

SULTANATE CONDEMNS PAKISTAN CHURCH ATTACKS

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman on Monday expressed its denunciation and condemnation of brutal acts of vandalism that targeted churches and homes in the city of Faisalabad, eastern Pakistan. **>A5**



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FIRST OMANI ADVANCED FISHING TRAWLER 'ACILA' REGISTERED

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, represented by the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs registered the first Omani advanced fishing trawler, named 'ACILA'. **>A2**



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MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Projects implemented to preserve craft heritage

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is implementing a number of projects that aims at preserving the handicrafts heritage, which is considered as a part of the national treasure and one of the most important pillars of preserving the Omani identity. The implementation of these projects stems from the value

added of the handicraft heritage for the tourism sector. Alia Salim Al Hinai, Director of the Craft Heritage Department at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said: "The handicraft heritage is everything that has historical, cultural and social importance."

Full story in A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Students honoured



1 More than 100 students were honoured at a ceremony by the Ministry of Education for the academic year 2022/2023 on Sunday. **>A2**

WORLD Chandrayaan-3

2 The Chandrayaan-2 orbiter has established a two-way connection with the Chandrayaan-3. **>A7**

MARKET Treasury bills issued

3 The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR106 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday. **>B1**

2,700 INVESTOR RESIDENCY CARDS HANDED OVER SO FAR IN OMAN

Promotional campaign launched to highlight benefits of Oman's investor residency programme



MUSCAT: Oman's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has revealed on Monday that more than 2,700 investor resident cards have been offered to people of various nationalities under the investor residency programme. The ministry said that the investor residency programme,

which began in 2021, has three categories to offer under 10-year, and 5-year category, and retirees, and the programme has benefited more than 2,700 investors till August 21, 2023.

Benefits offered

The ministry recently launched a promotional campaign for the

investor residency programme to highlight the benefits offered by the programme to investors.

Invest in Oman Lounge
Among the various campaigns are marketing the services of the Invest in Oman Lounge at Muscat and Salalah international airports.

The investor residency programme grants foreign investors and retirees the right to long-term residence in the Sultanate of Oman for a period of 5 or 10 years, subject to renewal. To obtain an investor residency card, the application must be submitted through the website <https://tejarah.gov.om/InvestorResidency>. **>A3**

How can SMEs benefit from financial education and new technology?

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) make up approximately 90% of all businesses worldwide, representing more than 50% of employment, according to the World Bank. In emerging economies, SMEs contribute up to 40% of a country's GDP and with an estimated 600 million jobs needed by 2030 to absorb the growing global workforce, SMEs have a crucial role to play in economic growth and employment in both developed and developing countries around the globe.

Common challenges are faced by SMEs in managing finances and staying competitive – such as limited resources, cashflow management, stiff competition and the harsher effects of any economic uncertainties versus larger organizations – but a lack of financial expertise and limited uptake of technology can quickly become professionally fatal.

The landscape is ever-changing: a World Economic Forum report in December 2022 suggested that two-thirds of SMEs are fighting for survival. And with margins, turnovers and profits anyway usually far smaller than in national and international organizations, with difficulties in securing bank funding not unusual, the need to secure all available advantages must be at the forefront of any successful SME's thinking.

The transformative potential of financial education and technology can clearly be the difference between success and failure.

NAVIGATING THE FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE
Economies of scale dictate that SMEs suffer from comparatively limited access to capital and funding options, a lack of financial expertise and knowledge, and difficulty in effectively managing cashflow and budgeting.



Financial education has a huge role to play in empowering SMEs by enhancing financial literacy and decision-making skills, providing knowledge on financial management principles and practice, and educating SMEs about funding options and investment strategies.

In tandem, SMEs need to keep up with latest technological advancements in their fields to remain competitive. Tech advances

can help increase efficiency and productivity, use data to drive decisions, boost communication and collaboration, improve access to global markets and evolve customer experiences. This also ties in with financial education, helping to maintain efficient financial management with the use of cloud-based accounting software, and the latest payment gateways and online transaction technology.



The transformative potential of financial education and technology can be the difference between success and failure

Sulaiman Al Hinai
Head of Wholesale Banking Group at Oman Arab Bank

DO THE MATH
Financial education has let down many SMEs in the past – improved financial literacy and decision-making bring many benefits for SMEs, from day-to-day operations through to planning for the future and potential expansions.

Understanding financial statements and key financial indicators is a vital skill that will feed into making informed decisions on subjects such as pricing, cost

management and investments, as well as mitigating financial risks and identifying growth opportunities.

SMEs rely on effective cashflow management and budgeting to stay afloat.

Having the financial nous and resources to develop cashflow forecasting and monitoring systems will provide an effective early warning system, while optimizing working capital and managing expenses efficiently helps to keep things ticking over economically.

Understanding funding options and strategies for capital raising is a necessary facet, while using financial technology platforms for payment processing and invoicing, as well as knowing how to access business loans, grants and government support programs, all form part of the bigger picture.

THE TECH FOR THE TASK
Harnessing new technology for SMEs has arguably never been more important, as the Fourth Industrial Revolution gathers pace, powered by emerging technologies such as blockchain, the Internet of Things, AI and machine learning.

Cloud computing and remote collaboration tools are vital, while savvy use of digital marketing and e-commerce platforms is opening countless possibilities to improve reach and gain customers.

Behind the scenes, the latest financial management software and mobile banking applications have made overseeing business banking and finances easy than ever. Digital tools can streamline SMEs' financial processes.

By automating book keeping and accounting tasks and simplifying payroll and tax management, digital tools can also free up more time for the day-to-day running of the company, as well

as unlocking the multiple benefits of improved financial reporting and analysis – particularly useful when pitching for funding or new business, as well as identifying areas to target investment or make savings.

Customer relationship management can be enhanced by using the latest technology – chatbots, for example, can reduce customer waiting times – while informed decision-making will be vastly improved by leveraging data analytics, which can likewise improve a raft of functions across a company, from sales and after-sales through to investment possibilities.

COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT
The importance of partnerships between financial institutions and SMEs cannot be underestimated, with banks and other organizations that provide tailored financial products and services for SMEs, powered by cutting-edge technologies, representing highly prized collaborators. Enrolling in financial mentoring and advisory programs are another way in which businesses can maintain relationships that provide ongoing positive effects on their output.

THE WAY FORWARD
It is clear, then, that SMEs must prioritize financial education and embrace new technology to allow them to reap the maximum benefits for both their businesses and the wider economy – but they cannot achieve this alone. SMEs should seek support and resources available for their growth wherever possible and not be afraid to ask for help, because without being financially educated and deploying relevant new technology, survival rates for SMEs could continue to be unnecessarily harsh.



OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:15pm
Asr.....	3:42pm
Maghrib.....	6:40pm
Isha.....	7:54pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:27am



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For more information 1001

Outstanding students honoured

More than 100 students were honoured at a ceremony held under the auspices of Eng. Salem bin Nasser Al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education honoured the outstanding students in the general diploma in the schools of the Sultanate of Oman for the academic year 2022/2023 on Sunday evening. More than 100 students were honoured at a ceremony held at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel under the auspices of Eng. Salem bin Nasser Al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

The ceremony was held in the presence of Dr. Madiha bint Ahmed Al Shaibaniya, Minister of Education, and with the support of Occidental Oman (OXY).

Honouring ceremony
The honouring ceremony began with an introductory film, after which Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, delivered the ministry's speech. Occidental Oman, the sponsoring company, gave a presentation on social responsibility, followed by the company's speech



with the requirements of the next stage, and with Oman Vision 2040, which placed education and strengthening national capabilities at the top of its priorities." "From this standpoint came the cooperation between Occidental Oman and the Ministry of Education, represented in many social responsibility initiatives in line with common goals and visions." The honoured students expressed their thanks and gratitude to their parents and teachers.

They said: "Today our hearts beat with pride that we reaped from the fruits of your struggle, your work, and your hope. We also renew our pledge before you to be a seed of love and belonging to our dear homeland that has given us so much, and this great moment is only a small part of the march of science, and the train of science will not stop here, but we will continue the journey of research, knowledge, and transcendence of our homeland, adhering to the teachings of our true religion and the authenticity of our culture and our Omani society."

FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT OMAN

First Omani fishing trawler 'ACILA' registered

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, represented by the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs registered the first Omani advanced fishing trawler, named 'ACILA'.

The vessel is owned by Oman Pelagic Company, an affiliate of Fisheries Development Oman (FDO).

The trawler is designed according to the highest international standards. This reflects FDO's commitment to sustainable fishing practices and economic growth in the fisheries sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), a leading entity in the development of Oman's fisheries sector. This remarkable vessel, built to the highest international standards, is a testament to FDO's commitment to sustainable fishing practices and the economic growth of Oman's fisheries sector. The 'Acila' is a cutting-edge fishing vessel constructed in 2023, proudly sailing under the flag of Oman. It is the 792nd creation of the renowned Zamakona Shipyard in Pasaia, commissioned by the esteemed Omani state-owned company, Oman Pelagic.

Measuring an impressive 84 meters in length, the 'Acila' boasts a hold capacity of 1,800 cubic metres, making it ideal for operations in the Indian Ocean, where it will



target various tuna species in international waters.

The vessel's propulsion system is powered by 2 x Guascor Energy SF480TA-SG engines, each providing 1250 kVA, and a Guascor Energy SF360-SP engine with a 360 6:1 reduction gearbox, delivering 1120 HP for auxiliary purposes.

These engines, known for their efficiency and reliability, minimise fuel consumption even in the harshest conditions.

"The 'Acila' embodies our commitment to sustainable fishing practices and showcases our dedication to maintaining the highest quality standards in the industry," said Eng. Nabil bin Salim Al Bimani, Group CEO.

"With this investment, we reinforce Oman's position as an attractive destination for local and international investors seeking growth opportunities in the aquaculture sector," he added.

Oman Pelagic CEO, Dawood Al Wahaibi said, "With a gross tonnage of 2480t and a DWT of 1900t, the vessel is designed to operate efficiently, maximising catch potential while minimising environmental impact. This aligns perfectly with FDO's core values, focusing on responsible use of renewable resources such as biomass and small pelagic fish, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry in

the Sultanate of Oman".

FDO is partnered in these developments by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Water Resources in promoting the sustainable exploitation of Oman's precious Fisheries resources for the benefit of future generations in Oman, extending the maritime heritage of Oman's fishermen and fisherfolk.

The Sultanate of Oman has a long maritime history as a trading nation between Eastern Africa, the Indian sub-continent and the Arabian Gulf states. Oman's 3,165-kilometre coastline gives Omani fishermen access to both the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea and a wide range of both de-

mersal and pelagic fish species. Oman is the only net exporter of fish products in the GCC and has ready access to the growing GCC markets, notably UAE and Saudi Arabia, as well as worldwide markets for quality seafood products.

The Acila' is not just a vessel; it symbolises the future of Oman's fisheries, exemplifying innovation, sustainability, and economic development.

"It is a significant step towards diversifying Oman's economy and harnessing the immense potential of its fisheries sector, in line with the Vision 2040 objectives of Food Safety and Security for the Sultanate of Oman", added Eng. Nabil Al Bimani.

REHABILITATION



Improvement of services to people with disabilities on anvil

MUSCAT: Activities of the Professional Development Programme aimed at ameliorating services rendered to people with disabilities kicked off on Monday.

The programme is organised by Al Aman Rehabilitation Centre, a subsidiary of the Directorate General for People with Disabilities Affairs, Ministry of Social Development.

The programme seeks to hone the skills of operators in the field of rehabilitation of people with disabilities and update them about developments in high quality standards of the social service.

As many as 125 rehabilitation personnel from different establishments are taking part in the programme, which runs till the end of August 2023. -ONA

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NORTH AL BATINAH



Several key municipal projects completed in Wilayat of Shinas

Times News Service

SHINAS: A number of municipal projects executed by the North Al Batinah Municipality in the Wilayat of Shinas has been completed.

