs at the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

During the session, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations. They underscored the joint keenness to boost cooperation in all spheres.

The two sides also discussed regional and international issues of common concern, including the repercussions of the Israeli war on Gaza.

The session was attended by several officials from both sides. -ONA

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1	126/2024	Providing Support & Manage Operational Technology for Cyber Security Services for Three Years.	02/12/2024	16/12/2024	14/01/2025	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	105/-
2	129/2024 (International)	Upgrading of Sohar Free Zone (SFZ) 220/132kV Grid Station.	02/12/2024	16/12/2024	14/01/2025	International and Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	2,625/-
3	130/2024 (International)	Construction of 400/132kV Wadi Latham Grid Station and Associated 400kV LILO, and Construction of 132kV Safah Grid Station and Associated OHL - OXY Network Connection.	02/12/2024	16/12/2024	14/01/2025	International and Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	2,625/-
4	131/2024	Providing Consultancy Services for Forming Environmental, Sustainability & Governance (ESG) Framework.	02/12/2024	16/12/2024	14/01/2025	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration.	52/500
Participation		Interested Companies may obtain Tender Document with the necessity Apply on E-tendering					
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The deadline for clarification		Before (21) Days from bid submission date.					
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Terms and conditions		- Specifying the name of the Company or whatever refers to in the Bid Guarantee Envelope. - The bid should be valid for not less than (90) days from bid submission date. - The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the bid value and should be valid for (90) days from bid submission date, addressed to Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC). Small & Medium Enterprises are exempted from the submission of 1% of the bid bond. - Any bid not comply with the required guarantee, will not be accepted.					
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**MUSCAT GOVERNORATE MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY**

Announcement of Public Auction No. (38/2024)

Muscat Municipality, represented by the Auction Committee for the sale of a variety of different items according to the following details:

Interested individuals for this Auction must comply with the conditions set out below:

Number	Type and classification of movables	Movables site for inspection
First Group	Various waste containers (Metal - Plastic)	Dumping Yard in Wadi Al Kabir
Second Group	Various waste containers (Metal - Plastic)	Dumping Yard in Bawshar (Snob)
Third Group	Various waste containers (Metal - Plastic)	Dumping Yard in Al Amerat
Forth Group	Various waste containers (Metal - Plastic)	Dumping Yard in Quriyat
Five Group	Various waste containers (Metal - Plastic)	Dumping Yard in Seeb
Six Group	Various waste containers (Metal - Plastic)	Qurum Natural Park
Seven Group	Various waste containers (Metal - Plastic)	Al Naseem Park

- Those wishing to enter the auction must pay (4 OMR) Four Omani Rials witch are not refundable, and A temporary deposit (refundable) is required to be paid an amount of (500 OMR) Five Hundred Omani Rials, as it required to be paid electronically to the collector of the committee in the General Directorate of Public administration & Financial affairs at municipal presidency building in Darsait.
- The person who wins the action obligated to pay the full price of the items if they were awarded to him plus 5% value added tax, and the Brokerage fees of 3% through electronic payment.
- Items are sold in their current condition, and the municipality is not responsible for the loss or damage of part of it once its value is paid. It also does not guarantee the validity of the items offered for sale or the safety of their technical condition those wishing to participate in the bidding will inspect the items on the specified days therefore.
- The items sold are not returnable or reduced in value, and any petition submitted in this regard will not be accepted. The buyer is obligated to transfer the items that have been awarded to him after paying their full value within a period not exceeding one week from the date of purchase, and he bears full responsibility for the movables that were not transported within the specified period, and in the event that they are not transferred within the specified period, the municipality may resell the items at its own expenses.
- The date and location set for inspecting the movables and awarding the bid are specified as follows:

Location	"Al Jabal" hall in Muscat Municipality in Al Amerat	
Date/Time of the inspection	From 03/12/2024 to 05/12/2024	From 08: 00 AM to 12:00- 00PM
Site for submission participation fees	Head office in Darsite at the committee cashier at the General Directorate of Public Administrative & financial Affairs	
Auction date	10/12/2024 at 08:00Am At Muscat Municipality in Al Amerat	
For inquires and coordination	Please contact the specialist of the committee member at (98070900)	
Other terms	- The VAT specified in the law will be applied to successful bidder. - It is not allowed to enter the auction arena until after showing the receipt of the subscription fee and amount of insurance. - Muscat Municipality may cancel or defer the sale without providing any justification. - The security deposit will not be refunded in cases;- - If he does not pay the value of the movables. - If he does not transfer the movables from the site within the specified period.	

QR Codes for Field Locations

Quriyat

Al Amerat

Bawshar (Snob)

Wadi Al Kabir

Al Naseem Park

Qurum Natural Park

Seeb (1)

Seeb (2)

DUQM-1

Oman to launch experimental rocket

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is set to launch its first experimental scientific rocket, Duqm-1, under the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology's National Space Programme.

The project, executed and funded by Etlaq Company, part of the National Space Services Company,

marks a milestone in Oman's space ambitions.

Etlaq Company is implementing the project through a pact with the ministry, granting the company use of land in Al-Kahl, Wilayat of Duqm, to establish a spaceport for rocket launches.

Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al-Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, described the

initiative as a strategic step under Oman's executive space sector programme. He emphasised its objectives to leverage Oman's geographic advantages, localise space technologies, attract investment, and foster private-sector partnerships. The project aims to support economic diversification and create employment opportunities within the space industry.

Dr. Ali bin Amer Al-Shaidhani,

Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology, highlighted Oman's geographical benefits, including its proximity to the equator and Tropic of Cancer, which reduce costs and time for satellite launches. Additionally, Oman's extensive coastline offers a safe environment for such activities, and the free economic zone in Duqm makes it an attractive location for global investments.

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OF OMAN

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GCC leaders hail Oman's efforts to revive political process in Yemen

In the Kuwaiti Declaration, issued at end of the 45th GCC Summit, held in Kuwait on December 1, the leaders praised the increasing role of GCC countries in addressing political and economic challenges, both regionally and globally

KUWAIT: The GCC leaders and representatives affirmed their strong support for the Palestinian cause, emphasising the importance of Palestinian sovereignty over all lands occupied since June 1967, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In the Kuwaiti Declaration, issued at end of the 45th GCC Summit, held in Kuwait on December 1, the leaders praised the increasing role of GCC countries in addressing political and economic challenges, both regionally and globally.

They also commended their contributions to resolving issues that threaten peace, security, and stability, while promoting international dialogue and fostering connections among nations. The leaders called for further efforts to strengthen the region's global position as a hub for business and economy, promote sustainable economic diversification, advance digital transformation, stabilise energy markets, and effectively address climate change. They condemned Israel's ongoing military actions in Gaza, Lebanon, and the West Bank, as well as violations in occupied Jerusalem's holy sites, calling for an immediate end to violence, urging international intervention to protect civilians and support negotiations for peace.

The declaration highlighted the increasing role of GCC countries in addressing political and economic challenges, both regionally and globally, as well as acknowledged their contributions to resolving issues threatening peace,

stability, and security, and to promoting international dialogue.

The summit expressed support for the outcomes of the extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit held in Saudi Arabia on November 11, 2024, which sought to halt the war in Gaza and advance the two-state solution. The leaders also praised Qatar's efforts to mediate a ceasefire and facilitate detainee exchanges.

Regarding Lebanon, the GCC leaders condemned Israeli aggression and warned of its potential to escalate into a broader regional conflict. They welcomed the temporary ceasefire agreement in

Lebanon and called for Israel occupation's withdrawal, the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, and the return of displaced persons.

They also expressed solidarity with the Lebanese people and called for a political solution to Lebanon's internal divisions, emphasizing the country's role in Arab security and culture.

In Yemen, the GCC leaders commended the efforts of Saudi Arabia and Oman to revive the political process among Yemeni parties.

The leaders reiterated the GCC's commitment to peaceful diploma-

cy in resolving regional and global disputes, respecting state sovereignty, and adhering to international law. They praised the GCC's growing influence in addressing regional and global challenges, promoting international dialogue, and building strategic partnerships. They emphasised the need for ongoing implementation of summit decisions to maximise their practical benefits. The leaders of the GCC countries emphasised the need to intensify efforts to strengthen the region's role as a global hub for business and economic activity.

