



HM SENDS GREETINGS TO SRI LANKA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulation to President Ranil Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health and happiness to the president and for his country's people further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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BUDGET TO PROVIDE ELECTRONIC SENSORS FOR CHILDREN WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES HAILED

His Majesty has directed to provide electronic sensors and insulin pumps for children with type 1 diabetes

Times News Service

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's directive to provide electronic sensors and insulin pumps for children with type 1 diabetes has been applauded by both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Madeeha bint Ahmed Al Shaibani, Minister of Education, expressed her gratitude to His Majesty and said, "The noble Royal directives come as confirmation of His Majesty's continued interest for the children, regardless of their ages. It is a continuation of the high patronage that the school education sector is enjoying during his prosperous era."

She added that the "electronic sensors and insulin pumps provided under the Royal directives contribute significantly to ensuring a healthy and comfortable life for students, allowing them to pursue education with confidence and ease."

Dr. Madiha extended her



Dr. Madeeha bint Ahmed Al Shaibani

thanks on behalf of the Ministry of Education's employees and parents of the students, and said, "Providing these sensors contributes to providing the means and capabilities for a decent, healthy life for this category of students in order to enable them to continue



Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti

their learning in the educational ladder with comfort and reassurance for themselves, their parents, and educational staff in schools."

The Ministry of Health also welcomed the Royal orders.

Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, said, "This generous

gesture is a manifestation of His Majesty's continuous interest and care to advance comprehensive health care for citizens."

He emphasised the significance of electronic sensors and insulin pumps, and said, "The group of children afflicted with type 1 diabetes often faces difficulty living with the disease, and with the presence of these sensors and pumps, their coexistence will be more flexible."

Dr. Al Sabti added, "These devices will have therapeutic value for those afflicted people who face a constant and life-threatening danger, represented by severe low or high blood sugar levels, which may directly lead to death."

He stressed that these technological advancements will also contribute to reducing long-term complications affecting various

organs of the child's body.

Both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health collectively expressed their gratitude for His Majesty's continuous interest and care towards the well-being of the nation's children, reflecting a holistic approach to healthcare and education in Oman.

His Majesty the Sultan issued Royal orders allocating an annual budget for the Ministry of Health to facilitate the provision of electronic sensor devices for measuring glucose levels in children with diabetes.

The glucose monitoring sensors represent cutting-edge technologies and advanced methods aimed at alleviating symptoms associated with blood glucose, providing accurate monitoring to address the complications of this disease. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Sayyid Badr makes calls to Iraq, Syria

1 Oman's Foreign Minister made phone calls to Dr. Fuad Hussein, Deputy PM, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq and Dr. Faisal Mekdad, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Syria. **>A3**

WORLD

Gaza death toll rises to 27,238

2 The Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has risen to 27,238. A total of 66,452 Palestinians have been wounded since the outbreak of the conflict. **>A7**



MARKET

Credit by banking sector tops OMR25bn

3 The total credit granted by commercial banks in Oman increased by 7.8% to 25.33bn at the end of the third quarter of 2023 compared to OMR23.49bn during the same period in 2022. **>B1**

FOOTBALL

New coach, new hope: OFA aims for success under Silhavy's leadership



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Anticipation and hope fill the air at the Oman Football Association (OFA) as they welcome the appointment of new national team coach Jaroslav Silhavy from the Czech Republic.

Following Oman's recent disappointment at the AFC Asian Cup, OFA officials are confident that Silhavy's experience and coaching prowess will lead the national team to success.

The 62-year-old Silhavy signed a two-year agreement with the OFA chairman Sheikh Salim Al Wahaibi on Thursday afternoon. OFA General Secretary Moham-

med Al Yahmadi expressed his optimism, and said, "We welcome Jaroslav Silhavy, a very experienced coach from the Czech Republic. He has been the coach of the Czech national team and also got good results with them. We hope he will lead our Red Warriors to victories and bring laurels for the nation."

Silhavy, only the second coach from the Czech Republic to lead the national team after Milan Macala, is seen as a promising addition.

OFA vice-president Mohsin Al Masroori said, "We are optimistic that the experience Silhavy brings along will be good for the team. We wish him the very best, and we hope to see our national team

win matches and advance further in the qualification round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2027 Asian Cup."

Macala's exploits still remembered

Milan Macala, one of the most successful coaches in Oman's football history, had a notable tenure with the Red Warriors.

During his spells from 2001-2004 and 2006-2007, Macala guided Oman to their maiden AFC Asian Cup appearance in China in 2004. He was also the architect of Oman's spot in their first Gulf Cup final (2004) and again during his second spell

from 2006-2007, he again led Oman to the Gulf Cup final and a spot in the Asian Cup.

The exploits under Macala made him a household name in the Sultanate of Oman and his achievements are still fondly remembered by fans and sports lovers.

Silhavy will aim to follow in Macala's footsteps, starting with the joint preliminary round two of FIFA World Cup 2026 and 2027 Asian Cup qualifiers.

Silhavy's appointment comes swiftly after the disappointing AFC Asian Cup campaign and the subsequent departure of Croatian coach Branko Ivankovic. **>A8**

LARGEST SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

SEZAD completes 40% of Duqm zone masterplan

DUQM: The administration of the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (SEZAD) said that work is underway to develop 40 percent of the masterplan for the SEZAD through the localisation and establishment of many strategic projects, namely the Port of Duqm, the dry dock, the fishing port, the Duqm Refinery, and other basic projects such as roads, stations for electricity, water and gas and projects for clean energy and green hydrogen.

SEZAD is one of the largest special economic zones in the Middle East and North Africa. It was established in 2011 and extends over an area of 2,000 square kilometres. It enjoys features that make it one of the main investment zones

at the regional and global levels. SEZAD receives interest from many international companies that find in Duqm a unique location for their investments.

The zone is distinguished by its ability to embrace various projects, whether in the industrial sector or other sectors such as tourism, trade, logistics services, and real estate development, in addition to its ability to provide the spaces that investors need to build their projects of all kinds.

Eng. Abdullah Salim Al Hakamani, Director of the Technical Affairs Department in the SEZAD, said "The cumulative volume of government and private investment in the zone has reached about OMR4.2 billion in

the SEZAD infrastructure and in other economic projects.

He pointed out that there is a turnout and demand for investment in the zone designated for heavy industries coinciding with the operation of the Duqm Refinery project, which forms a nucleus for other downstream industries by converting crude oil into downstream derivatives such as diesel, naphtha, gas, methane, and others.

He explained that the total length of the roads currently being implemented in the zone is about 120 kilometres, in addition to about 150 kilometres that were implemented during the last period, which varied between main, secondary, and service roads. **>A6**



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LANDMARK

Duqm rock garden: A tourist and geological landmark



DUQM: The Rock Garden located in the center of the Wilayat of Duqm, the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (SEZAD), constitutes one of the tourist attractions that attract tourists and visitors to learn about the hidden components of this garden.

The garden is one of the most important geological sites in the Sultanate of Oman, and one of the most prominent natural treasures of Duqm. The garden, which has an area of about 6 square kilometers, includes unique rock formations lined up in the form of sandstone and limestone statues, formed by wind, water, ice, and other natural elements over millions of years.

The rock formations consist of fragile deposits of limestone that formed in the modern era, approximately 40 million years ago and are covered by a harder layer. The processes of erosion by wind and water have contributed to sculpting these rocks in the form of a group of symmetry and natural sculptures.



Eng. Abdullah Salim Al Hakamani, Director of the Technical Affairs Department at the SEZAD, explained that the SEZAD is working hard to protect this unique natural component, as the site has been fenced with a wire fence and gates have been placed for visi-

tors and tourists to enter as well as public parking lots, in addition to surveillance cameras to ensure the safety of the site from tampering.

He pointed out in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA) that a study is currently underway to add some facilities to the garden, while creating corridors and highlighting the site's features more clearly.

He added that in the first phase, a study will be conducted to appoint a consultant specialized in lighting and development works in a way that suits the nature of the site.

He said that the project will contribute to adding an aesthetic touch to the site and will attract a number of visitors, tourists and enthusiasts who would like to enjoy the natural places of the rock garden.

He concluded that the garden witnessed the organization of a number of events by the SEZAD, including meetings with officials and visitors to the zone and other events. -ONA



Colorectal cancer study earns award for SQU team

The study conducted by a Ph.D. student of SQU underscores the potential of radiomics in enhancing clinical decision-making



Times News Service

MUSCAT: A recent study by Sultan Qaboos University scholar Fatma Nasser Al Shohoumi, recipient of the National Research Award in the Information and Communication Technology field in the Young Researcher's category, sheds light on the crucial need for early evaluation of colorectal cancer liver metastasis (CRCLM) to determine treatment options, significantly impacting patient survival rates and outcomes.

Titled 'A review of radiomics in predicting therapeutic response in colorectal liver metastases: From traditional to artificial intelligence techniques,' the study, conducted by principal investigator Fatma, a Ph.D. student and IT instructor at the Centre for Preparatory Studies (CPS), Sultan

Qaboos University (SQU), underscores the potential of radiomics in enhancing clinical decision-making.

The research team, recognised for their innovative work at the 10th National Research Award organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation, included Abdullah Al Hamadani, Abdulrahman Al Abdulsalam, Adhari Abdullah Al Zaabi, and Rachid Hedjam.

Elaborating on her study, Fatma said, "Radiomics, encompassing quantitative imaging features, has gained popularity in diagnostic and therapeutic strategies. However, it faces challenges and limitations. This study addresses these limitations by reviewing studies that employed radiomics to predict therapeutic response in CRCLM."

The study identifies instability in radiomics quantification due to variations in CT scan parameters, lesion segmentation methods, feature extraction techniques, and dataset sizes. Consequently,

the study advocates combining radiomics with deep learning to enhance prediction accuracy.

The research indicates that radiomics holds promise in predicting chemotherapy effectiveness, playing a significant role in identifying patients responsive to various treatment options. While radiomics has been confirmed as crucial for determining therapeutic response to chemotherapy, the study accentuates its limitations in accurately predicting responses in colorectal liver metastases cases.

To harness radiomics' potential, the study suggests integrating multiple data sources through deep learning techniques. By combining radiomics with additional clinical information, the research enables correlation analyses with clinical outcomes, offering a range of imaging biomarkers for purposes such as diagnosis, detection, prognostic evaluation, treatment response prediction, and disease progression monitoring.



TENDER
ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Labour announces the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender title	Last date for tender purchase online	Bid submission date
02/2024	Providing cleaning services for the building of the Directorate General of Labour in Dhofar Governorate	Sunday 18/02/2024 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 10/03/2024 10 a.m.
03/2024	Providing cleaning and gardening services for the building of the Directorate General of Labour in South Al Batinah Governorate	Sunday 18/02/2024 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 10/03/2024 10 a.m.
04/2024	Providing loading and unloading services at the sites of the Ministry of Labor in Muscat Governorate	Tuesday 20/02/2024 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 10/03/2024 10 a.m.
05/2024	Providing cleaning and gardening services for the building of the Directorate General of Labour in North Al Batinah Governorate	Tuesday 20/02/2024 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 10/03/2024 10 a.m.
10/2023 Re-floated	Providing cleaning services for the Ministry's Office building, the Directorate General of Labour Welfare, Seeb Labour Department, and Muttrah Labour Department	Sunday 18/02/2024 2:00 p.m.	Sunday 10/03/2024 10 a.m.

- Specialized establishments may obtain the tenders' documents online through the following link, starting from Tuesday 30/01/2024 at 08:00 a.m.: [/https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)
- Bids shall be opened at 11:00 am on 10/03/2024.

(The Ministry shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid)

labour_OMAN





WILAYAT OF AL JAZIR

BOASTS OF BREATHTAKING COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

AL JAZIR: The Wilayat of Al Jazir in Al Wusta Governorate stands apart for its picturesque nature that combines coastal lands, craggy hills and desert landscape.

A number of creeks penetrate the coastal slopes from Al Kohl area in the north to Ras Soqra in the south, passing through the areas of Khor Ghawi, Al Khadra, Qay-sad, Mader, Al Fadi, and Al Lakbi.