These projects include the design and asphalt/pavement works of internal roads and other works.

In the field of service roads,

the Municipality has completed pavement of roads, design and pavement of internal roads, 85 percent repair of damaged roads has been completed over an area of 990 square metres in the various parts of Wilayat of Shinas.

Seafront project

The Municipality also continues with the development works of the seafront project with the com-

pletion percentage of 72 while the completion percentage reached 20 in the project for the supply and installation of some kiosks for entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and jobseekers.

This is in addition to several taxi waiting areas with the completion percentage of 100 in the various parts of the Wilayat of Shinas. —With ONA inputs

Aangan by Rohit Ghai: A Culinary Revival at Shangri-La Al Husn



As the sun sets over the clifftop of Shangri-La Al Husn, there's a renewed zest in the air. Aangan, the latest addition to the portfolio of Michelin star chef Rohit Ghai, is set to reopen its doors this season today, offering an elevated dining experience to diners of Muscat.

From the heart of India to the luxurious ambience of Shangri-La Al Husn, Aangan is not just a restaurant; it's an experience in itself. The anticipated reopening of the sole Michelin-star fine dining venue promises an array of gastronomic delights with a revamped menu that combines the nostalgic flavours of the homeland and professional journey of Chef Rohit Ghai, with a contemporary twist. Whether you opt for the A la Carte offerings or indulge in the thoughtfully curated set menus, there's a dish waiting to tantalize every palate. Moreover, in line with Shangri-La's objective to be more sustainable and bring new experiences,



lent chicken chops enhanced with aromatic basil. For those who gravitate towards the grill, the tandoori lamb chops are a must-try, and seafood enthusiasts will undoubtedly be drawn to the lobster, infused with fragrant coriander and green paste.

The essence of Aangan is not just about the food, but about the stories each dish, curated meticulously by Chef Rohit Ghai and his stellar team in Muscat.

Coming Soon: The patron of the restaurant, Chef Rohit Ghai will be present from 19 to 24 September for a week of activation including cooking and interacting with diners at Aangan by Rohit Ghai!

As Aangan by Rohit Ghai reopens, diners can partake in a refined Indian affair that transcends the usual dining experience. It's an invitation to relish, reminisce, and revel in the flavours of Indian contemporary cuisine. For reservations 2477 6565 or whatsapp 79269247

Aangan takes pride in catering to diverse dietary preferences with large option of vegan and vegetarian selection.

Operating from 7pm to 10:30 pm, from Tuesday to Saturday, diners can look forward to evenings filled with an array of exquisite dishes with soothing music. Some of the standout menu items include the delectably seasoned salmon mooli, the jheenga bursting with the freshness of prawns and the tang of mustard, and succu-

INVESTOR RESIDENCY CARD

Investor gets right to reside with his family

<FROM A1 Investors who obtain an investor residence card can avail a number of advantages, as the investor is granted the right to own one property outside the Integrated Tourism Complexes (ITC), whether for residential, commercial or industrial purposes, and it is transferable to others, with the exception of the ownership of land that is prohibited for non-Omanis, for the first category.

The investor is granted the right to reside with his family (first degree) without specifying the number of family members and without specifying the age for the first category.

The holder of an "investor residency" has the right to use a special countermarked for investor residency card holders at airports and ports, and will be allowed to issue visitor visas for relatives, and they can also carry out economic activities or work in the Sultanate in Oman. They also do not require a sponsor to obtain a private work visa and can also bring in domestic workers in private professions.

The Sultanate of Oman also offers, through the Invest in Oman Hall, integrated and thoughtful investment opportunities in all sectors linked to the incentives and facilities provided to investors.



The investor can access the website of the platform <https://investoman.om> and benefit from the services it provides, as it includes the website, which was designed to comply with the requirements and data of investment marketing in the main investment sectors, which are logistics, manufacturing, education, technology, information technology, health and economy, mining, fisheries, renewable energy, agricultural wealth and tourism.

The Invest in Oman Hall also provides a special investor relations manager for each investor to follow up on his investment and provide all means to speed up the completion of procedures and various investment services smoothly and obtain approvals.

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‘Taster Run’ captures the essence of camaraderie, unity and shared passion

THE WINNERS 18 August 2023

10KM Race - Top Female		
Ruth Sebastian Alonso	Spain	1:23:15
Rahela Abdolamir	Yemen	1:28:27
Natalia Rozario	UK	1:29:07
Suad Al Nasibi	Oman	
Zoe Rafferty	Ireland	
Florencia Manzano	Argentina	
Reem Al Riyami	Oman	
Amani Al Rulaiti	Oman	
Suhair Al Harthi	Oman	
Julie Johnstone	UK	

10KM Race - Top Male		
Abdullah Al Quraini	Oman	51:04
Mohsen Al Hatmi	Oman	52:13
Amjad Al Jamoudi	Oman	52:48
Ahmed Al Fahde	Oman	
Mohammed Al Sulaimi	Oman	
Muath Al Shuraiqi	Oman	
Yousuf Al Subaihi	Oman	
Mohammed Al Mandhari	Oman	
Asaad Al Saqri	Oman	
Jamal Al Khatiri	Oman	

4KM Race - Top Female	
Manasik Al Mahrouqi	1100
Maryam Al Riyami	1105
Maitha Al Saqri	1104
Intisar Al Riyami	1416
Abra Al Riyami	1101

4KM Race - Top Male	
Nooh Al Battashi	1116
Yousuf Al Riyami	1075
Mudrik Al Hatmi	1115
Al Hawari Al Amri	1080
AbdulRahman Al Fahdi	1070
Mishaal Al Riyami	1073
Nooh Al Mamari	1121
Mohammed Al Amri	1066
Turki Al Mamari	1095



THE HIMAM Trail Run Race wrapped up an exciting race that was held as part of the Al Dhakhliliya Governorate festival, the Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival. A field of 345 runners from 23 countries participated in the event, infusing an electrifying vibrancy into the festivities. Dubbed as the ‘Taster Run’ ahead of the main Himam Trail Run Race in November, the event consisted of two races both for adults and kids, allowing all segment of the community to take part. The 10-kilometre race for adults commenced from the Amir of Qatar castle, nestled above the village of Sayq. The route led participants to a mountain trail meandering through Al-Shareija’s farms and culminating at the charming village. Continuing through a falaj path, the trail ascended to the village of Al-Ain, subsequently reaching Al Aqr village. Participants embraced a competitive spirit as they navigated a dirt path to Dusit2 resort, triumphantly crossing the finish line close by.

In the 10km Race, Abdullah Al Quraini (Oman) secured the first place with a time of 51:04, followed by Mohsen Al Hatmi (Oman) in second place at 52:13, and Amjad Al Jamoudi (Oman) in third with a time of 52:48. In the female category, Ruth Sebastian

Alonso (Spain) claimed the top spot, clocking in at 1:23:15, followed by Rahela Abdolamir (Yemen) at 1:28:27, and Natalia Rozario (UK) at 1:29:07.

The second race covered a 4-kilometre distance, inviting children to embark on an adventure from Hail Al-Yaman. As nature embraced the trail, participants culminated their journey amidst an exuberant crowd at the park, where cheers echoed in celebration of their achievements.

The closing ceremony also served as a moment of homage to veteran champions hailing from Al Jabal Al Akhdar, who have etched their legacy in mountain running. Khaseef Al Zakwani, Ali Al Falahi, and Zaki Al Jamoudi were honored for their profound contributions in the design and making of traditional and new trails.

Beyond showcasing athleticism, the ‘Taster Run’ captured the essence of camaraderie, unity, and shared passion, uniting runners from diverse corners of the globe. As anticipation builds, the Himam Trail Run Race eagerly awaits participants for its main event in November 23 – 25, inviting all to embrace the spirit of adventure and exploration amidst the awe-inspiring panorama of Al Hajar Mountains.

More information can be found on: <https://himam.om/>
All results: https://my.raceresult.com/257312/results#0_862FA3





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Oman implementing projects to preserve handicrafts heritage

Studies carried out by the Ministry aims to maximise the economic benefit of crafts, by identifying investment opportunities and utilising them in cooperation with the authorities concerned

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is implementing a number of projects that aims at preserving the handicrafts heritage, which is considered as a part of the national treasure and one of the most important pillars of preserving the Omani identity. The implementation of these projects stems from the value added of the handicraft heritage for the tourism sector. Alia Salim Al Hinai, Director

of the Craft Heritage Department at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said: "The handicraft heritage is everything that has historical, cultural and social importance, and inherited through generations, including the handicraft products, their elements, the associated moral, utilitarian or aesthetic value such as knowledge, skills and techniques." "It also includes environments for practicing crafts with machines, equipment and sites of extraction of raw materials for creating crafts in their various industries such as wood, which includes the manufacture of ships

and boats, silverware, daggers, ornaments, copper and metals, as well as leather industries, pottery, ceramics, palm fronds, the distillation of aromatic plants, incense, stone, gypsum and bone industries, musical instruments, fishing tools, cotton and woolen fabric, paints and dye." She added that the ministry is interested in all matters related to the craft heritage in a way that ensures its collection and documenting, good managing, protection, and transmitting it toward the future generations. She also affirmed that the Ministry gives a great attention to the research activities

in the fields of craft development. As far as registering crafts at UNESCO as an intangible heritage is concerned, Alia Al Hinai explained that protecting national crafts is one of the competences of the ministry. She added: "In this context, the Omani dagger -Al Khanjar- was recently inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, within the craft skills and social practices associated with it. At the same time, a number of files were submitted to the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth, as it is the competent authority for coordinating with UNESCO". She pointed out that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is implementing a number of projects related to craft heritage, including the innovative project of the Omani mortar product "Sarooj", which is a collaborative initiative launched in cooperation between the Industrial Innovation Centre and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. This project aims at developing the process of producing Omani Sarooj, in accordance with the high standards and quality. The project has been completed and officially launched along with its brand. Meanwhile, a cooperation agreement was signed with Oman Cement Company to produce this innovative product commercially, where the Ministry will have a share. The ministry strives to make the product available in the markets by the end of 2023. Moreover, there is a project for cultivating green cotton, which is a name for Omani cotton (the Omani seed), which was previously cultivated in Oman a long time ago. It is the cotton from which the Soharian and other textiles were woven in the wilayats of the Sultanate of Oman. The cultivation of this type of cotton spread in most of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, while specific wilayats were famous for their abundant production of green cotton, including the Wilayat of Sumail in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah and the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi in the Governorate of North Al Sharqiyah. She clarified that an agreement was signed with a house of expertise (the Academy of Industrial Innovation) on 1/6/2023, to implement the project under the supervision of the competent department in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, at an estimated cost of OMR30,000. Work is now underway in the first phase of the project. She pointed out that, there is also a study for the investment of leather in the Sultanate of Oman.

