



HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREET'S BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Aleksandr Lukashenko of the Republic of Belarus on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Aleksandr Lukashenko. His Majesty also wished the people of the Republic of Belarus further prosperity. — **ONA**



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TENTH TERM

At His Majesty's behest, Shura Council to end annual convening on July 18

MUSCAT: As per the Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Shura Council concludes the first annual convening (2023-2024) of the tenth term (2023-2027) on Thursday, 18 July 2024.

This comes in implementation of article (41) of the Law of the Council of Oman.

The first annual convening saw the completion of 9 agreements and 9 draft laws. Twelve regular sessions were also held, including 4 sessions to discuss ministerial statements of service ministries. Four ministerial statements were delivered to highlight queries and comments regarding the work of these ministries. — **ONA**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman Across Ages Museum joins ICOM

1 Oman Across Ages Museum (OAAM) has joined the International Council of Museums (ICOM), headquartered in Paris. The step places the museum on the map of global museums. **>A2**

OMAN

OMR2.13mn donation on Jood platform

2 The total financial donations received by the 'Jood' digital platform for charitable donations since its activation in October 2023 until the end of last June amounted to OMR2.136 million. **>A3**

WORLD

Over 100 people killed in India's stampede



3 Over 100 people were crushed to death in a stampede at a religious gathering in Mughalghari village in the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh in northern India on Tuesday, officials said. **>A6**

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of July 2, 2024



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NO PERMISSION REQUIRED TO RUN OFFERS AND PROMOTIONS IN OMAN

The decision is designed to enhance market competitiveness, provide products at reasonable prices and boost commercial activities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a drive aimed at enhancing the business environment, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) announced that the commercial establishments in Oman no longer need prior permission from the ministry to run promotions and offers.

The decision, made in cooperation with the Consumer Protection Authority, is designed to stimulate commercial activities, enhance market competitiveness, and provide products at reasonable prices, says the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion.

But some strings are attached



to the discount and promotion offers: The discounts and promotional offers should not exceed 3 consecutive days in a week.

Moreover, promotions should not be offered more than three times a month and the maximum amount of discount is 30%.

While prior permission is no longer required for offering rebates, the companies must notify the Consumer Protection Authority if they intend to offer

discounts or offers.

The commerce ministry's initiative aims to create an environment that benefits both businesses and consumers in Oman.

The number of permits for discount and promotion sale issued by the ministry during the first six months of 2024 reached 7,379.

Mubarak bin Mohammed Al Dohni, Director General of Commerce at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment

The discounts and promotional offers should not exceed 3 consecutive days in a week, promotions should not be offered more than three times a month and the maximum amount of discount is 30%.

Promotion, said that the regulation of the discount and promotion offers/sale comes within the continued efforts of the Ministry for facilitating the business environment and boosting the commercial activity.

Allowing the establishment to make discounts and promotion offers without getting prior permit would encourage the companies to offer high quality services and products which would in

turn boost the local economy and support the economic growth of whole society, he said, adding that this procedure would create a more flexible business environment and contribute to sustainability and growth of business in the local market. "We always seek to boost cooperation between the government sector and the private sector to ensure sustainable development and prosperity of all," he added.

DEPARTMENT OF PAEDIATRIC HAEMATOLOGY

Royal hospital doctors treat rare medical condition

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A specialised medical team from the Royal Hospital's Department of Paediatric Haematology made history by using Romiplostim drug to treat a patient suffering from a combination of Down Syndrome and bone marrow failure.

Dr. Alyaa Al Mughairy, Consultant of Paediatrics Haematology and Oncology at the Royal Hospital, who headed the medical team that treated the patient's case, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that this first-of-a-kind case showed

that the treatment generated rapid response, not only by increasing the number of blood platelets, but also by augmenting red and white blood cells, without causing any side effects.

Dr. Alyaa Al Mughairy explained that Romiplostim is a synthetic protein that stimulates the production of platelets in patients suffering from platelet deficiency. The drug is typically used to treat some cases of bleeding in children suffering immune thrombocytopenia.

Dr. Alyaa added that the treatment has been documented in a



leading scientific journal specialised in paediatric haematology and oncology (Pediatric Hematology Oncology Journal), run by an international editorial board of experts in the field of paediatrics and oncology.

Innovative and effective

"It is the first case of its kind and its procedure has been reported as 'an innovative and effective treatment,'" said Dr. Alyaa.

She pointed out that this accomplishment is testimony to the skills and expertise of the paediatric haematology team at the Royal

Hospital, as well as the team members' confidence in tackling the most complex cases.

Dr. Alyaa explained that bone marrow failure is a rare and serious condition, which leads to a decrease in the number of white and red blood cells and platelets and makes the patient vulnerable to bleeding and bacterial or fungal infections.

This may be serious and requires frequent blood transfusions, platelets, and antibiotics. The patient also suffered from Down syndrome, which further complicated the condition. **>A2**



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TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:16pm
Asr.....	3:34pm
Maghrib.....	7:03pm
Isha.....	8:25pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	3:58am

IN PARIS

Oman museum joins International Council of Museums

MANAH: Across Ages Museum (OAAM) has joined the International Council of Museums (ICOM), headquartered in Paris.

The step places the museum on the map of global museums and allows it to benefit from international expertise.

Eng. Al Yaqdhan Abdullah Al Harthi, Director General of the Oman Across Ages Museum, said that the OAAM's joining of the ICOM would help the Omani museum's operators to conduct international meetings, forums, research and studies specialised in the museum field.

He added that the step would also help upgrade the efficiency and efforts of the museum's intendants.

The ICOM is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to museums that sets professional and ethical standards for museum activities.

It also makes recommendations on matters related to cultural heritage and raises public cultural awareness. -**OMA**



UTAS organises workshop on charter of AI in Islamic World

The two-day workshop is being conducted within the context of growing global interest in AI and the need to regulate the ethics of its use



MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) is organising the first regional workshop for Asia and the Middle East on the charter of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Islamic World.

The two-day workshop is being conducted within the context of growing global interest in artificial intelligence and the need to regulate the ethics of its use. The workshop reflects a dedication to advanced executive plans, programmes and strategic initiatives.

The ISESCO's drafting of the "Charter of Ethics for Artificial Intelligence in the Islamic World" has been envisaged in implementation of the ISESCO's resolution issued at the organisation's 43rd session held in Morocco in December 2022.

The opening of the workshop was held under the auspices of Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

Dr. Said Hamad Al Ruba'ee, Vice-Chancellor of UTAS, said, "This regional workshop constitutes a major step forward promoting consultation towards the enactment of the AI Charter".

He added that the workshop reviews successful experiences for establishing a strong framework for the ethics and governance of AI in Asia and the Middle East.

Dr. Salim M. Al Malik, Director-General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO), stressed the importance of the workshop in exchanging visions among experts from ICESCO countries and beyond.

The workshop is the first activity undertaken by the "ISESCO Chair for Artificial Intelligence Ethics", said Al Malik, noting that

the organization accords attention to enlightened vision and strategic approaches for devising a framework of human values that regulates AI and protects individuals' rights and the confidentiality of their personal data.

The activities include discussion panels under the theme of regional visions and perspectives about the applications of AI in Asia and Middle East Regions. Tomorrow, Wednesday 3 July 2024, the participants will present proposals on AI ethics and governance and embark on drafting a first document for "The Islamic World Charter on Artificial Intelligence".

The workshop brings about experts and representatives of organizations specialized in information technology and artificial intelligence, as well as stakeholders in new technology, members of civil society institutions and doctorate students from ISESCO member states in the region.



Tender Announcement

Financial Services Authority announces the following tender :-

Tender name	Tender Number	Description	Release the RFP	Last date for Purchase of RFP	Last date of Submitting the proposal	Tender fees in OMR
FSA Network Infrastructure Upgrade	FSA 4/2024	Delivering, mounting, configuring and migrating all equipment, software and licenses (access switches, wireless controller, wireless access points, call manager, virtual server hardware, storage, backup solution ..)	2 July 2024	11 July 2024 03:00 PM	08 August 2024 01:00 PM	125 /- OMR Non Refundable

■ Specialized companies interested in participating in the above tender must deposit the tender fee into bank account, and submit payment receipt of the tender along with a copy of the commercial registration certificate and the contact details of the authorized person to the Services & Public Relations Department e-mail : Admin@fsa.gov.om, hence, we shall provide you with Tender document by e-mail.

■ All participating companies must provide a bank guarantee, issued by locally registered bank not less than 2 % of the tender value addressed to FSA , the bond shall be valid for 90 days from the submission of the proposal.

■ All bids shall be submitted in tender box at financial affairs department.

■ FSA is not obliged to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without any justifiable reasons.

Bank account information :-

Name of beneficiary : Financial Services Authority

Account no : 0423019706330018

Bank : Bank Muscat- Corporate Branch- CBD

SWIFT code : BMUSOMRXXXX

Please attach a copy of the deposit receipt

For inquiries, please contact :-

E-mail : Admin@fsa.gov.om

Telephone Number : 24823133 , 24823299, 24823268

Timing : 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

Workdays : Sunday to Thursday.



MINISTRY OF LABOUR

More than 900 expats deported in June 2024

MUSCAT: More than 900 violating expat workers have been deported from the Sultanate of Oman in June 2024 during the inspection campaigns carried out by the Ministry of Labour. The Ministry of Labour arrested 1,366 violating workers and deported 919 male and female workers, during the inspection campaigns.

HEALTHCARE

Proud moment for doctors

< FROM A1 She pointed out that the drug "Romiplostim" proved effective in stimulating the bone marrow's production of blood cells, which led to a noticeable improvement in the patient's condition.

Dr. Alyaa Al Mughairy stressed that this achievement is a testimony to the skills and competence of the paediatric haematology team at the Royal Hospital, and their firm belief in the possibility of achieving positive treatment results even in the most complex cases.

The medical team participating in the scientific paper consisted of Dr. Alyaa Al Mughairy, head of the medical team and supervisor of the girl's treatment, Dr. Dima Abila, paediatric haematology and oncology specialist, and Dr. Huda bint Rashid Al Habsi, a trained physician in the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Fellowship at the Oman Medical Specialisation Board, and Dr. Nasser Al Rahbi, a consultant in histopathology in the Laboratory Department at the Royal Hospital.

This achievement highlights the prestigious position that the Sultanate of Oman occupies in the field of healthcare, and confirms its commitment to providing the best healthcare.



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END OF JUNE

‘Jood’ digital platform receives OMR2.136 million donations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The total financial donations received by the ‘Jood’ digital platform for charitable donations since its activation in October 2023 until the end of June reached OMR2.136 million and the number of donors through the platform reached 115,533.

The platform aims to create a unified database to record the data of beneficiaries of charitable aid and assistance, accelerate the study of cases, and deliver aid to those who deserve it easily and smoothly.

The number of charitable associations, teams, and endowment institutions registered on the ‘Jood’ platform reached 30 associations, 63 teams, and 3 endowment institutions, and the total number of initiatives and programmes on the platform is about 597 initiatives and 181 programmes.