The Wilayat of Al Jazir also boasts many other tourist destinations like pink lakes, with their marvellous blend of salt water assuming pink colour due to the lack of oxygen that causes the death of bacteria, algae and marine plankton. One of the most prominent tourist destinations in the Wilayat of Al Jazir is Ras Souqra, which witnesses an influx of tourists due to its moderate climate throughout the year.

Meanwhile, Al Raha Beach in Al Lakbi area attracts camping enthusiasts who enjoy the bliss of calmness and the areas proximity to commercial outlets.

The Governor of Al Jazir, Sheikh Hamad Sultan Al Busaidi, said that the wilayat provides all basic services. These include electricity, water, paved roads and educational and health services, he added.

Al Busaid pointed out that many development projects are currently being implemented by Al Wusta Governorate, including Al Jazir Public Park, the Ras Soukra Development Project and Al Lakbi Beach waterfront. -ONA



Al Busaid pointed out that many development projects are currently being implemented by Al Wusta Governorate, including Al Jazir Public Park, the Ras Soukra Development Project and Al Lakbi Beach waterfront.

BAYT GREIZA

National Museum inaugurates ‘The Infinity of White’ exhibition



MUSCAT: The National Museum inaugurated at Bayt Greiza the exhibition ‘The Infinity of White: Lucio Fontana and the Italian Artists of the Absolute’. This comes in furtherance of cultural communication between the Sultanate of Oman and the Italian Republic.

The exhibition displays eight works of art by Italian artists, in cooperation with the Italian “Robilant and Voena” foundation, a long-established art house devoted to the promotion of Italian post-war art.

The exhibition brings together works by eight of the most influential artists who energised Italian painting and sculpture in the mid-twentieth century: Agostino Bonalumi, Enrico Castellani, Pietro Consagra, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, and Paolo Scheggi. The exhibition aims to bring the work of these artists to new audiences, bringing a greater understanding of how they uprooted artistic traditions to explore the limitless potential of space.

In addition to the exhibition at Bayt Greiza, R+V is lending an artwork by Agostino Bonalumi,



Rosso (Red), to the National Museum, where it will be displayed alongside the Museum’s permanent collection.

Jamal Hassan Al Moosawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, said: “To complement the legacy of this historic house with its exquisite geometric design, the idea of the project came up titled ‘A Masterpiece in Bayt Greiza,’ through which the National Museum enriches the artistic and expressive dimensions of this palace by hosting art exhibitions with splendid implications and senses within its walls, such as the “The Infinity of White” ex-

hibition. We hope that visitors to the exhibition will have an unforgettable artistic experience.

Speaking about the exhibition, Edmondo di Robilant and Marco Voena, Partners at Robilant +Voena have stated: ‘As one of the leading international galleries of post-war Italian art, Robilant +Voena is delighted to be curating this exhibition in partnership with the National Museum, the first exhibition focusing on Spatialism and its legacy in the 1960s and 1970s to take place in the Middle East. We hope this exhibition will allow new audiences to engage with the pioneering artistic experiments set in motion by Lucio Fontana and his contemporaries.’

The artworks in this exhibition exemplify the variety and innovation of the artists of this era. United by the colour white, embodying the purity of the artistic ambitions of these artists and emphasising the power of their spatial experiments in monochrome, the journey through the artworks reflects the development of the movement from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Breast cancer the most common life threatening disease in Omani women

Unfortunately, Omani women tend to be diagnosed at advanced stages of the disease despite the readily available resources for diagnosis

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Center (SQCCRC) continues its efforts to increase awareness and enhance efforts aimed at reducing its spread and recovery chances to achieve the goals of World Cancer Day, which falls on February 4 annually. During 2023, the SQCCRC received 1,145 patients with breast cancer. Breast cancer is the most common life-threatening cancer discovered among women in Oman. The age at which Omani women



are diagnosed with cancer is relatively young (49 years). Unfortunately, they tend to be diagnosed at later stages of the disease despite the readily available resources for diagnosis. At SQCCRC, the Breast One Stop Clinic has been established to facilitate rapid diagnosis and initiation of treatment using a multidisciplinary strategy. In the same sitting, a patient is seen and examined by a consultant breast surgeon and assessment of any suspicious changes is detected in breasts under the guidance of experienced radiologists. Dr Suhaila Al Farsi, Medical

Oncology Consultant, Breast Cancer Programme said: “The breast cancer programme provides evidence based and state-of-the-art therapies that have revolutionised breast cancer treatment over the last few years. These advancements include oncoplastic surgical techniques, systemic treatment such as antibody drug conjugates and immunotherapy as well as radiation therapy techniques that ensure pinpoint accuracy to preserve as much healthy tissue as possible surrounding the tumour. Also, our patients have the advantage of volunteering to take part in clinical trials with new treatment

options that may become future cures for breast cancer.” “Furthermore, genetic counselling and testing, is offered to all newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. Although 5-10% of breast cancers are inherited, detected mutation may be used to personalise management and predict which treatments are likely to be the most effective for our patients,” she added. Dr Al Farsi confirmed: “The breast cancer programme is committed to support the patient at every step by ensuring they receive optimal and state of the art medical care. One of these steps is

through empowering them with knowledge about their disease through education sessions led by our multidisciplinary teams as well as organising community awareness campaigns such as the health symposium on early detection of breast cancer in cooperation with Oman Breast Cancer Society and ministry of health.” The SQCCRC provides high-quality medical services to cancer patients and their families through its treatment programmes dealing with cancers, by providing medical care that includes introducing the latest therapeutic methods, educating and raising awareness among patients, and providing them with psychological, rehabilitative and counseling support, in addition to training Omani cadres and preparing them to serving patients according to the highest medical standards, and also conducting research to find more effective ways in treating cancer.

Dr. Moza bint Abdullah Al-Kalbani, Senior Consultant Gynecological Oncology Surgeon at SQCCRC, said: “The Gynecological Cancer Programme team includes a distinguished person who guides and supports the patient psychologically beside treating him and plays an integrated role in the comprehensive care process. Dr. Khadra Jalal, Senior Consultant Gynecologic Oncology Surgeon at SQCCRC, indicated that the team works hard to achieve a number of goals, the most notable of which are: Providing advisory and therapeutic service for gynecologic oncology cases at the region level with high-quality standards, improving the quality of healthcare provided to those recovering, and helping them adapt to their lives after recovery. Dr Khadra added: “The programme recently opened a clinic specialising in endoscopy, which specialises in prevention and early detection of cervical cancers and their precursors. The programme team also contributes to the design of clinical trials and also participates in national clinical research programmes, all of which aim to understand women’s cancers and find new and better ways to treat them, including research studying the effectiveness of self-examination in early detection of cervical cancer. With Ona inputs

BANGLADESH SCHOOL MUSCAT

BSM honours student for getting high marks

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A student of Bangladesh School Muscat (BSM) was honoured for attaining highest marks in Oman, in the last Edexcel-Pearson International Advanced Subsidiary examination. Mikaella Cupalao, student of commerce stream of the school, was given a special certificate, ‘outstanding Pearson Learner Awards’, for scoring highest marks in Economics in Oman, topper in the country ranking with 164 out of 200 UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) mark. BSM organised a special event to

celebrate the performance of Mikaella. She was given an academic excellence award by the school on the occasion of 53rd victory day celebration of Bangladesh. An event was organised in the school to celebrate the glorious achievement. Mikaella thanked the school authority for their wholehearted caring to keep the students on the right track to success. She expressed her gratitude to her economics teacher as well. “I am satisfied with my results and from what I have achieved. At the same time, my parents are delighted with my test scores and are

proud of my achievements. With their emotional support, I was able to study and I am happy for my feats,” said Mikaella. “I have been a student of Tayabul Haque and he has been a great help in my journey with Edexcel International exams. I have achieved excellent marks under his guidance.” Engineer Kazi Emdad Hosain, the chairman of Bangladesh schools in Oman, congratulated Mikaella for soaring the school flag high. He also thanked Md. Tayabul Haque, head of economics department, for his effective and efficient endeavour towards his students.

In his welcome speech, he said, “As the chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to express my happiness on behalf of the entire school on this glorious accomplishment! We are really proud of you, my dear Mikaella; you have made us great! Keep it up and establish yourself a role model for other students. I also thank Tayabul, our economics teacher for his devotion.” Along with other members of the board of directors, principal and concerned teachers, students of senior section and invited guests attended in the event to celebrate the glory.



ROYAL SUPPORT

Help for type 1 diabetes

<FROM A1 While there is no perfect cure for type 1 diabetes, control in children is possible by limiting the occurrence of serious complications. This is achieved through the application of advanced medical methods and technologies, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for patients and facilitating their active participation in various school and social activities. The Royal orders are targeted at addressing the challenges faced by some patients in embracing traditional treatments that heavily rely on insulin injections. Dr. Dilip Kumar Singhvi, Specialist in Internal Medicine at Shifa Hospital, said: “It is a commendable initiative by His Majesty to provide blood sugar sensors for children with diabetes. Type 1 diabetes in children and young adolescents necessitates daily insulin injections due to the absence of insulin in the body for controlling blood sugar. Strict monitoring is essential. “These blood sugar sensors play a crucial role in achieving control and also in detecting if sugar levels dip below the normal range, leading to hypoglycemia and its associated adverse effects. The implementation of these sensors will significantly contribute to our mission to manage and control blood sugar not only in children but also in adults with type 2 diabetes, which has seen a notable increase, particularly in the post-COVID era.” He added: “Globally, 540 million people are affected by diabetes, with many more undiagnosed and unaware of their condition. In Oman, there are approximately half a million people with diabetes, including around 3000 children with type 1 diabetes, and this number continues to rise.”

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024



Students to join for second semester from today in Oman

MUSCAT: The second semester of the current academic year 2023-2024 following the mid-year holiday in the Sultanate of Oman’s governorates will start on Sunday for students and the staff and the directorates of education. The end of second semester exams for students of classes (5-11) at the government and pri-

vate schools and the general education diploma examinations and the examination marking works were set for the period from 2 June to 11 July 2024. During the current semester, 13 school buildings would be handed over in the governorates of Muscat, Dhofar, South Al Batinah, North Al Batinah and South Al Sharqiyah. — ONA



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TENDER NOTICE
REF: ISD / ADMIN/TENDER/2023-24/004
Indian School Darsait is delighted to announce an open Tender for the **Construction, Completion, Commissioning, and Maintenance of a penthouse extension for an existing classroom block, a new sports field, multipurpose court, terrace seating and facilities, compound wall, and other associated works.**
● Experienced and qualified Contractors are invited to meticulously prepare and submit their proposals, adhering to the specifications outlined in the Tender Documents. Interested parties can procure the Tender Documents from the school office upon the payment of a non-refundable Tender fee of RO 50/-. The issuance of Tender Documents will be facilitated from 5th February to 13th February 2024, during the school's working days (Sunday to Thursday), between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
● To provide prospective bidders with a comprehensive understanding of the project, a Site visit has been scheduled for Saturday, 17th February 2024, commencing at 10:00 a.m.
● All completed Tenders must be submitted in a sealed envelope and deposited in the designated Tender Box located within the school office on or before 29th February 2024, no later than 3:00 p.m. The envelope should be addressed to The Head, Purchase Subcommittee, Indian School Darsait, PO Box 1551, PC 114, Darsait, Muscat.

Principal

REMEMBRANCE



Sneha Iyer

27-01-2009 – 03-02-2022

You are near, Even if we don't see you.
You are with us, Even if you are far away.
You are in our heart, In our thoughts,
In our life Always. Missing you.

Parents and Sister

Duqm emerges as a unique tourism attraction in Oman

The rising investments are contributing to increasing visitor traffic in the region

Times News Service

DUQM: With its moderate climate throughout the year, the Wilayat of Duqm has become famous for its diverse natural and geological heritage. Local and foreign tourists are flocking to Duqm to enjoy its cool climate.

The Duqm Special Economic Zone has many three and four-star hotels such as the Crowne Plaza Duqm Hotel and the Park Inn Duqm Resort, which are located on Duqm Beach providing accommodation to tourists and businessmen.