They also underscored the im-

portance of sustainable economic diversification, energy market stability, and effective responses to climate change. They reaffirmed their commitment to empowering Gulf women across various fields and enhancing the role of youth.

The leaders highlighted the importance of universities, research institutions in preserving Gulf identity, Arab culture, Islamic values, and principles of good leadership, emphasising the role of GCC institutions in achieving these objectives.

They recognised the digital economy as an opportunity for economic growth and regional integration, commending the region's advanced and adaptable digital infrastructure, including investments in fast communication technologies. These investments have positioned the GCC as a global hub for the digital economy, encourage innovation, supporting emerging technologies, and attracting digital investments.

The leaders highlighted the importance of strategic investments in areas including artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity. These technologies, they noted, have placed the GCC in a leading position to capitalise on the global digital transformation, with applications in renewable energy, healthcare, education, transportation, and financial services.

The leaders also called for enhanced cooperation among

GCC countries to develop joint digital strategies, facilitate e-commerce, advance digital payment systems, and strengthen cybersecurity. They emphasised the need to establish unified digital markets to boost regional economic integration and global competitiveness. Recognising their diverse resources, skilled workforce, and advanced technologies, the leaders noted the growing contribution of GCC countries to the global economy. They emphasised that the region's digital initiatives aim not only to achieve national objectives but also to drive global innovation and economic growth, solidifying the GCC's status as a key player in the digital economy.

The leaders stressed the ongoing development of digital infrastructure and the adoption of emerging technologies, alongside building a technically skilled workforce capable of leading the digital transformation.

They underscored the importance of balancing innovation and economic growth with environmental and social sustainability.

The leaders affirmed that these collective efforts demonstrate the GCC's commitment to keeping up with global advancements, improving citizen's quality of life, and establishing the region as a global digital economy hub, ensuring sustainable prosperity for both the region and the world. - WAM

THIRD NIGHT OF PROTESTS

Georgia police arrest scores amid ongoing pro-EU protests

TBILISI: Police in the former Soviet republic of Georgia on Saturday said they had arrested 107 people in the capital, Tbilisi, amid protests.

Thousands of people gathered again across Georgia on Saturday for the third night of protests.

The demonstrations, in response to the government's suspension of accession talks with the EU, were said to be the largest in recent weeks after the ruling Russia-friendly Georgian Dream party's disputed win in October's parliamentary elections.

Why did the arrests take place?

Thousands of protesters had gathered in Tbilisi on Friday evening and again on Saturday. On Thursday, the country's outgoing president, Salome Zourabichvili,

joined protesters and accused the government of declaring "war" on its own people in cracking down on demonstrations.

Speaking with DW on Saturday, Zourabichvili not only denounced the use of a water cannon and arrests but also what she called "systemic violence against protesters." She said the violence mirrors a previous wrong committed against the Georgian voters when they were "deprived of a voice in the elections."

President says she won't stand down

Zourabichvili branded the country's parliament illegitimate and said the only legitimate institution in the country right now is the presidency. As such, she said on Saturday that she does not intend to leave her post when her term

ends in December.

Georgia's Interior Ministry has said the protests had "exceeded the norms set by the law for assemblies and rallies."

The ministry claimed the demonstrators had thrown stones at police officers and burned objects. Police fired tear gas and a water

cannon at the protesters as they gathered on Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi's main street.

The demonstrators built improvised barricades and set off fireworks.

Pro-EU rallies were also reported from Batumi, Sugdidi, and other cities across the country. It

is believed that arrests were also made in Batumi, Georgia's second-largest city.

Zourabichvili told DW that the scale of the protests was new, having spread to every major city in the country for the first time. She also noted that numerous public-sector employees had begun signing protest letters as well as resigning from their posts, emphasizing that this included some in the diplomatic corps.

Why are there demonstrations in Georgia?

The ruling Georgian Dream party said on Thursday that the country would suspend talks on European Union accession until 2028. It also refused budgetary grants from Brussels — effectively halting its application to join the bloc for the

next four years.

That move bolstered opposition to the Georgian Dream party remaining in power after the disputed election, with the opposition fearing that the country was turning away from Europe — and allowing Russia more influence in Georgia again.

The US State Department on Saturday said it suspended its strategic partnership with Georgia after the Georgian Dream party suspended talks for accession to the European Union.

"We condemn excessive force used against Georgians rightfully protesting this betrayal of their constitution — EU is a bulwark against Kremlin," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller wrote on X. "We have therefore suspended our Strategic Partnership with Georgia." - WAM

the origin

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WOMEN IN BUSINESS FORUM



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MEMBER OF OMAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



FATMA AL NABHANI

PROFESSIONAL TENNIS AND
PADEL ATHLETE, MEMBER OF
THE PADEL NATIONAL
COMMITTEE



DR. BUDOOR AL MANSOUR

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NOVO GENOMICS



RAHMA AL-HASMI

DEPUTY VP COMMERCIAL,
SHOHAR PORT AND FREEZONE



SOFANA DAHLAN

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Oman’s racing stars shine bright



Al Faisal Al Zubair and Ahmad Al Harthy cap off stellar seasons with podium finishes in Jeddah

MUSCAT: Omani motorsport sensations Al Faisal Al Zubair and Ahmad Al Harthy delivered exceptional performances at the 6 Hours of Jeddah, the season finale of the 2024 Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe Powered by AWS Endurance Cup, held at the Jeddah Corniche Circuit on Saturday.

Al Zubair claimed second place in the Gold Cup category, completing the season as runner-up in both the Drivers' and Teams' championships with Al Manar Racing by Getspeed. Al Harthy, competing in the Bronze class with OQ by Oman Racing, secured a strong second-place finish in Jeddah and finished fourth overall in the championship standings.

Al Zubair: Gold Cup runner-up finish

For Al Zubair, the season's final race was a testament to resilience and determination. Partnered with Dominik Baumann of Austria and Mikaël Grenier of Canada, Al Zubair overcame a challenging start to the weekend, navigating penalties and technical setbacks to finish second in the Gold Cup category.

The Mercedes-AMG GT3 trio qualified sixth in class, setting the stage for an uphill battle.

The race itself was a dramatic affair, featuring a Full Course Yellow (FCY) triggered by an early collision between Arthur Rougier's CSA Racing Audi and Nicolo Schiro's Kessel Racing Ferrari.

Despite a 30-second penalty, a five-second penalty, and a puncture, the Al Manar Racing team methodically worked their way through the field to secure a well-earned podium.

Speaking about the race and his season, Al Zubair said: "GT World Challenge is always a difficult championship, but the track here



in Saudi Arabia was extremely demanding. Honestly, we had a blast. All the drivers enjoyed it. What a blessing to see a championship like this in Saudi Arabia. Let's hope we see more races in other Gulf countries.

"It was chaotic. We got a 30-second penalty, and we got a five-second penalty, and we got a puncture. But we still finished second and second in the championship.

"That is something we should be really proud of. We would have liked to have won the championship, but I guess that gives us the target to improve one step next year."

Al Zubair's efforts earned him 104 points, cementing his position as runner-up in the Drivers' championship, while Al Manar Racing by Getspeed secured second place in the Teams' standings.

Gold Cup podium (Jeddah): 1 Paul Evrard / Gilles Magnus / Jim Pla – Sainteloc Racing, Audi

R8 LMS GT3 Evo, 2 Al Faisal Al Zubair / Dominik Baumann / Mikaël Grenier – Al-Manar Racing by Getspeed, Mercedes-AMG G 3, 3 Dennis Lind / Alberto Di Folco / Philippe Denes – Imperiale Racing, Lamborghini Huracan GT3.

Season standings:

Gold Cup (Drivers): 1 Paul Evrard / Gilles Magnus / Jim Pla (140 points), 2 Al Faisal Al Zubair / Dominik Baumann / Mikaël Grenier (104).

A Bronze class podium to remember for Al Harthy

Racing in the Bronze class, Ahmad Al Harthy once again demonstrated his mastery of endurance racing. Teamed with Sam De Haan and Jens Klingmann in the No. 30 BMW M4, the OQ by Oman Racing trio executed a flawless race strategy to secure second place in class in Jeddah, capping a season highlighted by an outright win at Monza.



Starting eighth in class, De Haan's solid opening stint moved the team into podium contention by the end of the first hour.

Al Harthy took over in the second hour, delivering a consistent and composed performance under the lights of Jeddah.