The platform for charitable donations, which brings together all charitable associations and volunteer teams in the Sultanate of Oman, is concerned with receiving donations and providing assistance to those who deserve it. It is one of the goals and indicators of the “Oman 2040” vision, within the priority of social wel-



fare and protection.

The platform includes four types of donations: Donations according to the initiative, which refers to initiatives provided by charitable associations and teams with the aim of collecting donations from the public, such as general donations, orphan sponsorship, school meals, Eid clothing, ongoing charity, sacrifices, zakat, housing assistance, relief and disaster relief, etc., as well as donations according to the association or charitable team, donations to a specific case, in addition

to in-kind donations.

It is worth noting that the ‘Jood’ charitable platform allows individuals and institutions to donate electronically through secure payment channels, as part of employing information and communications technology to serve charitable associations and teams. It also facilitates donors’ access to charitable associations and volunteer teams in the Sultanate of Oman through a unified platform without the need to visit each association or team separately.

PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES

Ministry carries out inspection campaign for Khareef season

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Investment Promotion, represented by the Inspection Department, carried out several inspection campaigns on shops and filling stations to enhance preparedness for Khareef Dhofar 2024 season.

The campaigns aimed to confirm the ministry’s commitment to providing quality services to consumers and to assess the compliance of commercial and service establishments with the Ministry’s requirements.

As a result of the campaign, 131 commercial establishments were issued violation reports for failing to provide an electronic payment device, as required by Ministry regulations for facilitating consumer transactions.

The Ministry’s Inspection Department visited and evaluated the service levels at several fuel stations situated along the Adam-Haima-Thumrait line, Mahout Salalah Road, and in Dhofar Governorate.

A total of 59 gas stations were inspected, leading to warnings being issued to 10 stations for failing to comply with the standards and requirements established by the Ministry of Commerce



and Industry and Investment Promotion.

These regular inspections affirm adherence to approved standards, service levels, and the provision of essential requirements at these stations.

The Ministry reiterated its commitment to ongoing inspection campaigns to ensure compliance with Ministerial Resolution No. 386/2022, which mandates electronic payment services across various commercial activities. The Ministry will also continue monitoring gas stations to ensure they provide efficient and quality services to consumers.



Dhofar Governorate Police takes steps to boost tourism experience of guests



Special measures have been taken with the expected increase in the number of tourists during this season

SALALAH: Following the start of the Dhofar Khareef season 2024, the Dhofar Governorate Police Command is taking a number of steps in accordance with the nature of tourism events and activities in the governorate, with support from other formations of the Royal Oman Police.

Brigadier Saeed bin Hamad Al Balushi, Commander of the Dhofar Governorate Police, said: “The General Command of Police is keen to provide support to the Dhofar Governorate Police to enhance police presence at all tourist sites in the governorate and ensure the delivery of quality services.”

He added that the relevant committees of the Royal Oman Police held several meetings and conducted field visits to determine all the needs and requirements of security and traffic procedures at tourist sites during the Khareef season.

He explained that special measures have been taken to deal with the expected increase in the num-

ber of tourists during this season, in coordination with the relevant authorities, to ensure the safety of visitors and ensure the smooth flow of traffic leading to tourist and event sites.

He pointed out the ongoing co-ordination with other government agencies to maintain the safety of visitors and citizens to tourist sites, in addition to ensuring the availability of safety standards by installing barriers at dangerous places and alerting operating companies to ensure the validity of electronic games and setting warning regulations.

The Commander of Dhofar Governorate Police stressed the presence of police personnel along the roads leading to Dhofar Governorate to ensure the safety of road users and provide immediate assistance to them in emergency cases, in addition to the presence of Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority teams and Coast Guard Police patrols on beaches and water springs to raise awareness and deal with reports immediately and carry out rescue operations.

Mounted police columns will patrol beaches, tourist sites and places that are difficult to reach.

He called on vehicle drivers to adhere to traffic regulations and rules and take into account safety requirements, by inspecting vehicles and performing the necessary maintenance before traveling to Dhofar Governorate, adhering to the specified speed, not overtaking in prohibited places, leaving a safe distance between vehicles, and not using a mobile phone while driving.



Oman calls for innovative solutions to tackle negative impacts of climate change



Oman made the plea in a speech during an annual conference about the negative effects of climate change, which was held as part of events of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday called for finding practical, innovative solutions to tackle the negative impacts of climate change. Oman proposed the compilation of a database about areas that are most vulnerable to related damage in the near, medium and long future. Oman made the plea in a

speech during an annual conference about the negative effects of climate change, held as part of events of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council. The speech was delivered by Idris Abdulrahman Al Khanjari, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations (UN) and International

Organisations in Geneva. Al Khanjari urged the parties concerned to make an attempt to find collective, comprehensive solutions that take into account local dimensions, anticipate change and comprise measures to ensure smooth transition, sustainability and the protection of the environment against further damage. Al Khanjari stressed that the desired proactive, fair, sustainable and environment-friendly alternatives would contribute to shifting entire human populations to more suitable places. The solutions should also replace production activities in a manner that ensures the safety of human livelihoods, secures justice and equity and respects social, economic and environmental laws worldwide, he added.

FAMILY RELATIONS

Joint report evaluating marital relations in Arab World released

CAIRO: The Arab League Secretariat General launched together with the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a Qatar Foundation affiliate, the Joint Report on "Evaluating Marital Relationships during the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World" in an event taking place in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, over three days. The launching event was held with the participation of Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Social Affairs Sector at the Arab League Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Executive Director of DIFI Dr. Sharifa Al Emadi, and HE Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the Arab League Tariq Ali Faraj Al Ansari, along with the representatives of member state delegations to the Arab League, and a lineup of experts and specialists. Dr. Sharifa Al Emadi said that marriage is a solid covenant out of which the building blocks of society and the nation emerge, regulating social ties and family relations, as well as promoting solidarity and compassion, adding that spouses form a single

soul united in love and compassion under one roof. She continued by pointing out that in partnership with the Arab League, DIFI launched back in 2019, a book on the status of marriage in the Arab World, which is the first of its kind in comprehensively covering all aspects of marriage in the Arab region, including marital choice, traditional and modern marriage patterns, age and marriage, marital relationships, and the intersection of marriage with educational, economic, and labor systems, among other analytical aspects. The Executive Director of DIFI noted that it was imperative to develop a scientific and accurate understanding of marital relationships, particularly with regards to factors contributing to divorce in the early years of marriage, but also to consider marriage's strength and resilience factors, hence, giving birth to the collaboration between DIFI and the Arab League's Social Affairs Sector in producing "Evaluating Marital Relationships During the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World" For her part,

Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Social Affairs Sector at the Arab League Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh expressed her happiness for the launching event taking place, in partnership with DIFI, highlighted the report's success in identifying the success factors and challenges to marriage in the Arab world, as well as recommending intervention programs to deal with marital issues during the early years of marriage. Ambassador Abu Ghazaleh praised DIFT's efforts in making this activity a success, adding that the Arab League considers these efforts as a manifestation of DIFT's vision to promote family well-being. The Arab League Assistant Secretary-General also pointed out that the circumstances facing the Arab family pertaining to the ever-changing pace of life and trends, wars, cultural changes, and the wide exposure to media and information, require constantly finding innovative solutions and new approaches to protect marriage and maintain its cohesion in the Arab region. — ONA

TOURISM MINISTRY

Visitor spending in Saudi Arabia rises

RIYADH: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia achieved a 22.9 percent growth in inbound visitor spending during the first quarter of 2024 compared to the first quarter of 2023, with their total spending exceeding SAR45 billion. Also, the Kingdom recorded a surplus in the travel account amounting to SAR24 billion, representing a growth rate of over 46 percent compared to the same period in 2023. Preliminary data During the same period, outbound travellers from the Kingdom spent an estimated SAR21 billion, according to preliminary data from the Saudi Central Bank's travel account in the balance of payments. The increase in spending by inbound visitors to the Kingdom is part of the continuous successes achieved by the tourism sector in the Kingdom, where it ranked first on the United Na-

tions tourism list for the growth rate of international tourists and the growth rate of tourism revenues among the top major tourist destinations globally in 2023 compared to 2019. Improving tourism services The data also confirms the effective efforts made by the tourism system to achieve global leadership in the sector by applying the best practices in tourism development and improving tourism services and products. This includes ongoing cooperation with all government entities to support the development of the tourism sector in the Kingdom. This achievement, which reflects the extensive efforts made by the Ministry of Tourism and other components of the Saudi tourism system, not only enhances the tourism sector but also significantly contributes to the growth of the national economy as part of the framework of the National Tourism Strategy. — SPA

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Expats arrested

MUSCAT: Two expatriates have been arrested for possessing crystal narcotics and hashish, the ROP said. They were arrested in possession of a quantity of crystal narcotics and hashish, the ROP said. The legal procedures were completed against them.

— Times News Service

CABLE OF CONGRATULATIONS

HM congratulates President of Panama

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to José Raúl Mulino on winning the Presidential elections of the Republic of Panama. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt

sentiments and wished him success in achieving further progress and prosperity for the people of Panama. His Majesty also wished the bilateral relations further development and growth.

— ONA

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 - c. Fleet Management Capabilities: Demonstrated ability to manage and maintain a fleet of vehicles.
 - d. Presence in Maximum locations with established offices preferable in Oman.
- Eligibility Criteria for Commercial Bidding:**
 - a. Registration Grade: First or Excellent.
 - b. Oman Chamber Certificate.
 - c. Company Registration Certificate (CR).
 - d. VAT Certificate & Tax Card Certificate.
 - e. Company's Profile.
 - f. Financial stability.
- Types of Vehicles:**
 - a. Mazda 6 2.0 Auto MY 2022 or equivalent.
 - b. Honda Accord LX 1.5T Auto MY 2022 or equivalent.
 - c. Mitsubishi L200 DC Pickup 2.4 Diesel Auto or equivalent.
 - d. Nissan Navara Pickup Petrol or equivalent.
- Companies who are meeting our standard criteria mentioned above are required to submit their documents to vendorr@omanflourmills.com no later than 11th July 2024.
- Only the shortlisted companies will be invited to purchase the tender documents.

Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defense invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in The following tender:

Subject	Tender Number	Last Date for Inquiries	Last date to submit the tender	Tender Documnet Price
PAINTING OF RNO SHIPS AND BOATS	19 /2024	18/07/2024	05/08/2024	75 OMR

1. Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs on the working days.

2. Payment of Tender documents to be made by using of any Visa Electron Cards or "Visa credit" Cards or through Smart Card issued from all the banks are operated in oman.

Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref	Description	Last date for Collection of tenders Document	Closing Time/ Day/ Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
2024/2468	General maintenance work at Wadi Bani Khalid Hospital, affiliated with the General Directorate of Health Services in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate	Before 10 am on Sunday 07/ July /2024	Before 10 am on Wednesday 24/ July /2024	Specialized companies registered with the Tender Board at the fourth level	R.O 25/= Per set

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) Any Clarification, you may contact via , Telephone: 24402200 Email id: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

COALITION GOVERNMENT

Former-spy chief sworn in as Dutch PM

AMSTERDAM: Former Dutch intelligence chief Dick Schoof was sworn in as prime minister on Tuesday at the head of a coalition government promising to implement the Netherlands’ “strictest ever” asylum and immigration policy.