The 3-star hotels include the "Madina" Hotel, the "Asian" Hotel, the "Royal Land Luxury Suites" Hotel, and the Duqm Hotel.

Other hotels with lower ratings and hotel apartments are also available, in addition to the Al Nahda Village. The number of hotel rooms in Duqm is estimated at approximately 2,250.

Salem bin Saeed Qattan, the General Authority for Special Economic Zone and Free Zones spokesperson, said that the Wilayat of Duqm is characterised by the presence of diverse tourism components, in addition to the presence of the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (as an investment zone). The rising investments are contributing to increasing visitor traffic in the region.



In a statement to the Oman News Agency, he said: "The General Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, represented by the Special Economic Zone in Duqm, has paid great attention to tourism and entertainment projects in the region, by allocating a special plan for these projects, with an area exceeding 20 square kilometres and a waterfront of 16 square kilometres.

He pointed out that the Duqm Special Economic Zone provides a set of incentives for investors wishing to invest in the tourism sector. The presence of port and Duqm Airport, and the road network contributes to facilitating movement and connectivity between the Special Economic Zone and other regions.

He stressed that the tourism sector has witnessed good growth in terms of the number of tourist facilities in the region, as the number of tourism projects has risen to more than 20.

He explained that work is underway to study the number of applications related to the tourism sector during the coming period, noting that there is currently

a group of parks in the Special Economic Zone in Duqm, including the Rock Garden, which provides an opportunity to the visitor to learn about the existing geological landmarks.

For his part, a Filipino tourist Angelo Francisco said: "The state of Duqm has become one of the attractive places for tourism due to the services and infrastructure it contains, in addition to the beautiful weather it characterises, especially during the summer period.

He pointed out that there are tourist offices in Duqm that organise visits to a number of tourist sites, beaches, parks, rock gardens and other sites in the state.

Kyriakos Korentzis (a Greek tourist) also pointed out that the tourism and entertainment sector in the Wilayat of Duqm is witnessing remarkable growth through the availability of good, advanced infrastructure and services, such as hotels of various levels, hotel apartments, parks, and hotel gardens.

Korentzis pointed out that the state has picturesque beaches that allow tourists to walk and relax at all times due to the beautiful weather it has throughout the year.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

AI training course ends

MUSCAT: The training course "AI Apps in Media" concluded here Thursday.

The course was organized by the Gulf Radio and Television Organisation for the GCC States in cooperation with the Ministry of Information.

— ONA



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FIFTH EDITION OF ISFF

Indian School Al Maabela named winner of film fest

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The fifth edition of the Indian Schools Film Fest (ISFF), an annual event organised under the aegis of the Board of Directors of Indian Schools in the Sultanate of Oman was held on 28 January at Indian School Al Seeb Auditorium.

Indian School Al Maabela emerged as the overall champions. The coordinator of the winning school team flaunted the coveted trophy.

The Film Fest was organised in three categories which included Junior (Grade VI to VIII), Senior (Grade IX to XII) and Open Category which could have children of any level. Facilitators of Schools and Children with Special Needs also participated in this mega event.

This 5th edition of ISFF with the tagline 'Imagine, Ignite, Influence' had an array of genres such as Short Film, Animated Film, HSE Video Creation, Ad Making, Reels, Travelogue, and Educational Movie for the students and facilitators to unleash the spark of their ingenuity.

Mrs. Mahfoudha Mubarak Al Araiimi, Director General for Labour, Muscat Governorate graced the function as the Chief Guest and gave away the prizes



and certificates to the winners of filmmaking.

Lal Jose, renowned South Indian Film director, producer and actor was the celebrity guest on the occasion. Dr. Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman, Board of Directors, Indian Schools Oman presided over the function.

The programme was attended by Shameer PTK, Vice Chairman, Nidheesh Kumar, Director in Charge, Vijay Saravanan, Director on Board, Vinobha M. P. Senior Principal and Education Advisor, Krishnan Raman, President of the School Management Committee, Members of the School Management Committee, Principals, Teachers and students of different Indian Schools in Oman. Krishnan Raman, the President of the School Management Committee welcomed the gathering and spoke about the educational significance of the film fest.

Dr. Sivakumar Manickam underscored the significance of the Film Fest in his address. "The purpose of the film fest organized by the Indian School Board is to give a hands-on experience to our students on the nuances and techniques of film making and to make them aware of the numerous avenues open to them in this domain," Dr. Manickam said. He lauded the efforts of Indian School Al Seeb in harnessing maximum participation for the event.

Principal Dr. Leena Francis gave a presentation compiling the exciting phases and vibes of the film fest and threw light on the acumen and creativity of the participants.

Coordinators were felicitated by Vice Chairman Shameer PTK, Director in Charge Nidheesh Kumar and Director on Board Vijay Saravanan.

DUQM MASTERPLAN

Many works related to expanding green area have been carried out

< FROM A1 He added that the zone has been connected to the national electricity grid that supplies the entire Sultanate of Oman with a capacity of 400 kilovolts, accommodating all mega projects.

This constitutes a fundamental incentive for investors wishing to invest in the zone, especially large projects whose operation require high electrical energy and a water station with a capacity of 36,000 cubic metres per day, in addition to a water station.

Electricity generation

He further said that another electricity generation is also established for the Duqm Refinery and Ras Markaz tank project with a capacity of 326 megawatts, in addition to the presence of a gas station that accommodates 25 million cubic meters of gas, which was linked to the Saih Nahidah station via 220 km long pipelines, which in turn constitutes another incentive to encourage investors

of large projects that require has operations. All these features make SEZAD among the best investment destinations.

He stated that the zone carried out many works related to expanding the green area, afforestation operations, and infrastructure for recreational projects, in addition to establishing a public park.

Afforestation projects

He explained that the completion rate of afforestation projects in the first phase in the zone reached about 100 percent.

Al Hakamani affirmed that the SEZAD was interested in implementing entertainment projects that contribute to attracting visitors and residents in the zone, including a multi-use entertainment commercial project that will be established near the tourist area, and the establishment of a Friday market in the village of Dhahr in the Wilayat of Duqm.

He explained that about OMR5

million have been allocated for these projects.

Social responsibility

He pointed that the zone has adopted a policy related to social responsibility, which was to allocate 10 percent of the purchases of projects and businesses that take place in the SEZAD to small and medium enterprises.

These projects will contribute to providing the basic services and facilities that the local community needs.

Al Hakamani affirmed that these projects have contributed to generating many job opportunities for citizens of the Wilayat of Duqm and Al Wusta Governorate in general, in addition to organizing training and qualification programs for graduates from the citizens of Duqm as well as various programs and initiatives designed to create a real partnership with the community and involve it in the development process taking place in the zone.



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Palestinian death toll in Gaza rises to 27,238: Health Ministry

A total of 66,452 Palestinians have been wounded since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas conflict, ministry spokesperson Ashraf Al-Qedra said

GAZA: The Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has risen to 27,238, the Health Ministry said on Saturday. A total of 66,452 Palestinians have been wounded since the out-



break of the Israel-Hamas conflict on Oct. 7, 2023, ministry spokesperson Ashraf Al-Qedra said in a statement. During the past 24 hours, the Israeli army killed 107 Palestinians and wounded 165 others, according to Al-Qedra. In the early hours of Saturday,

at least 24 Palestinians, including children and women, were killed as Israeli airstrikes and artillery bombardments struck houses in the Gazan cities of Deir al-Balah and Rafah, according to the official Palestinian news agency WAFA. Meanwhile, the United Nations is cautioning against a worsen-

ing humanitarian crisis in Gaza due to dwindling donor support, a spokesperson said on Friday. Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, highlighted a critical situation at the regular press briefing, citing a statement from Philippe Lazzarini, head of the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Lazzarini expressed grave concerns over the “colossal humanitarian needs of over 2 million people in Gaza,” which are at risk of worsening after 16 donor countries ceased their financial contributions to the agency. He emphasized the secretary-general’s appeal for the resumption of funding to UNRWA, stating “if the funding remains suspended, the agency will most likely be forced to shut down operations by the end of February -- not only in Gaza but across the region.” The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is escalating, with “thousands of Palestinians continue fleeing to the southern town of Rafah,” now home to “half of Gaza’s population of 2.3 million people,” who are living in “makeshift structures, tents, or out in the open,” as per UNRWA’s reports. Additionally, UNICEF has

raised alarms over the welfare of children in the region, estimating “at least 17,000 children in the Gaza Strip are unaccompanied or separated from their families,” which is “1 percent of the overall displaced population of 1.7 million people.” The psychological toll of the conflict on children is profound, with UNICEF estimating that “almost all children in the Gaza Strip need some sort of mental health or psychosocial support -- that’s more than 1 million children.” Despite efforts to provide aid, “UNICEF and its partners have provided this kind of support to more than 40,000 children and 10,000 caregivers,” which Dujarric notes is “far from sufficient.” The spokesperson underscored that “the only way to deliver these services at scale is with a humanitarian ceasefire,” highlighting the urgent need for renewed support and peace efforts to address the humanitarian crisis. — **Xinhua**

FORCIBLY EXPELLED

Expelled Afghan migrants in dire straits: Report

KABUL: The World Food Programme has raised an alarm regarding the plight of Afghan migrants forcibly expelled from neighbouring country, revealing that they are currently resorting to borrowing money merely to survive, Khaama Press reported.

Half a million migrants
In a recently released video clip, the organisation disclosed that in the span of nearly five months, over half a million Afghan migrants have been forcibly deported by the Pakistani government. Highlighting the grim situation, the WFP emphasised that Afghan migrants find themselves compelled to borrow funds for survival, devoid of any facilities or support. The organisation’s website underscores that the majority of expelled migrants are currently in a state of confusion, as reported by Khaama Press. —**ANI**

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

US Senate FRC approves drone deal with India

WASHINGTON: US Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md), Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (FRC), issued a statement on his approval of the sale of MQ-9 drones to India, following assurances from the administration about steps taken to address recent allegations of transnational repression. “My approval of this sale was the result of months of painstaking discussions with the Biden administration,” he said.

US-India partnership
“The US-India partnership plays a key role in Indo-Pacific stability, including through regional mechanisms such as the Quad. I support deepening our bilateral relationship with India as long as that partnership is based on mutual trust and respect,” the US Senator added. Highlighting human rights and democratic values globally as one of his top priorities, Cardin added, “Progress on these



issues requires difficult discussions about our own democracy, as well as discussions with our closest allies and friends. I will continue raising human rights issues with the Administration, as well as with our Indian counterparts because I believe that our shared values are fundamental to the growth and longevity of our partnership.”