This project aims at developing a mechanism to activate the slaughterhouses with the highest efficiency to benefit from the leather by activating the previously existing assets (the tannery of the south in Dhofar, and the Masran factory in Al Buraimi). This, she explained, will be done through devising a mechanism in cooperation with the competent authorities. The studies carried out by the Ministry also work to maximise the economic benefit of crafts, though identifying investment opportunities and utilising them in cooperation with the authorities concerned. Alia Al Hinai emphasised that the ministry is exerting efforts to support the craft heritage by assisting artisans, implementing studies and inventorying the crafts carried out by the ministry, coming up with recommendations and proposals and coordinating with the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development to prepare programs that will strengthen the craft sector. It is worth noting that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is also working on documenting handicraft industries through a number of publications, including the monthly bulleting titled "Treasures of Craftsmanship Series". -**ONA**

LIFESTYLE FOR ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

Embassy of India in Muscat concludes Mission Life campaign

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of India, Muscat, has successfully concluded a week-long awareness campaign as part of the Mission Life (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative, aimed at encouraging behavioural changes in individuals to combat climate change. The campaign, which ran from August 13 to August 19, 2023, included a series of impactful activities and events that highlighted the importance of transitioning from wasteful consumption to responsible resource utilisation. Mission Life, launched by Hon-ourable Prime Minister on October 20, 2022, envisions a global

movement towards mindful consumption and environmental conservation. The initiative seeks to address the pressing challenges of climate change and global warming by inspiring individuals to adopt eco-friendly practices in their daily lives. The week long campaign launched by the Embassy on 13 August 2023. The event saw the participation of more than 100 environmental enthusiast and prominent members of Indian Community in Oman. The programme commenced with a screening of a message from the Hon'ble Prime Minister, reinforcing the core principles of

Mission Life. Ambassador H.E. Shri Amit Narang in his address highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change and emphasising the role of Mission LIFE in achieving this goal. On August 14, Ambassador set an inspiring example by planting a "Tulsi" plant within the Embassy premises, encouraging officials to replicate this initiative in their households for a healthier future. Continuing the momentum, the Embassy marked India's Independence Day on August 15 with a gathering of over 600 guests. The Ambassador in his address highlighted the significance of sustainable living through Mission Life and called upon the audience

to embrace its seven themes, while also shedding light on health benefits of Millets, as world celebrates the International Year of Millets. On August 16, Indian School Wadi Kabir (ISWK) orchestrated a remarkable mega event as part of their commitment to promoting Mission Life. During this event, students took center stage by showcasing exhibits dedicated to each theme of Mission Life. These exhibits served as powerful platforms to communicate practical solutions for energy conservation, water preservation, sustainable food systems, and more. The event was further enriched by cultural performances curated

for raising awareness about the importance of sustainable living. The Ambassador addressed the students, emphasising the significance of adopting small lifestyle changes that collectively contribute to a greener future. On August 17, several Indian Schools in Oman organised awareness campaigns under Mission Life, promoting sustainable living and environmental consciousness. The Embassy further popularised the cause of adopting healthy lifestyles through yoga sessions under Mission Life. The sessions, held within the Embassy premises, enabled participants to connect with their physical and mental well-being.

FAISALABAD

Sultanate condemns Pakistan church attacks

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman on Monday expressed its denunciation and condemnation of brutal acts of vandalism that targeted churches and homes in the city of Faisalabad, eastern Pakistan. In a statement by the Foreign Ministry, Oman lauded the steps taken by the Pakistani government to address those acts which, Oman said, contravene religious teachings and human values. Oman reiterated its rejection of all practices of violence, hatred and intolerance against religions and beliefs. -**ONA**



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



Royal Oman Police

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Directorate General of Customs at the Royal Oman Police announces a public auction to
sell vehicles and various goods at Salalah Port on Monday 04 September 2023. The goods can
be inspected at Salalah Port during official working hours on Sunday and Monday 27 & 28
August 2023, according to the following terms and conditions:

- Those wishing to bid must be registered with the Bayan System.
- The buyer must pay the auctioneer's fees at 3% of the total value of the purchased materials.
- A security deposit of RO 100/- (refundable) shall be collected to enter the auction.
- The buyer must pay the value of the purchased materials by electronic payment within a
maximum period of (48) hours from the end of the auction. In case of non-payment, the items
will be put up for auction with no refund of the security deposit.
- Goods will be submitted to the successful bidder after completing the customs declaration
procedures and providing the permits for the restricted goods, if any.
- The Directorate General of Customs shall bear no responsibility for any damage to the goods
after sale is concluded.
- The successful bidder must approach Dhofar Customs Department at Salalah Port to receive
the goods during the period from 05 to 10 September 2023, noting that a fine of RO 10/- will
be imposed for each day of delay after that period.

Bangladesh PM to attend Johannesburg Summit

Prime Minister Hasina's joining the BRICS summit in South Africa has generated much interest



DHAKA: BANGLADESH Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave for Johannesburg on Tuesday to attend the BRICS meeting at the invitation of South African President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, Dhaka Tribune reported.

Briefing reporters about the visit, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen on Sunday said the prime

minister will attend the “BRICS-Africa Outreach and the BRICS Plus Dialogues” on August 24 on the last day of the 15th BRICS summit.

Prime Minister Hasina's joining the BRICS summit in South Africa has generated much interest in the five countries' political bloc in Bangladesh.

The government also showed interest to be a member of the major emerging economies, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa grouping, Dhaka Tribune reported.

The foreign minister said earlier in June in a “Friends of BRICS Foreign Ministers” presented Bangladesh's position virtually. “There, I called on the BRICS

member countries to transfer their cost-effective technology to developing countries and to invest in the developing countries. This year we formally expressed our desire to join BRICS,” he said.

Bangladesh joined BRICS' new development bank in 2021 as the first country outside the member states.

The foreign minister said the prime minister will attend the Bangladesh trade and business summit being organized by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission and Bangladesh Investment Development Board.

She will attend the “regional envoys conference” organised by the foreign ministry.

She will attend the dinner hosted in honour of the participating head of state and governments.

On August 24, she will attend the BRICS-Africa Outreach and the BRICS Plus Dialogues. -ANI



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DEFENCE BOOST

Australia plans to buy Tomahawk missiles from US

SYDNEY: Australia on Monday announced that it will buy more than 200 Tomahawk cruise missiles from the US for its navy, for 1.3 billion Australian dollars (\$83 million; €76 million).

With this deal, Australia will join the small league of countries that have the 1,500 kilometre (932 mile)-range missiles. Britain and the United States are the only two countries that have the missile technology.

Australia's Defence Ministry said the Tomahawk cruise missiles would be some of the “most powerful and technologically advanced” weapons in Australia's armory.

Long-range strike missiles
Stressing over the need for long-range strike missiles, Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said, “We are investing in the capabilities our Defence Force needs to hold our adversaries at risk further from our shores and keep Australians safe in the complex and uncertain world in which we live today.”

Besides the Tomahawk missiles, the Australian government has also agreed to buy more than 60 extended range anti-radar missiles.

Australia's robust efforts to boost defence capacity
Australia's recent weapon purchases suggest the country is investing heavily in ramping up its military power and preparing for unforeseen attacks from its adversaries like China.

Recently, Australia's defence review stressed the need to invest in the development of potential that can enable the country to make precise strikes over a long range.

Missile manufacturing capabilities
Australia also plans to develop its domestic missile manufacturing capabilities, Minister for Defense Industry Pat Conroy said.

“We are buying these weapons now to deliver capability quickly — but we are also considering options to manufacture missiles domestically because of the importance of building sovereign Australian defence manufacturing capabilities,” he said in the statement.

The US had also recently confirmed that it is helping Australia in building its own domestic missile manufacturing industry.

France to build entire submarine fleet in Australia. -DW

OVERFISHING

North Sea and Baltic Sea fisheries are in poor condition, warns WWF

GLAND: Environmental advocacy group WWF warned that the North Sea and Baltic Sea fisheries are in poor condition, with fish stocks threatened by climate change and overfishing.

“The past five years have been the worst years in history for the Baltic herring. Its recovery will take a long time. And the cod population in the western Baltic Sea has completely collapsed in recent years,” WWF Germany fisheries expert Karoline Schacht said in a statement on Monday.

The group called for the establishment of large wildlife refuge areas in the Baltic and North seas



where aquatic life would be protected from commercial fishing. The group also called for tight-

er controls of commercial fish harvests. Better protection and conser-

vation of fish populations in the North and Baltic seas could allow Germans to start regularly eating locally caught fish again, the group said.

“Fish from domestic production is now a rarity,” Schacht said.

She said that about 80% of fish and seafood consumed in Germany is imported, such as Alaska pollock, tuna or shrimp. Most of it arrives canned or frozen.

“If we want to continue eating local wild fish, we urgently need to improve their living conditions,” she said. “Healthy fish stocks only exist in healthy seas - it's inextricably linked.” -GNA









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Tropical storm batters Mexico and California

Hilary made landfall around 250 kilometres south of the city of Ensenada before heading north towards Mexico's second-largest city of Tijuana

NEW YORK: Towns on Mexico's Baja California peninsula were inundated by floodwaters on Sunday as Tropical Storm Hilary pummeled the border region with the United States.

Hilary made landfall around 250 kilometres (250 miles) south of the city of Ensenada before



heading north towards Mexico's second-largest city of Tijuana.

Across the border in the US state of California, at least nine million people were under flash-flood warnings.

"Catastrophic and life-threatening flooding likely over Baja California and portions of the southwestern US through Monday," the US National Hurricane Center warned.

Residents across southern California spent the weekend filling sandbags and stocking up on sup-

plies after Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency.

Hillary is the first tropical storm to hit the region in 84 years, and it is set to be the wettest on record.

Cities like Palm Springs are set to receive 6-10 inches (15-25 centimeters) of rain from the storm, compared to the 4.6 inches of rain Palm Springs usually receives an entire year.

"This is a dangerous storm," said Zack Taylor, a meteorologist with the National Weather

Service.

"It's not just the rain's totality but the intensity."

Major League Baseball games in the areas have been relocated while hundreds of flights in and out of San Diego have also been cancelled.

A 5.1 magnitude earthquake also struck north of Los Angeles as people hunkered down on Sunday afternoon.

Hillary brought flash floods and strong winds to Mexico over the weekend.

One person died on Saturday when their vehicle was swept away by water. The passengers were able to be rescued.

On Sunday, army troops used bulldozers and dump trucks to clear tons of boulders and dirt that clogged streets during the flash floods. The army also opened 35 shelters providing refuge to 1,725 people affected by the storm.

Other emergency workers were deployed to repair toppled power lines that cut communities off from electricity. **-aw**

Trump confirms skipping debates

NEW YORK: Former US President Donald Trump on Sunday confirmed that he will not participate in the first televised Republican presidential primary debate, which is scheduled for Wednesday.

"The public knows who I am & what a successful Presidency I had," Trump posted on Truth Social, a social media platform he co-founded.

"I will therefore not be doing the debates," he added as he mentioned his lead in opinion polls as evidence of his popularity among Republican voters ahead of the 2024 presidential elections.

Trump's absence in the party's primary debates was already speculated. For months, he had repeatedly said he saw little value in giving a chance to his party rivals — who will gather for the first time in Milwaukee on Wednesday — to attack him given his lead in polls.

A CBS poll on Sunday showed that Trump was the preferred candidate for 62% of the Republican voters, beating his closest rival Florida Governor Ron DeSantis receiving 16% support. The other



Republicans in the race each had less than 10% support.

Trump's sizable lead in the polls suggests that the former real estate mogul is still popular with the base of the Republican Party despite now being indicted four times.

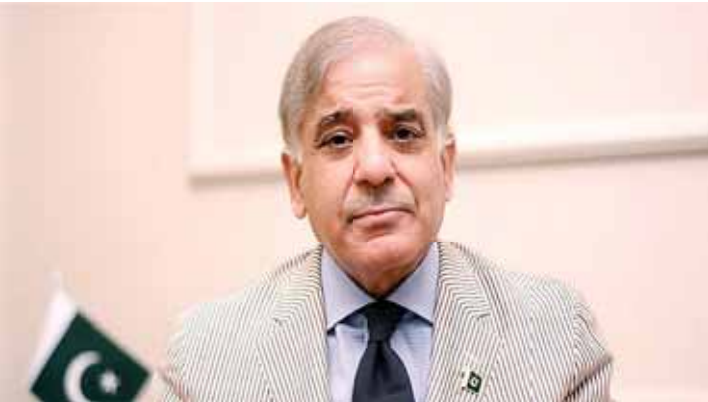
DeSantis, former US Vice President Mike Pence and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley are expected to take part in the debate.

Trump's absence from this week's debate could allow his rivals such as DeSantis to gain ground.