The 67-year-old Independent candidate is succeeding departing Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who

is set to become the next secretary-general of NATO after 14 years in office in The Hague.

Schoof’s inauguration comes seven months on from a general election in which far-right populist Geert Wilders’ PVV (Freedom Party) emerged as the Netherlands’ largest party.

Traditionally, the leader of the largest party would be favorite to

become Dutch prime minister. But the anti-Islam and Eurosceptic Wilders, 60, renounced the role to appease coalition partners from the Famers Party (BBB), the liberal-conservative VVD and the new anti-corruption NSC, whose leaders also agreed not to stand for PM.

Instead, they settled on Schoof as a compromise to be sworn in by King Willem-Alexander.

Schoof has insisted that he wants to be “a prime minister for all citizens of the Netherlands” and that he won’t allow himself to be “held on a string by Mr. Wilders.” He has nevertheless promised to implement the country’s “strictest-ever admission policy for asylum and the most comprehensive package for getting a grip on migration.”

— DW



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Stampede at religious event in India kills more than 100 people

Medical and government officials gave varying death tolls in a fluid situation, with most recent estimates exceeding 100 people and many more in hospital, some with serious injuries



told reporters.

What do we know about the stampede?

Crowds had gathered to celebrate the Hindu god Shiva in the city of Hathras, about 140 kilometres (85 miles) south of New Delhi.

“The attendees were exiting the venue when a dust storm blinded their vision, leading to a melee and the subsequent tragic incident,” Chaitra V. told the French AFP news agency.

The precise cause of the stampede remains unclear, but media have cited police sources as saying that hot and humid weather may have led to uncomfortable conditions, prompting panic.

“There was a huge crowd of [worshippers] gathered at the spot,” one victim told the Hindustan Times in a nearby hospital.

“There was no way out, and everybody fell on each other, and a stampede took place,” the victim said.

“When I tried to move out, there were motorcycles parked outside, which blocked my way. Many fainted while others died.”

State Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has already ordered an investigation into the incident.

“Instructions have been given to the concerned officials to conduct relief and rescue operations on [a] war footing and to provide proper treatment to the injured,” he wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

In a tragic incident, a stampede at a private event in Hathras has claimed 50-60 lives, Hathras DM Ashish Kumar confirmed.

He said that the district administration is actively investigating the incident.

“District administration is investigating the matter. The injured are being taken to the hospital and people are still being recovered. A figure of nearly 50-60 deaths has been reported to me by the doctors,” Hathras DM Ashish Kumar told ANI.

“Permission for the event to be held was given by the SDM and it was a private event. A high-level committee has been formed to investigate the matter. The primary focus of the administration is to provide all possible help to the

injured and kin of the deceased,” he added.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed condolences over the incident in the parliament session.

“There are reports of many people dying in the stampede in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. I express my condolences to those who lost their lives in this accident. I wish for the speedy recovery of all the injured. The administration is engaged in relief and rescue work under the supervision of the state government. Senior officials of the central government are in constant touch with the Uttar Pradesh government. I assure everyone through this House that the victims will be helped in every way,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in the parliament session today.

The Chief Minister has instructed officials to promptly transport the injured to hospitals and ensure they receive adequate medical treatment. He has also wished for the swift recovery of those injured. — ANI

UP CM announces financial aid to deceased, injured families

LUCKNOW: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakhs each to the families of the deceased and Rs 50 thousand each to the injured following the tragic stampede in Hathras.

Earlier in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, a stampede at a religious event resulted in the deaths of 50 to 60 people.

Expressing deep sorrow over the incident, the Chief Minister has ordered a thorough investigation.

He also instructed the officials to form a team under the leadership of ADG, Agra and Commissioner, Aligarh to investigate the causes of the accident.

CM Adityanath is personally monitoring the situation and has dispatched two ministers, the Chief Secretary, and the DGP to the site.



FIR will be filed

An FIR will be filed against the programme organisers, and the administration is preparing for major action in response to the tragedy.

Earlier in the day, Hathras DM Ashish Kumar confirmed the increase in death toll from 27 to around 50-60. He said, “District administration is investigating the matter. The injured are being taken

to the hospital and people are still being recovered... A figure of nearly 50-60 deaths has been reported to me by the doctors... Permission for the event to be held was given by the SDM and it was a private event... A high-level committee has been formed to investigate the matter... The primary focus of the administration is to provide all possible help to the injured and kin of the deceased.”

Union Minister Rajnath Singh and Biju Janata Dal President Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday expressed their condolences following the tragic incident in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, where a stampede at a religious event resulted in the deaths of 50 to 60 people.

Paying condolence to the deceased the Union Minister labelled the accident as “extremely painful”. — ANI

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

US and Panama sign deal to curb migration across the Darien Gap

DARIÉN GAP: The US and Panama have signed an agreement to curb the flow of migration to the southern US border through the Darien Gap, the Central American government announced on Monday.

Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino, who took office on Monday, told the people in his first speech that he would seek international assistance to find solutions to what he described as a costly “humanitarian and environmental crisis.”

Minutes later, Mulino’s new foreign minister signed a memorandum of understanding with the US to “allow the closing off of the passing of illegal immigrants through the Darien,” Panama’s government said.

The US agreed to “cover” the costs of repatriating migrants who enter Panama illegally, the agreement signed by US Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said. Mayorkas attended Mulino’s inauguration.

The agreement was “designed to jointly reduce the number of migrants being cruelly smuggled through the Darien, usually en route to the United States,” a spokeswoman for the White House National Security Council said in a statement.

The Darien Gap, a 160-mile (257-kilometre) space between Colombia and Panama, is the only land route to the US from South America.

The perilous jungle, which just a few years ago was seen as an impassable barrier, has in recent



years seen people make the trek in search of better opportunities in the US.

Hundreds of thousands traverse the Darien corridor

Last year, a record 520,000 migrants, including thousands of children, traversed the perilous corridor by foot.

More than 190,000 people have crossed so far in 2024, with most migrants hailing from Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and China.

The route grew in popularity in recent years as smugglers made it an affordable pathway for hundreds of thousands of people.

But the trek is a highly dangerous one — people face treacherous terrain, wild animals and criminal gangs that extort and abuse them.

“I won’t allow Panama to be an open path for thousands of people who enter our country illegally, supported by an international organisation related to drug trafficking and human trafficking,” Mulino, a former security minister, said on Monday. — DW

RIGHTS WATCHDOG

At least 39 killed, over 360 injured in recent anti-tax protest in Kenya

NAIROBI: At least 39 people have lost their lives in recent anti-government protests in Kenya against the new tax hike, according to media report, citing the national rights watchdog.

The activists have geared up for a new round of protests this week in Kenya.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) announced the toll on Monday, which is almost double the figure previously disclosed by the government for those killed while demonstrating against a raft of unpopular tax increases that have now been withdrawn.

KNCHR records further indicated that 39 people have died and 361 have been injured “in relation to the protests countrywide”, the state-funded body said in a statement, adding that the figures covered the period from June 18 to July 1, reported Al Jazeera.

It further stated that there had been 32 cases of “enforced or involuntary disappearances” and 627 arrests of protesters.

Moreover, largely peaceful anti-tax rallies, led by mostly young Gen-Z protesters, descended into shocking scenes of deadly violence last Tuesday when lawmakers passed the contentious legislation.

Later, following the announcement of the vote, crowds ransacked the parliament complex in central Nairobi and it was partly set ablaze as police fired live bullets at protesters, as reported by Al Jazeera.

Notably, it is the most serious crisis to be confronted by the government of President William



Ruto since he took office in September 2022 following a deeply divisive election in a nation often considered a beacon of stability in a turbulent region.

Ruto, in a televised interview on Sunday, said that 19 people had died in the protests, but insisted that he did not have “blood on my hands” and pledged an investigation into the deaths.

The KNCHR “continues to condemn in the strongest terms

possible the unwarranted violence and force that was inflicted on protesters, medical personnel, lawyers, journalists and on safe spaces such as churches, medical emergency centres and ambulances,” the rights body said.

“We maintain that the force used against the protesters was excessive and disproportionate,” it added.

The watchdog also said that it “strongly condemns the violent

and shocking acts of lawlessness that were exhibited by some of the protesters” including the parliament and other government buildings.

Moreover, fresh protests have been called by activists beginning Tuesday despite last week, when Ruto announced that he would not sign into law the bill containing the tax hikes.

Additionally, leaflets have been posted on social media with the hashtags “Occupy Everywhere”, “Ruto must go” and “Reject Budgeted Corruption”.

India has also issued an advisory for its nationals in Kenya, as protests against a tax hike turned violent, causing a rampage in the African nation.

The Indian Embassy in Kenya earlier advised the Indian nationals there to “exercise utmost caution, restrict non-essential movement and avoid the areas affected by the protests and violence till the situation clears up.” — ANI

250,000 Palestinians will be forced to flee Khan Yunis again: UNRWA

The Israeli occupation army warned residents to evacuate several areas east of Khan Yunis, which it said were dangerous combat zones

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said an estimated 250,000 Palestinians will be forced to flee Khan Yunis again, despite the lack of a safe place in the Gaza Strip.

“Just weeks after people were forced to return to a devastated Khan Yunis, Israeli authorities have issued new evacuation orders for the area,” said UNRWA on X.

Adding: “Yet again, families face forced displacement. We estimate 250,000 people will have to

flee. Even though nowhere is safe in Gaza.” The Israeli occupation army warned residents to evacuate several areas east of Khan Yunis, which it said were dangerous combat zones. Residents received a warning phone call from the Israeli occupation army, saying they would immediately start operating with “extreme force.”

Israeli occupation forces murder 8,672 students since beginning of genocide on Gaza

The Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education said that the Israeli occupation forces murdered at least 8,672 Palestinian students and injured at least 14,583 others, since the beginning of the Israeli ongoing genocide on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The ministry said in a statement today that the death toll of students in the Gaza Strip since Oct. 7, 2023 is at least 8,572, and the injuries have reach an approximate 14,089, while the Israeli occupation forces murdered a hundred students, injured 494 Palestinian students, and arrested 349 others in the West Bank.

The Israeli occupation forces murdered 497 teachers and managers, injured 3,402 others, and ar-



rested more than 109 in the West Bank, the statement added. The ministry also pointed out that 353 government schools, universities, university buildings, and 65 of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were bombed and vandalized in the Gaza Strip.

As a result, 139 of them were severely damaged, 93 were completely destroyed, 57 schools in the West Bank were stormed and vandalized, and 133 government schools were used as shelter

centers in the Gaza Strip.

The ministry confirmed that at least 620,000 students in the Gaza Strip are still deprived of enrolling in their schools since the beginning of the genocide, while most of the students suffer from psychological trauma and face difficult health conditions.

UN says Israel prevented entry of aid sent to Gaza

The United Nations said that Israel prevented the arrival of more than half of the aid sent to the northern Gaza Strip last June.

This came in a press conference by United Nations spokesman Stéphane Dujarric, in which he explained that the displaced people in Gaza suffer from a major shortage of shelter materials or vital supplies.