He added that he has conveyed his concerns to the Biden administration regarding the “timing of this sale to administration officials in light of the alleged murder-for-hire plot involving Indian officials to attempt to assassinate an American citizen on US soil.” “I have been assured by the administration that the Indian government is committed to thor-

oughly investigating the situation and fully cooperating with the US Department of Justice investigation so that there is credible accountability in this case. As the Chairman of this committee, I fully intend to hold the administration to these commitments,” the US Senator said in the statement. On Thursday, US State Department spokesperson Mat-

thew Miller, while shedding light on the recently approved foreign military sale of MQ-9B Remotely Piloted Aircraft to India, said, “I cannot give a timeline. This was the initial step today. Notifying Congress of the exact timeline of the delivery is something that we will explore with the government of India over the coming months.” Highlighting the significance of the deal, Miller emphasised, “Almost USD 4 billion sale of 31 MQ-9B Sky Guardian aircraft will provide India with enhanced maritime security and maritime domain awareness capability. It offers India outright ownership and a 16-fold increase in the number of aircraft as compared to their current lease.” The defence security cooperation agency, which is an agency within the US Department of Defence, said in a press release on Thursday that the sale helps strengthen the US-Indian Strategic Relationship. —**ANI**

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Hunger crisis in Ethiopia threatens to eclipse past famines

ADDIS ABABA: In 1985, musician and activist Bob Geldof organized the now-legendary Live Aid benefit concerts in London and Philadelphia to raise money in response to the devastating two-year famine in Ethiopia. Nearly four decades later, Geldof might need to come out of retirement to plan another event of such proportions if the latest predictions and calculations by experts specializing in hunger in Ethiopia become a reality. According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), some 20 million people in Ethiopia urgently need food assistance. A former head of the WFP, who doesn’t want to be named, told The Associated Press that the Horn of Africa country is “marching towards starvation” once again. Getachew Reda, the president of the beleaguered Tigray region’s interim administration, recently declared that over 90% of the region’s population was at risk of starvation and death. Tigrayan authorities have warned of an “unfolding famine” that could match the disaster of 1984-85, which claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. However, the government in Addis Ababa initially tried to shrug these reports off as “inaccurate,” accusing Reda of “politicizing the crisis.” In 2022, a UN panel published a report accusing Ethiopia’s government of using “starvation as a method of warfare” — among other human rights violations committed during the Tigray conflict. Building on the growing public awareness of the government’s complicity in hunger in the country’s recent past, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed decided to tone down his accusatory tone, releasing a joint statement with the UN on Friday. In it, the prime minister “makes the link to the current



situation with the fact that civilians’ communities in this region have not recovered from the impact of the conflict,” said Laetitia Bader, deputy director for Africa at Human Rights Watch. After years of deadly clashes, the government is quietly acknowledging that people in the regions of Tigray and Amhara are now facing a new enemy: hunger. **‘Conflict and drought are intricately linked’**
According to the latest numbers, at least 372 people have already died as a consequence of suffering hunger in the past six months in the country’s restive north. Food shortages have accelerated chiefly due to war in the Tigray region and unrest in neighboring Amara. Meanwhile, the worst drought in decades in the Horn of

Africa has only exacerbated the dire situation — particularly in Tigray. “There is no doubt that conflict and drought are intricately linked right now in north Ethiopia and contributing to the devastating food insecurity situation there,” Bader told DW. The persistent state of insecurity there, both in terms of political developments and agricultural challenges, meant only half of Tigray’s farmland was used during the main planting season last year, according to the UN. In most cases, only about a third of the yield was usable. In some areas of Tigray, that yield was reportedly as low as 2%. “Nothing we planted [this year] managed to yield any harvest, and now, there is a famine in the country,” Fitsum Woldegbriel, from the Atsbi district in eastern Tigray,

told DW. She added that in all of 2023, she saw rain in the province only twice. The 65-year-old said she doesn’t even know how to feed her family anymore. “In the past, when there was a similar problem, you would go somewhere and beg [for something] to eat. Now we don’t even have the energy to go.” **High-level government corruption**
The WFP decided to suspend food aid to Tigray in March 2023 following reports of widespread theft of aid donations, especially grain. In June, the WFP expanded that suspension of aid to all of Ethiopia in response to ongoing aid corruption. “Food aid programming was halted in Ethiopia at a critical mo-

ment for many months while the UN and the US government were investigating allegations of widespread theft of aid supplies across the country,” said Bader. US officials later said they believed the grain theft may have been the biggest deliberate diversion of grain in history — coming at a time when such commodities continue to be in high demand amid limited exports from Ukraine due to the ongoing war with Russia. “It’s obviously essential for donors and the aid community to be investigating and to be taking actions against the theft of aid supplies,” said Bader. “But at the same time, it is critical that this doesn’t come at the cost of the many people in need,” she added. It remains unclear whose pockets benefited from the theft of aid donations. Some humanitarian groups have blamed Ethiopian government officials, while others have pointed the finger at the country’s powerful military. “This is a government — and forces that [the prime minister] oversees — that have deliberately hampered civilians’ access to food as part of their strategy of war in the Tigray region,” said Bader. Following the discovery of the widespread fraud, the WFP took a set of precautions to avert future theft, resuming some of its limited aid distribution to Ethiopia just six months ago. The US only restarted its aid program in December. However, even just one month into the resumption of aid deliveries by the WFP and other aid agencies and governments, only a small fraction of people in Tigray said they are receiving food aid. The Tigray Food Cluster, a group of aid agencies co-chaired by the WFP working with Ethiopian officials, announced two weeks ago that only 14% of more than 3 mil-

lion people targeted for food aid in the region were able to eat. Yosef Gebremichael, a child nurse in Central Tigray, is worried that hunger might again become the greatest killer of children in the country, telling DW that the rate of malnutrition among children had tripled in recent months. “In just a few months, more than 80 children suffering from severe malnutrition have received support at our hospital. And even those who were discharged from treatment [had to] come back again.” Meanwhile, in neighboring Amhara region, the distribution of aid also appears to be suffering setbacks made more difficult by a rebellion since last August, which experts say is obstructing the movements of humanitarian organisations there. HRW’s Bader worries that any potential escalation of the Amhara conflict would result in further suffering. “Government forces and their allies restricted humanitarian assistance, targeted humanitarian actors, deliberately targeted food sources and livelihood sources throughout the conflict [in Tigray],” she said. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed just returned from a recent trip to Italy, where he was awarded the Agriicola Medal — the highest award given by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. The UN body said the award recognised Abiy’s “vision, leadership and commitment to food security and nutrition as well as the pursuit of innovative solutions in wheat self-sufficiency in the context of fast-changing and challenging circumstances.” “So, of course, there is an irony,” said Bader, referring to Abiy’s recognition in light of the cascading hunger disaster in Ethiopia. —**DW**

SPORTS

AFC ASIAN CUP



Jahanbakhsh scores late as Iran oust Japan in quarters

DOHA: A late Alireza Jahanbakhsh penalty was the difference as Iran came from behind to defeat Japan 2-1 and book their place in the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 semi-finals on Saturday. The two teams had met in the semi-finals of the previous edition, with Japan emerging 3-0 winners and they looked on course to repeat the win. Japan they took the lead before the half-hour mark, but two second-half goals from Mohammad Mohebi and Jahanbakhsh turned things around for the Iranians at Education City Stadium. Captaining Team Melli on the day in the absence of Ehsan Hajsafi, Jahanbakhsh nearly opened the Iranians' account in the 13th minute when he picked up Saeid Ezatollahi's pass down the left flank and curled a shot that nearly caught goalkeeper Zion Suzuki off-guard, but fizzed just over the crossbar. The first test for Suzuki came after 18 minutes when Hidemasa Morita lost possession on the edge of the Japanese penalty box, allowing Ezatollahi to control the ball and hit with his left, but his shot was too central and the Japanese goalkeeper had no problems in dealing with it. Morita more than made up for his mistake 10 minutes later. The central midfielder embarked on a solo run to beat three Iranian defenders and arrive into the box before drilling an effort that made its way into the back of the

net despite goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand's best efforts to make the save. Iran's biggest chance to equalise before the break was a Saman Ghoddos half-volley after he controlled the ball with his chest, but the Brentford midfielder narrowly missed the target. Nine minutes after the restart, Team Melli were able to restore parity after a long pass from Suzuki was interrupted and the ball fell to Sardar Azmoun who supplied a through pass to Mohebi. The forward was left with just the goalkeeper to beat and coolly slotted into the bottom corner for the equaliser. Iran thought they had completed their comeback in the 64th minute when Azmoun latched onto a long ball, dribbling expertly past two defenders and powering past Suzuki into the near post, but the AS Roma forward had strayed marginally off-side and the goal was overruled. The Japanese goalkeeper was called into action again to stop a spectacular Ezatollahi volley from the edge of the box and confidently produced the required save with just six minutes left to the end of 90. Deep into four minutes of added time, Iran got a golden chance to win the game when Ko Itakura brought Hussein Kanaani down inside the box. Jahanbakhsh stepped up and emphatically dispatched it into the top corner to earn coach Amir Ghalenoei's side the all-important victory. - Agencies

Bumrah, Jaiswal light up Vizag Test

A scintillating spell from Indian pacer saw England bowled out for 253 to give the hosts a first-innings lead of 143 in the second Test

VISAKHAPATNAM: England were blown away by a scintillating spell of reverse-swing bowling by India's Jasprit Bumrah on day two of the second Test in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. Bumrah took 6-45 in a devastating burst either side of tea, sensationally knocking Ollie Pope's middle and leg stumps out of the ground with an unplayable in-swinging yorker. Zak Crawley batted beautifully for 76, but his loose swipe at Axar Patel allowed Bumrah and spinner Kuldeep Yadav to rip the heart out of England's middle order. In all, the tourists lost 6-68. Ben Stokes fought back with 47 until he was bowled by Bumrah, who took his fifth when Tom Hartley was caught at first slip and then had James Anderson lbw to leave England 253 all out. That gave India a first-innings lead of 143 after they were bowled out for 396 in the morning session. Yashasvi Jaiswal, 22, became the third-youngest Indian man to make a Test double century before holing out off Anderson (209), who along with Shoaib Bashir and Rehan Ahmed finished with three wickets. Jaiswal became the third youngest Indian to make a men's Test double century after Vinod Kambli and Sunil Gavaskar. Notably, Mithali Raj made a women's Test double century aged 20. Jaiswal was batting again before the close, joined by captain Rohit Sharma to take India to 28-0. Their lead is 171 on a pitch where chasing any target of 300 or above would be utterly remarkable. England are in a dire position, but fewer runs behind on first innings than the 190 they gave up in the first Test in Hyderabad, when they pulled off an astonishing victory. The main difference here is that it will be England batting last on a pitch that seems sure to deteriorate. India are hugely indebted to Jaiswal. No-one else made more than 34 in the hosts' first innings.



The wicket of Crawley was a huge turning point, after which England were overwhelmed by the skill of Bumrah and trickery of Kuldeep Yadav. Till Stokes was batting, hope remained. Ultimately, even he was powerless to resist the brilliant Bumrah. It would take bravery to write off England, but comebacks like Hyderabad come once in a generation. The tourists now need their second in the space of a week. Bumrah went past 150 wickets while also claiming his 10th five-wicket haul in Tests. Crawley, on his 26th birthday, batted with extreme elegance to add 59 with Ben Duckett and 55 with Pope. He played dreamy straight drives, two slog-sweeps for six and danced to clip Axar for four before trying to repeat it the next ball. Losing his shape, Crawley miscued to point, where Shreyas Iyer took a difficult catch running back over his shoulder. With the ball reversing, India im-

mediately called for Bumrah, who bowled even better than a similar spell in Hyderabad last week. Joe Root, battling his technique, poked an edge and Jonny Bairstow was drawn into a needless drive. In between was the stunning delivery to Pope, arcing into the toes at almost 90mph to leave the superb visual of one stump standing and two lying on the ground. At the other end left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav, in for the injured Ravindra Jadeja, was getting the ball to skid and pop. Duckett prodded to silly point, Ben Foakes played all around one to be bowled and Ahmed patted a long-hop to short mid-wicket. Stokes countered, so Bumrah was summoned again. Two balls into a new spell, Bumrah got one to scoot into off stump, leaving Stokes to drop his bat and throw out his hands in frustration. Hartley was spirited for his 21, including a six, but Bumrah was too

good. Anderson survived one lbw review in adding 19 with Bashir, only to be plumb in front for Bumrah's sixth. The 90 minutes that India batted on the second morning were action-packed. Jaiswal, on 179 from the overnight 336-6, attacked, while Anderson was masterful with the second new ball. Jaiswal crashed Bashir for two sixes, then swept the same bowler for four to go to 200, celebrating by removing his gloves and helmet, and blowing kisses to the crowd. Anderson had exchanged words with Ravichandran Ashwin before having him caught behind, then England dried Jaiswal's scoring to entice a smear to Bairstow at deep cover. Ahmed had Bumrah caught at slip and Bashir snared No.11 Mukesh Kumar in the same fashion. **Brief scores:** India 396 & 28-0 (Jaiswal 209; Anderson 3-47, Ahmed 3-65, Bashir 3-138) vs England 253 (Crawley 76; Bumrah 6-45, Kuldeep 3-71).