Other candidates at the debate, such as former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, may attack Trump relentlessly throughout the event. **-aw**

FORMER PRIME MINISTER

Shehbaz Sharif reaches London, to meet Nawaz



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has arrived in London where he is scheduled to meet his brother and Pakistan Muslim League (N) Supremo Nawaz Sharif to discuss important things for the upcoming general election, Dawn reported.

In a post shared on the X (formerly known as Twitter), Pakistan's Information and Broadcasting Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb confirmed that they will meet during PML-N President's stay in the UK.

"Former Prime Minister and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Mr Shabbaz Sharif will leave for London from Lahore today. During his stay in London, Mr Shabbaz Sharif will also meet the party leader, Mr Muhammad Nawaz Sharif," she said on an X.

The former premier departed from Lahore on a Qatar Airways flight and landed at Heathrow after a short stopover in Doha, as per Dawn.

The return of Nawaz Sharif and the status of the cases he is embroiled in are likely to come up at the meeting, and the two brothers are expected to set a date for the party supremo's return to Pakistan.

Nawaz Sharif left the country in November 2019 for medical treatment in London following his conviction in a corruption case. The three-time prime minister has not returned since and faces multiple cases in Pakistan, per Dawn's report.

Recently, Shehbaz Sharif said that his brother would return to Pakistan in September, lead the PML-N's election campaign and assume the role of the prime minister for a fourth time if the party would emerge victorious in the polls.

In an interview on a Geo News programme, PM Sharif said that he will travel to London to meet his elder brother Nawaz as soon as the caretaker government took charge.

But recently, the Supreme Court has ruled that the Review of Judgments and Orders Act, 2023 was "unconstitutional", crashing all the hopes of Nawaz Sharif, who was seeking to challenge his lifetime disqualifications, Geo News reported.

This decision has created a cloud of uncertainty for Nawaz Sharif to come back to his homeland. But, PML-N seems to be confident about Nawaz Sharif's return. **-ANI**

TWO-WAY FLIGHTS

China green lights resumption of North Korea commercial flights

BEIJING: China announced on Monday approving the restarting of commercial flights between Beijing and Pyongyang, for the first time since North Korea closed its borders in early 2020 as a precautionary measure against the COVID-19 pandemic.

China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a press briefing on Monday that plans for two-way flights on Air Koryo, North Korea's national airline, were approved "during the summer and autumn flight season."

Also on Monday, the country's first commercial flight in over three years was set to take



off from Pyongyang, heading to Beijing, but it was canceled at the last minute, the French AFP news agency reported. No reasons were given for the cancellation.

Over three years of border closure

Since the coronavirus pandemic started in early 2020, North Korea has largely kept its borders

shuttered, maintaining one of the longest and most stringent COVID-related border measures.

In recent months, however, signs that Pyongyang was ready to ease its border restrictions began showing. Last month, Chinese and Russian officials became the first foreign dignitaries to visit the country in years. The delegations attended a military parade in Pyongyang, in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Korean War armistice, known as "Victory Day" in North Korea.

Last week, North Korea allowed a delegation of athletes to attend a taekwondo competition in Kazakhstan. **-aw**

COMMUNICATION ESTABLISHED

'Welcome, buddy!' Chandrayaan-2 orbiter greets Chandrayaan-3 lander

NEW DELHI: In a significant development, the Chandrayaan-2 orbiter which was already fixed around the moon established a two-way connection with the lander module of Chandrayaan-3 on Monday.

"Welcome, buddy! Ch-2 orbiter formally welcomed Ch-3 LM (lander module). Two-way communication between the two is established. MOX (Mission Operations Complex) has now more routes to reach the LM," ISRO posted on X, formerly Twitter.

Chandrayaan-3 is set to land on the moon on August 23, 2023, around 18:04 IST.

Live actions will be available on the ISRO website, its YouTube channel, Facebook, and public broadcaster DD National TV from 17:27 IST on Aug 23, 2023.

Ahead of the much-awaited soft



landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the south pole of the Moon, former director of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and in-charge of the previous lunar mission 'Chandrayaan-2', K Sivan on Monday said that the mission will be a "grand success".

"It's a very anxious moment... I'm sure that this time it will be a

grand success," Sivan said while speaking to ANI.

"We have our own system and we will be establishing a soft landing without any problem. But it is a complex process," he said while responding to a question asked whether there would be any impact after the failure of Russia's Luna-25 mission. Russia's moon

mission failed after its Luna-25 spacecraft spun out of control and smashed into the moon on Sunday.

He said that corrective measures have been taken after going through data generated by the Chandrayaan-2 mission. When asked if those additional systems too were indigenous, Sivan said, "Everything is indigenous."

Earlier today, ISRO released images of the lunar far side area captured by the Lander Hazard Detection and Avoidance Camera (LHDAC). This camera assists in locating a safe landing area -- without boulders or deep trenches -- during the descent.

Notably, the 'Vikram' lander module of the spacecraft successfully separated from the propulsion module recently, and underwent deboosting manoeuvres. **-ANI**

DISTINGUISHED POSITION

Srinagar's Tulip Garden enters book of records as Asia's largest

SRINAGAR: The people of Kashmir are rejoicing as the renowned Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden secures a distinguished position in the esteemed World Book of Records (London).

Nestled amidst the picturesque foothills of the Zabarwan mountain range, this accolade recognizes the garden's status as Asia's largest tulip haven, adorned with an awe-inspiring array of 1.5 million tulip bulbs showcasing an astonishing collection of 68 distinct tulip varieties.

Echoing the sentiments of the locals, it's widely believed that Kashmir holds immense untapped potential. The region's natural beauty and the magnificence of the tulip garden have once again put it in the spotlight.

In a formal ceremony hosted at



the Tulip Garden, the Commissioner Secretary of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad, received the certification from the President and CEO of the World Book of Records (London),

Santosh Shukla.

The event was graced by the presence of Dilip N Pandit, Editor of World Book of Records (London), the Director of Floriculture Kashmir, various officials, and

dedicated gardening staff.

Commending this remarkable achievement, Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad expressed heartfelt gratitude to the team at the World Book of Records (London) for acknowl-

edging the splendour of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden.

He emphasised that this recognition stands as a monumental milestone, not only enhancing the reputation of Srinagar's floral treasure but also contributing to the local economy's growth within the tranquil valleys of Kashmir.

The Commissioner Secretary remarked that the inclusion in the World Book of Records signifies not just the blossoming gem of Srinagar, but also celebrates the enchanting bond between humanity and nature, a sentiment cherished deeply in the hearts of Kashmir's inhabitants.

Santosh Shukla, President and CEO of the World Book of Records, extended his warmest congratulations to the Central Working Com-

mittee of the organization for this exceptional achievement.

He underlined that this recognition underscores the unparalleled beauty and magnificence of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, positioning it as an emblem of both natural splendor and human creativity.

Affectionately known for its breathtaking vistas, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden boasts not only a splendid array of tulips but also provides sanctuary to an array of other flower species.

Delicate Daffodils, fragrant Hyacinths, resplendent Roses, charming Ranunculi, vibrant Muscaria, and enchanting Iris blooms flourish alongside the iconic tulips, weaving an enchanting tapestry of colours and fragrances that captivates visitors. **-ANI**

SPORTS

India pick Rahul, Iyer, Varma for Asia Cup

Jasprit Bumrah and Prasidh Krishna make their ODI comebacks; Experienced spinner Yuzvendra Chahal dropped from the squad

NEW DELHI: KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer have been selected in India's ODI squad for the Asia Cup after recovering in time from a thigh and a back injury respectively. The 17-man Asia Cup squad announced on Monday by chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar in New Delhi on Monday included rookie left-hander Tilak Varma, who hasn't played ODI cricket yet. Fast bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Prasidh Krishna, who made their international comebacks during the T20I series in Ireland after recovering from back surgeries, were also selected. Mohammed Shami made a comeback after being rested for the entire tour of West Indies, while Mohammed Siraj and allrounders Hardik Pandya and Shardul Thakur complete the pace attack.



"In the West Indies, we saw some real promise in terms of not just performances but the temperament," Agarkar said of Tilak's [Varma] selection. "And it gives us an opportunity to take him with the team, give him some more exposure; a left-hander again, looks very promising. So fortunately we can take 17 here, it'll be 15 at the World Cup. So when the time comes we'll take that decision, but at the moment it at least gives the coach and captain an opportunity to have him with the squad." Experienced leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal was dropped from the squad, with Kuldeep

Yadav preferred as the only wrist-spinner along with two finger-spinning all-rounders in Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel. There was no off-spinner in the squad. India captain Rohit Sharma said: "We thought about an off-spinner as well, [R] Ashwin and Wasly [Washington Sundar], but right now you see Chahal had to miss out because we could only pick 17 players." Ishan Kishan was chosen over Sanju Samson as the second wicketkeeper in the squad, behind Rahul, with the left-hand batter doubling up as a reserve opener. Samson, however, will travel to Sri Lanka as a back-up player.

Rahul and Iyer had spent several weeks undergoing rehab at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru and took part in match-simulation exercises in the days leading up to their selection. Rahul has not played any competitive cricket since he was injured during IPL 2023, while Iyer has been out of action since Australia's tour of India in March. Agarkar said that while Iyer was passed fully fit, there was still a question mark over Rahul. The Asia Cup begins on August 30 with Pakistan hosting Nepal in Multan. India's first Group A game is against Pakistan in Pallekele on September 2, after which they play Nepal in Pallekele on September 4. Group B comprises Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka and the top two teams from each group will progress to the Super Four stage. The sides that finish one and two in the Super Fours will contest the final in Colombo on September 17. **India squad for Asia Cup:** Rohit Sharma (capt), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Hardik Pandya (vice-capt), Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Mohammed Shami, Ishan Kishan (wk), Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Prasidh Krishna. Reserve player: Sanju Samson. - Agencies

T20I SERIES VS IRELAND

Rinku, Ruturaj shine as India seal series win



DUBLIN: Ruturaj Gaikwad scored a half-century but Rinku Singh stole the limelight on his debut with a swashbuckling innings at the death as India sealed the series by beating Ireland by 33 runs in the second T20I. Gaikwad and Sanju Samson put on 71 to stabilise India after they lost two wickets in the powerplay. Then, with Ireland applying the squeeze following their departures, Rinku took centre stage to help India pump 42 runs off the last two overs and get to a total of 185, which proved too much for Ireland. Andy Balbirnie fought a lone battle for Ireland with a 51-ball 72

but it wasn't enough as Prasidh Krishna, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravi Bishnoi spearheaded India's defence with two wickets apiece. After India were put in on a sunny afternoon in Malahide, Gaikwad and Yashasvi Jaiswal got going in the second over. Gaikwad nudged Josh Little behind square for the first boundary of the match before Jaiswal pulled successive deliveries for four and six. **Brief scores:** India 185/5 (Ruturaj Gaikwad 58, Sanju Samson 40, Rinku Singh 38; Barry McCarthy 2-36) beat Ireland 152/8 (Andy Balbirnie 72, Mark Adair 23; Jasprit Bumrah 2-15, Prasidh Krishna 2-29, Ravi Bishnoi 2-37). - ANI

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Lyles crowned men's 100m world champion

BUDAPEST: Noah Lyles is the new fastest man in the world. The American track and field star shined at the 2023 World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, on Sunday, winning the men's 100m final in 9.83 seconds. It was a come-from-behind victory, with the 26-year-old having trailed behind teammate and early leader Christian Coleman. However, 2019 world champion Coleman faded in the closing metres, with Lyles, Letsile Tebogo of Botswana, Zharnel Hughes of Great Britain, and Jamaica's Oblique Seville all overtaking him.



"I came here for three golds, ticked off one, others are coming," Lyles said. "[The] 100m was the hardest one.... I will have fun

with the event I love now (200m). "Coleman always has the fast start. He had it the whole season, he was even getting better and better. I expected him to do what he does and if he would be the only one in front of me, it would be my race. I needed to make sure that I was accelerating, when I was at the 60m, I took the lead. "My documentary series will come out soon on the World Athletics YouTube channel. I talked there about doing the individual double. The reason I really wanted to do it is because nobody else deserves it more than me."