He pointed out that distributing humanitarian aid through Karam Abu Salam border gate is almost impossible due to security problems and fuel shortages.

Dujarric pointed out that unexploded ordnance in Gaza poses a great danger, especially to children, pointing out that a 9-year-

old girl was killed in Khan Yunis last Saturday because of these munitions.

He added that Israel prevented the arrival of more than half of the 115 planned aid missions to northern Gaza during June.

Some Gaza detainees in Israeli prisons had their limbs amputated without anesthesia

Some Gaza detainees in Israeli prisons had their limbs amputated without anesthesia

The Palestinian Prisoner's Society (PPS) said that some detainees from the Gaza Strip, who are held in Israeli occupation prisons, have had their limbs amputated without anesthesia.

In a statement reviewing the most salient facts about the Gaza detainees' issue, PPS said some detainees had their limbs amputated due to injuries sustained from leg shackles during their detention.

PPS pointed out that the occupation keeps detainees restrained; shackled and blindfolded for 24 hours.

Detainees are subjected to beatings with the use of all means and tools, including attacking them with batons and police dogs.

— WAPA

TRUMP IMMUNITY CASE

US apex court sends case back to lower court

WASHINGTON: Justices in the US Supreme Court ruled on an appeal by former US President Donald Trump regarding his claimed immunity from prosecution over his alleged efforts to overturn the result of the 2020 presidential election.

Trump appealed after a lower court rejected his bid for protection from a federal criminal case.

The Supreme Court judges rejected the lower court's ruling and sent the case back to them but did not give a clear ruling on whether Trump was, in fact, immune from prosecution.

However, the decision will mean that a trial before the November election is now highly unlikely.

What did the Supreme Court judges say?

The ruling, voted through 6-3 on partisan lines in the chamber, found that former presidents have absolute immunity from prosecution for their official acts — and no immunity for unofficial acts.

However, the justices did not outline what separates official and



unofficial acts, which is to say acts carried out in a private capacity, referring that a decision instead to the lower court.

A statement of the ruling said that a president “is entitled to at least presumptive immunity from prosecution for all his official acts. There is no immunity for unofficial acts.”

Trump celebrates ‘big win’

The former president, who is also the current presumptive Republican nominee for this year's White

House run, celebrated the decision on social media.

“Big win for our constitution and democracy. Proud to be an American!” he wrote on his Truth Social platform.

His expected opponent is current President Joe Biden, setting the stage for a rematch of the 2020 election.

Biden's campaign commented that Trump “thinks he's above the law” following the ruling.

Election expert David Becker called Monday's ruling “deeply

disturbing,” the Associated Press reported.

“Almost anything that a president does with the executive branch is characterized as an official act,” he said on a call with reporters following the ruling.

“I think putting aside this particular prosecution, for any unscrupulous individual holding the seat of the Oval Office who might lose an election, the way I read this opinion is it could be a road map for them seeking to stay in power.”

Biden condemns ‘fundamentally new principle’

In a speech at the White House on Monday, Biden slammed the court ruling.

“For all practical purposes, today's decision almost certainly means there are no limits to what a president can do. This is a fundamentally new principle, and it's a dangerous precedent,” he said.

Biden used this point in his pitch to voters ahead of the presidential election.

“The American people must decide if they want to entrust... once

again, the presidency to Donald Trump, now knowing he'll be more emboldened to do whatever he pleases, whenever he wants to do it,” Biden said.

What we know about the case

Trump had argued that US presidents are immune from prosecution for official acts they took in office and that the indictment he faces on charges of election interference must be dismissed.

The 78-year-old, who is in a tight rematch race against White House incumbent Joe Biden for the November 5 election, nominated three of the six conservatives on the nine-member court.

Conservative justices had previously voiced concern about presidents lacking any level of immunity.

While the Supreme Court has previously ruled that ex-presidents can't be sued in civil cases for their actions in the Oval Office, it has never previously pronounced on criminal immunity.

— DW

INDIA

Assam flood situation grim

KAMRUP METROPOLITAN: The flood situation in Assam has deteriorated with more than 6.44 lakh people in 19 districts being affected. Floods have claimed 35 lives so far with one person dying in Tinsukia district on Monday, said Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

The flood report of ASDMA stated that 1275 villages under 64 revenue circles in 19 districts - Kamrup, Golaghat, Majuli, Lakhimpur, Karimganj, Cachar, Dhemaji, Morigaon, Udalguri, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Nagaon, Sivasagar, Darrang, Nalbari, Sonitpur, Tamulpur, Biswanath, Jorhat have affected in the second wave of flood.

The flood has waters inundated 26199.18 hectares of crop area.

One person died in Tinsukia district after drowning in flood waters and one person is missing in Golaghat district.

The district administration of 12 districts has set up 136 relief camps and distribution centers where over 54,200 people are now taking shelter.

— ANI

LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION

Hurricane Beryl batters Caribbean with Category 5 storm

BARBADOS: Hurricane Beryl left a trail of destruction across the Caribbean after it made landfall late on Monday.

The storm, which was updated to a Category 5 status, ripped doors off their frames, shattered windows and upended roofs off people's homes, scattering debris from Grenada up to St Lucia.

“This is an extremely dangerous and life-threatening situation. Take action now to protect your life!” the US National Hurricane Centre said on Monday.

“Beryl is expected to remain an extremely dangerous major hurricane as it moves across the Caribbean Sea later this week.”

Late on Monday night, it added: “Beryl is now a potentially catastrophic Category 5 hurricane.”

Authorities on other Caribbean countries have issued warnings as Beryl moved north, including a hurricane warning in Jamaica and a tropical storm warning in Haiti.

The National Hurricane Centre added that “Beryl is expected to remain an extremely dangerous major hurricane as its moves.”

“We have to wait this monster out,” said St Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves.

Prime Minister of Grenada Dickon Mitchell said one person had died. However he could not yet say if there were other fatalities because authorities had not been able to assess the situation on the islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.



Wednesday, rising to as much as 12 inches (31 cm) in some areas, it said.

“Only five major (Category 3+) hurricanes have been recorded in the Atlantic before the first week of July,” hurricane expert Michael Lowry said on social media.

Experts said the unusual weather pattern was a result of climate change.

“Climate change is loading the dice for more intense hurricanes to form,” Christopher Rozoff from the National Center for Atmospheric Research told Reuters.

Wild weather like this is predicted to continue in future.

“This is the type of storm that we expect this year, these outlier things that happen when and where they shouldn't,” University of Miami tropical weather researcher Brian McNoldy told the Associated Press.

Rapid intensification

“Not only for things to form and intensify and reach higher intensities, but increase the likelihood of rapid intensification. All of that is just coming together right now, and this won't be the last time.”

Wild weather like this is predicted to continue in future.

“This is the type of storm that we expect this year, these outlier things that happen when and where they shouldn't,” University of Miami tropical weather researcher Brian McNoldy told the Associated Press. — DW

“We do hope there aren't any other fatalities or any injuries,” he said, adding that the government will send people first thing Tuesday morning to evaluate the situation on the islands.

Unseasonably strong

Beryl is the earliest Category 5 observed in the Atlantic basin on record, and only the second Category 5 hurricane in July after Hurricane Emily in 2005, according to the National Hurricane Center said.

It could dump 4 inches to 8 inches (10 cm to 20 cm) of rain on

SPORTS

INDIA COACH TENURE ENDS

‘Thank you Rohit for that call in November’, says Dravid

BRIDGETOWN: Rahul Dravid was done as India head coach after his initial two-year term ended at the end of last year's ODI World Cup, where the team finished runners-up to Australia. Then came a call from Rohit Sharma, and everything changed.

“Ro [Rohit], thank you very much for making that call to me in November and asking [me] to continue,” Dravid, whose tenure ended after India's T20 World Cup 2024 title win, said in a video posted by the BCCI on Monday.

“I think it's been such a privilege and a pleasure to work with each and every one of you, but Ro, also thanks for the time. There is a lot of time we have to chat, we have to discuss, we have to agree, we have to disagree at times, but thank you so very much.”

As coach, apart from winning the T20 World Cup, Dravid was in charge when India got to the World Test Championship (WTC) final in June 2023 and the ODI World Cup final in November 2023.

In his moment of glory as coach, Dravid said he didn't believe in “redemption stories”. That was in response to a question on whether it was particularly satisfying to lift the World Cup on the same shores where India were dumped out of the ODI World Cup in the first round in 2007 with Dravid the team's captain.

“I'm not usually short of words but on a day like today, for me to be part of this, I could not be more grateful,” Dravid said. “For the respect, for the kindness, for the effort that each and everyone of you have shown to me, to my coaching staff, to my support staff.

“All of you will remember these moments. We always say, it is not about the runs, it is not about the wickets, you never remember your career but you remember moments like this, so let's really enjoy.”

Dravid was hoisted by the entire team on the field during the victory celebrations, with Virat Kohli and Rohit leading the way. Dravid and the selectors were responsible for bringing back the two senior players to the T20I side earlier this year despite them having not featured in the format for a long time.

As they celebrated together, Dravid had a small message for Kohli: “All three whites ticked off. One red to go. Tick it.” The reference being to India's wins in the ODI World Cup in 2011, the Champions Trophy in 2013 and now the T20 World Cup, all of which Kohli was a part of, and the World Test Championship, which India haven't won yet despite reaching the final on both occasions so far.

Dravid's successor is expected to be named soon. VVS Laxman is coaching the second-string side that will play a series of five T20Is in Zimbabwe starting July 6, and Jay Shah, the BCCI secretary, has said that the next coach will be named ahead of the white-ball tour of Sri Lanka in late July. Gautam Gambhir is the frontrunner to be named head coach.

Last month, prior to the start of the T20 World Cup, Dravid had cited the packed calendar as a major reason for not reapplying for the job. “Unfortunately, just the kind of schedules [that are in place in international cricket] and where I find myself in this stage in my life, I don't think I'll be able to reapply,” he had said upon India's arrival in New York. - Agencies

Defending champ Vondrousova suffers exit; Djokovic triumphs

The Czech made 21 unforced errors in her defeat to Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro, who committed 13



LONDON: Marketa Vondrousova's Wimbledon title defence came to an early end as she fell to a surprise first-round defeat by Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro on Tuesday. The Czech became the first unseeded player to win the women's singles trophy when she triumphed against Ons Jabeur in last year's final.

But Vondrousova's game was riddled with 21 unforced errors and double faults as the 25-year-old opened proceedings with a lacklustre performance on Centre Court. World No.83 Bouzas Maneiro, 21, committed just 13 unforced errors as she won 6-4, 6-2

for her first Grand Slam victory.

Vondrousova's early exit means there will be a different women's singles champion for a seventh consecutive year. Serena Williams was the last player to successfully defend the Venus Rosewater Dish, winning back-to-back titles in 2015 and 2016.

Djokovic cruises

Meanwhile, in men's section, Novak Djokovic said he was “extremely glad with the way I felt

and the way I played” as he won his first match since knee surgery to reach the second round on Tuesday. Djokovic, seeking to equal Roger Federer's men's record of eight singles titles at SW19, beat Vit Kopriva 6-1 6-2 6-2 under the roof on Centre Court.