The Omani driver briefly led the class before pitting, rejoining in sixth and climbing back to second. Klingmann completed the final stint, crossing the finish line just seven seconds behind the class-winning Porsche of Dennis Marshall, Dustin Blattner, and Loek Hartog.

Reflecting on the race, Al Harthy said: "I'm absolutely delighted, thrilled to finish the season with such an amazing result. Jeddah is such a difficult, fast, and complicated race track.

"For us to come here for the first time in this championship and to come out with a podium, especially after what we achieved at Monza,

is just testament to everything we have done as a team.

"Huge thank you to OQ by Oman Racing and everybody involved, our amazing partners OQ, the Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel, Experience Oman, and BMW Oman.

"The amount of support we have from back home is truly incredible. Racing in the Middle East, and racing in the Gulf especially, means such a lot, and we had so much amazing local support here – it's a weekend I will always remember."

He added: "I must say a huge thank you to my teammates as well. Sam and Jens have done a great job this season with OQ by Oman Racing. This is a really proud moment for me here in Jeddah and a proud moment for my country. It is an honour to be on the podium once again for Oman."

While the Jeddah race result was an excellent achievement, Al

Harthy's consistency throughout the season secured him fourth place overall in the 2024 Bronze class standings with 64 points, behind the champion trio of Eddie Cheever, Jonathan Hui, and Christopher Froggatt.

Bronze Class podium:

1 Dennis Marshall / Dustin Blattner / Loek Hartog – Rutronik Racing, Porsche 911, 2 Ahmad Al Harthy / Sam De Haan / Jens Klingmann – OQ by Oman Racing, BMW M4, 3 Nicolai Kjaergaard / Mark Sansom / James Baldwin – Garage 59, McLaren 720S.

Season standings:

Bronze class: 1 Eddie Cheever / Jonathan Hui / Christopher Froggatt (74 points), 2 Jef Machiels / Louis Machiels / Andrea Bertolini – (72), 3 Dennis Marshall / Dustin Blattner / Loek Hartog (71), 4 Ahmad Al Harthy / Sam De Haan / Jens Klingmann (64).

FIRST TEST

Carse and Bethell star in England’s dominant victory over NZ

CHRISTCHURCH: Brydon Carse and debutant Jacob Bethell delivered stellar performances to power England to an emphatic eight-wicket victory over New Zealand on the fourth day of the first Test in Christchurch.

Carse was the standout, claiming 6-42 in the second innings to register his maiden Test five-wicket haul. His match figures of 10-106 marked a historic milestone as the first away 10-for by an England bowler since Monty Panesar in 2012 and the first by a seamer since Ryan Sidebottom achieved the feat in New Zealand 16 years ago.

Daryl Mitchell offered resistance with a spirited 84, including a defiant 45-run last-wicket stand with Will O'Rourke, but New Zealand's total of 254 left England chasing just 104. Bethell, the 21-year-old left-hander, ensured the chase was a formality, smashing a 37-ball unbeaten 50, including a six to seal the win in style.

England's victory provided



much-needed momentum after a tough run of three defeats in their last four matches. The win also highlighted the depth and adaptability of the squad, which underwent significant changes due to injuries.

Carse's comeback

Carse's rise has been remarkable, especially considering his earlier suspension for historical betting offenses. This performance solidifies his place as England's winter

standout, stepping up in the absence of Mark Wood. His ability to extract bounce and deliver awkward lengths troubled New Zealand's batters, with crucial strikes on the fourth morning to derail the hosts.

Chris Woakes also made an impact with pivotal wickets on the third evening, and Shoaib Bashir bounced back from a tough tour in Pakistan to contribute in the first innings. Gus Atkinson chipped in as well, while captain Ben Stokes



showed glimpses of his all-round brilliance despite managing a back stiffness issue.

Brook's brilliance

Harry Brook's imperious 171 in the first innings was the foundation of England's dominant position. Benefiting from New Zealand's uncharacteristic fielding lapses—dropping him five times—Brook boosted his overseas average to an astonishing 89, second only to the legendary Sir Don Bradman.

Stokes, returning to form, led the side with composure, and Ollie Pope stepped in as an emergency wicketkeeper, contributing valuable runs. Bethell, the youngest player in the lineup, demonstrated why he's regarded as one of England's brightest prospects with his composed and aggressive knock in the second innings.

New Zealand's struggles

New Zealand, fresh off a historic 3-0 series win in India, faltered in

Christchurch. Their 348-run first-innings total appeared competitive, but costly dropped catches and Mitchell's late counterattack couldn't compensate for an otherwise subpar performance.

Tim Southee, set to retire after the series, struggled to make an impact and was punished by England's batters. New Zealand's selectors now face tough decisions, including whether to recall in-form batter Will Young and how to rejuvenate their bowling attack.

This victory gives England a 1-0 lead in the three-match series, with the second Test in Wellington beginning Friday. England will be eager to build on their strong start, while New Zealand must regroup to keep their faint World Test Championship final hopes alive.

Brief scores: New Zealand 348 (Williamson 93) & 254 (Carse 6-42) lost to England 499 (Brook 171) & 104-2 (Bethell 50*) by eight wickets. - Agencies

INDIAN PC MARKET

The desktop category experienced an 8.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) decline, while the notebook and workstation categories recorded modest growth, rising by 2.8 per cent YoY and 2.4 per cent YoY, respectively. — **ANI**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSM INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,578.38 points, up by 0.34 percent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.66 percent at 415.46 points. Barka Water & Power Company, up 10 percent, was the top gainer while, Oman Fisheries, down 2.86 percent, was the top loser. > **B2**

ENHANCING EFFICIENCY



Opaz implements many initiatives to improve health of its employees

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has adopted a number of initiatives aimed at improving the health of employees, with the goal of enhancing performance efficiency and creating suitable conditions in the workplace.

These initiatives include implementing several programmes throughout the year to raise awareness on how to handle emergency situations, prevent chronic diseases, promote positive thinking among employees, and prepare them to deal with stressful work conditions.

The programmes aim to equip employees with the necessary skills to cope with challenges they may face in their daily work duties or in their personal lives.

Abdul Majid bin Abdullah Al-Ansari, General Director of the Support Services Sector at Opaz, stated that these initiatives align with the Authority's strategic plan within the framework of the Institutional Excellence Programme. This programme includes objectives that involve the Authority's management taking necessary measures to ensure the presence of employees who enjoy good health and possess the skills suitable for the nature of the Authority's work and achieving its goals. He added that this year, several regular health check-ups were conducted to ensure the physical well-being of employees during working hours.

In addition, workshops and initiatives were carried out for employees on first aid, healthy nutrition, and general health care through early detection of chronic diseases, as well as initiatives to promote mental health and ways to deal with stressful work conditions. These initiatives were executed in cooperation with several hospitals and private healthcare centers.

He pointed out that the programs implemented this year included increasing knowledge of first aid techniques, whether at work or at home.

They focused on training employees on how to deal with various emergency situations such as burns, fractures, wounds, drowning, head injuries, choking, and cardiac arrest, among other emergencies, with the goal of providing necessary support to the injured until medical care arrives.

As a parallel administrative measure, Opaz's building was equipped to ensure the availability of first aid tools and medical devices related to testing blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and body temperature.

A small pharmacy containing medications for seasonal illnesses was also set up. Employees were trained and provided with certified first aid certificates to assist their colleagues at work or help their families and friends as part of their community service beyond the official work framework.

Abdul Majid Al-Ansari added that these initiatives focus on promoting awareness about healthy eating and its impact on employee health, both physically and mentally, which in turn improves energy levels, concentration, and productivity at work.

The initiatives aim to prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

They included a workshop on healthy nutrition, a weight check-up with body mass index calculation, and sports consultations by specialists invited periodically by the Authority in areas such as weight management, calories, and nutrition.

The goal is to improve employees' dietary habits, benefiting both the employees and the Authority by reducing work hours lost due to sick leave, enhancing physical activity, and improving employees' physical and mental health.

A mental health initiative was also held under the slogan "Positivity and Well-being," which included several activities such as a workshop on positive thinking and ways to cope with signs of burnout.

Additionally, consultations with specialists, as well as blood sugar, blood pressure, and eye tests, were provided. A discussion session was held with a center specialising in psychological and social counseling.