It was a three-way photo-finish for second, third, and fourth all on 9.88, with Tebogo the first over the line (873). His silver medal marked the first time Africa had put a man on the senior world 100m podium, and is his third world-level medal at just 20 years old (in addition to titles at under-18 and under-20 levels). Hughes, who had run the world's fastest time until Lyles equalled the world lead on Saturday, was just one one-thousandth behind Tebogo (874), with Seville only another three one-thousandths outside the medals (877). - Agencies

T20I SERIES VS UAE

Young, Chapman power Kiwis to series victory

DUBAI: New Zealand put up a complete show as they roared back in style following the loss on Saturday, to win the third T20I by 32 runs and seal the three-match series 2-1 on Sunday. The win was set up by fifties from Will Young, playing his first game of the series, and Mark Chapman, who continued from where he left in the second game, as the visitors racked up 166 for 5 in their 20 overs. Junaid Siddique was the pick of the bowlers for the hosts, pick-

ing up three wickets for 26. In reply, UAE's top half was blown away by some restrictive New Zealand bowling. Basil Hameed and Aayan Afzal Khan added 68 off 57 for the sixth wicket, but it came a bit too late for the hosts as they could only muster 134 for 7. **Brief scores:** New Zealand 166/5 (Will Young 56, Mark Chapman 51; Junaid Siddique 3-26) beat UAE 134/7 (Aayan Afzal Khan 42, Basil Hameed 24*; Ben Lister 3-35). - ANI



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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by October 2023 reaching \$86.94, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$1.49 from the price of Friday, which was \$85.45. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,775.10 points, up by 0.05 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.34 per cent at 479.26 points. A'Saffia Foods, up 4.24 per cent, was the top gainer while Ahli Bank, down 4.37 per cent, was the top loser.

Treasury bills worth OMR106mn issued

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR106 million by way of allotting treasury bills.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR5 million, for a maturity period of 28 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR99.660 for even-



ry OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.660 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.43214 per cent and 4.44726 per cent, respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR101 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.710 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.705 per OMR100. The

average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.17616 per cent and 5.24383 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 6.00 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.50 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

APPOINTMENT

Al Bustan Palace, A Ritz-Carlton Hotel appoints Luba Stepanova as director of sales and marketing

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel announced the appointment of Luba Stepanova as its new Director of Sales and Marketing. With an illustrious 23-year career in the hospitality industry, Luba brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success to her new role.

Luba's journey in the world of luxury hospitality began as an intern at Kempinski, where she embarked on a remarkable career trajectory. Her association with the Ritz-Carlton brand commenced in 2003, and over the years, she has consistently elevated her role and responsibilities. Most recently, she served as the Director of Sales and Marketing at The Ritz-Carlton Astana, where she exhibited exceptional leadership skills and spearheaded numerous successful initiatives for the past 40 months.

Having spent 17 years within Marriott International's luxury hospitality, Luba excelled in driving business development, fostering customer relationships, and delivering exceptional revenue growth. Her expertise spans various facets of the industry, including luxury travel, MICE, business



travel, groups, events, and PR.

"Luba Stepanova's appointment as the Director of Sales and Marketing at Al Bustan Palace is a significant moment for us," said General Manager, Erkan Karatas. "Her extensive experience and remarkable achievements within the luxury hospitality sector make her a perfect fit to lead our sales and marketing team. We are confident that her strategic mindset, innovation, and commitment to excellence will contribute to the continued success of Al Bustan Palace."

Luba's journey with The Ritz-Carlton began in 2003 as a Sales Executive for Groups and Events at The Ritz-Carlton Moscow. Through her dedication and focus on quality, she steadily progressed through various roles, eventually assuming the position of Associate Director of Sales and Marketing at the same property 9 years later.

"I am truly honoured to join the Ladies and Gentlemen of Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel," said Luba. "Oman's unique charm and boundless adventures present an exciting opportunity for us to showcase this remarkable destination on the global stage. I look forward to contributing to the growth and success of this iconic property."

Stepanova's educational background includes a Hospitality Management diploma from the Russian Economic Academy. Outside of her professional endeavors, she is an avid theatre enthusiast and plans to immerse herself in the cultural scene of Muscat, particularly by attending performances at the Royal Opera House. Additionally, she has a passion for sports, particularly yoga and cycling, and is eager to explore the diverse cultures and people that Oman has to offer.

EUROPEAN STOCKS

Stocks, yields rise as traders balance China, oil supply

FRANKFURT: European stocks edged higher on Monday after a rout last week while government bond yields renewed their rise as oil prices firmed even as China delivered smaller rate cuts than investors expected.

China's central bank trimmed its one-year lending rate by 10 basis points and left its five-year rate unmoved. That was a surprise to analysts who had expected cuts of 15 basis points to both as recovery in the world's second-largest economy has lost steam due to a worsening property slump, weak spending, and tumbling credit growth, Reuters reported.

"The small injection of stimulus by China's central bank in the ailing economy has proved largely underwhelming given the scale of the challenges erupting across sectors, but it has given investors hope there could be more to come," said Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown.

"There is still some expectation that Chinese authorities will step in with a more generous boost, but it appears the weakness of the yen appears to be stemming more immediate action," Streeter added.

While disappointment sent Asian shares lower, with Chinese blue chips falling 0.4% to the lowest in almost nine months and



other Asian indexes also dropping, European shares opened higher.

Europe's index was up 0.7% by 0914 GMT, following last week's 2.3% drop, with energy companies outperforming as oil prices rose with tightening supply from a Middle Eastern country offsetting demand concerns. US stock futures were also higher.

Oil prices edged higher on Monday after snapping a seven-week winning streak last week on concerns about Chinese demand. Brent was last up 36 cents at \$85.16 a barrel, while US crude was 41 cents higher to \$81.66 per barrel.

In bond markets, a sell-off that sent government borrowing costs to their highest in over a decade regained impetus on Monday.

Longer-dated US Treasury yields were up another 3-4 basis points on Monday with the 30-

year yield touching a fresh 12-year high at 4.44%.

The key event for the week is the US Federal Reserve's Jackson Hole conference, where markets assume chair Jerome Powell will note the jump in yields and the recent run of strong economic data. The Atlanta Fed's GDP Now tracker is running at a heady 5.8% for this quarter.

"It's an opportunity for Powell to give an updated assessment on economic conditions, which now appear stronger than anticipated and reinforce the case for additional rate hikes," Barclays analyst Marc Giannoni said.

"Even so, we would be surprised if he provided specific guidance, with key August prints for employment, CPI, and retail sales all to come before the September meeting." - **BNA**

ANNUAL SUMMIT

BRICS: Why Saudi Arabia and others are vying for membership

BRUSSELS: The BRICS group of emerging countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — will meet for their annual summit starting August 22 in Johannesburg.

This year's summit has gained prominence amid expectations that the grouping could add new members as China and Russia seek to increase their political influence with tensions with the US and its allies running high.

How did BRICS come about? It started as an acronym BRIC, coined in 2001 by economist Jim O'Neill at the US investment bank Goldman Sachs, to group together four of the largest and fastest-growing economies at the time. O'Neill stressed how the four economies — Brazil, Russia, India and China — could collectively become a global economic force in the coming decade.

Investors took the cue and so did the policymakers in those countries. Keeping aside their political and social differences, the develop-

ing countries felt they were bound by a shared urge to restructure the US-led global political economic and financial systems to be "fair, balanced and representative."

The BRIC leaders held their first annual meeting in 2009 in Russia's Yekaterinburg. A year later, they invited South Africa to join the political club, and an 'S' was added to the BRIC acronym.

Why does it matter?

The BRICS members represent over 42% of the world's population and account for nearly a quarter of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 18% of trade.

The grouping is hailed by some as a counterweight to Western economic and political forums and institutions like the G7 and the World Bank. They believe the bloc could use its political influence and economic clout to prompt much-needed reforms at the likes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to represent the re-



alities of a more multipolar world.

What has BRICS achieved so far?

The BRICS has struggled to live up to its potential to offer an alternative to traditional financial and political systems.

Among its notable achievements has been the establishment of the New Development Bank or the BRICS bank, a multilateral development bank with \$50 billion (€45.6 billion) in subscribed

capital to fund infrastructure and climate-related projects in developing countries. The bank, which includes BRICS members as well as Bangladesh, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates among its shareholders, has so far approved more than \$30 billion in loans since its inception in 2015. By comparison, the World Bank committed more than \$100 billion in 2022 alone.

The BRICS have also created a \$100 billion Contingency Reserve Arrangement, a foreign currency

liquidity facility that the members can tap into during global financial turmoil. The bloc is said to be pushing for the creation of a common currency in a bid to challenge the dollar's dominance. A BRICS currency isn't expected to come to fruition any time soon. As a result, the bloc is currently focusing on deepening the use of local currencies in trade between members.

"Beyond creating the BRICS Bank...it is difficult to see what the group has done other than meet annually," Jim O'Neill opined in a 2021 article.

The grouping's limited success can be explained by the often diverging and competing interests of its members, especially those of China and India, which share a disputed border and have seen ties deteriorate in recent years.

How have trade and investments fared among BRICS members?

The BRICS have seen their eco-

nomie influence grow over the past two decades, thanks largely to years of roaring growth in China, the world's second-largest economy by GDP notwithstanding its current slowdown, and to the rise of India, which has emerged as the fifth largest economy and is currently the fastest-growing major economy.

The economies of Russia and Brazil have failed to keep up their momentum and have fallen back to where they were in 2001 in terms of their share of global GDP. The South African economy has also struggled to shift gears since joining the BRICS.

While the BRICS is now a major force in international trade, trading among its members has remained relatively low in the absence of any bloc-wide free trade agreement. On the investments front, the bloc has seen annual foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows more than quadruple from 2001 to 2021. - **aw**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

A'Saffa Foods, up 4.24 per cent, was the top gainer while Ahli Bank, down 4.37 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,775.10 points, up by 0.05 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.34 per cent at 479.26 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 4.24 per cent, was the top gainer while Ahli Bank, down 4.37 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while GDB 66 were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 619 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.93 million, with more than 14.28 million shares changing hands. Out of 42 traded securities, 15 advanced, 11 declined, and 16 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR279,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR258,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR21,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,763.05 points, down 0.1 per cent. Prices of Oman United Insurance, Sohar International Bank, Ominvest, Al Anwar Investment, Bank Nizwa were up by 3.33 per cent, 2.86 per cent, 1.30 per cent, 1.24 per cent, 1.03 per cent respectively. Prices of Ahli Bank, Oman & Emirates Investment, United Finance, National Bank Oman were up by 4.37 per cent, 2.94 per cent, 1.64 per cent, 1.01 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,009.64 points, up 0.28 per cent. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Al Maha Ceramics, Gulf Mushroom Products, Oman Chromite, Voltamp Energy were up by 4.24 per cent, 3.45 per cent, 3.15 per cent, 1.00 per cent, 0.82 per cent respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 1.23 per cent, 0.37 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.27 per cent before closing at 1,668.08 points. Prices of Renaissance Services, Oman Telecom were up by 2.21 per cent, 0.10 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Batinah Power, Phoenix Power, Al Jazeera Services, Abraj Energy were up by 3.70 per cent, 3.23 per cent, 2.89 per cent, 0.34 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,803.52	4,767.67	4,775.10	4,772.77	2.32	0.05
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,836.04	7,762.35	7,763.05	7,770.68	-7.63	-0.10
Industry Index	6,009.64	5,987.02	6,009.64	5,992.95	16.69	0.28
Services Index	1,676.58	1,668.08	1,668.08	1,672.62	-4.54	-0.27
MSX Shariah Index	480.62	477.39	479.26	477.64	1.62	0.34
MSX TR INDEX	6,321.33	6,274.16	6,283.93	6,280.87	3.06	0.05
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,550.56	8,470.15	8,470.91	8,479.24	-8.32	-0.10
SERVICES TR IDX	1,850.74	1,841.35	1,841.35	1,846.37	-5.02	-0.27
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,419.79	6,395.63	6,419.79	6,401.97	17.83	0.28