The Serb, 37, had an operation on a torn medial meniscus in his right knee on 5 June, having aggravated the problem during the French Open. He will next play British wildcard Jacob Fearnley or

Spanish qualifier Alejandro Moro Canas.

On Monday, top seed Jannik Sinner found a way past German Yannick Hanfmann, winning 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 on Court One and played partly under the roof on Monday. Elsewhere, Frances Tiafoe made a comeback from two sets down to beat Italy's Matteo Arnaldi. The American 29th seed fought back to win 6-7 (5-7), 2-6, 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 on Court 15.

However, Sebastian Baez became the first seed to fall in the men's singles, losing to Brandon Nakashima. And in an all-French affair on Court 18, 37-year-old Gael Monfils knocked out 22nd seed, and compatriot, Adrian Mannarino.

Osaka wins

Naomi Osaka said it “feels like a dream” as she made a winning return on her first appearance at Wimbledon for five years on Monday. The four-time Grand Slam champion came through 6-1, 1-6, 6-4 against Diane Parry in the first round on court two.

The 26-year-old, who is now ranked 113rd in the world, was injured in 2022 and also missed the 2021 tournament while taking time off to deal with mental health issues.

Murray opts out of singles, to play Wimbledon doubles

LONDON: Andy Murray has decided not to play in the Wimbledon singles, instead making his farewell to the All England Club in the doubles alongside older brother Jamie.

Murray, who is planning to retire later this year, had surgery 10 days ago on a back issue. The 37-year-old, who won Wimbledon in 2013 and 2016, was due to play Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic on Tuesday.

“Unfortunately, despite working incredibly hard on his recovery since his operation just over a week ago, Andy has taken the very difficult decision not to play the singles this year,” Murray's team said in a statement.

“As you can imagine, he is extremely disappointed but has confirmed that he will be playing in the doubles with Jamie and looks forward to competing at Wimbledon for the last time.”

Also, Coco Gauff, playing the final match on Centre Court on Monday, breezed into the second round with a commanding 6-1, 6-2 victory over fellow American Caroline Dolehide.

Elsewhere, French Open runner-up Jasmine Paolini, and Eastbourne champion Daria Kasatkina were among the early first-round winners. But there was a surprise exit for Chinese eighth seed Zheng Qinwen, who lost 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 to New Zealand qualifier Lulu Sun.

Russian teen Mirra Andreeva, the 24th seed, also suffered a surprise 1-6, 6-3, 6-2 defeat by world No.88 Brenda Fruhvirtova. - Agencies

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by September 2024 reaching \$86.79, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$1.23 from the price of Monday, which was \$85.56. - **OMA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,684.24 points, down by 0.25% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.04% at 462.73 points. Muscat Gases, up 8.53%, was the top gainer while Oman Oil Marketing, down 9.71%, was the top loser.

ahlibank successfully completes OMR40 million AT1 bonds issue



This includes a base issue of OMR20 million and a Green Shoe Option of OMR20 million

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ahlibank has announced the successful completion of its Additional Tier 1 Capital Instruments (AT1 Bonds) issue aggregating OMR 40 million, through private placement. This includes a base issue of OMR20 million and a Green Shoe Option of OMR 20 million. The AT1 Bonds issuance is set to strengthen the overall capital adequacy of the bank. The sub-



scription period for the issuance opened on June 13, 2024, and closed on June 25, 2024. The issue received a strong response from investors and was oversubscribed more than two times, leading to the bank exercising the green shoe option in full. Earlier in June 2024, the bank

had exercised its first call option on AT1 Bonds of OMR 20 million, issued by the bank in June 2019. A diverse demographic of investors, including foreign investors, corporate entities, government bodies, sovereign institutions, and high-net-worth individuals, participated in the subscription,

underscoring the widespread popularity of ahlibank's financial instruments. Besides attracting a significant number of new marquee investors, another notable aspect of the subscription was the continued support from a large proportion of investors who had previously subscribed to the

2019 AT1 Bonds. Commenting on the success of the issue, Said Al Hatmi, Chief Executive Officer, ahlibank, said, "With the successful completion of our AT1 Bonds issuance, ahlibank has achieved yet another milestone. This strong demand for our AT1 Bonds is a testament to the resilience of our business model and the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives. We are indeed grateful for the continued support from our existing investors and delighted to welcome new participants to our growing community of stakeholders. We would also like to thank the Central Bank of Oman, Financial Services Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange, and Muscat Clearing and Depository who have played a quintessential role in facilitating the entire process." He added saying, "The issuance of AT1 Bonds plays a pivotal role in fortifying our capital structure, ensuring financial robustness, and maintaining the trust and

confidence of our stakeholders. The strengthened capital base resulting from this issuance also enhances our ability to continue with the growth trajectory of the bank in line with our strategy, continuing to offer competitive and innovative financial solutions. Furthermore, the significant interest witnessed in the subscription reflects the high confidence the market places in ahlibank's financial strength and strategic vision. It solidifies our image as a reliable and forward-thinking institution, truly making us a Partner in Excellence for each of our stakeholders." Through such accomplishments, ahlibank reaffirms its conviction in innovation, customer-centricity, and sound financial practices. As ahlibank continues to pioneer advancements in the realm of banking, it remains dedicated to fostering sustainable growth and contributing to the overall prosperity of the local banking sector as well as the economy of the country.

REPORT

MSX index witnesses 3.3% decline in June

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The MSX 30 index registered a decline during June-2024 at 3.3 percent to close the month at 4,687.23 points, according to a new report. "In terms of sectoral performance, two out of the three sector indices on the exchange recorded gains during the month," Kamco Invest said in its GCC Markets Monthly Report June 2024. However, the Financial Index recorded a decline of 4.1 percent during June-2024 to close the month at 7,684.9 points mainly driven by broad-based decline in shares of several of the compa-

nies in the sector such as Muscat Finance Company (-7.8 percent) and National Finance Company (-6.1 percent). In comparison, the Industrial Index registered a 2.6 percent monthly gain during June-2024 to close the month at 6,066.3 points, while the Services Index witnessed a monthly gain of 1 percent for the month, closing the month at 1,820.4 points. In terms of company performance, National Gas Company topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 40.5 percent followed by Construction Material Industries and Shell Oman Marketing with 23.8 percent and 14 percent monthly share gains, respectively.



On the decliner's side, Al Madina Investment Holding Company led the chart with an 15.2 percent share price fall followed by Oman

Refreshment Company and Renaissance Services Company which witnessed a share price drop of 11.8 percent and 10.5 per-

cent, respectively. Trading activity on the exchange witnessed a significant decline during June-2024. Total volume of shares traded in the exchange declined by 63.2 percent to 205.7 million during June-2024 shares as compared to 559 million in May-2024. Similarly, total value traded in the exchange declined by 54.2 percent to OMR41.1 million against OMR89.8 million in May-2024. Bank Muscat topped the monthly value traded chart with trades at OMR9.3 million followed by Galfar Engineering and Contracting and Sohar Bank with total value traded at OMR4.9 million and

OMR3.7 million, respectively. In terms of monthly volume traded, Bank Muscat topped the list too with 36.8 million shares followed by Galfar Engineering and Contracting and Sohar Bank with volumes at 28.8 million shares and 26.8 million shares, respectively. In economic news, in its Spring 2024 Gulf Economic Update report the World Bank emphasised Oman's economic outlook as favourable with real gross domestic product (GDP) expected growth of 1.5 percent in 2024. The Bank underlined that expected increased gas production and the Sultanate's diversification efforts were the key drivers of growth for the country.

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Muscat Gases, up 8.53%, was the top gainer while Oman Oil Marketing, down 9.71%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,684.24 points, down by 0.25% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.04% at 462.73 points. Muscat Gases, up 8.53%, was the top gainer while Oman Oil Marketing, down 9.71%, was the top loser. Shares of National Gas were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 862 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO1.78 million, with more than 13.03 million shares changing hands. Out of 45 traded securities, 16 advanced, 18 declined, and 11 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for RO 99K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 83K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 15K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,612.11 points, down 0.85%. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Global Financial Investments

were up by 1.79%, 1.35% respectively. Prices of Oman United Insurance, Ominvest, Takaful Oman, Oman Arab Bank, Al Madina Takaful were down by 4.91%, 4.23%, 3.85%, 3.50%, 1.25% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,080.31 points, up 0.25%. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Construction Materials, Voltamp Energy, Oman Cement, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 5.03%, 1.92%, 1.61%, 1.56%, 0.44% respectively. Prices of Oman Flour Mills, Galfar Engineering were down by 2.27%, 0.60% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.16% before closing at 1,833.92 points. Prices of Muscat Gases, Barka Water & Power Company, National Gas, Al Batinah Power, Al Suwadi Power were up by 8.53%, 6.56%, 2.56%, 1.35%, 1.32% respectively. Prices of Oman Oil Marketing, Dhofar Generating, OIFC, Phoenix Power, Sembcorp Salalah were down by 9.71%, 2.20%, 2.35%, 1.67%, 0.97% respectively. – United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,715.19	4,683.56	4,684.24	4,696.02	-11.79	-0.25
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,707.13	7,612.11	7,612.11	7,677.20	-65.09	-0.85
Industry Index	6,097.77	6,078.49	6,080.31	6,065.12	15.19	0.25
Services Index	1,837.76	1,829.41	1,833.92	1,831.00	2.92	0.16
MSX Shariah Index	465.82	461.75	462.73	462.89	-0.17	-0.04
MSX TRI INDEX	6,549.87	6,505.94	6,506.88	6,523.25	-16.37	-0.25
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,756.10	8,648.13	8,648.13	8,722.08	-73.95	-0.85
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	7,035.38	7,013.13	7,015.23	6,997.71	17.52	0.25
SERVICES TR IDX	2,131.25	2,121.57	2,126.79	2,123.41	3.38	0.16
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
13,034,980	1,779,202	862	24,306,904,500	16	18	11	45