The event, held in observance of World Mental Health Day on October 10, 2024, aimed to encourage positive thinking among employees by urging them to adopt an optimistic view of life, thus improving mental health, increasing productivity at work, reducing stress, and developing coping skills to handle daily pressures and challenges.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business

Passenger traffic through airports in Oman rises by 4.1%

International flights stood at 73,040, carrying 9,716,134 passengers while the number of domestic flights reached 7,638 with 1,004,247 passengers on board

MUSCAT: The number of passengers travelling through the Sultanate of Oman's airports by the end of October 2024 increased by 4.1 percent to reach 12,158,086 (onboard 90,846 flights) compared to 11,677,931 passengers onboard 89,043 flights by the end of October 2023, according to the preliminary data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The number of passengers through Muscat International Airport by the end of October 2024 reached 10,720,381, comprising a rise by 3.7 percent. These passengers travelled onboard 80,678 flights (up by 2.3 percent).

International flights stood at 73,040, carrying 9,716,134 passengers. Meanwhile, the number of domestic flights reached 7,638 with 1,004,247 passengers on board.

Moreover, the number of passengers through Salalah Airport by the end of October 2024 reached 1,321,622, comprising a rise by 6.4



percent compared to the figures of the corresponding period in 2023. These passengers travelled onboard 9,068 flights (down by 1.6 percent).

International flights through Salalah Airport reached 4,410 with 576,743 passengers onboard, while the number of domestic flights reached 4,658 (with 744,879 passengers onboard).

Further, the number of pas-

sengers through Sohar Airport reached 65,427 on board 580 flights, while the number of passengers through Duqm Airport reached 50,656 onboard 520 flights.

As for nationalities, the Indian nationality topped the list in terms of the highest number of passengers in outbound and inbound flights through Muscat International Airport (153,396 passengers) by the end of October 2024.

The number of inbound passengers from the Indian nationality reached 74,034, while outbound passengers reached 79,362.

The Omani nationality came next, with 99,236 inbound passengers and 50,723 outbound passengers. The Pakistani nationality followed next with a total of 51,172 passengers, of them 25,893 are inbound and 25,279 are outbound. — **ONA**

BY UNION OF ARAB BANKS

ahlibank recognised as the 'Best Conventional Bank in Oman'

MUSCAT: Continuing its journey as a 'Partner in Excellence', ahlibank, one of the most prestigious banks in the Sultanate of Oman, has recently been recognized as the 'Best Conventional Bank in Oman' for the year 2024 by the Union of Arab Banks.

The award is a testament to ahlibank's leading status in the Sultanate, showcasing its banking expertise and forward-thinking vision as a thriving center for banking. Receiving the award on behalf of the bank was Jumana Al Hashmi, AGM Head of Marketing & Corporate Communications.

The award was given in recognition of the best in the banking sector, highlighting the various institutions whose efforts have made a significant impact on the economy. It shed the spotlight on ahlibank, attesting to its outstanding contributions in driving forward the Omani banking sector. Above all,



it underscored the dedication and hard work of the ahlibank team that has been at the heart of its successes, embodying the bank's ethos as a true 'Partner in Excellence.'

On receiving the award, Jumana Al Hashmi said, "At ahlibank, we are committed to reaching new milestones in an ever-evolving and competitive market. The banking sector has experienced re-

markable growth in recent years. And with resilience and adaptability, we have successfully navigated these changes, maintaining a steady upward trajectory. We are deeply grateful to the Union of Arab Banks for honoring us with the Best Conventional Bank in Oman award. This recognition not only reflects our relentless drive but also motivates us to continue striving to attain greater

milestones."

"Our growth and success are a direct result of our unwavering commitment to customer-centricity. We remain focused on achieving sustainable growth and continuing to meet the evolving needs of our customers," she added.

ahlibank provides a diverse range of innovative products and services, designed to offer seamless and efficient experiences for its customers.

With a strong focus on customer-centricity, the bank has firmly established itself as one of the leading institutions in the country, with the recognition as the 'Best Conventional Bank in Oman' underscoring its commitment and the significant impact it had on the market. As we look to the future, ahlibank remains dedicated to driving sustainable growth and further strengthening its position within the industry.

STRENGTHENING ITS LEADERSHIP

Bank Nizwa titled 'Strongest Islamic Retail Bank in Oman 2024'



MUSCAT: Enhancing its prominent leadership as the most-trusted Islamic banking partner, Bank Nizwa, the leading Islamic bank in the Sultanate of Oman, was recently titled 'Strongest Islamic Retail Bank in Oman 2024' at the Islamic Retail Banking Awards (IRBA). This prestigious accolade highlights Bank Nizwa's commitment to providing innovative Sharia-compliant banking solutions, underpinned by a profound understanding of its customers' evolving needs and a steadfast dedication to service excellence.

The award was graciously accepted by Talib Al Yarubi, Head of

Branches of Bank Nizwa, on behalf of the bank.

The Islamic Retail Banking Awards 2024, now in its 10th edition, convened a distinguished assembly of industry luminaries, C-suite executives, and leaders from across the region. The awards celebrated 50 top-performing entities in the Islamic retail financial services sector from the GCC, the Far East, Africa, Asia, and the Western Hemisphere, based on a global ranking of Islamic banks conducted by the Cambridge Institute of Islamic Finance.

Bank Nizwa's recognition on this prestigious international plat-

form underscores its leadership in the Islamic finance sector.

Reflecting on this honour, Mohamed Al Ghassani, Chief Retail Banking officer at Bank Nizwa, commented, "We are immensely proud to be recognised at the IRBA as the Strongest Islamic Retail Bank in Oman, as this accolade not only shines the spotlight on our expertise in Islamic banking but also solidifies our position at the forefront of the sector. Furthermore, this award inspires us to persist in our journey of innovation and excellence, delivering groundbreaking Islamic banking solutions."

It is worth mentioning that the

retail banking division at Bank Nizwa offers a comprehensive suite of personal banking solutions, including savings and current accounts, alongside customised auto, home, and personal finance offerings designed to meet the diverse needs of its retail customers. This array of services is further enhanced by the bank's user-friendly digital banking channels, including a robust mobile banking app, internet banking services, and a digital branch, all of which significantly improve accessibility and convenience for all customers.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business

MARKET



MSM index ends higher

Barka Water & Power Company, up 10 percent, was the top gainer while, Oman Fisheries, down 2.86 percent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,578.38 points, up by 0.34 percent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 1.66 percent at 415.46 points. Barka Water & Power Company, up 10 percent, was the top gainer while, Oman Fisheries, down 2.86 percent, was the top loser. Shares of OQEP were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 842 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.54 million, with more than 11.38 million shares changing hands. Out of 43 traded securities, 23 advanced, 4 declined, and 16 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR301,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR279,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR22,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,707.84 points, up 0.34 percent. Prices of Al Sharqia Investment,

Oman & Emirates Investment, Muscat Finance, Al Anwar Investment, Oman Arab Bank were up by 5.71 percent, 2.86 percent, 2.33 percent, 1.52 percent, 0.69 percent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,255.61 points, up 1.05 percent. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products, Galfar Engineering, A'Saffa Foods, Al Anwar Ceramics, Al Maha Ceramics were up by 9.77 percent, 3.26 percent, 2.68 percent, 2.04 percent, 1.56 percent respectively. Prices of Oman Fisheries were down by 2.86 percent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.68 percent before closing at 1,755.47 points. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Al Jazeera Services, National Gas, SMN Power Holding, Ooredoo were up by 10 percent, 5.78 percent, 4.00 percent, 2.42 percent, 1.24 percent respectively.

Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, OIFC were down by 2.53 percent, 1.28 percent, 1.24 percent respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,581.92	4,563.05	4,578.38	4,563.05	15.33	0.34
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,707.84	7,677.21	7,707.84	7,681.53	26.31	0.34
Industry Index	5,255.61	5,200.90	5,255.61	5,200.90	54.71	1.05
Services Index	1,760.45	1,743.57	1,755.47	1,743.57	11.90	0.68
MSX Shariah Index	415.46	409.15	415.46	408.69	6.78	1.66
MSX TR INDEX	6,400.65	6,374.29	6,395.71	6,374.29	21.41	0.34
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,756.90	8,722.10	8,756.90	8,727.01	29.89	0.34
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,063.73	6,000.60	6,063.73	6,000.60	63.13	1.05
SERVICES TR IDX	2,071.69	2,051.82	2,065.83	2,051.82	14.00	0.68
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,066.89	1,066.89	1,066.89	1,066.89	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
11,389,464	2,539,464	842	27,429,992,017	23	4	16	43

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. BD.	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BD.	LAST OFFER	PRE. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	204,270	14,687	16	0.071	0.074	0.071	0.074	0.070	0.004	5.714	0.074	0.072	0.074	0.100	6,660,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	14,620	1,023	3	0.069	0.072	0.069	0.072	0.070	0.002	2.857	0.072	0.063	0.072	0.100	8,775,000
OM0000002804	SASFA FOODS.	100	38	1	0.383	0.383	0.383	0.383	0.373	0.010	2.681	0.383	0.370	0.383	0.100	45,960,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC.	30,472	3,054	6	0.102	0.102	0.100	0.100	0.098	0.002	2.041	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	22,000,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	32,010	7,842	8	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.242	0.003	1.240	0.245	0.242	0.245	0.100	159,481,336
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	2,526,217	339,812	126	0.133	0.135	0.132	0.134	0.133	0.001	0.732	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.100	580,303,605
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	183,956	167,941	5	0.910	0.916	0.910	0.916	0.910	0.006	0.659	0.916	0.910	0.916	0.100	687,000,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	5,975	2,253	3	0.377	0.377	0.377	0.377	0.375	0.002	0.533	0.377	0.377	0.377	0.100	124,739,012
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	43,300	10,955	6	0.253	0.253	0.253	0.253	0.252	0.001	0.397	0.253	0.254	0.256	0.100	1,899,118,457
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	73,329	25,067	7	0.340	0.342	0.339	0.342	0.342	0.000	0.000	0.342	0.342	0.342	0.100	228,580,976
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,136	794	2	0.699	0.699	0.699	0.699	0.699	0.000	0.000	0.699	0.699	0.699	0.100	66,405,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	184,450	15,309	8	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.083	0.088	0.100	16,600,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	50	19	1	0.387	0.387	0.387	0.379	0.379	0.000	0.000	0.387	0.387	0.387	0.100	85,599,390
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	80,000	10,910	4	0.136	0.137	0.136	0.137	0.137	0.000	0.000	0.137	0.135	0.142	0.100	906,562,739
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	5,000	480	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.095	0.097	0.100	91,638,907
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	126,662	10,133	21	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.079	0.084	0.100	14,000,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	69,473	19,209	30	0.276	0.279	0.276	0.276	0.276	0.000	0.000	0.276	0.275	0.276	0.100	212,575,200
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	987,306	76,072	67	0.079	0.079	0.077	0.077	0.078	-0.001	-1.282	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.100	51,966,332
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	1,073,623	83,335	66	0.079	0.079	0.077	0.077	0.079	-0.002	-2.532	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.100	55,009,288
Total	19	5,641,949	788,935	381												
Parallel Market																
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	268,123	81,123	31	0.280	0.308	0.280	0.308	0.280	0.028	10.000	0.308	0.308	0.308	0.100	48,280,000
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	100	24	1	0.236	0.236	0.236	0.236	0.215	0.021	9.767	0.236	0.205	0.235	0.100	10,800,728
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REEF	365	42	1	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.105	0.010	9.524	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.100	16,431,908
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	734	169	2	0.215	0.238	0.215	0.238	0.225	0.013	5.778	0.238	0.203	0.238	0.100	10,196,632
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	140,899	11,031	20	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.078	0.075	0.003	4.000	0.078	0.078	0.079	0.100	6,630,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	336,342	31,547	23	0.092	0.096	0.092	0.095	0.092	0.003	3.261	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.100	19,283,712
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	31,200	10,579	7	0.350	0.350	0.339	0.339	0.331	0.008	2.417	0.339	0.335	0.339	0.100	67,676,468
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	12,000	528	1	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.043	0.001	2.326	0.044	0.043	0.047	0.100	13,514,438
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	1,215	156	3	0.130	0.130	0.128	0.130	0.128	0.002	1.563	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.100	7,150,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	58,896	3,942	10	0.067	0.068	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.100	14,216,060
OM0000003036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	9,000	1,296	2	0.140	0.142	0.140	0.142	0.140	0.002	1.429	0.142	0.142	0.144	0.100	3,327,963
OM0000003661	VOLITAMP ENERGY	150	59	2	0.395	0.400	0.395	0.400	0.395	0.005	1.266	0.400	0.390	0.400	0.100	32,561,100
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	2,585	377	1	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.145	0.001	0.690	0.146	0.146	0.154	0.100	243,723,860
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	52,906	5,135	8	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	20,000	820	2	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.000	0.000	0.041	0.041	0.043	0.100	10,250,000
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	119,690	6,915	11	0.058	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.100	84,839,885
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	33	2	1	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.071	0.100	10,423,877
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	25,000	1,575	2	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.100	14,001,120
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	98,968	6,928	10	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.068	0.071	0.100	35,604,191
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	4,490,482	1,582,719	306	0.352	0.353	0.351	0.352	0.352	0.000	0.000	0.352	0.352	0.353	0.100	101,012,816,000
Total	20	5,668,728	1,744,939	444												

JP MORGAN REPORT

India's GDP growth expected to rebound

NEW DELHI: India's economic growth is expected to accelerate to 6.7 per cent in the second half (H2) of the fiscal year, bringing the full-year 2024-25 GDP growth to 6.4 per cent, according to a report by JP Morgan.

India's economy grew at 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2024, marking the lowest

growth rate in seven quarters and falling significantly below market expectations.

This slowdown is attributed to a combination of cyclical factors and weaker-than-expected consumption, investment, and exports.

The report highlighted that the sluggish figures for the third quar-

ter were not entirely unexpected, as the economy had been showing signs of cooling in recent months.

Core Gross Value Added (GVA), excluding agriculture, public administration, and subsidies, decelerated sharply to 5.3 per cent, the lowest in seven quarters.

Nominal GDP growth, which accounts for inflation, slowed to just

8 per cent, the weakest since December 2020.

"We expect growth to average about 6.7 per cent in the second half of the fiscal year, taking full-year 2024-25 GDP growth to 6.4 per cent," the JP Morgan report stated, citing factors that could boost growth in the coming quarters. — ANI

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LIFESTYLE

STUDY FINDS MASSIVE GLACIERS ONCE COVERED EARTH TO THE EQUATOR

A NEW STUDY led by the University of Colorado Boulder reveals compelling evidence that massive glaciers once stretched to the equator, supporting the Snowball Earth theory.

This theory suggests that between 720 and 635 million years ago, Earth underwent a dramatic climate shift, causing ice sheets miles thick to cover the planet.

The study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, examined rocks in Colorado's Front Range, where sandstones known as Tavakaiv sandstones showed signs of being buried by glaciers. These findings provide the first physical evidence that glaciers reached the heart of continents near the equator.

The researchers used advanced dating techniques to determine that the rocks were likely compressed underground between 690 and 660 million years ago, during the glacial period.

This discovery could help scientists understand not only Earth's geological history, but also the evolution of life, as the thawing of Snowball Earth may have triggered the emergence of multicellular organisms.

Although the full extent of the global freeze remains debated, this new evidence from Colorado supports the idea that glaciers may have formed across the entire planet, helping to unlock a critical period in Earth's climate and biological evolution. - **ONA**

SPORTS

OFAL: 372 goals and counting

A new era for Oman football academies as teams battle out to reach second round in four categories at the Cheltenham School

MUSCAT: The Oman Football Academies League (OFAL) entered its second round on November 15, marking a milestone for football development in the Sultanate of Oman. The tournament has seen unprecedented participation, with academies from across the nation competing in what promises to be a transformative event for Omani football.

The league has delivered thrilling performances, with an astounding 372 goals scored across the first and second rounds. Al Muhtarif Academy recorded the most significant victory so far, defeating Al Noor Academy 16-2. Al Seeb Academy followed with a dominant 14-0 win over the same team.

Eighty matches have already taken place at Cheltenham School in Wilayat Seeb, featuring 70 teams from 26 academies within Muscat Governorate.

Overall, the league includes 200 teams from 70 academies competing in four age categories.

Digital access to tournament details

To streamline access to tournament information, the organising committee has launched an elec-



tronic platform. This platform provides real-time updates, match results, schedules, and team standings, accessible at this link.