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
14,281,924	3,931,684	619	23,806,121,677	15	11	16	42

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 21

ISS	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFR	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	3,513	949	3	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.261	0.009	3.448	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.100	14,850,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	57,000	15,632	11	0.270	0.279	0.270	0.279	0.270	0.009	3.333	0.279	0.276	0.279	0.100	27,900,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	2,594,765	275,019	59	0.105	0.108	0.104	0.108	0.105	0.003	2.857	0.108	0.107	0.108	0.100	590,531,958
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	678,568	278,361	50	0.410	0.418	0.408	0.416	0.407	0.009	2.211	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.100	98,346,560
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	692,406	267,948	39	0.385	0.390	0.385	0.390	0.385	0.005	1.299	0.390	0.389	0.390	0.100	260,662,516
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	538,435	557,448	46	1.025	1.050	1.025	1.031	1.030	0.001	0.097	1.031	1.031	1.055	0.100	773,250,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	8,287	2,900	2	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.000	0.000	0.350	0.350	0.360	0.100	115,805,449
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	4,300	968	2	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.000	0.000	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.100	49,500,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	20,000	3,500	2	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.100	524,361,501
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,497,979	701,089	91	0.282	0.282	0.280	0.281	0.281	0.000	0.000	0.281	0.281	0.282	0.100	2,109,297,574
OM0000003968	COORED	1,553,446	591,905	62	0.382	0.383	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.000	0.380	0.380	0.383	0.100	247,358,907
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	294,371	20,475	20	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.065	0.072	0.100	14,373,763
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	15,134	1,302	3	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.100	15,050,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	200	54	1	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.269	-0.001	-0.372	0.268	0.268	0.295	0.100	33,472,653
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	241,000	71,089	7	0.295	0.295	0.294	0.295	0.298	-0.003	-1.007	0.294	0.294	0.295	0.100	479,654,178
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	181,500	10,890	3	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.060	0.061	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000002235	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	500	118	2	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.242	-0.007	-2.893	0.235	0.220	0.235	0.100	14,383,004
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	40,000	2,640	3	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.068	-0.002	-2.941	0.066	0.066	0.000	0.100	8,043,750
Total	18	9,411,404	2,802,283	406												
Parallel Market																
OM0000002804	ASAFA FOODS	52,000	16,123	2	0.310	0.320	0.310	0.320	0.307	0.013	4.235	0.320	0.300	0.320	0.100	38,400,000
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	300	69	1	0.229	0.229	0.229	0.229	0.222	0.007	3.153	0.229	0.000	0.229	0.100	10,480,368
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	128,027	10,373	7	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.001	1.235	0.082	0.082	0.083	0.100	10,862,000
OM0000004447	OMAN REIT FUND	780,000	68,679	22	0.087	0.090	0.087	0.090	0.089	0.001	1.124	0.090	0.083	0.092	0.100	42,406,775
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,139,980	111,271	45	0.096	0.098	0.096	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	5,852	29,637	22	5.000	5.160	5.000	5.050	5.000	0.050	1.000	5.050	5.050	5.150	1.000	15,150,000
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	3,090	312	1	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.193	0.001	0.971	0.194	0.094	0.194	0.100	20,800,000
OM0000008869	THE PEARL REIF	46,600	5,544	6	0.118	0.119	0.118	0.119	0.118	0.001	0.847	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.100	50,547,655
OM0000003961	VOLTAMP ENERGY	741	91	1	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.122	0.001	0.820	0.123	0.123	0.125	0.100	10,012,538
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	2,500	100	1	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.037	0.040	0.100	3,400,000
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	11,140	1,448	2	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.130	0.143	0.100	12,714,281
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	135,000	13,500	9	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.097	0.100	0.100	95,457,195
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	5,200	774	3	0.149	0.149	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.143	0.148	0.100	237,056,220
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	48,151	14,106	25	0.293	0.293	0.292	0.293	0.294	-0.001	-0.340	0.293	0.293	0.293	0.100	225,668,600
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	109,500	17,700	14	0.162	0.162	0.161	0.161	0.163	-0.002	-1.227	0.161	0.160	0.161	0.100	32,680,818
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	24,920	1,497	2	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.060	0.062	-0.002	-3.226	0.060	0.060	0.064	0.100	87,756,088
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	287,864	7,486	10	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	0.027	-0.001	-3.704	0.026	0.026	0.028	0.100	17,547,073
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	90,626	2,358	8	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	0.027	-0.001	-3.704	0.026	0.025	0.027	0.100	18,374,585
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	100	18	1	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.183	-0.008	-4.572	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.100	41,190,057
Total	19	2,871,501	301,085	182												

China's lending rate drops amid strengthened policies to boost economy

BEIJING: China's benchmark lending rate saw its second decline this year on Monday as the government has beefed up policy support to ensure a sustained economic recovery. The one-year LPR was 3.45 percent on Monday, down from the previous reading of 3.55 percent, according to the National Interbank Funding Center. The over-five-year LPR, on which lenders base their mortgage rates, remained unchanged at 4.2 percent.

Analysts said the lower rate will help reduce financing costs and improve credit demand, further bolstering the consumption and investment momentum. The real economy will get a boost, said Wang Yiming, deputy head of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.

The LPR released once a month is a pricing reference rate for banks. In June, the lending rate went down 10 basis points in both one-year and five-year terms.



Monday's rate adjustment signifies the strengthening of pro-growth strategies aimed at fending off economic headwinds.

A signal was sent to intensify counter-cyclical adjustments and promote a quicker economic recovery, said Dong Ximiao, the chief researcher of Merchants Union Consumer Finance Company Limited.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC), the country's central bank, cut several policy rates last week to shore up economic recovery. The interest rate of the one-year medium-term lending facility was reduced from 2.65 percent to 2.5 percent, and that of seven-day reverse repos fell from 1.9 percent to 1.8 percent.

The overnight, seven-day and one-month interest rates on the central bank's standing lending facility were all lowered by 10 basis points to 2.65 percent, 2.8 percent and 3.15 percent, respectively.

More financial support will be lent to the real economy, according to a recent meeting of financial authorities, including the PBOC, the National Financial Regulatory Administration, and the China Securities Regulatory Commission.

There will be stronger credit support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as well as sectors such as green development, technological innovation and manufacturing, according to the meeting.

The Chinese economy has continued the upward trend so far this year, but challenges remain amid a complex global environment and insufficient domestic demand.

Analysts believe that China still has multiple options in its policy toolkit to further consolidate the economic momentum, including adjustments in banks' reserve requirement ratio and optimizing credit policies for the property sector. —Xinhua

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Japan's tech industry needs Africa's critical minerals

TOKYO: Japan's Economy and Industry Minister Nishimura Yasutoshi has concluded a series of agreements with a number of African states to explore and extract minerals that are critical to the Asian nation's hi-tech industry.

In the Zambian capital of Lusaka, Nishimura inked a deal on August 11 aimed at greater cooperation in mining for minerals used in electric vehicles and other technologies.

Under the agreement, Japanese companies will receive government support to expand operations into Zambia to reinforce the strategic supply chain.

Japan has committed to deploying satellites to conduct surveys for areas that are likely to have deposits of copper, cobalt and nickel, key components in batteries for electric vehicles.

Demand for such minerals is expected to grow sharply in the coming years. There are, however, supply constraints, as only a limited number of countries produce them, and Japan is facing tough competition to acquire these resources.

Nishimura was able to conclude similar agreements on exploration and supply networks with the governments of Namibia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, while he also visited Angola and Mozambique to lay the groundwork for similar trade deals.

The Japanese government has been prodded into action by the aggressive expansion efforts of China in Africa.

China already has some of the world's most extensive deposits



of rare earth minerals, but is already feeding growing domestic demand. To meet anticipated future demand, state-run Chinese firms are busily acquiring overseas mining interests, with the Democratic Republic of Congo a particular target.

Japan's priority on capacity-building

As an added sweetener to the deals, and more that are likely to be coming, Japan is likely to continue to be generous with its aid budget, said Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi, an assistant professor of international relations at the University of Tokyo.

"Through the years, Japan has been very good at capacity building in developing nations, of providing technical support, funding for infrastructure projects, creating skilled labour forces and so on," he said. "China has been less good in these areas. And Tokyo

is hoping that its partners will choose Japanese quality over Chinese quantity."

Countries in Africa and the island states of the Pacific are aware of Beijing's use of assistance with conditions and are seeking alternative sources of development aid, Hinata-Yamaguchi said.

"Japan's approach has been to work with local governments and people as partners," he said. "China has acted questionably in many of its trade agreements, and that has made the local people very distrustful. Japan is consciously taking a very different road and is making sure that capacity-building, training and education are up front."

Securing access to key minerals has been high up on the agenda of Japan and Western countries in recent years. It was a key topic at the G7 energy and environment ministers meeting in Japan in April, where they agreed to boost cooperation in the area.

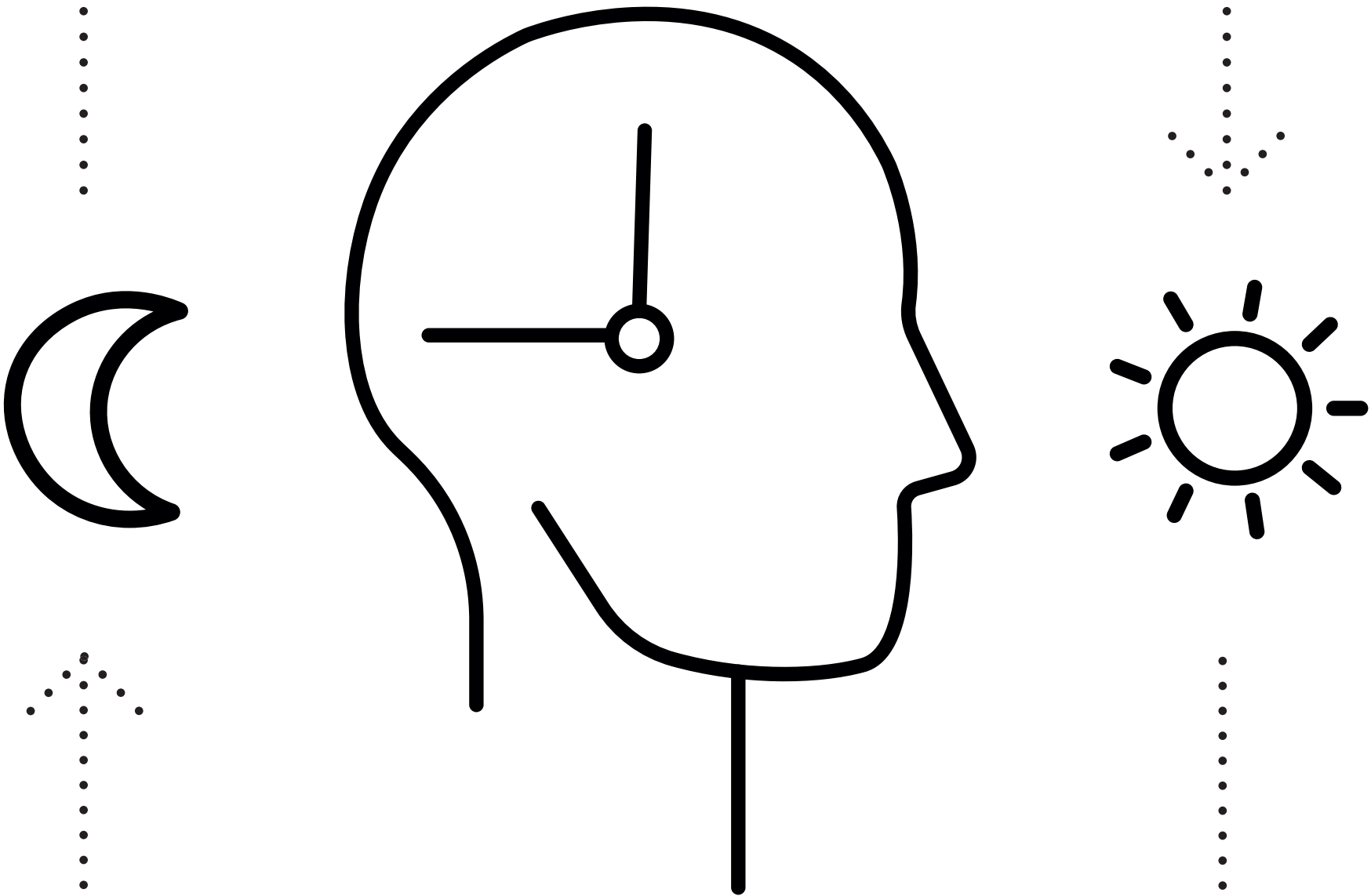
Just a stop-gap arrangement between Japan and Africa?