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JULY 2

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. RD	DIFF. %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000001749..... OMAN CEMENT	126,347	48,126	14	0.387	0.391	0.380	0.391	0.385	0.006	1.558	0.391	0.381	0.394	0.100	129,371,230
OM0000003125..... GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	1,376,742	103,241	64	0.074	0.076	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	15,000,000
OM0000004925..... ALBATINAH POWER	437,659	32,471	32	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.001	1.351	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.100	50,616,557
OM0000004933..... AL SUWADI POWER	740,306	56,164	28	0.076	0.077	0.075	0.077	0.076	0.001	1.316	0.077	0.070	0.079	0.100	55,009,288
OM0000008934..... ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	204,349	61,046	37	0.297	0.300	0.297	0.299	0.297	0.002	0.673	0.299	0.290	0.305	0.100	230,289,600
OM0000007811..... MUSANDAM POWER	10,170	2,502	2	0.246	0.246	0.246	0.246	0.245	0.001	0.408	0.246	0.246	0.246	0.100	17,315,940
OM0000003026..... OMAN TELECOM	37,100	37,634	7	1.019	1.019	1.012	1.012	1.011	0.001	0.099	1.012	1.011	1.012	0.100	759,000,000
OM0000001681..... OMAN EMIRATES HO	213,950	18,069	24	0.083	0.085	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	10,115,625
OM0000002440..... AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO	1,067,900	86,049	53	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.079	0.085	0.100	7,200,000
OM0000003398..... SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,004,028	137,017	29	0.137	0.137	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.000	0.136	0.128	0.145	0.100	758,505,493
OM0000002796..... BANK MUSCAT	1,086,081	273,554	52	0.251	0.251	0.249	0.250	0.251	-0.001	-0.398	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.100	1,876,599,265
OM0000003224..... RENAISSANCE SERVICES	890	316	2	0.355	0.355	0.355	0.355	0.357	-0.002	-0.560	0.355	0.355	0.370	0.100	83,925,505
OM0000003968..... OOREDOO	254,826	73,919	28	0.292	0.292	0.290	0.290	0.292	-0.002	-0.685	0.290	0.300	0.300	0.100	188,773,827
OM0000009072..... OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,534,890	216,818	114	0.141	0.142	0.141	0.141	0.142	-0.001	-0.704	0.141	0.141	0.148	0.100	610,617,973
OM0000004735..... SEMBCORP SALALAH	60,200	6,141	4	0.105	0.105	0.101	0.102	0.103	-0.001	-0.971	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.100	97,366,339
OM0000004789..... MADINA TAKAFUL	35,456	2,817	14	0.080	0.080	0.079	0.079	0.080	-0.001	-1.250	0.079	0.079	0.080	0.100	13,825,000
OM0000001533..... OMINVEST	407,204	140,808	56	0.370	0.370	0.340	0.340	0.355	-0.015	-4.225	0.340	0.335	0.359	0.100	227,244,245
OM0000001087..... OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	22,419	5,686	6	0.256	0.256	0.252	0.252	0.265	-0.013	-4.906	0.252	0.252	0.264	0.100	25,200,000
Total	18	8,629,497	1,302,368	566											
Parallel Market															
OM0000000178..... MUSCAT GASES	8,158	1,142	3	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.129	0.011	8.527	0.140	0.131	0.140	0.100	4,200,000
OM0000003141..... BARKA WATER AND POWER	266	83	2	0.305	0.325	0.305	0.325	0.305	0.020	6.557	0.325	0.278	0.326	0.100	52,000,000
OM0000005005..... ALMAHA CERAMICS	100	19	1	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.179	0.009	5.028	0.188	0.175	0.188	0.100	10,340,000
OM0000001160..... NATIONAL GAS	2,011,867	245,456	127	0.118	0.126	0.118	0.120	0.117	0.003	2.564	0.120	0.121	0.120	0.100	10,200,000
OM0000007910..... AMAN REAL ESTATE	5,350	511	4	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.094	0.002	2.128	0.096	0.094	0.096	0.100	19,200,000
OM0000001388..... CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	44,000	2,258	4	0.053	0.053	0.051	0.053	0.052	0.001	1.923	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.100	3,312,500
OM0000001962..... AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	100	6	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.001	1.786	0.057	0.055	0.059	0.100	4,845,000
OM0000003661..... VOLTAMP ENERGY	40,000	12,588	7	0.310	0.320	0.310	0.315	0.310	0.005	1.613	0.315	0.300	0.315	0.100	25,641,866
OM0000002287..... GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	40,954	9,306	8	0.228	0.230	0.226	0.226	0.225	0.001	0.444	0.226	0.226	0.230	0.100	10,343,070
OM0000002036..... MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	350	35	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	1,639,411
OM0000002226..... ALJAZEERA SERVICES	2,650	844	2	0.240	0.245	0.240	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.222	0.240	0.100	14,995,047
OM0000002281..... TANGEEER FINANCE	21,515	2,173	1	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	0.107	0.100	27,380,140
OM0000004420..... BANK NIZWA	651,611	67,756	16	0.103	0.105	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.103	0.105	0.100	232,643,115
OM0000008447..... OMAN REIT FUND	460,248	32,217	15	0.070	0.070	0.068	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.067	0.070	0.100	34,358,547
OM0000003521..... GOLFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	90,300	13,384	9	0.168	0.168	0.166	0.166	0.167	-0.001	-0.599	0.166	0.166	0.167	0.100	33,695,750
OM0000008888..... THE PEARL REEF	30,200	3,554	4	0.119	0.119	0.117	0.117	0.119	-0.001	-0.847	0.117	0.117	0.119	0.100	59,448,115
OM0000001772..... ALANWAR INVESTMENT	78,026	6,242	16	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.235	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	16,974,400
OM0000005963..... PHOENIX POWER	433,865	25,915	26	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.059	0.060	-0.001	-1.667	0.059	0.059	0.060	0.100	86,293,486
OM0000001400..... OMAN FLOUR MILLS	4,486	1,944	6	0.440	0.440	0.430	0.430	0.440	-0.010	-2.273	0.430	0.430	0.431	0.100	67,725,000
OM0000007407..... DHOFAR GENERATING	210	15	1	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.074	-0.002	-2.703	0.072	0.072	0.081	0.100	16,001,280
OM0000005260..... OMAN ARAB BANK	56,215	7,873	11	0.143	0.143	0.138	0.138	0.143	-0.005	-3.497	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.100	230,378,580
OM0000004776..... TAKAFUL OMAN	400	39	1	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.052	-0.002	-3.846	0.050	0.048	0.050	0.100	12,500,000
OM0000002572..... OMAN OIL MARKETING	520	413	2	0.800	0.800	0.790	0.790	0.875	-0.085	-9.714	0.790	0.800	0.000	0.100	48,407,250
Total	23	3,971,391	433,554	269											

FORECAST

CAMBRIDGE: During the Cambridge India Conference held at the historic Cambridge Union, Sanjeev Sanyal, a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India, forecast India reaching a \$4 trillion GDP milestone this year, outpacing global growth rates. He shared insights into India's

remarkable economic growth trajectory and future prospects while engaging in dialogue with Kishen Shastry, a PhD economist from the University of Cambridge. Sanyal highlighted India's ambitious goal to surpass the \$4 trillion GDP mark and solidify its position as the world's fastest-growing economy. "This year, India's GDP will reach

\$4 trillion, putting us on par with Japan in terms of economic size. We continue to lead as the world's fastest-growing economy by a significant margin. Last year, our growth rate surprised us at 8.2 per cent, and we anticipate over 7 per cent growth this year, outpacing all major economies," Sanyal stated. He emphasised the compound-

ing effects of India's growth rate, noting the rapid pace at which economic milestones have been achieved. In a discussion, Sanyal said, "After liberalisation, it took us 16-17 years to cross the first trillion dollars mark. It took another 7 years to reach the 2 trillion dollars mark, which happened in 2014-15." -ANI

NEW BENCHMARK FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Oman's first hydroponic farm in Alila Jabal Akhdar

MUSCAT: Alila Jabal Akhdar, perched majestically at 2000 meters above sea level on the cliffs of the Hajar mountains, has always been a beacon of luxury and eco-consciousness. Today, with the inauguration of Oman's first hydroponic farm in a luxury hotel, Alila Jabal Akhdar sets a new benchmark for sustainability in the region.

This innovative initiative is structured in two phases. Phase 1, which began earlier this year and spans 646 square meters, saw its first harvest in March. This phase includes the cultivation of lettuces, strawberries, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis, and bell peppers, with blueberries currently in process. Utilizing hydroponics—a soil-free method that employs nutrient-rich water—allows for year-round production of fruits and vegetables at an accelerated rate.



INTAKE OF ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISK OF DEATH: STUDY

Older persons who reported consuming more ultra-processed foods were nearly 10 per cent more likely to die after a median follow-up of 23 years than older adults who reported consuming less processed food, according to a recent study.

The results are drawn from a sizable study that followed more than 500,000 persons in the United States for about thirty years. The findings showed that consuming more ultra-processed foods was linked to slight increases in deaths from heart disease and diabetes, as well as deaths from all causes. However, there was no correlation observed in deaths from cancer.

“Our study results support a larger body of literature, including both observational and experimental studies, which indicate that ultra-processed food intake

adversely impacts health and longevity,” said Erika Loftfield, PhD, Stadtman Investigator at the National Cancer Institute. “However, there is still a lot that we don’t know, including what aspects of ultra-processed foods pose potential health risks.”

Loftfield will present the findings at NUTRITION 2024, the flagship annual meeting of the American Society for Nutrition held June 29 to July 2 in Chicago.

The research drew data from more than 540,000 people who provided information about their eating habits and health in the mid-1990s, when they were between 50 and 71 years of age. Over half of the participants have since died. The researchers analyzed overall rates of death among those who were in the 90th percentile for consumption of ultra-processed foods at baseline versus those in the 10th per-

centile, and also looked at associations with specific foods and specific diseases.

“We observed that highly processed meat and soft drinks were a couple of the subgroups of ultra-processed food most strongly associated with mortality risk and eating a diet low in these foods is already recommended for disease prevention and health promotion,” said Loftfield. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting sugar-sweetened beverages and processed meats such as hot dogs, sausages and deli meat.

For this study, researchers used multiple strategies to classify the level of processing for various food items. This included breaking down food frequency questionnaire data into particular food and ingredient types in addition to incorporating expert consensus to categorize dietary components

according to a rubric known as the NOVA classification system.

The researchers also accounted for other factors that can increase a person’s risk of death, such as smoking and obesity. They found that people who consumed more ultra-processed foods also tended to have higher body mass index and a lower Healthy Eating Index score (a measure of diet quality based on how closely a person’s diet aligns with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans). However, the analysis showed that the associations between ultra-processed food consumption and increased mortality were not explained by these variables, as the associations between higher ultra-processed food intake and mortality risk persisted among people categorized as having better or worse diet quality as well as among those classified as normal weight or obese. -ANI

SPORTS

Costa the hero as Portugal beat Slovenia on penalties

Portugal goalkeeper made three crucial saves in the shootout to help his side reach Euro quarter-finals

FRANKFURT: Cristiano Ronaldo was left in tears after his penalty was saved in extra time but Portugal still progressed to the quarter-finals of Euro 2024 following a dramatic 3-0 shootout victory over Slovenia on Monday.

Portugal's superstar captain saw his penalty kept out by Atletico Madrid goalkeeper Jan Oblak and he was consoled by his teammates, as fans chanted his name in the stands. But he recovered to score his country's first penalty in the shootout - where goalkeeper Diogo Costa saved all three kicks he faced - before Manchester City's Bernardo Silva netted the winning kick.

Ronaldo was involved in the thick of it throughout the night as he searched for his first goal at Euro 2024. Before his penalty was tipped on to the post, he wasted a golden opportunity in the final minute of normal time, drilling his shot straight at Oblak, having seen countless crosses fly over his head throughout 120 minutes of



blockbuster action.

Eventually, Portugal's persistence paid off as Slovenia crumbled in the shootout and Costa's heroics ensured Ronaldo's Euro dream continues.

Portugal had dominated for long periods and could have led in the first half but Joao Palhinha struck the post.

Slovenia, who defended with grit and resilience, had chances of their own and will regret Benjamin Sesko failing to score when through one-on-one with Portugal goalkeeper Costa, who made a fine save with his left foot, in the final minutes of extra time.