Cooperative spirit

Tournament Director Nabil Fakhr highlighted the cooperative spirit among participants and the support of families, which has created an electric atmosphere. "This event has not only been competitive but also a celebration of community and talent," Fakhr noted.

Legendary Oman footballer Younis Aman, the only Omani player to win the Arab Golden Shoe in the 1990s, described the tournament as a "real starting point for Omani football."

He emphasised its importance as a talent incubator, enabling clubs to scout, nurture, and refine young players who will become the foundation of Oman's football future. As the competition progresses, it is clear that the OFAL is more than a tournament - it is

a beacon for the nation's football aspirations, setting the stage for a bright and dynamic future.

The league's structure divides participants into groups across four age categories. Following the first round, the standings are as follows:

Under-10 Championship:

Group 1: Al Muhtarif leads with 6 points, followed by Professional (4 points) and Al Mawaleh (3 points).

Group 2: Sporta leads with 9

points, followed by Al Seeb, Al Shamali, and MFA (6 points each).

Under-12 Championship:

Group 1: Al Mawaleh and Al Muhtarif are tied at 6 points, with Al Najm in third place (3 points).

Group 2: MFA tops the table with 7 points, followed closely by Al Khoud with 6 points.

Under-14 Championship:

Group 1: Al Noor leads with a perfect 12 points, followed by Al

Mawaleh (9 points each). Genova Academy is also in contention with 7 points.

Group 2: Sporta and Al Ebdaa are tied at 6 points, with Saif and Algeria close behind (4 points each).

Under-16 Championship:

Group 1: MFA, Al Muhtarif, and Algeria are locked in a three-way tie for first place.

Group 2: Al Shamali leads with 6 points, followed by Al Noor and Al Gharafa (3 points each).



OMAN FOOTBALL ACADEMY LEAGUE

RESULTS — SATURDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2024



OMAN FOOTBALL ACADEMY LEAGUE

Group A - U10	Play 1A	Group B - U14	Play 1B	Group C - U14	Play 1C
Sporta Sport	1	Al Nooriba School	2	3M	1
Al Noor	1	Al Jah Al Braq	1	Al Mawaleh	2
Group A - U14	Play 1D	Group B - U16	Play 1E	Group C - U16	Play 1F
Sporta Sport	1	Al Sedaa School	2	Al Shamali	2
Excellence	1	Al Seeb	1	3M	1
Group A - U16	Play 1G	Group B - U18	Play 1H	Group C - U18	Play 1I
Al Noor	2	PRO 11	1	Alzora	2
Professional	2	Seeb	2	All Star	2
Group B - U18	Play 1J	Group C - U20	Play 1K	Group D - U14	Play 1L
Al Khod Academy	1	Junior Star Academy	1	Future Generation	1
ORT	1	MFA	1	Al Sedaa School	2
Group B - U20	Play 1M	Group C - U22	Play 1N	Group D - U16	Play 1O
Al Khod Academy	1	All Star	1	Al Seeb	2
Alzora	1	Al Khod Academy	1	Jenova	2
Group C - U22	Play 1P	Group D - U24	Play 1Q	Group E - U14	Play 1R
Al Mawaleh	2	Al Noor	1	Al Noor	1
Professional	2	3M	1	Alzora	1
Group D - U24	Play 1S	Group E - U26	Play 1T	Group F - U14	Play 1U
Al Mawaleh	2	Junior Star Academy	1	Al Noor	1
Professional	2	Al Khod Academy	1	Alzora	1

OMAN FOOTBALL ACADEMY LEAGUE

RESULTS — FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024



OMAN FOOTBALL ACADEMY LEAGUE

Group A - U10	Play 1A	Group B - U14	Play 1B	Group C - U14	Play 1C
Al Mawaleh	1	Sporta Sport	1	Al Khod Academy	2
Junior Star Academy	1	Al Noor	1	3M	2
Group A - U14	Play 1D	Group B - U16	Play 1E	Group C - U16	Play 1F
Professional	1	Al Seeb	2	Al Noor	1
Jenova	1	3M	2	Shala School	1
Group A - U16	Play 1G	Group B - U18	Play 1H	Group C - U18	Play 1I
Excellence	1	Excellence	1	Al Khod Academy	2
Al Shamali	1	Al Shamali	1	MFA	2
Group A - U18	Play 1J	Group B - U20	Play 1K	Group C - U20	Play 1L
Professional	1	Future Generation	1	Al Muhtarif	1
All Star	1	MFA	1	Al Seeb	1
Group A - U20	Play 1M	Group B - U22	Play 1N	Group C - U22	Play 1O
Professional	1	Al Seeb	1	Al Noor	2
Alzora	1	Sporta Sport	1	Jenova	1
Group A - U22	Play 1P	Group B - U24	Play 1Q	Group C - U24	Play 1R
MFA	1	MFA	1	MFA	1
Al Sedaa School	1	Al Noor	1	Excellence	1
Group A - U24	Play 1S	Group B - U26	Play 1T	Group C - U26	Play 1U
MFA	1	Excellence	1		





FORMULA ONE

Russell promoted to Qatar pole after Verstappen hit by grid penalty

DOHA: Red Bull's Max Verstappen has been stripped of pole position for impeding Mercedes driver George Russell in qualifying at the Qatar Grand Prix on Saturday.

The judgement reverses the places on the front row, with Russell promoted to pole and Verstappen demoted to second place.

Verstappen, who had beaten Russell to pole by 0.055 seconds, was penalised for driving unnecessarily slowly and impeding his rival.

The two cars tangled at Turn 12, forcing Russell on to the gravel.

Verstappen was penalised for driving unnecessarily slowly and found to have been "well outside" the target time required of drivers when not on a flying lap.

The stewards said there were mitigating circumstances as neither driver was on a flying lap, but

ruled that Verstappen had broken the rules.

They sided with Russell's argument that Verstappen should not have been on the racing line if he was going slowly.

Russell had been on provisional pole after the first runs in the final session but was pipped by 0.055 seconds by Verstappen's final lap.

Russell felt the Verstappen incident had prevented his tyres being in the right operating window for his final lap, on which he did not improve.

The Mercedes driver said: "I expected to improve on the second lap and had a scrappy out lap, nearly had the collision with Max and went into the gravel two corners before I started it."

"The time was in the car but as soon as I went into Turn One the car and tyres just didn't feel right and I was in the gravel two corners



before I started my lap.

"It was a shame it ended that way."

McLaren drivers Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri took third and fourth, after the Australian led a one-two in the sprint race earlier in the day.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc took fifth from Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and

Verstappen said: "Crazy. Honestly, I also didn't expect that. Well done to the team to give me a car that feels a bit more connected and once the car is more together you can push a lot harder."

"We did change a bit on the car but I never thought it would make such a swing in performance, it felt a lot more stable over one lap and that is exactly what we need."

Russell said: "I was really surprised by [Red Bull's] turnaround. I think we've got a good race on our hands."

Norris, who dominated the sprint race before handing victory to Piastri on the run to the line, was 0.252secs off pole.

"Not the position we were hoping for after yesterday and today but the maximum we could do," Norris said. "The lap was pretty good. It was pretty happy with it but just not quick enough

compared to the others.

"Not a lot in it between all of us, which gives us hope we can all go forwards. We showed good race pace today I did gave the benefit of being out front and having clean air but I think we still have a good chance."

"I don't think we are as quick as the Mercedes and Red Bull showed how much they improved since yesterday."

McLaren can clinch the constructors' championship in the grand prix, but only if they finish one-two and take the fastest lap.

Hamilton was 0.491secs off pole but managed to split the Ferraris, while eighth was an encouraging performance for Alonso after a difficult season for Aston Martin. The veteran two-time champion was just 0.21secs off Sainz's Ferrari, and 0.174secs quicker than Perez's Red Bull. - Agencies

Botafogo are champions

The Copa Libertadores final between the two Brazilian clubs in Buenos Aires witnessed the winners reduced to ten men soon after the kick-off



Atletico struggled.

They halved the deficit two minutes into the second half as Eduardo Vargas headed in Hulk's corner with his first touch since coming on off the bench.

The side from Belo Horizonte pressed for an equaliser against a tired-looking Botafogo and 38-year-old former Brazil international Hulk unleashed a trademark left-footed drive that was palmed away by Victor.