OMAN FOOTBALL

OFA aims for success with Silhavy as head coach



< FROM A1 Silhavy, having managed the Czech national team from 2018-2023, has a solid coaching background, leading the team to the quarter-finals of the 2020 European Championship. As a former Czech national team defender, Silhavy also managed top domestic clubs in his country, including Slovan Liberec and Slavia Prague. Silhavy will be assisted by his Czech support staff, comprising assistants Jiří Chytrý and Milan Veselý, along with fitness coach Pavel Čvančara. Oman's joint World Cup and Asian campaign is set to resume

in March, with Oman placed in Group D alongside Malaysia, Kyrgyzstan, and Chinese Taipei. After a 2-0 win against Chinese Taipei and a surprising 1-0 defeat against Kyrgyzstan, Oman is gearing up for upcoming matches, starting with hosting Malaysia in Muscat on March 21. The Red Warriors then travel to Kuala Lumpur to face the hosts on March 26, with subsequent matches against Chinese Taipei and Kyrgyzstan in June to conclude their campaign. As of now, Malaysia leads the group with six points, while Oman and Kyrgyzstan have three points each, with Oman placed second on a better goal difference.

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TREE-PLANTING PROJECT
In its drive to increase the green cover around its projects, the management of the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (Sezad) has embarked on planting more trees in service streets and parks, utilising modern irrigation systems and making the best use of treated water. > **B2**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024



ASYAD DRY DOCK AT SEZAD
Asyad Dry Dock complex, at the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (Sezad), emerges as one of the largest ship repair hubs in the Middle East and North Africa region. Asyad last year introduced ship manufacturing services to spur the growth of the logistics and shipbuilding industry. > **B2**

MSX trading value in January rises 9.6% to OMR90.1 million

The number of transactions executed in January 2024 increased to 21,265 deals, compared to 16,683 deals in December 2023, according to trading data issued by the MSX

MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded a number of positive results in January 2024. The trading value of MSX increased by 9.6 percent from its level in December 2023, and the main index recorded an increase of more than one percent, while the number of transactions executed and the market value of public joint-stock companies listed on the stock exchange increased.

Trading data issued by the MSX indicated that the trading value rose in January to about OMR90.1 million, compared to OMR82.1 million in December 2023. The number of transactions executed in January 2024 increased to 21,265 deals, compared to 16,683 deals in December 2023.

OQ Gas Networks (OQGN) shares accounted for about 20 percent of the total trading value, with transactions worth OMR177 million. The company distributed cash dividends of 7.6 baisas per share, and the sixth issuance of



sovereign Sukuk witnessed trades worth OMR10.7 million.

While Bank Muscat shares witnessed trades worth OMR9.4 million, representing 10.4 percent of the total trading value, Omantel ranked among the most traded companies in terms of trading value with OMR9.1 million and the third issuance of sovereign Sukuk came in next with trades worth OMR9.1 million.

The market value of public joint stock companies rose at the end of January reached OMR9.70 billion compared to OMR8.96 billion at the end of December 2023, recording gains of OMR40 million.

However, the total market value of securities listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange declined at the end of January to OMR23.78 billion, recording losses of OMR13.4 million compared to their level in December 2023. The market value of the sukuk market declined by OMR152 million reaching OMR4.27 billion at the end of January 2024. The market value of closed companies recorded gains of about OMR100 million rising to OMR10.5 billion at the end of January 2024.

The MSX in January witnessed an increase in the prices of 35 securities, compared to 40 securities

Omani stock market falls amid regional uncertainty and volatile crude oil prices

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market experienced a negative performance this past week, marking a return to a bearish trend after trading sideways for a couple of weeks, according to an analyst.

"The main index fell by 0.97 percent, extending the market's decline that followed its strong rebound at the beginning of the year. The market could remain exposed to additional price corrections as the main index failed to return toward its previous peak," said Ahmed Negm, Head of Market Research MENA at XS.com.

Declining trading volumes could also exacerbate the market's direction. While trading volumes remain relatively high despite a retreat, the value traded was shifting toward the lower end of the spectrum observed during the past few months, he further added.

"This Omani stock market followed others across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region as geopolitical tensions and fluctuations in oil prices have contributed to a climate of



uncertainty and volatility," said Ahmed Negm.

These factors have dampened market sentiment, leading to mixed performances. Investors in the region reacted to the Federal Reserve's meeting this week as well as it maintained its interest rates unchanged and indicated that they could remain elevated for a longer period of time," he added.

Sector-wise, the financial sector declined by 1.20 percent and weighed significantly on the market's performance. Several banks recorded nega-

tive performances this week. Bank Dhofar retreated by 6 percent while the National Bank of Oman fell by 4 percent, continuing its downward trajectory from its peak in October. Similarly, Ominvest dropped by 5.38 percent. Several banks also announced dividend payouts this week.

Conversely, the services sector showcased a strong performance, gaining 1.9 percent over the week and recorded strong gains among some stocks such as Sembcorp Salalah, which rose by 9 percent, Sharqiyah Desalination, which was up by 4.62 percent, and Oman National Engineering & Investment which increased by 6.25 percent. Oman Telecom climbed slightly by 0.19 percent, along with Ooredoo which gained 2 percent. Abraj Energy and Renaissance Services fell, however.

The industry index, albeit with a modest gain of 0.19 percent, saw positive contributions from stocks like Oman Cables Industry, which increased by 3.07 percent, and Al Jazeera Steel Products, by 2.89 percent.

NCSI DATA

Oman sees 9.7% increase in postpaid mobile subscriptions

MUSCAT: Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated an increase in postpaid mobile phone subscriptions by 9.7 percent to 1.78 subscriptions.

The number of prepaid mobile phone subscriptions also increased by 1.5 percent to reach 5.19 million subscriptions. Among these subscriptions were 3.93 million from operators and 1.26 million subscriptions from resale. This represented an increase in the total number of mobile phone subscriptions by 3.5 percent at the end of 2023. The total number of mobile phone subscriptions (postpaid and prepaid) reached 6.98 subscriptions.

The number of active mobile broadband subscriptions recorded an increase of 5.5 percent until the end of December 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Fixed Internet service subscriptions also recorded an increase of 4.6 percent to reach 563,708 subscriptions compared to the same period in 2022.

The total subscriptions to fixed broadband service (more than 256KB/s) amounted to about 561,983 subscriptions at the end of 2023, an increase of 4.7 percent compared to the end of 2022, while the number of subscriptions via low-speed Internet (less than 256 KB/s) decreased. This includes telephone calls and some rented Internet lines at a rate of 0.1 percent, reaching 1,725 subscriptions.

Statistics further indicated an increase in the number of fixed-line telephone subscriptions at the end of 2023 by 2.9 percent to reach 579,270 subscriptions as compared to the end of 2022.

With regard to analogue fixed-line telephone subscriptions, which include prepaid and postpaid, their number decreased at the end of 2023 by 4.8 percent



to reach 225,416 subscriptions compared to the same period of the previous year. The number of fixed-line telephone subscriptions connected to Internet Protocol (IP) technology reached 296,628 subscriptions during the same period, recording an increase of 10.3 percent compared to the end of 2022.

Muscat Governorate ranked first in the number of analogue fixed telephone lines at 68 percent by the end of 2023, followed by the Dhofar Governorate in second place at 7.9 percent, while the North Al Batinah Governorate registered a rate of 7.4 percent and the percentage in the remaining governorates reached 16.7 percent.

The NCSI statistics further showed that the number of subscriptions to digital network channels for integrated services recorded a decrease of 0.1 percent at the end of 2023 to reach 49,722 subscriptions corresponding to the same period in 2022, while the number of fixed wireless subscriptions decreased by 18.8 percent to reach 703 subscriptions compared to the year 2022, while the number of public phone subscriptions stabilised at 6,800. - **ONA**

STATISTICAL BULLETIN

Total credit granted by Oman's banking sector tops OMR23bn

MUSCAT: The total credit granted by commercial banks in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 7.8 percent to 25.33 at the end of the third quarter of 2023 compared to OMR23.49 billion during the same period in 2022.

The quarterly statistical bulletin issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) indicated that the personal loan sector received OMR9.36 billion representing 38.3 percent of the total bank credit to commercial banks at the end of September 2023.

The industrial sector received OMR2.18 billion or 8.2 percent of the total credit granted while the wholesale and retail trade sector received credits amounting to OMR1.92 billion or 7.9 percent of the total credit, followed by the construction sector at OMR1.81 billion or 7.4 percent of the total bank credit.

The bulletin further stated that the services sector received credit worth OMR1.74 billion or 7.1 percent of the volume of credit granted to commercial banks and the electricity, transportation, and



water sector received OMR1.61 billion or 6.6 percent of the total volume of credit granted.

The transportation sector received OMR1.51 billion or 6.2 percent of the credit granted while the financial institutions sector received OMR1.33 or 5.4 percent, followed by the mining sector (mines and quarries), which received OMR1.20 billion or 4.9 percent of the credit granted.

The Statistical bulletin further indicated that the volume of bank credit granted to the import sector amounted to OMR894.3 million at the end of the third quarter of 2023 followed by the government sector at OMR786.7 million.

By the end of September 2023, the agriculture sector and related activities received OMR44.3 million or 0.2 percent of the credit granted while the export sector re-

ceived OMR77.7 million.

The bulletin indicated that the volume of bank credit to commercial banks in the Sultanate of Oman for other economic activities amounted to about OMR800.3 million at the end of the third quarter of 2023, while the volume of bank credit to non-residents reached OMR252 million or one percent of the total volume of bank credit. - **ONA**

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Opec Fund delivers record results in 2023 with \$1.7 billion in development funding

VIENNA: The Opec Fund for International Development, a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Vienna, Austria, expanded its new commitments to \$1.7 billion across 55 projects globally in 2023, providing funding to address climate change and energy transition, support social and economic resilience and boost sustainable growth.

The organisation was estab-

lished 48 years ago and the 2023 results represent a record in new commitments.

Strong demand

Opec Fund Director-General Dr Abdulhamid Alkhalifa, said, "In 2023, the Opec Fund increased its impact through the delivery of development support in a challenging global environment. We grew our lending programme across the

board in response to strong demand by our partner countries and thanks to our success in raising additional funds from the capital markets. We were also able to leverage our partnerships to mobilise development support by working with multilateral development banks and development finance institutions such as the Arab Co-ordination Group. And we are well on track with our 2030 target to

commit 40 percent of all new financing to climate action."

In 2023, the Opec Fund delivered strong results across Africa (42 percent of investments), the Middle East and North Africa & Europe and Central Asia (20 percent), Latin America and the Caribbean (20 percent), as well as Asia and the Pacific (18 percent) through public and private sector lending, trade finance and grants operations. - **WAM**

MARKET

Asyad Dry Dock emerges as one of largest ship repair hubs in Mena

To expand the portfolio of its commercial services and meet the needs of regional and international clients, Asyad last year introduced ship manufacturing services to spur the growth of the logistics and shipbuilding industry

MUSCAT: Asyad Dry Dock complex, at the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (Sezad), emerges as one of the largest ship repair



hubs in the Middle East and North Africa region. To expand the portfolio of its commercial services and meet the needs of regional and international clients, Asyad last year introduced ship manufacturing services to spur the growth of the logistics and shipbuilding industry. The hub provides cargo load-



ing, unloading and transportation services, as well as full support for modern fishing trawlers and marine research vessels. Since the start of its operations in 2011 until September 2023, Asyad Dry Dock implemented more than 1,700 maintenance projects for more than 550 local and international commercial clients

from about 70 countries. The facility features two docks: the first is 410 metres long and 95 metres wide and the second is 410 metres long and 80 metres wide, with a depth of up to 14 metres. It can provide services to ships with a tonnage of 600,000. The dock also includes a 2,800-metres long berth that

boasts a full set of industrial workshops and yards covering an area of 453,000 sqm. The first quarter of 2023 saw the operation of a floating dock that will augment the company's capacity in the field of maintenance and vessel repair services by 20 percent. Dr Abdulsalam Omar Al Ra-

baani, Acting Chief Operating Officer of Asyad Drydock, said that the Asyad Group invested more than OMR6 million to purchase the floating dock in 2023. He pointed out that the location and size of the current dock enables it to accommodate a larger number of floating docks in the future. -ONA

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE IN DUQM

Sezad concludes 5,000 tree-planting project

MUSCAT: In its drive to increase the green cover around its projects, the management of the Special Economic Zone in Duqm (Sezad) has embarked on planting more trees in service streets and parks, utilising modern irrigation systems and making the best use of treated water.