Kawaguchi noted that Japan's investment in African resources could be something of a stop-gap arrangement.

"A lot of money and effort is going into exploring beneath the seabed in Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ)," he said. "And that is paying off as test excavations at depths of 3,000 meters and more have come



LIFESTYLE



Researchers develop model to understand durability of body clock

Mathematical models are being used by researchers to better understand how disruptions to the body's circadian rhythms, such as daylight savings time, working night shifts, jet lag, or even late-night phone scrolling, affect the body.

Academics from the Universities of Waterloo and Oxford have developed a novel model to help academics better understand the durability of the master clock in the brain, which is a group of neurons in the brain that regulates the body's other internal rhythms. Additionally, they wish to provide methods for boosting resilience in those whose circadian rhythms are compromised or weak.

Chronic circadian rhythm disturbances have been linked to diabetes, cognitive loss, and a wide range of other diseases.

"Current society is experiencing a rapid increase in demand for work outside of traditional daylight hours," said Stéphanie Abo, a PhD student in applied mathematics and the study's lead author, adding, "This greatly disrupts how we are exposed to light, as well as other habits such as eating and sleeping patterns."

Humans' circadian rhythms, or internal clocks, are the roughly 24-hour cycles many body systems follow, usually alternating between wakefulness and rest. Scientists are still working to understand the cluster of neurons known as the Suprachiasmatic Nucleus (SCN) or master clock.

Using mathematical modelling techniques and differential equations, the team of applied mathematics researchers modelled the SCN as a macroscopic, or big-picture, system consisting of a seemingly infinite number of neurons. They were especially interested in understanding the system's couplings – the connections between neurons in the SCN that allow it to achieve a shared rhythm.

Frequent and sustained disturbances to the body's circadian rhythms eliminated the shared rhythm, implying a weakening of the signals transmitted between SCN neurons.

Abo said they were surprised to find that "a small enough disruption can actually make the connections between neurons stronger."

"Mathematical models allow you to manipulate body systems with specificity that cannot be easily or ethically achieved in the body or a petri dish," Abo said, adding, "This allows us to do research and develop good hypotheses at a lower cost."

-ANI

SPORTS

TRAGIC NEWS

Women’s World Cup winner Carmona told after final that father has died

MADRID: Spain captain Olga Carmona, who scored her country's winner in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup final against England on Sunday, was told after the game that her father had died. Carmona, 23, scored the only goal as Spain beat England to claim the trophy. The Real Madrid left-back's father had been fighting a long ill-

ness and died on Friday, Reuters reported. "I know you have been watching me tonight and that you are proud of me. Rest in peace dad," Carmona wrote on social media. Carmona included a picture of her kissing her winners' medal along with the message. She added: "And without knowing it, I had my star before the game started. I know that you have

given me the strength to achieve something unique." A gold star is added to the shirt of the winners of a World Cup, above the national team crest, every time they win the trophy. "The RFEF deeply regrets to announce the death of Olga Carmona's father," the Spanish Football Association (RFEF) wrote on social media. "The footballer learned the sad

news after the World Cup final against England. "We send our most sincere embrace to Olga and her family in a moment of deep sorrow. We love you, Olga, you are Spanish soccer history." Carmona celebrated her goal by revealing a message on a t-shirt, reading "Merchi" - she said afterwards it was a tribute to a friend whose mother had died

Carmona started five of Spain's seven games at the World Cup. Spanish media outlet Relevo said her family and friends decided not to tell her so she could focus on the final, with her mother and brothers arriving in Australia on Saturday to support her. Her club Real Madrid also expressed "condolences and affection for Olga, her relatives and all her loved ones". - Agencies



West Ham shock Chelsea

Despite being down to 10 men, West Ham took the honours in the London derby against the big-spending Blues

LONDON: West Ham United claimed a rousing London derby win against Chelsea despite playing almost 30 minutes with 10 men as they recorded a 3-1 win in the English Premier League on Sunday. The Hammers were 2-1 ahead when defender Nayef Aguerd, who opened the scoring with an early header, was sent off in the 67th minute for his second bookable offence. But Chelsea could not force an equaliser with their numerical advantage and then conceded a late third through Lucas Paqueta's penalty in the fifth minute of added time.



Teenager Carney Chukwuemeka scored his first goal for the Blues to make it 1-1 but Enzo Fernandez wasted a chance to put them ahead when his penalty was saved by Alphonse Areola. Michail Antonio fired West Ham back in front with a powerful angled strike in the 53rd minute,

before the hosts were reduced to 10 men. However, Mauricio Pochettino's side were unable to capitalise on Aguerd's dismissal to force a second leveller despite a second-half debut for Moises Caicedo, who has joined from Brighton in a deal that could become a British record.

The Ecuador midfielder had a chance to make it 2-2 but shot over from the edge of the penalty area. Caicedo, looking rusty after two months without a game, then conceded a penalty for a foul on Hammers left-back Emerson and Paqueta made no mistake from the spot to seal West Ham's victory.

Chelsea have spent more than US\$1.147mn since American businessman Todd Boehly and private equity firm Clearlake Capital bought the club in May 2022 yet have just one point from their first two competitive games under new manager Pochettino. West Ham were playing at home for the first time since beating Fiorentina 2-1 in June to win the Europa Conference League - the Hammers' first piece of silverware since 1980. The trophy was on display at London Stadium before the match, but the man who lifted the trophy, England midfielder Declan Rice, is no longer at the club having joined Arsenal in July. His replacement James Ward-Prowse, whose move from Southampton was confirmed last week, impressed his new supporters as he registered two assists - the corner for Aguerd's header then the pass through for Antonio to score the Hammers' second. "It was a dream debut for me on a personal note, just a direct free-kick was missing," Ward-Prowse told Sky Sports. "Everyone knows the impact Declan Rice had for this club, I have to show what James Ward-Prowse can bring to the club and that's my mentality.

"It is a special day and the first of hopefully many more to come." **Aston Villa rout Everton** Aston Villa recovered from their opening Premier League thrashing at Newcastle by thumping woeful Everton 4-0 at Villa Park. Unai Emery's Villa were heavily beaten 5-1 last weekend but got their campaign up and running at home with the impressive Leon Bailey having a hand in two goals. Fine work from the fleet-footed winger allowed him to create the opener for skipper John McGinn, who clipped home a first-time finish from close range. The hosts doubled their lead on 24 minutes courtesy of Douglas Luiz's penalty after the referee adjudged Jordan Pickford to have brought down Ollie Watkins in the box. Villa were carving Everton open with ease and Jamaica international Bailey pounced to net their third after the break, punishing Toffees defender Michael Keane's poor clearance. England keeper Pickford made a stunning reaction save to deny Moussa Diaby's thunderous volley but more shambolic defending from the away side gifted Jhon Duran a fourth. - Agencies

SERIE A



Juve off to a flying start; Roma held by Salernitana

ROME: Juventus began their new Serie A season in commanding style, cruising to a 3-0 victory over Udinese on Sunday. Juve, coming off a lacklustre seventh-place finish last season and barred from European competition due to a series of misconducts, started the 2023-24 campaign with a statement win over Udinese. The Bianconeri asserted their dominance in the first half. Federico Chiesa found the net following an assist from Dusan Vlahovic just two min-

utes in. Vlahovic then doubled the lead by converting a penalty. Andrea Cambiaso's cross in the final moments of the half set up Adrien Rabiot, who sealed the score with a header. In other matches, late goals from new signings Charles De Ketelaere and Nadir Zortea secured Atalanta a 2-0 away win against Sassuolo. Additionally, Roma ended in a 2-2 draw with Salernitana, while Lecce pulled off an upset, besting Lazio 2-1. - Xinhua

LA LIGA

Barcelona edge past Cadiz for first win of the season

BARCELONA: Defending La Liga champions Barcelona marked their first home game at the city's Olympic Stadium with a 2-0 win over Cadiz on Sunday. The Spanish giants are playing at the ground while the Nou Camp is refurbished and it looked like they would have to settle for a draw. But Pedri opened the scoring late on after receiving a superb pass from ex-Manchester City captain Ilkay Gundogan. Ferran Torres then drove home in stoppage time to wrap up the victory. Barca began their campaign with a goalless draw against Getafe in last week's opener. Sunday's win moves them on to four points after two games, two points behind early leaders Real Madrid. There was also a landmark moment for the hosts as Lamine Yamal became the youngest player to start a league match for Barcelona, aged just 16 years and 38 days. Meanwhile, Betis and Atletico Madrid played out a goalless draw at the Benito Villamarin Stadium. Despite having the better chances, Betis' erratic finishing prevented them from registering a shot on target. Nonetheless, Isco's com-



mendable midfield debut for the Seville-based club was the highlight. Veteran forward Cristhian Stuani netted two after the break as Girona clinched a comfortable 3-0 triumph over Getafe at home. Yangel Herrera's 11th-minute goal meant Getafe couldn't resort to their delaying tactics as seen in their previous fixture against Barcelona. Stuani executed a volley in the 55th minute and capitalized on a goalkeeper's blunder shortly thereafter. - Agencies

TENNIS RIVALRY

Djokovic defeats Alcaraz to clinch Cincinnati Open

CINCINNATI: Novak Djokovic avenged his Wimbledon final defeat to Carlos Alcaraz by beating the Spaniard in just under four hours to win the Cincinnati Open on Sunday. The Serb survived match point in the second set before going on to win 5-7, 7-6 (9-7), 7-6 (7-4). Top seed Alcaraz beat Djokovic in five sets in last month's Wimbledon final. "The feeling that I have on the court reminds me a little bit of when I was facing [Rafael] Nadal when we were at our prime," Djokovic said. "I don't think I've played too many matches like this in my life." Djokovic compared the draining win to his Australian Open final victory in 2012, when he defeated Nadal in five hours and 53 minutes. "Each point is a hustle. Each point is a battle. You've got to basically earn every single point, every single shot, regardless of the conditions. It's amazing to be able to experience that with him on the court," he added. Despite the defeat, Alcaraz will keep the world No.1 ranking for his US Open title defence. However, Djokovic will return to the top of the rankings if he



wins just one match at Flushing Meadows. It was Djokovic's record-extending 39th ATP Masters 1000 title. "It's amazing playing against you, sharing the court with you, learning from you," said the 20-year-old Alcaraz. "This match was really close, but I learned a lot from a champion like you. So congratulations to you and your team." "This rivalry just gets better," Djokovic said. "It gets better and better. [He's an] amazing player. Tons of respect for him. For such a young player to show so much poise in important moments is impressive. Obviously, three sets today, but almost four hours. You just have to put your hats down to a guy like that. He plays so maturely, handles the pressure so well for a 20-year-old." - Agencies