As the match wore on, the Botafogo defence crept further back as they looked to absorb the huge pressure from the Atletico attack.

But Vargas missed a golden opportunity to equalise when he could only sweep his late effort over from five yards.

Substitute forward Santos lashed home the third goal when a defender's attempt to cut out his cross fell back to him.

The Botafogo players sunk to

the turf at the sound of the final whistle after writing their names in the club's history.

In the Buenos Aires sun, more than 80,000 Brazilians felt every emotion possible as a football lover.

Shock, elation, sadness and anger were emotions felt by both sets of supporters in just the opening 45 minutes after a red card and two surprising goals.

The drama in this encounter should have come as no surprise, though, following an opening ceremony that almost made you feel as though you were at a pop concert.

The pitch was covered in gold and black with performers dotted all over the huge playing surface before 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic appeared to place the famous trophy on a plinth before delivering a coin to the referee.

When the real action started, the controversial incident in the opening minute set the tone.

Gregore's horror challenge and red card looked to have put the game beyond Botafogo's reach before they had even got going.

However, they defied the odds with a display full of spirit and style. Henrique's goal left grown men in the crowd in tears, while babies were held aloft in the celebrations.

Atletico's Argentine manager Gabriel Milito dropped to his knees in the final stages as his side missed out, especially when Vargas wasted his late opportunity. In the end, there were scenes of both jubilation and devastation as a Brazilian club lifted the trophy for a sixth consecutive time. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Las Palmas stun Barca



BARCELONA: La Liga leaders Barcelona's 125th anniversary celebrations were dampened as they fell to a surprise 2-1 defeat against struggling Las Palmas on Saturday.

The visitors went in front when former Barca striker Sandro fired a low effort across goal to a chorus of boos and whistles from the home crowd. Barca captain Raphinha equalised for the hosts with an unstoppable low drive into the net.

Wolves loanee Fabio Silva scored his fifth league goal of the campaign to restore Las Palmas' lead, slotting into the bottom corner after latching onto Javi Munoz's superb pass.

The result means Las Palmas climb to 14th in the league.

Barca marked their 125th anniversary on Friday and debuted a new mascot for the occasion but the celebrations did not continue on the pitch as they lost at home to Los Amarillos for the first time since September 1971 - and they are now without a win in three league matches.

They suffered a setback when Alejandro Balde was taken off on a stretcher in the 26th minute following a collision with Sandro.

Hansi Flick's side had 26 shots in the match, their highest total in a league match this season, but did not do enough to trouble Las Palmas. - Agencies

BUEENOS AIRES: Botafogo clinched the first Copa Libertadores in their 123-year history with an incredible 3-1 victory over Brazilian rivals Atletico Mineiro on Saturday.

The River Plate Stadium in Argentina was stunned just 30 seconds into the final when Botafogo midfielder Gregore was sent off for a high kick to the head of Fausto Vera.

After having their hearts in their mouths for 34 minutes, the Botafogo fans were sent wild after a rare foray forward ended in Luiz Henrique smashing home with his left foot inside the box.

Buoyed by that, the 10 men ventured forward again and goalscorer Henrique was fouled in the box by a rash challenge by Atletico keeper Everson, resulting in former Manchester United left-back Alex Telles doubling their lead

from the spot a minute before the break.

They wrapped up their historic victory through substitute Junior

Santos from close range in the seventh minute of added time.

Despite having the extra man for almost the entire match,

PREMIER LEAGUE

Gunners hammer West Ham to move second

LONDON: Arsenal moved second in the Premier League after a frenetic 5-2 victory over West Ham at London Stadium in which seven goals were scored in the first half on Saturday.

The Gunners led after 10 minutes when centre-back Gabriel flicked home Bukayo Saka's corner at the near post after escaping loose West Ham marking.

And the lead was doubled after 27 minutes when Leandro Trossard finished a flowing Arsenal move from close range. Saka was again the provider, played in by a chipped Martin Odegaard through ball before squaring to Trossard to finish.

Then followed a frantic period of four goals in six minutes, started by Odegaard making it three shortly following the hour mark from the penalty spot after Saka was tripped in the area by Lucas Paqueta.

And Arsenal went 4-0 up after 36 minutes when a long ball was missed by home defender Max Kilman, allowing Kai Havertz to finish one-on-one past beleaguered goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski.

West Ham responded when right-back Aaron Wan-Bissaka scored his second goal in consecutive games with a near-post finish, before left-back Emerson reduced the arrears to 4-2 with a magnificent free-kick that crashed in off the crossbar.

But Arsenal restored their three-goal lead with a second penalty, this time netted by Saka for his first away league goal of the



season after Fabianski accidentally punched Gabriel while trying to clear a corner.

This was only the fourth time in Premier League history that seven

goals have been scored in the first half of a game - but there were none after the break as Arsenal comfortably saw out the win.

Victory moves Mikel Arteta's

side six points behind leaders Liverpool, who face third-place Manchester City on Sunday.

West Ham remain 14th in the table, six points above the relegation zone.

Schade's hat-trick in Brentford victory

New Leicester manager Ruud van Nistelrooy watched Kevin Schade net a hat-trick as Brentford thumped the Foxes 4-1 to underline the size of the task he faces.

The former Manchester United striker, who has yet to over coaching matters, with Ben Dawson overseeing Leicester for this game, sat next to owner Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha in the stands at the Gtech Community

Stadium on Saturday.

And the Dutchman saw his new side overrun to offer little suggestion they have the quality to pull away from danger.

Schade's treble added to Yoane Wissa's equaliser in the first half after Facundo Buonanotte's 21st-minute goal put the Foxes ahead against the run of play.

The dominant Bees were 3-1 ahead by half-time with Wissa and Schade firing them in front within eight minutes of going behind.

Schade, who was also denied an early opener by a fine Mads Hermansen save, added a third in first-half stoppage time, the Germany international's first top-flight goals of the season.

Thomas Frank's impressively fluid side are now seventh in the Premier League, two points adrift of the top four, after a fourth home win in a row for the first time in the top flight since 1937.

Sitting two points from the top four, they are the highest scorers at home in the Premier League this season, Saturday's four goals taking their total to 22.

Victory also takes them to 19 points at home this season, which is another league high.

And the Bees have scored at least three times in four consecutive home league fixtures for the first time since 1984.

Other results: Crystal Palace 1 Newcastle United 1, Nottingham Forest 1 Ipswich Town 0, Wolverhampton Wanderers 2 AFC Bournemouth 4. - Agencies

Fan violence at game in Germany leaves 79 injured

JENA: German police say 79 people were injured after violent disturbances between rival groups of supporters following a regional league game on Saturday.

Fans of FC Carl Zeiss Jena and BSG Chemie Leipzig forced open gates separating them and used what police described as "uninhibited violence" after the game in Jena.

Tear gas and batons were used by the authorities to break up the incident but 64 supporters, 10 police officers and five stewards were injured.

Before the game, about 350 home fans had gone on an unannounced march through the city setting off pyrotechnics, with the police forced to halt it.

During the game, which was won 5-0 by the home side and played in front of 7,224 at the Ernst-Abbe Sportfeld, pyrotechnics were repeatedly set off by both sides. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Asalah banking customers utilise Bank Muscat’s exclusive WhatsApp service

Through this service, customers can utilise advanced search features, both in Arabic and English, to learn more about the products and services offered to them



MUSCAT: In line with its customer-centric vision “To serve you better, every day” and strategy to enhance communication with customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues its automated communication service via WhatsApp, offered exclusively to the Bank’s Asalah Priority Banking customers.

Through this service, customers can utilise advanced search fea-

tures, both in Arabic and English, to learn more about the products and services offered to them.

They may also avail the service to raise inquiries about these services from 8:00am to 10:30pm every day, with the help of a dedicated customer service team to respond to customer inquiries.

The WhatsApp service has witnessed significant engagement from Asalah Priority Banking customers, since its launch. Custom-

ers avail a wide range of services through the platform, that has facilitated and enhanced communication between the Bank and customers. Customers can also benefit from the service by messaging the number 24779999. In addition, the Bank has introduced a general WhatsApp service offered to all customers to obtain details and features about the banking services by contacting the Bank’s Contact Center agents at

24795555, dedicated for responding to customer inquiries.