Abdullah Al Alawi, a member of Sezad Afforestation and Landscaping Department, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that Sezad carried out 100 per cent of its project to plant 5,000 trees by the end of 2023. The project included a total of 5,718 trees and featured landscaping of about 34,000 square metres, said Al Alawi, noting that Sezad Authority has allocated OMR2.393 million for the project. Between 2025 and 2026, the authority plans to plant about 5,000 more trees in the zone, Al Alawi added. He explained that the agricultural nursery in Duqm, whose area is estimated at 5,000 square metres, constitutes a primary source of trees that are compatible with



the nature of the project. Al Alawi pointed out that Sezad management allocated several investment lands to establish agricultural nurseries in the zone. He added that the nursery serves an initiative to plant 100,000 wild trees in Al Wusta Governorate and augment the National Initiative to plant 10 million wild trees. By mid-2024, the green area is set to cover an area of more than 50,000 square metres of different types of trees that adapt to climatic conditions in the region, said Al Alawi. -ONA

UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE

India's UPI makes global debut, formally launched at Eiffel Tower in Paris

PARIS: The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has been formally launched at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Indian Embassy in France said on Friday and termed it as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "vision of taking UPI global." The UPI was formally launched at the Republic Day reception held in France. The UPI is India's mobile-based payment system and allows people to make round-the-clock payments through a virtual payment address created by the customer. UPI is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing and merchant payments into one hood. In 2023, India and France committed to nurturing a thriving ecosystem and building collaborations that empower their citizens and ensure their full participation in the digital century, according to the India-France joint statement. NPCI International Payments Limited



(NIPL) and France's Lyra Collect executed an agreement to implement the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) in France and Europe. During his visit to France in July last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India and France have agreed to use the UPI

payment mechanism and it will begin from the iconic Eiffel Tower. PM Modi said that Indian tourists in France will now be able to make payments in rupees. While addressing the Indian community at La Seine Musicale in Paris on July 14, PM Modi said,

"Be it India's UPI or other digital platforms, they have brought a huge social transformation in the country and I am happy that India and France are also working together in direction. India and France have agreed to use UPI in France. I will leave after the agreement. However, it is your job to move forward. Friends, in the coming days its beginning will be made from Eiffel Tower which means that Indian tourists will now be able to make payments in Rupees, through UPI, at Eiffel Tower." Recently, French President Emmanuel Macron visited India to attend the Republic Day Parade as Chief Guest. During his visit, Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited a tea stall and interacted with each other over a cup of tea in Jaipur. Macron used UPI to make a payment there. Earlier, PM Modi explained the UPI digital payments system to Macron as the two leaders visited a local shop during their visit to Hawa Mahal in Jaipur. -ANI

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ECONOMIC DATA

Scorching US economy throws off market's Federal Reserve cut narrative

NEW YORK: Robust US economic data is confronting investors with an unexpected question: whether strong growth can keep driving stocks higher even if the Federal Reserve delivers less monetary-policy easing than the market had hoped. Expectations that the Fed would pivot to cutting rates sent stocks soaring at the end of 2023 and pushed the S&P 500, opening a new tab to a record high in January. The index is up 4% this year after surging 24% in 2023, Reuters reported. That narrative has been jolted by evidence that the economy may be running too hot for the Fed to cut rates without risking an inflationary rebound. Friday's blockbuster US employment number was the latest sign of stronger-than-expected growth, after Fed Chairman Jerome Powell days earlier deflated hopes the central bank would begin lowering rates in March. Market expectations of a near-term rate cut dimmed after the jobs data, with futures tied to the Fed's main policy rate reflecting a 70% chance of the central bank lowering borrowing costs at its May 1 meeting, from over 90% on Thursday, according to the CME FedWatch Tool. The probability of a March cut stood at about 20%, from just under 50% a week ago. With Friday's jobs report, "the six or seven rate cuts that markets had



been pricing in seems very offside," Seema Shah, chief global strategist at Principal Asset Management, said in a written commentary. Friday's jobs report showed nonfarm payrolls increased by 353,000 jobs last month - well above the 180,000 increase expected by economists polled by Reuters. The economy also added 126,000 more jobs in November and December than previously reported. Plenty of investors believe the strong growth is a positive for stocks, especially if accompanied by better-than-expected corporate earnings. The S&P 500 hit a fresh high on Friday after the jobs data, helped by the soaring shares

of Facebook parent Meta Platforms, opens new tab and Amazon, opens new tab, which rose 20% and 8%, respectively, following their corporate results. For 2024, S&P 500 earnings are expected to jump nearly 10% after a 3.6% rise in 2023, according to LSEG data. Those expectations will be tested in the coming week with another heavy batch of reports, including from Eli Lilly, opens new tab, Walt Disney, opens new tab and ConocoPhillips, opens new tab. Analysts at Capital Economics forecast a "banner" year for US stocks, finishing 2024 over 10% above current levels at 5,500. Optimism over the business po-

tential of artificial intelligence, which helped power stocks such as Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab last year, will likely drive those gains, they said. However, sustained above trend growth poses another issue - fears of an inflationary rebound. A longer period of high interest rates also could increase stress for areas of the economy that are already hurting such as commercial real estate. Shares of New York Community Bancorp (NYCB.N), opens new tab, a major CRE lender in New York, have tumbled in recent days, setting off broader regional banking concerns, after the company slashed its dividend and posted a surprise loss. Ramped-up growth, along with expectations of rates staying at current levels for longer, could drive Treasury yields up. Higher yields can pressure equities because they compete with stocks for investors, while higher rates raise the cost of capital in the economy. The benchmark 10-year Treasury yield, which moves inversely to bond prices, hit 4.05% on Friday. Investors are still pricing in around 125 basis points of Fed cuts this year, LSEG data shows. That is down from around 150 basis points priced in earlier this week, but still far more than the 75 basis points the Fed has projected. -BNA



LIFESTYLE

ENERGY DRINKS LINKED TO POOR SLEEP QUALITY, INSOMNIA AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: STUDY

Consuming energy drinks is associated with poor quality sleep and insomnia among college students, according to a major Norwegian study published in the open-access journal BMJ Open.

And the higher the frequency of consumption, the fewer hours of nightly shut eye the students clocked up. But even just the occasional can--1-3 times a month--is linked to a heightened risk of disturbed sleep, the findings indicate.

Energy drinks contain an average caffeine content of 150 mg per litre as well as sugar, vitamins, minerals and amino acids in varying quantities, note the researchers. Marketed as mental and physical pick-me-ups, they are popular with college students and young people in general.

While there is some evidence to suggest that they reduce sleep quality, it's not clear exactly which aspects of sleep might be more or less affected, or whether there are any sex specific differences in these effects.

To explore these issues further, the researchers drew on 53,266 eighteen to 35 year old participants of the Students' Health and Well-being Study (SHOT22 study)---the most recent wave of a large national survey of college and university students in Norway.

The students were asked how often they drank energy drinks, with the response options of daily, weekly (once; 2-3 times; 4-6 times), monthly (1-3 times), and seldom/never.

They were also asked detailed questions about their usual sleep patterns: when they went to bed and got up; how long it took them to fall asleep (sleep latency); wakefulness after going to sleep. Sleep efficiency was then calculated from total nightly hours of sleep vs time spent in bed.

Insomnia was defined as experiencing difficulties falling and staying asleep and waking early on at least 3 nights of the week, plus daytime sleepiness and tiredness for at least 3 days of the week, for at least 3 months.

The survey responses indicated clear sex differences in patterns of energy drink consumption. For example, women were more likely than men to report never or seldom consuming energy drinks: 50% vs 40%

Of those who said they did drink these beverages, 5.5% of women said they drank them 4-6 times a week and just over 3% reported daily consumption. The comparable figures for men were 8% and 5%, respectively.

But there was a clear dose-response association for both male and female between energy drink consumption and fewer hours of sleep.

Both men and women who reported daily consumption slept around half an hour less than those reporting only occasional or no consumption. Similar associations were also observed for waking after falling asleep and taking longer to fall asleep.

And increasing consumption was associated with a corresponding increase in both nocturnal wake time and time taken to fall asleep--poorer sleep efficiency.

Insomnia was also more common among both women and men reporting daily consumption than among those reporting occasional or no consumption: 51% vs 33% (women) and 37% vs 22 % (men).

Overall, higher energy drink consumption was associated with an increasing risk of sleep problems across all the aspects studied, with the strongest associations for short sleep duration.

Compared with those reporting no or only an occasional energy drink, men who reported daily consumption were more than twice as likely to say they slept fewer than 6 hours/night, while women were 87% more likely to do so.

But even those reporting having an energy drink just 1-3 times a month were still at heightened risk of sleep problems.

This is an observational study, and as such, no firm conclusions can be drawn about cause. And the researchers acknowledge that reverse causality--whereby energy drink consumption might be a consequence of poor sleep rather than the other way round--might explain the associations found.

There was no information either on the timing of consumption or the exact quantities drunk, and the study relied on self assessment rather than objective measures of consumption and sleep patterns.

Nevertheless, the researchers conclude: "The results from the current study show that there is a robust association between the frequency of [energy drink] consumption and the different sleep parameters.

"Identifying modifiable risk factors for sleep problems among college and university students is vital and our results suggest that the frequency of ...consumption could be a possible target for interventions."

SPORTS

Super Eagles fly into last four

Ademola Lookman steers Nigeria to a 1-0 win over Angola in AFCON 2023 quarter-finals

ABIDJAN: A first-half goal from Ademola Lookman was enough to help Nigeria overcome Angola 1-0 and reach the semi-finals of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations on Friday.

The former England Under-21 winger emphatically converted a cut-back from Moses Simon four minutes before the break at Felix Houphouet-Boigny Stadium in Abidjan.

The 1-0 scoreline flattered Angola, who were second best for long periods of the game, and Nigeria striker Victor Osimhen had a 75th-minute header ruled out for offside by the video assistant referee (VAR).

Angola's best chance fell to Zine, who rolled the ball against the base of the post when clean through on goal just before the hour mark.

Nigeria will now face the winner of the quarter-final between Cape Verde and South Africa in the last four next Wednesday.



If possible, the humidity inside the Felix Houphouet-Boigny Stadium appeared to have gone up another notch from previous games at the finals but both sets of players gave their all despite the conditions to entertain what ended up being a near-capacity crowd.

Angola carved out the first chance of the game, as Super Eagles goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali tipped Mabululu's effort away following Gilberto's flick-on from a corner.

But the Palancas Negras showed little intention of over-attacking in the first period, preferring to sit deep and soak up pressure before launching counter-attacks.

The tactic worked well to limit their opponents until just before



half-time, when Simon was the architect of Lookman's goal.

The Nantes man timed his run well to win the ball ahead of the sliding Kialonda Gaspar and surged down the left flank before showing a cool head to look up and pick out his fellow winger's late run into the area.

Lookman, who now has three

teams showed more intent.

Zaidu Sanusi blazed wide after better wing play from Lookman before Calvin Bassey wasted a header from six yards out after Nigeria worked the ball back into the box following a cleared corner.

Angola should have equalised when an excellent through ball from Show played Zine in behind the resolute Nigeria defence, which has now kept four successive clean sheets.

But the half-time substitute could only strike the right-hand post with his effort, leaving many of his team-mates with their heads in their hands.

African footballer of the year Osimhen thought he had sealed the win with his header from Lookman's free-kick, only for VAR to intervene after a prolonged check for offside which caught many in the stadium by surprise.

Minutes later, Angola centre-back Gaspar also denied the Napoli striker with a fantastic last-ditch tackle.

Zito Luvumbo had a late shot palmed away by Nwabali and the three-time Nations Cup winners saw out seven minutes of added time to reach the semi-finals of the competition for the 15th time in their past 18 appearances.

Angola, ranked 117th in the world, had surprisingly won their group ahead of 2019 champions Algeria and Burkina Faso, but their wait for a first appearance in the last four goes on. - Agencies

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS: QUARTER-FINALS

DR Congo rally to defeat Guinea in quarter-finals

ABIDJAN: DR Congo came from behind to beat Guinea 3-1 and book a semi-final spot at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations on Friday.