Portugal now play France in the quarter-finals in Hamburg on Friday, while Slovenia leave the competition in the cruellest of manners.

As ever, Ronaldo stole the lime-light in a memorable match, but his wait for a first goal here in Germany continues.

It was not through a lack of trying as he was energetic and lively, particularly in the first half, and was not afraid to show his emotions.

Throwing his arms towards the sky, punching the air in frustration and roaring his dismay at missed chances became a common trend - but when his moment came to

shine, he did not seize it.

The narrative threatened to swing the other way - but like Ronaldo, Slovenia talisman Sesko missed his big opportunity with four minutes left on the clock.

It was a match of 'what ifs' but ultimately Portugal, who created the better chances and had controlled large periods, deserved their victory and credit must go to Costa for his sensational individual performance in the shootout.

When Silva netted the final spot-kick, he raced over to his goalkeeper to celebrate, with Ronaldo among those sprinting behind, no doubt unleashing huge feelings of



relief and elation.

Slovenia fans have experienced a memorable few days, with this their country's first appearance in the knockout stages of a major tournament.

They arrived draped in flags, chanting, banging drums and dancing in the stands two hours before kick-off.

When Ronaldo's penalty was tipped on to the post by Oblak, they let off flares in the stands at Frankfurt Arena and jeered as his earlier chances went unconverted.

Slovenia's players responded to their support, growing in confidence as the game wore on and

becoming more of a threat on the counter-attack.

Sesko had a few chances before his one-on-one with Costa but Oblak was kept busy throughout at the other end, making crucial late saves to deny Palhinha and Ronaldo.

In the end, Slovenia exit the competition having not lost a match in 90 or 120 minutes - drawing all of their group games before this shootout defeat, including a hard-earned point against England. They will leave with their heads held high - their supporters were still celebrating their achievements long after the finish. - Agencies

PORTUGAL VS SLOVENIA

Redemption for Portugal's Ronaldo at his 'last Euros'

FRANKFURT: As Jan Oblak's hand tipped Cristiano Ronaldo's extra-time penalty on to the post, the Portuguese legend's dreams shattered in a moment. He had "hit rock bottom".

The 39-year-old, who afterwards told Portuguese media this was his last Euros, bowed his head and burst into tears while team-mates raced to console their captain, with Slovenia threatening one of the Euros' biggest ever shocks. A legendary European Championship career seemed set to end in the cruellest of ways.

Ronaldo's penalty was saved in extra time with the last-16 tie goalless, but just 15 minutes later he stepped up to the same spot to fire in the first of his country's shootout kicks.

"Even the strongest people have their [bad] days. I was at rock bottom when the team needed me the most," said Ronaldo afterwards, before tearing up again.

"Sadness at the start is joy at the end. That's what football is. Moments, inexplicable moments. I feel sad and happy at the same time. "But the important thing is to enjoy it. The team did



an extraordinary job. We fought right to the end and I think we deserved it because we had more authority."

Portugal's talisman experienced every emotion imaginable in 120 minutes. He is still yet to score at Euro 2024 and was in the spotlight throughout the match, showing his emotions and frustrations as he missed numerous chances.

His entrance had been greeted with a huge roar from the Portugal fans - the same supporters who chanted his name when his penalty was saved by Oblak.

Despite 20 shots on goal in the tournament - the most by any player - he is yet to find the net. To make matters worse, he has missed three of his nine penalties at major tournaments. - Agencies

EURO 2024

UEFA opens probe into Bellingham's gesture



BERLIN: UEFA is investigating England midfielder Jude Bellingham for a gesture he made following his late equaliser against Slovakia in Sunday's Euro 2024 last-16 tie.

European football's governing body said it is looking into a "potential violation" of "the basic rules of decent conduct" by Bellingham.

Bellingham was seen making a crotch-grabbing gesture towards the Slovakian bench after scoring an overhead kick in stoppage time.

The Real Madrid player denied it was aimed at England's opponents, saying on social media that it was an inside joke directed towards some close friends.

If found to have breached the rules, the 21-year-old could face a suspension, a fine or both.

England won 2-1 after extra time to set up a quarter-final meeting with Switzerland on Saturday.

EURO 2024

France edge Belgium, to meet Portugal in quarters

DUSSELDORF: A late own goal by Jan Vertonghen sent France into the quarter-finals of Euro 2024 at Belgium's expense on Monday. A game that had lacked quality and excitement for large periods looked destined for extra time, but a shot by substitute Randal Kolo Muani deflected off Vertonghen with five minutes remaining to seal the victory at Dusseldorf Arena.

France had missed several chances before that as once again their lack of a cutting edge let them down, and even captain Kylian Mbappe put efforts he would normally finish wide.

Belgium could even have taken the lead themselves before France's late goal as Manchester City midfielder Kevin de Bruyne charged into space through the middle, but his shot was pushed behind by Mike Maignan.

That had been the below-par Belgians only decent opportunity as France closed out the final few minutes to progress to the last eight, where they will face Portugal after their dramatic penalty shootout win over Slovenia.

France have reached the quarter-finals without one of their players scoring a goal from open play. Didier Deschamps' side



were deserved winners, but this will be relief more than anything for the 2018 world champions as they once again struggled to turn chances into goals. They dominated play for large periods, but only managed a single shot on target in the first half when Antoine Griezmann's low strike from distance was comfortably saved.

In Mbappe they have one of the world's best forwards but even he found it difficult when faced with shooting opportunities, notably curling over in the second half after having done well initially to make the space for himself.

In the end they finished with 19 shots on goal but just two of those were on target, while they are still waiting for one of their own players to score a goal from open play in Germany.

Belgium were booed off the pitch by some fans when they could only manage a draw against Ukraine in their final group game, but in the hours before this match there was hope from their supporters that they would lift their game against the French side.

However, once again they were far too cautious for long periods and their threatening moments were all too brief.

Like Croatia, this has felt like one final throw of the dice for Belgium's 'golden generation', with the likes of De Bruyne and Lukaku now into their 30s.

And, like Croatia, they exit the tournament wondering if this was ultimately a missed opportunity for what could have been with this group of players. - Agencies

COPA AMERICA

USA dumped out after narrow defeat to Uruguay

KANSAS CITY: United States head coach Gregg Berhalter has insisted he is the right person to lead the team to the 2026 World Cup despite his side being knocked out of the Copa America at the group stage on Monday.

The USA, who are tournament hosts, were beaten 1-0 by Uruguay as they finished third in Group C with only the top two advancing.

Uruguay claimed top spot to secure their quarter-final place, while Panama beat Bolivia 3-1 to progress to the last eight as Group C runners-up.

"We're bitterly disappointed in the results," said Berhalter, whose side beat Bolivia in their opening match before suffering defeats by Panama and Uruguay.

"We know that we're capable of more and at this tournament we didn't show it. It's as simple as that."

Asked if he thought he was the



right person to lead the team up to the 2026 World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the USA, Canada and Mexico, Berhalter said: "Yes."

Uruguay won each of their three group games, with Mathias Olivera scoring the decisive goal against the US in Kansas City.

"You have to keep moving forward," said Berhalter, who was re-

appointed USA men's team coach in June 2023 after an internal investigation into his conduct in the wake of allegations made during the 2022 World Cup.

"It's not where you say OK, this program is doomed. That's not the case at all. It was a poor performance, we didn't get the results that we expected and we need to get better."



However, US Soccer sporting director Matt Crocker has said the performance of the national team at Copa America "fell short of our expectations" and they "must do better".

"We will be conducting a comprehensive review of our performance in Copa America and how best to improve the team and results as we look towards the

2026 World Cup," he added in a US Soccer statement.

Uruguay will play the second placed team in Group D in their quarter-final, while Panama are to play the winners of that group.

Colombia lead Group D on six points, with Brazil second on four points. They play each other in their final group match on Wednesday.

Panama make history

Panama, who are playing in only their second Copa America, reached the knockout stage for the first time with their victory over Bolivia.

Jose Fajardo put Panama in front and after Bruno Miranda equalised, substitutes Eduardo Guerrero and Cesar Yanis scored to seal their win.

"Football is daily suffering, but today there was a lot at stake," said Panama boss Thomas Christiansen.

"We knew that not even a win guaranteed that we would make it to the quarter-finals after the first goal. "Our performance dropped at times, they [Bolivia] began to control the game and they scored. We started to get a bit more anxious."

"But we reacted quickly. Our players were able to overcome those odds and the substitutions made a huge difference."

ROUND-UP

Hongqi redefines driving experience with its HS5 and Ousado models

These models stand as a testament to Hongqi's commitment to delivering unparalleled luxury and performance to the discerning drivers of Oman

MUSCAT: Hongqi, a prestigious name in the automotive industry, showcases its range, including the Hongqi HS5 and Hongqi Ousado, designed to redefine the driving experience with a blend of luxury, performance, and technology. These models stand as a testament to Hongqi's commitment to delivering unparalleled luxury and performance to the discerning drivers of Oman. Mohsin Hani Bahrani, CEO MHD ACERE, remarked, "Our goal at Hongqi Oman is to provide our customers with a driving experience that transcends the ordinary. The Hongqi HS5 and Ousado models embody our commitment to innovation, luxury, and performance. We are proud to offer vehicles that not only meet the highest standards of quality but also provide a unique blend of elegance and technology,"

Hongqi Ousado: Luxury and modernity redefined The Hongqi Ousado is a remarkable blend of luxury and modernity, making a bold statement on



Oman's roads. Its prominent exterior embodies a sophisticated design that seamlessly integrates contemporary aesthetics with luxurious details. Inside, the Ousado offers an exquisite interior that harmoniously balances comfort, nobility, and luxury, creating an

environment of pure indulgence. Underneath its stylish exterior, the Ousado is powered by a high-performance aluminum 2.0 turbo-charged engine, paired with an 8-speed transmission. This powerful combination allows the Ousado to accelerate from 0 to 100

km/h in just 7.8 seconds, providing a thrilling and dynamic driving experience.

Key features of Ousado include Dynaudio Surround Sound System: Delivers an immersive audio

experience. Large Panorama Glass Sunroof: Enhances the sense of space and openness. 12.6-inch Central Control Screen: Equipped with automatic CarPlay for seamless connectivity. Parking Assistance: Facilitates

effortless and safe parking. Wireless Charging: Ensures you stay connected on the go. **Hongqi HS5: A symphony of delicacy and power** The Hongqi HS5 brings a unique blend of aesthetic brilliance, safety, and comfort, making it a stand-out on the roads of Oman. The HS5's exterior features extremely delicate aesthetic elements, ensuring it shines in the limelight. Its unique "Wing of Hongqi" welcome light resembles an eagle spreading its wings, offering an honorable experience every time you approach your vehicle.

Key features of HS5 include: Extremely Delicate Design: The vehicle's aesthetic elements make it shine in the limelight, with a unique "Wing of Hongqi" welcome light design. Extremely Safe: Over 60% of high-strength steel sheet and 1500MPa high-strength thermos steel sheet create a safe cage-type body structure. Extremely Comfortable: Nappa and Alcantara seat trim, aviation-grade side foldable headrest, heated and ventilated seats offer extreme driving and riding enjoyment. Five Driving Modes: Economy, comfort, sports, off-road, and snow modes coordinate with the intelligent damper control suspension system to provide a pleasant driving experience. Available in Five Stunning Colors: Allowing personalization to match individual style.