Asalah Priority Banking customers can easily send “Hi” or “Hello” to the dedicated WhatsApp number to receive a list of all information related to their Asalah membership whether it is travel or banking benefits.

New “Asalah” customers or those who have not yet used this service can save the designated number on their phones, and it will

automatically appear on WhatsApp as the dedicated account for Bank Muscat’s Asalah Priority Banking customers.

In its ongoing commitment to offering the best services to this customer segment and keeping up with the latest developments, the Bank has made a number of banking services and facilities available through the Bank Muscat’s Mobile Banking App.

Customers can enjoy various features, including steps to activating their current account, creating a new login code to open an additional account, and activating a new device.

Speaking about the dedicated Asalah WhatsApp service, Abdunasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager – Personal Banking, Bank Muscat said: “Bank Muscat is committed to enhancing communication with its valued customers through various channels. The Bank is always keen to meet their expectations and offer them a sophisticated banking experience, backed by high-tech products, innovative financing facilities, and world-class customer-centric services. In line with our vision “To serve you better, everyday”, the Bank constantly strengthens its communication channels for

customer convenience by setting new benchmarks. As the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, the Bank will maintain its dedication to innovation, in order to further elevate the service quality standards, thus, meeting the expectations and needs of customers.”

Al Raisi added: “Since it was launched in 2021, the automated reply service has witnessed a significant engagement from customers availing the services provided to them. The new WhatsApp service will be useful for customers in better understanding and utilising the exclusive benefits also available at the Asalah Priority Banking centers. Some of these services include Lifestyle and Travel benefits as well as Wealth and Investment solutions amongst others. In translation of its customer-focused vision and commitment to keeping pace with digital transformation trends, the Bank has also offered a number of digital services online via its Mobile Banking App. We would like to thank our customers for their trust in the Bank’s services, and we assure them that the Bank will continue providing them with the best banking services to enhance their experience.”

WITH THE COMMUNITY IN SOHAR

Floward celebrates Oman’s National Day

MUSCAT: Floward, the go-to online flowers and gifts delivery destination in MENA and the UK, proudly joined the celebrations for the Sultanate of Oman’s 54th National Day by engaging with the local community through an interactive booth at City Centre Sohar, Al Batinah, from November 21 to 23. The booth featured two engaging activities designed to honour Oman’s rich heritage and foster community spirit. Children enjoyed a cultural quiz displayed on an interactive screen, testing their knowledge of the Sultanate’s history and traditions.

Meanwhile, visitors contributed heartfelt messages of appreciation to Oman on a community mural, creating a vibrant and meaningful display of national pride. To further spread joy, Floward distributed over 800 roses as giveaways, adding a touch of elegance to the celebrations.

Floward Chairman and CEO, Mr. Abdulaziz B. Al Loughani, said: “On this special occasion, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the generous people of Oman, wishing the nation continued progress and prosperity. We are honoured to celebrate the Sultanate of Oman’s National Day with the community in Sohar. At Floward, we are deeply committed to bringing joy and connecting with the communities we serve. This special occasion allowed us to share in the pride and unity of the Omani people, and we are thrilled to have played a part in these meaningful celebrations.”

This initiative reflects Floward’s



dedication to being close to the community and enhancing their celebrations with thoughtful experiences.

Established in 2017, Floward is a full-fledged e-commerce solution that offers prime fresh-cut flowers sourced from the best growers and farmers around the world and arranged locally by a team of florists and designers. Floward also offers cakes, chocolate and perfumes curated by the region’s most exciting designers bundled with its flower arrangements and manages last-mile same-day delivery to ensure the best customer experience.

Founded in 2017, Floward is the preferred online flowers and gifts destination in the MENA region that offers a wide range of fresh-cut flowers and a variety of accessories for every occasion. Floward procures flowers from the best farmers and growers around the world which are arranged by a team of florists and delivered to the customer through its last-mile delivery fleet.

FOR GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Ominvest promotes community well-being and institutional collaboration through second football tournament

MUSCAT: As part of its commitment to enhancing community awareness about the transformative power of well-being and sports, Ominvest successfully concluded its second Football Tournament for Government Institutions.

This initiative highlights the significant physical, mental, and social benefits of regular physical activity, underscoring Ominvest’s dedication to fostering a healthier and more active society.

The month-long tournament, featuring 16 teams from government institutions, also aimed to encourage camaraderie and strengthen professional relationships among government employees, reflecting positively on their workplace performance and overall quality of life.

Held at the Military Technological College Stadium, the tournament provided an engaging platform to not only promote physical activity but also to emphasise the vital role of sports in improving individual well-being and fostering teamwork. The final match witnessed Muscat Municipality claiming victory after a thrilling game against the Ministry of Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

Commenting on the successful conclusion of the tournament, Waleed Al Yarubi, Chief People, Corporate Communication and Sustainability Officer at Ominvest, said: “Ominvest hosts this



annual tournament as part of its commitment to promote well-being, teamwork and collaboration. We are delighted to witness the success of this tournament in its second edition.”

“We congratulate the Muscat Municipality team for their well-deserved victory, and extend our appreciation for the organisers and participating team for their contribution to the success of the tournament. We reaffirm our commitment to continue supporting such initiatives as they contribute to the well-being of our society and encouraging sustain-

able practices across all sectors.”

By promoting physical and mental well-being, Ominvest aligns its efforts with the broader goals of sustainability and societal progress, creating meaningful impacts that benefit the community at large.

Ominvest is one of the largest listed investment companies in the region. Founded in 1983, it has been consistently profitable and has an enviable track record of uninterrupted dividend payments to shareholders. Ominvest owns high-quality durable assets in diversified sectors, producing

healthy cash flows. As of 2023 year-end, the company’s total assets stood at OMR1.3 billion covering diverse sectors, including Banking, Insurance, Finance and Leasing, Financial Investments, Private Equity and Investment Banking.

The company’s assets cover diversified geographies including the GCC and Asia in addition to significant investments in global capital markets. The company is led by a progressive board and a capable management team – dedicated to enhancing value for all stakeholders.

DANCE ACADEMY BY DELICIOUS SAHADEVAN

DADS emerges as the Ultimate Gold Winner at IIGF 2024



MUSCAT: In a remarkable achievement, Dance Academy by Delicious Sahadevan (DADS), in collaboration with The Champ Sports & Arts, has emerged as the Ultimate Gold Winner at the 6th season of India’s International Groove Fest (IIGF) 2024 which was Organised by Megha Sampat Founder of Padanyaas Entertainment.

Held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, this prestigious global dance competition saw over 130 participants from around the world. DADS has made history by becoming the first-ever team from Oman to win this coveted title.

The victorious team was awarded a cash prize of 3 Lakh Indian Rupees. In addition, the academy’s Junior group, The Little Saints, earned a special place among the Top 22 Grand Finalists. The competition was judged by renowned choreographers and dance legends, including Madam Sudha Chandran, Madam Sajna Najam,

Miss Vrushi Chavan, Mr. Devash Mirchandani, and Mr. Manan Sachdeva, all of whom are prominent figures in the Indian film industry.

Expressing their gratitude, the team credited their success to the blessings of their parents and divine guidance, which helped them overcome the challenges they faced throughout the competition.

A heartfelt thank you was extended to the exceptional team behind the success, including:

- Choreography team: Delicious, Nixon, Harshal, Ajay, Sumit, Nagesh and Salim.
- Costume Designers: Arpita and Juliana
- Backstage Support, Hair & Makeup: Arpita, Sheeba, Radhika, Seema, Suchitra, Gayathri, Reshma, Mejo, Anjali & Chinchu Sreejith.
- Travel Partners: Trips On Maps Tours & Khimjis House of Travel.
- Participants and their families

for their unwavering dedication and support.

Special thanks were also expressed for the continuous encouragement and support of Madam Lujaina Mohsin Darwish who always stood for their team.

Thanks to Mr. Vasim and Ms. Sana from the Champ Arts & Sports for their cooperation & partnership. The team also expressed deep appreciation to Rathish Rajan, Santhosh Panicker, Prasanna Srinivasan and Rakesh Nair for their constant presence and support. The entire DADS team, along with their friends and families, celebrated this triumph as a dream come true, with heartfelt gratitude to all who helped make it a reality.

In addition to the DADS team’s success, a complimentary 2-day workshop will be offered for all dance enthusiasts in Oman, regardless of age. Details of the workshop will be announced soon on social media.



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