Mohamed Bayo put Guinea ahead with a 20th-minute penalty after the forward was fouled by Chancel Mbemba, who then fired in from a narrow angle at the other end to equalise seven minutes later.

DR Congo had a penalty of their own in the second half when Julian Jeanvier clipped the legs of Silas and Brentford forward Yoane Wissa converted to give the Leopards the lead with 25 minutes left.

The West Africans had little in response after going behind and the result was sealed when Arthur Masuaku's free-kick from wide on the left caught out Guinea goalkeeper Ibrahim Kone at his near post.

DR Congo had drawn all four of their previous games in Ivory Coast, beating Egypt on penalties in the last 16, and now prepare for a first semi-final outing since the Central Africans finished third in 2015.

Sebastien Desabre's side will face the winners of the quarter-final between Mali and hosts Ivory Coast in the last four on Wednesday.

Guinea had appeals for a penalty turned down in the opening minute when the ball flicked behind off Mbemba's hand but, after Wissa had poked wide for DR Congo, the Syli National were awarded a soft spot-kick.

Bayo was under pressure from Mbemba when he hit the turf while attempting to get on the end of Ibrahim Diakite's cross, and referee Mustapha Ghorbal controversially decided Mbemba's shoulder in the back was worthy of a foul.

The Video Assistant Referee did not get involved despite Congolese protests and, after a delay, Bayo slotted to the right of centre to notch his third goal at the finals.

However, Mbemba made amends when Masuaku's corner fell to the former Newcastle cen-



tre-back at the far post and he rifled a left-footed shot into the roof of the net.

Facinet Conte spurned a glorious chance to put Guinea back ahead when he could not get a decent connection on the ball after being played through, and a minute later DR Congo had a penalty when Jeanvier carelessly halted Silas' bustling run forward.

Wissa stuttered in his run-up but found the bottom left-hand corner and Guinea, making their first appearance in the last eight since 2015, struggled to find a re-

sponse, despite bringing Stuttgart striker Serhou Guirassy off the bench.

With eight minutes remaining Masuaku put the result beyond doubt when the former West Ham full-back's left-footed knuckleball shot dipped and swerved past Kone, who had expected a cross and could not keep out the ball despite his despairing dive.

Guirassy did have an injury-time header deflected wide, while Silas could have added a fourth goal but fired over from inside the area. - Agencies

AFC ASIAN CUP: QUARTER-FINALS

My focus was only on helping S Korea win: Son Heung-min

DOHA: Son Heung-min insisted his determination to defeat Australia was motivated by the desire to keep South Korea's hopes of lifting the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 alive and not to avenge the Taeguk Warriors' heart-breaking loss to the Socceroos in the 2015 final.

The Tottenham Hotspur forward was instrumental in Jurgen Klinsmann's side advancing to a last four meeting with Jordan, winning the penalty that allowed Hwang Hee-chan to score an injury time equaliser before hitting a sweetly-struck free-kick in extra-time that sealed the 2-1 victory on Friday.

The win came almost nine years to the day since South Korea lost to the Australians in the 2015 final in Sydney, when Son scored in injury time to take that game into an additional 30 minutes only for James Troisi to hit the winner as Ange Postecoglou's side were crowned champions.

"I wouldn't call it revenge," Son said. "But, yes, 2015 was painful, it really did hurt. We had a very good chance that day and I was one of the players who was really disappointed with the result.

"But its part of football, those experiences really helped me mature as a person and as a football player and that's what brought me along the way. Today wasn't about the last game in 2015, it was about my goal in this tournament and our goal as a team. That was all that was in my head and I'm just happy that we're one step closer to achieving our goal."

Klinsmann's side have been grinding out results during the current Finals, with injury time goals against Jordan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia playing a vital role in their progress to the last eight before Hwang's spot-kick took Friday's match into extra-time.

Their refusal to die has seen Son and his teammates nicknamed the 'Zombie Team' by fans in Korea, but the 31-year-old insists the challenges the players are facing have enhanced the



unity within the squad.

"The most important thing is we get the result," he said. "Whatever name you want to put on it is not important. The thing I can say with assurance is that this is only making us stay together even stronger.

"Playing 120 minutes, it's difficult, it's not easy but the spirit the boys are showing is making us stick together and I can say with confidence that our strength is that we're one team.

"We're all together in this. That's what's really important, the spirit that we're showing and that's what people need to focus on."

While exhaustion could become a factor for a side that has played extra-time in back-to-back games, Son is confident he and his teammates can overcome the issue with the correct psychological approach.

"Ever since becoming a footballer I think that it's the first time I've played two matches in a row of 120 minutes, but it's not as bad as it might seem," he said.

"It's more about the mentality and what you think in your head. But now I'm playing for the country, now I belong to the country and there shouldn't be any excuse.

"After tomorrow there's only going to be four teams left in Doha. And of the four teams only one team is going to lift the trophy. I want to fight for that trophy. Tiredness, fatigue, there should be no excuse. We're going



to go forward to win the trophy, to bring it back home."

Australia had looked set for victory thanks to Craig Goodwin's volley from Nathaniel Atkinson's cross.

But Son was fouled by Lewis Miller and Hwang Hee-chan's 96th-minute penalty sent the game to extra time.

Tottenham's Son was the difference in the added 30 minutes, as he curled a free-kick past Mat Ryan in Qatar.

Australia ended with 10 men after Aiden O'Neill was sent off by the video assistant referee for a dangerous foul.

Jordan in semis

Jordan will be South Korea's opponents in Tuesday's semi-final after a 1-0 win over Asian Cup debutants Tajikistan.

Earlier on Friday, Jordan made history as they reached the semi-finals for the first time. Vahdat Hanonov's own goal, as Abdallah Nasib's header went in off his chest, saw off surprise package Tajikistan. - Agencies

BOUT WAS ON 17 FEBRUARY

Fury-Usyk undisputed heavyweight title fight off

RIYADH: Tyson Fury's undisputed heavyweight title fight against Oleksandr Usyk has been postponed after the Briton sustained a "freak" cut in training.

Fury, 35, was cut in sparring at his training camp in Saudi Arabia on Friday in preparation for the bout on 17 February in Riyadh.

The injury above Fury's right eye needed "urgent medical attention" and "significant stitching".

In a statement, the Briton said

he was "absolutely devastated".

Fury is the WBC champion with Ukraine's Usyk, 37, holding the WBA, WBO and IBF belts.

If the fight does take place at a later date, the winner will be crowned the first undisputed heavyweight champion in the four-belt era. Fury said he had been preparing to face Usyk "for so long" and was in "superb condition".

"I feel bad for everyone involved in this huge event and I will work

diligently towards the rescheduled date once the eye is healed," he added.

In a later Instagram post he wrote: "Can't help getting injured in sparring but what I can say was Usyk was in trouble. I am in fantastic shape. I will reschedule soon as I can. 2024 is a massive year for team GK."

Usyk's promoter, Alex Krassyuk, commented underneath: "Wishing you soonest recovery. God sent

you a sign. Think of retirement, brother."

Promoters Queensberry Promotions said once doctors have assessed the cut they will have a "better idea of the recovery period needed". IBF mandatory challenger Croatian Filip Hrgovic, 31, told ESPN: "Now that Fury [is] injured, I'm ready to step in and fight Usyk.

"Let's go Usyk, you owe me my mandatory shot. It's time to finally face me." - Agencies



ROUND-UP



Samsung introduces Galaxy S24 series in Oman ushering new era of mobile AI

Revolutionising daily interactions, from seamless communication to boundless creativity and enhanced capabilities, Galaxy AI propels the iconic S Series into the future

MUSCAT: Samsung Gulf Electronics has announced the local availability of the Galaxy S24 Series in Oman -featuring the Galaxy S24 Ultra, Galaxy S24+, and Galaxy S24 - introducing groundbreaking mobile experiences fuelled by artificial intelligence.

The Galaxy S24 Series spearheads a transformative era that redefines how users interact with mobile devices, enabling a premium, intelligent experience only Galaxy could create. Powered by Galaxy AI, the Galaxy S24 Series enables barrier-free communication through intelligent text and call translations, unleashing creative freedom and setting a new benchmark for search.

The launch event was presided over by DooHee Lee, President of Samsung Gulf Electronics at Zenon, a futuristic restaurant and lounge in Downtown Dubai, where holograms and digital art create a dynamic and immersive environment in Dubai's first AI restaurant. Merging creative ingenuity with cutting-edge technology, this distinctive and inventive dining ven-



ue embodies the essence of Samsung's first AI phone, ushering in unique user experiences.

DooHee Lee, President of Samsung Gulf Electronics, said, “We are paving the way to a transformative future in mobile technology with Galaxy AI, where everyday experiences are elevated to extraordinary heights. The commitment to innovation is unmistakable in the Galaxy S24 Series, introducing groundbreaking features that set new standards in mobile technology. From communication to photography, this series redefines possibilities, offering an intelligent, immersive experience tailored to the diverse needs of our users. By building advanced AI capabilities in our new devices, we look to support Oman’s vision of creating new economic, educational, and social opportunities for the country.”

Fadi Abu Shamat, Head of the Mobile eXperience Division at Samsung Gulf Electronics, added, "The Galaxy S24 Series features a suite of AI-powered tools that redefine how we perceive and share our world. With enhanced camera capabilities, AI-powered productivity tools and a powerful chipset, users can unleash their creativity and performance in exciting new ways. In the pursuit of excellence, this Series combines cutting-edge technology with a commitment to sustainability, setting new benchmarks for mobile devices that respect both the user and the environment."

**Elevate everyday
experiences to
extraordinary heights**

Galaxy AI introduces purposeful intelligence aimed at enriching every aspect of life, particularly the fundamental role of communication. AI-powered advances in the Galaxy S24 Series overcome language barriers, facilitating seamless conversations with non-native speakers. Live Translate offers two-way, real-time voice and text translations within the native app, ensuring privacy without the need for third-party applications. On the other hand, the Interpreter feature instantly translates live conversations on a split-screen, allowing individuals facing each other to read text transcriptions, even without cellular data or Wi-Fi.

For messaging and similar apps, Chat Assist refines conversational tones, ensuring communication reflects the intended message. AI is integrated into the Samsung Keyboard provides real-time translations in 13 languages. In the car, Android Auto automatically summarises incoming messages and suggests relevant replies, keeping users connected while focused on the road.

Organising our lives receives a significant boost with Note Assist in Samsung Notes, featuring AI-generated summaries, template creation, and cover creation for easy note identification via a brief preview. Meanwhile, Transcript



Assist utilizes AI and Speech-to-Text technology to transcribe, summarize, and translate voice recordings, even in scenarios with multiple speakers.

Communication isn't the only aspect evolving in the Galaxy S24 Series. Online search undergoes a groundbreaking transformation with the introduction of Circle to Search, an intuitive, gesture-driven feature in collaboration with Google. A long press on the home button enables users to circle, highlight, scribble, or tap on anything on the Galaxy S24 screen to obtain high-quality search results, providing a seamless and epic search experience.

Unleash creativity for fresh perspective on the world

The ProVisual Engine in the Galaxy S24 Series is a comprehensive suite of AI-powered tools redefining image-capturing capabilities and creative freedom, from setting up a shot to sharing it on social media. The Quad Tele System in the Galaxy S24 Ultra, featuring a new 5x optical zoom lens, works with the 50MP sensor to deliver optical-quality performance at varying zoom levels. Nightography capabilities powered by Space Zoom in the Galaxy S24 Series deliver brilliant photos and videos in any condition, even when zoomed in. Enhanced pixel size and improved optical image stabilization reduce blur, ensuring clearer results.



Galaxy AI editing tools enable simple edits such as erase, re-compose, and remaster. Edit Suggestions uses Galaxy AI to recommend suitable tweaks for each photo, while Generative Edit allows users to fill in parts of an image background with generative AI. Instant Slow-mo can generate additional frames for action-packed videos, offering a more detailed look.