Experience the future of driving with Hongqi Oman Hongqi Oman invites you to experience the future of driving with the HS5 and Ousado models. These vehicles are not just modes of transportation; they are symbols of luxury, performance, and advanced engineering.

CAMPAIGN

Be one of the 2024 winners this summer with Bank Muscat Credit Cards

MUSCAT: In line with its pioneering role in providing exceptional offers to customers during summer travel season, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced an exclusive travel offer for credit card holders. During the offer period, customers will get the chance to enter a draw to win RO 50 cashback when they spend a minimum of RO 50 using their Bank Muscat Credit Cards internationally on POS (Point of Sale) machines. For every additional RO 50 spent, customers will get another chance to win in the draw. There will be 2024 winners by the end of the campaign. The offer continues until August 31st, 2024. For those looking to participate in the offer, Bank Muscat offers a variety of credit cards carefully curated to fit the needs of its customers offering a plethora of benefits such as free travel insurance, rewards on spends and discounted offers across a wide range of categories including, lifestyle, health and beauty, entertainment, travel and hotel stays. On this occasion, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager – Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said:



“We are pleased to continue our summer offerings for our valued customers, enabling them to enjoy the best value proposition for Bank Muscat's products and enhance their banking experience. I would like to take this opportunity to invite customers to take advantage of this special offer as they enjoy their holidays

Abdulnasir Al Raisi
General Manager – Personal Banking, Bank Muscat

“We are pleased to continue our summer offerings for our valued customers, enabling them to enjoy the best value proposition for Bank Muscat's products and enhance their banking experience. I would like to take this opportunity to invite customers to take advantage of this special offer as they enjoy

their summer holidays. Going forward, we will continue to elevate our services and offerings to provide a memorable experience for all customers.” Abdulnasir Al Raisi further added that this special offer comes as part of Bank Muscat's strategy to provide special offers to customers

and users of Bank Muscat's Credit Cards. Such offers will help to enhancing the concept of electronic payment and completing various transactions especially at times that require reducing the use of cash, such as travel, as credit cards offer more convenience and security with their multiple features.

COOLEST SUMMER CAMP IS BACK AT SNOW OMAN

Oman's coolest summer camp is back! From 30 June to 29 August, Snow Oman welcomes kids aged 4-10 to beat the heat with 'snow' much fun and learning, from snow park rides and games, workshops, trips to VOX Cinemas, and more! Packages are available for One-Day Summer Camps (OMR20*), One-Week Summer Camps (OMR 75*), and One-Month Summer Camps (OMR 250*) from Sunday to Thursday. Plus, enjoy up to 15%* savings with the exclusive Siblings' Discount.



SUMMER DEAL

Fuso launches summer service campaign for its customers



MUSCAT: As Oman's scorching summer season gathers heat, General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor for Fuso in the Sultanate of Oman, is strategically launching an exciting summer service campaign, offering Fuso vehicle owners the chance to enjoy fantastic rewards and exceptional discounts. Through this summer promotion, GAC is not only encouraging customers to service their vehicles with the authorized dealers but also providing them with an opportunity to win an unforgettable vacation and enjoy attractive giveaways. Customers who service their Fuso vehicles at any GAC service center during the campaign pe-

riod will earn the chance to win a luxurious five-night stay at a 5-star hotel in Thailand. This incredible prize includes air tickets and a complete holiday package, promising the ultimate summer getaway. In addition to the grand prize, GAC is offering several exciting giveaways: Two gift vouchers for a buffet at Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Two RO 25 gift vouchers for Lulu Hypermarket Two gift vouchers for free vehicle service Additionally, GAC is also announcing a 45 percent discount on parts for repair jobs on all Fuso vehicles under the campaign, demonstrating its commitment to

providing outstanding value, while maintaining the highest standards of customer satisfaction. Commenting on the campaign, Manoj Ranade, General Manager of GAC, said, "Our summer campaign is designed to reward our loyal customers with more than just excellent service. We want to offer them unique experiences and significant savings. At GAC, we strive to exceed customer expectations and this campaign is a testament to our dedication to enhancing the ownership experience for Fuso patrons in Oman." To participate in the summer campaign, Fuso owners simply need to bring their vehicles in for servicing at any Fuso Oman service center.

ROUND-UP

BankDhofar wins Best Bank for Corporates in Oman 2024 award

This award underscores BankDhofar’s dedication to providing comprehensive and innovative financial solutions to Omani corporates that empower businesses to thrive

MUSCAT: BankDhofar, a leading bank in the Sultanate of Oman, has been recognised as the “Best Bank for Corporates in Oman” by Euromoney, a world-renowned financial publication.

This award underscores BankDhofar’s dedication to providing comprehensive and innovative financial solutions to Omani corporates that empower businesses to thrive.

BankDhofar has a comprehensive suite of products to meet the growing needs of Omani Corporates



including Lending and Working Capital, Trade Finance products including import and export financing, Transaction Banking products ensuring faster collection and automated reconciliation services.

Euromoney’s Awards for Excellence are highly respected within the global banking sector. Winning this distinction solidifies BankD-

hofar’s position as a leader in corporate banking within the Sultanate of Oman. The bank has been recognized for its commitment to delivering a comprehensive suite of corporate banking products and services, providing tailored financial solutions to meet the unique needs of each client and offering exceptional customer service and support to corporate clients.

BankDhofar’s dedication to corporate banking is reflected in its various initiatives, including developing industry-specific solutions for different sectors, providing cash management solutions to optimize business finances and offering trade finance solutions to facilitate international trade.

By prioritizing exceptional corporate banking services, BankDhofar empowers businesses in the Sultanate of Oman to achieve their financial goals. This win reinforces the bank’s commitment to being a one-stop shop for all corporate banking needs in Oman.

BankDhofar puts technology and innovation at the core of its strategy to improve the experience of its customers. The Bank is constantly keeping pace with the technological developments while designing new products and services to ensure convenient banking experience for customers. Customers may conduct their transactions at ease and around the clock through the highly-secured and user-friendly digital banking channels.

Explore the hidden wonders at Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah



MUSCAT: Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn, Muscat invite guests to explore the hidden wonders of their hotels through exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences that celebrate the natural beauty and rich cultural heritage of Oman.

Guests can immerse themselves in two captivating experiences, bookable with a room stay, offering a unique glimpse into the heart of Shangri-La

Behind the Shells: Become a Turtle Ranger What does a day in the life of a Turtle Ranger entail? Kids and adults alike will embark on an educational adventure to care for the baby turtles born on the resorts’ secluded beaches that are listed as one of the top five nesting sites in Oman. The trainee rangers will learn about turtle conservation and participate in hands-on activities to safeguard nests from predators, ensuring these magnificent and endangered creatures have the best start in life.

Nature enthusiasts can enhance their connection with marine life by participating in an optional guided snorkelling session in Oman’s crystal-clear waters, providing an intimate encounter with turtles in their natural habitat.

Beyond the ordinary: Oman’s flavours & traditions

Guests can delve into the vibrant tapestry of Omani culture with an immersive experience led by Khalid Al Amri, the world’s first



Omani Frankincense Sommelier, Commencing with a walk around the resort to discover its rich history, art and architecture guests soon find themselves in the resort’s very own Frankincense (Luban) garden, to discover the aromatic resin’s healing properties and its every day uses in Oman.

Khalid will then teach guests the art of serving and enjoying traditional Arabic coffee, while enjoying a taste of sweet and savoury Omani delights together. Local to Muscat, Khalid Al Amri is a wealth of knowledge and will share secrets of Oman’s heritage with guests while revealing insights into the significance of the country’s traditional dress and cultural nuances

Next under the guidance of the resort’s talented Omani chefs, guests are invited to put on an apron and venture behind the scenes and into the kitchen to learn how to cook a delicious three-course Omani supper. Guests can savour their very own culinary creations paired with a selection of beverages within the elegant surroundings of one of the resort’s premium restaurants.

DIAMOND COLLECTION

Malabar Gold & Diamonds introduces NUWA, Kareena Kapoor Khan unveils latest diamond jewellery collection

DUBAI: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, sixth largest jewellery retailer globally with a strong retail network of over 350+ outlets spread across 13 countries, unveiled its latest diamond jewellery collection named ‘NUWA’ at a grand event in the UAE.

Renowned Indian actress Kareena Kapoor Khan unveiled the collection. Kareena, known for her timeless elegance embodies the very essence of the NUWA collection, making her the perfect ambassador for this launch.

The NUWA collection is a celebration of nature’s intricate designs, waves, forms, folds and textures, masterfully crafted into luxurious pieces of diamond jewellery. Drawing inspiration from the elegance and resilience found in the natural world, each piece in the collection has been meticulously crafted, refined over time, and perfected to emerge as a glorious, intricate work of art. Just like women, who navigate the ups and downs, standing tall and resolute in the dreams they hold. Each piece is a testament to the elegance, strength, and grace that women embody.

MP Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group, said, “We are incredibly proud to introduce the NUWA collection, which celebrates both nature and the indomitable spirit of women. Each piece in this collection has been crafted with immense care and precision, reflecting the intricate beauty of nature and the resilience of women. We are honoured to have Kareena Kapoor



Khan launch this collection, as she perfectly represents the grace and awe that NUWA stands for.”

The NUWA collection by Malabar Gold & Diamonds stands as a testament to the women of today, their commitment to excellence, celebrating the intricate beauty of nature and the empowering essence of womanhood. Like all diamond jewellery at Malabar Gold & Diamonds, NUWA also comes with the assurance of Malabar Promises like responsibly sourced natural diamonds, tested and certified diamonds, 100% exchange value, 100% transparency, guaranteed buyback, etc.

REMARKABLE

Indian School Bousher celebrates students’ achievements

MUSCAT: Indian School Bousher announced the outstanding achievements of two of its talented students from Grade IV, Zaara Vasim Assadi and Niyola Pinto, at prestigious competitions held recently.

Zaara showcased her exceptional gymnastics skills at the GymnastEx Sports Service competition held at the Sports Hall of Jumeirah Baccalaureate School in the UAE. Competing against around 600 participants from across the GCC, Zaara excelled in the highly competitive Level-1 category, which featured over 250 participants. She achieved gold medals in both the floor and beam events, and a silver medal in the vault event.

Her dedication, hard work, and remarkable performance have made her a source of immense pride for our school community.

In another proud moment for Indian School Bousher, Niyola has secured the 2nd Runner-Up position in the Karnataka State Girls U9 Championship. Her outstanding performance in this highly competitive event demon-



strates her dedication and skill in her sport.

The entire Indian School Bousher community is incredibly proud of Zaara and Niyola’s achievements. We are committed to nurturing the potential of our students and encouraging them to excel in all areas of their interest.

Zaara’s and Niyola’s accomplishments are an inspiration to their peers and a testament to the high standards of excellence we strive for at Indian School Bousher. The school congratulates them on their outstanding accomplishments and look forward to their continued success in future competitions.



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