Super HDR ensures lifelike previews before shooting, while third-party social apps seamlessly integrate with Galaxy's AI-powered camera system for enhanced social sharing. The Galaxy S Series camera tools directly integrate with other apps for an elevated HDR experience, ensuring a lifelike range of brightness, colour, and contrast when viewing photos and videos in the Gallery or on social media.

As AI takes centre stage in everyday life, Galaxy S24's performance excels at meeting evolving demands. The Snapdragon® 8 Gen 3 Mobile Platform for Galaxy, available in the Galaxy S24 Ultra, delivers remarkable NPU improvement for efficient AI processing. Meanwhile, adaptive refresh rates ranging from 1 Hz to 120 Hz enhance performance efficiency across all three Galaxy S24 models.

Gaming experiences are enhanced with optimal thermal control systems, ray tracing for lifelike visuals, and collaborations with industry-leading gaming partners. The Galaxy S24 Series

boasts the brightest Galaxy display ever, reaching a peak brightness of 2,600nit with Vision Booster for improved outdoor visibility.

The Corning Gorilla Armor on the Galaxy S24 Ultra display provides enhanced durability against everyday scratches, while design enhancements, slimmer bezels, and larger screen sizes on the Galaxy S24+ and Galaxy S24 ensure an immersive viewing experience. The Galaxy S24 Ultra features a flatter 6.8-inch display optimized for entertainment and productivity.

Advanced security and privacy, empowering user trust

Secured by Samsung Knox, the Galaxy S24 delivers defense-grade security with end-to-end secure hardware, real-time threat detection, and collaborative protection. Advanced Intelligence settings grant users control over data processing for AI features, demonstrating Samsung's commitment to user choice and privacy.

The Knox Matrix vision of a secure, connected and password-less future gets a boost with passkeys, offering convenient and secure access to user-registered websites and apps across trusted devices. Enhanced Data Protection provides end-to-end encryption for secure data backup, sync, and restoration with Samsung Cloud. This ensures the data can only be encrypted or decrypted on a user's devices, meaning nobody can see it but the user, even if a server is compromised or account details are stolen. A recovery code protects data if access to a trusted device is lost.

Consumers purchasing the new Galaxy S24 Ultra and Galaxy S24+ from Samsung stores, retail partners, and Samsung.com will receive complimentary Galaxy Buds2Pro and Galaxy SmartTag2, whereas those purchasing the Galaxy S24 will receive complimentary Galaxy Buds2Pro.

TECHNOLOGY RETAILER

Belltel launches first Samsung store in Ruwi showcasing Galaxy S24 with innovative AI technology

MUSCAT: Belltel, a leading technology retailer, announces the grand opening of its first Samsung flagship store in Ruwi, Muscat.

The new store aims to provide customers with an immersive and cutting-edge retail experience, offering a wide range of Samsung products and services. As part of the launch, Belltel unveiled the highly anticipated Samsung Galaxy S24, which boasts revolutionary AI technology.

The Samsung flagship store in Ruwi is a testament to Belltel's commitment to bringing the latest technological advancements to the local community. At the heart of the grand opening is the Samsung Galaxy S24, a device that has been eagerly awaited by tech enthusiasts.

Packed with state-of-the-art features and powered by advanced AI technology, the Galaxy S24 promises to revolutionize the way users interact with their smartphones. From enhanced camera capabilities to seamless performance, the Galaxy S24 showcases Samsung's dedication to delivering cutting-edge technology to its customers.

During the launch event, attendees had the opportunity to witness live demonstrations of the Galaxy S24's AI capabilities. The device's AI technology enables users to personalise their smartphone experience, providing intelligent suggestions and adapting to individual preferences. Whether it's optimising camera settings for the perfect shot or streamlining daily tasks, the Galaxy S24 is designed to make life easier and more efficient.

"We are excited to introduce the Samsung flagship store to the vibrant community of Oman," said Malik Al Khalidi Chairman for the Group of companies, spokesperson for Belltel. "By showcasing the highly anticipated Samsung Galaxy S24 with its



innovative AI technology, we are offering our customers a glimpse into the future of smartphone technology. We believe that the store's immersive experience will empower customers to explore Samsung's cutting-edge products and discover how they can enhance their everyday lives."

The opening of Belltel's Samsung flagship store in Ruw marks a significant milestone in the company's commitment to providing customers with exceptional technology solutions. The store provides a welcoming envi-

ronment for customers to explore and experience Samsung's innovative products firsthand. As a trusted retailer, Belltel continues to collaborate with leading brands like Samsung to offer the latest and most innovative products in the market.

Visit the new Samsung flagship store in Ruwi today to witness the future of smartphone technology firsthand. Belltel's knowledgeable staff will be on hand to provide expert guidance and support, ensuring an unparalleled shopping experience for all customers.

ROUND-UP

ahlibank’s ‘Pearl Points’ elevates customer experience to new heights

Harnessing the power of state-of-the-art financial technology, this programme empowers ahlibank’s esteemed customers to effortlessly accumulate points while conducting everyday transactions using their debit or credit cards

MUSCAT: Continuing its promising journey by providing the best services to its customers, ahlibank has enhanced its ‘Pearl Points’ rewards programme. Customers can relish an exceptional banking journey, with points seamlessly accruing upon completing day-to-day banking transactions. Designed as an integral part of ahlibank’s innovative suite of offerings, the Pearl Points programme

redefines the traditional banking experience. Harnessing the power of state-of-the-art financial technology, this programme empowers ahlibank’s esteemed customers to effortlessly accumulate points while conducting everyday transactions using their debit or credit cards. What sets the Pearl Points program apart is its unparalleled versatility. Customers can earn points



by simply maintaining a deposit, using their debit and credit card, or engaging with ahlibank’s user-friendly e-channels for routine banking activities. Notably, this

includes ahlibank’s mobile banking app. With the programme, customers can convert Pearl Points into cashback into their accounts, pay credit card outstanding and

pay utility bills. Moreover, the programme boasts a diverse array of redemption options meticulously crafted to align with the multifaceted lifestyles and preferences of customers. This includes being able to redeem points by booking flights with over 100 leading airlines to luxurious hotel stays worldwide and buy shopping vouchers with top-tier merchants — the possibilities are endless. Muneer Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution at ahlibank, expressed his enthusiasm for the programme, stating, “At ahlibank, our customers are at the core of our endeavours. We take pride in providing a comprehensive rewards programme that caters to their distinct needs, passions, and aspirations. Elevating the banking journey with ahlibank is our way of thanking our customers for their continued trust and support.” Al Balushi emphasised, “Innovation forms the bedrock of our growth story and is translated

into our products and services. By enriching the lives of our customers with rewards and personalised perks, we will usher in a new age of being Partners in Excellence.” Continuing its legacy of rewarding loyalty and enhancing banking experiences, ahlibank remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering an extensive array of benefits and rewards. As a holistic programme, customers can use Pearl Points to pay utility bills using the mobile banking app or Internet banking. It is through such resolute dedication that not only underscores ahlibank’s mission to create a banking landscape that is better, but one that is more inclusive as well. The Pearl Points programme stands true to ahlibank’s endeavours to foster a deeper connection with its customers. As the financial landscape continues to evolve, the bank remains dedicated to providing unparalleled financial solutions that empower customers to achieve their financial goals.

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE



BankDhofar launches Commodity Hedging Desk

MUSCAT: BankDhofar announced the launch of Commodity Hedging Desk and successful hedging execution of copper transaction, marking a significant milestone. This new desk will offer hedging solutions in various commodities and commodity linked instruments to its corporate customers. The Commodities Hedging Desk

empowers our corporate customers to proactively manage their exposure to market fluctuations, providing them with a strategic advantage in an ever-changing landscape. The desk is managed by skilled professionals equipped by sophisticated systems to enable pricing competitive and highly dynamic

commodities like copper, aluminium, zinc, lead, palm oil and steel rebar as well as other commodities classes like precious metals, energy and agriculture. By offering hedging solutions, we enable our customers to mitigate risks associated with commodity price volatility, fostering a more resilient business environment.

CSR SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVE

Bank Muscat partners in planting 300 olive trees in Jabal Al Akhdhar

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat signed a partnership agreement for planting 300 olive trees in the village of Al Manakhir, Jabal Al Akhdhar. The plantation project will be implemented across different phases over a period of 8 months. The agreement was signed at the bank’s head office by Talib bin Saif Al Makhmari, Head of Community & Media Relations, Bank Muscat, Mahmood bin Salim Al Tobi, the person responsible for endowments and mosques in Al Manakhir village, Jabal Al Akhdhar, and Ishaq bin Nasser Al Nabhani, the CEO of the company responsible for implementing the project. The plantation project falls under Bank Muscat’s CSR sustainable initiatives, set with the aim to support the community and nurture Oman’s economic growth through the launch of projects that have sustainable impact from the ecological, social, and economic perspectives. Bank Muscat’s contribution to the project included providing financial support to foster a successful implementation process of planting the olive trees. Speaking on the occasion, Talib bin Saif Al Makhmari, Head of Community & Media Relations, Bank Muscat, said: “We are proud of this partnership which empha-



sises the bank’s commitment to serving the society and supporting the Sultanate’s sustainable economy. The Olive tree plantation project implemented in the well-conditioned agronomic areas in Al Manakhir will help in achieving the ecological, social, and economic goals set to support the people of the village, as the entire community will be supported by the returns realised. Bank Muscat will uphold its pioneering role in supporting the society through the implementation of such strategic and sustainable plans to serve the needs of the local communities.” Talib Al Makhmari added: “The bank is committed to supporting the local community in multiple

areas that bring about great social impact, including education, youth, sports, health, SMEs, and environment. Through initiatives and projects touching upon these spheres, the bank seeks to enhance the social ties among the people of the community.” Mahmood Al Tobi expressed his appreciation of the partnership with Bank Muscat which showcases the bank’s contribution to supporting the community and developing various areas through launching social initiatives aiming to serve the various needs of local people. Mahmood Al Tobi delivered his thanks and appreciation to the bank for the constant support contributed to local projects.

STYLISH SEDAN

Kia K5 GDI GTL now available with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: The Kia K5 GDI GTL is one of the most stylish and exciting sedans in the Kia range. Customers owning the K5 GDI GTL can now benefit with Service up to 5 years / 50,000 kms (Whichever is earlier) and Attractive Instalments. (Conditions apply. Please visit any Kia showroom for details.) The K5 GDI GTL with its sleek profile makes a lasting impression highlighting an angular design language and the brand’s new chapter in boldness and passion. Adding to this is the K5’s low-slung and fastback silhouette from the side, highlighted by a chrome garnish that spans the roofline and wraps around the rear glass. The K5 GDI GTL’s exterior is enhanced with a number of features including LED Headlamps,



LED Daytime Running Lights, LED Front Fog Lamps, LED Rear Fog Lamps, LED Rear Combina-

tion Lamps, Solar Glass, Panoramic Sunroof and Dual LED Headlamps. The K5 GDI GTL is equipped

with a powerful 2.5L engine that offers 191 HP and 25.1 KG.M Torque. This is paired to an

8-speed Automatic Transmission. Increasing exciting experiences on every journey are a range of features including Drive Mode Select, Auto Cruise Control, Power Driver Seat, Auto AC, Power Passenger Seat, Premium Music System, Red Leather Seats, Ventilated Front Seats, Paddle Shifter, Aluminium Pedals, Mood Lamp, Android Auto & Car Play and more. The K5 GDI GTL’s Interior is enhanced with a newly designed infotainment display that seamlessly stretches into the instrument panel, creating a futuristic, three-dimensional layout and driver-centric space. Creating an inviting and comfortable interior are a range of features that include Tinted Glass, Tilt & Telescopic Steering, Radio with USB, Audio

Remote Control, Driver’s Seat Height Adjuster, Rear AC Vents, Leather AT Knob and more. Keeping smiles intact are the impressive safety features. They include Driver and Front Passenger Airbags, Side and Curtain Airbags, Electro Chromic Inside Mirror, Blind Spot Collision Warning (BCW), Blind Spot View Monitor (BVM), Around View Monitor (AVM), Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Tyre Pressure Monitoring system (TPMS), Front and Rear Parking Assist system and Electric Parking Brake (EPB) with Auto Hold and more. Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers.



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