WORLD SAILING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Omani sailors gain valuable experience at the worlds in Netherlands

MUSCAT: Oman Sail's parasailing and windsurfing team gained valuable experience as they concluded their campaign at the 2023 Allianz Sailing World Championships at The Hague in the Netherlands recently. Taking part in the first Sailing World Championships that featured para sailing events, Marjan Al Balushi finished 11th in the women's Hansa, Nasr al Rahbi finished 12th out of 15 in the men's Hansa, and the crew of Sami al Sulaimi and Ghaliya al Jabri finished 15th out of 16 in the RS Venture event. Mohsin Al Busaidi, Oman Sail's

Head of Performance said, "We have mixed feelings on the results. We had hoped for a stronger showing but it is important to remain focused on the wider context. Some of the sailors at the Allianz Sailing World Championships have been sailing for decades. This is the level we are aiming for, and this event gave us a first-hand look at what we need to do." "All four sailors began their journey in the sport in 2019 with the launch of Oman Sail's SailFree initiative, a joint project with bp Oman and the Oman Paralympic Committee. They have already



made significant progress and the exposure to the highest level in the sport will serve them well in the future," he added. Elsewhere at the same event, Abdulmajeed Al Hadhrami continued his quest for Olympic qualification in the men's Windsurfing iQFOiL where he finished 85th in a strong fleet. The top ten qualify automatically for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, while more places are on offer at competitions around the world in the coming months. Al Hadhrami will be part of the Oman team travelling to the Hangzhou 2023 Asian Games,

taking place from 23 September-October 8, and also at the Asian Olympic Qualifier in Chon Buri, Thailand, from December 10-20. Al Busaidi said, "The iQFOiL is one of the fastest-growing disciplines in watersports and we have a great opportunity to qualify. The Allianz Sailing World Championships featured the very best in the world and it was a chance to see where we stand and how to improve. The two regional events give us another way to qualify and time to take back our learning from Europe to Oman and prepare to end the year in strong form."

Bank Muscat celebrates inauguration of relocated corporate branch in Sohar

The relocated branch is characterised by a modern design and distinctive space that provides corporate and government-institution customers with comfort and financial inclusion

MUSCAT: Aiming to enhance its network of branches across the Sultanate's governorates and provide the best banking services and facilities to individuals and corporates, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, celebrated the inauguration of the relocated corporate branch in Falaj Al Qabail in the Wilayat of Sohar.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Sheikh Ahmed Bin Mohammed bin Shihab Al Balushi, Deputy Wali of Sohar, with the attendance of Ahmed bin Faqir Al Balushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat, and other executive officers from the Bank. The inauguration of the Bank Muscat's relocated customised branch aims at keeping pace with the recent developments witnessed in Al Batinah North generally and the Wilayat of Sohar specifically, as it has been experiencing significant investment and economic shifts making it the focus of attention of many local and international investors, which contributes to the development of the public and private sectors through providing the best bank-



ing services and solutions. The relocated branch is characterised by a modern design and distinctive space that provides corporate and government-institution customers with comfort and financial inclusion seen in the wide range of services provided to the public and private sectors. The branch is managed by a team of Omani experts ready to effectively provide various financial options and services. Customers can benefit from the services the new branch provides from Sunday to Thursday starting from 8am until 2pm. It is to be noted that Bank Muscat has other customised branches that offer different services and solutions to corporates and government institutions, and they are located in different locations such as the commercial district branch in Ruwi, Al Nahdha Towers branch in Bausher and Salalah branch in Dhofar. Speaking on the occasion, Ahmed Bin Faqir Al Balushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat, declared that Bank Muscat's relocated branch that provides customized services and facilities to corporate and institutional customers started in 2014 in the Wilayat of Sohar. Today, we have celebrated the inauguration of the relocated corporate branch,

which comes to support the bank's strategic plans of enhancing its network of branches that serve the public and private sectors and keeping pace with the growth the private sector has seen in North Al Batinah. Al Balushi further said that the relocated branch, with its financial advisory services and banking facilities, would contribute to the development of the public and private sectors altogether, having emphasised that the Bank would continue its commitment to providing the best banking services and solutions to achieve positive results conducive to the growth of these prominent sectors. Al Balushi further added that Bank Muscat is the first leading financial service provider in the Sultanate to have taken proactive steps in enhancing the Sultanate's Renaissance through allocating a business unit in charge of providing financial services catering the diverse needs of large corporates and small-medium enterprises (SMEs). Therefore, Al Balushi mentioned that opening the relocated corporate branch would contribute to fostering the Bank's leadership stance in the banking industry by means of a range of recent diverse facilities and financing services provided to investors and customers, having stressed



that the Bank would continue its commitment to providing satisfying services that meet their needs and contribute to enhancing public-private partnerships to achieve Oman's vision 2040. Addressing her opinion on the very occasion, Ilham Bint Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager, Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, spoke about the achievement of opening the relocated corporate branch in the Wilayat of Sohar, which is characterised by its wide space and modern comfortable design. She mentioned that the location was selected to be adjacent to different corporates and government institutions, industrial and free Zones, which emphasises Bank Muscat's constant endeavour to providing its investors and customers with distinguished banking services across the Sultanate and achieving more successes in the banking industry through the inauguration of such customized branches. Further to that, Ilham Al Hamaid mentioned that Bank Muscat has a distinguished network

of relationships with its local and international customers from corporates and institutions, to which it provides a wide range of facilities and products. These banking services include project financing loans, capital financing services to expand projects, bid bonds, performance bonds, prepaid bonds, financial bonds, performance insurance bonds, letters of credit bonds to procure equipment and instruments, and standby letters of credit. On this occasion, AL Hamaid expressed a word of thanks and appreciation to the Bank Muscat's customers for their continuous confidence in the banking facilities offered to them and their partnerships to improve various joint businesses, having stressed that the Bank would continue enhancing this cooperation to fulfil further achievements during the coming phases. It must be also mentioned that to enhance the Bank's digital services, Bank Muscat has upgraded its Corporate Banking website which features a modern design, simple and user-friendly content,

easy navigation, and interactive application forms for existing and prospective customers to apply for availing banking products and services. The site provides direct links to a large range of services and solutions including Corporate Online Banking, Business Loans and Solutions, Trade Finance, Agency and Custody Services, Sectoral Insights and Customer Testimonials. Therefore, the bank's corporate customers can easily access eApplications for various trade solutions, in addition to various other application forms for various banking services, a checklist of documents required, and other guides and tutorials. In addition to this, the new digital portal for trade services (Digital Trade) launched in the recent past has witnessed an excellent turnout from corporate and institutional customers. This platform contributes to facilitate trade transactions and showcases the bank's commitment to implementing the digital transformation strategy in line with Oman Vision 2040. In addition, this digital portal is designed for easy access and convenience, so that customers can complete their banking transactions at any time and from anywhere. The Bank's 'Integrated Transaction Banking Platform' provides convenience to its corporate and government customers with the availability of digital services for payments, collections, liquidity management and trade services under one platform with single login credentials. Customers may experience the unparalleled service and expertise offered by Bank Muscat's corporate branches and empowers their organisations to thrive in an ever-evolving business landscape, as a result of that. To discover and obtain more details about the Bank's different services and solutions, customers can visit the nearest corporate branch or contact Help Desk.

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ROUND-UP

Unbeatable offers on MG's premium vehicles

This limited-time offer, brings an unmatched opportunity for car enthusiasts to experience the sheer power, performance, and technology that MG vehicles are known for

MUSCAT: MHD ACERE, the authorised distributor of MG Motor Oman, introduced the 'Unleash your passion' EMI campaign, presenting extraordinary offers on MG's premium range of vehicles. This limited-time offer, brings an unmatched opportunity for car enthusiasts to experience the sheer power, performance, and technology that MG vehicles are known for. Discover the MG RX8, an epit-



ome of adventure and sophistication, available at an incredible EMI of OMR 96. Equipped with a 2.0l turbo engine, 221 HP, and 360nm torque, the RX8 boasts an intelligent real-time torque-on-demand (TOD) 4WD system, ensuring seamless travel across any terrain. The flagship MG RX8 Black Edition, available at an EMI of 115, presents a captivating blend of style and technology. With features like Apple Car Play, Android Auto, and a 10.1-inch touch screen, driving becomes an immersive experience. For those seeking performance with efficiency, the MG 6, with an EMI of OMR 69, offers a 1.5L turbo engine, 7-speed dual-clutch transmission, and an 8" integrated touchscreen. The MG HS, starting

at an EMI of 91, promises power with its 2.0L turbo engine, combined with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission and intelligent 4WD. The MG 5, available at an EMI of OMR 55, sets new standards with its 1.5L engine, 10.1-inch color touchscreen, and advanced safety features such as the 360-degree camera view. The MG GT, with a starting EMI of OMR 75, offers a blend of elegance and speed, while the MG T60, available at an EMI of OMR 91, presents exceptional power with its 2.8L turbo diesel engine and versatile 4x2 and 4x4 configurations. To make this offer even more enticing, MG is providing additional benefits including free 1st year insurance, free registration, and 3 years/60,000 km service [which ever comes earlier]. This holistic

package ensures that owning an MG is not just about driving excellence, but also about savings and complete peace of mind. Speaking about the campaign, Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO, MHD ACERE, shared his excitement: "At MG, we aim to ignite the passion of driving in every individual. With the 'Unleash your passion' EMI Campaign, we're making luxury and performance more accessible than ever. The offers have already started making an impact as seen by the customer response we are receiving at all MG showrooms." Don't miss the chance to own your dream MG vehicle. Join the 'Unleash your passion' EMI Campaign before September 25, 2023, and embrace a new era of driving excellence.

200TH SHOWROOM GLOBALLY



Kalyan Jewellers launches its first showroom in Jammu

MUSCAT: Kalyan Jewellers, one of the largest and most trusted jewellery brands recently announced the launch of its 1st showroom in Jammu, India which was inaugurated by Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan. The launch celebrations marked the momentous milestone of the company's 200th showroom globally. T S Kalyanaraman, Managing Director of Kalyan Jewellers along with the Executive Directors - Rajesh Kalyanaraman and Ramesh Kalyanaraman were present at the inauguration. The brand new showroom promises a luxurious shopping experience with an extensive array of exquisite jewellery designs in a world-class ambience. The city of Jammu came to a standstill as crowds jostled to catch a glimpse of the iconic superstar. Addressing the enthralled crowd, Hrithik Roshan said, "I am delighted and honoured to be part of the 200th showroom launch festivities of Kalyan Jewellers. With a legacy spanning over three

decades, Kalyan Jewellers has time and again, revolutionised India's jewellery industry with its pioneering initiatives. It is a matter of pride for me, to represent this iconic brand that is built on the core pillars of trust, transparency and customer centricity. "This magnificent Kalyan Jewellers' showroom is a testament to the company's unwavering commitment to providing an unparalleled shopping experience to patrons. I am confident that the patrons here will warmly welcome and wholeheartedly support the jewellery brand." The extravagant launch celebrations also encompassed the unveiling of Kalyan Jewellers' e-commerce platform - Candere's 3rd Experience Centre in India. Following a phygital model, the company had introduced this first-of-its-kind concept in September 2022. The Experience Centre is designed to work seamlessly alongside its online platform, offering next-gen consumers with a distinctive shopping experience.

WORLD PREMIERE



Maserati MCXtrema: Trident's new racing beast unveiled at Monterey Car Week

MONTEREY: On Friday 18 August, the unique and exclusive stage of The Quail - where every summer, connoisseurs and enthusiasts from all over the world gather on the Monterey Peninsula to celebrate outstanding automotive design and engineering - hosted the world premiere of Maserati's new creation: MCXtrema, a veritable "beast" designed for the track - with no type approval to be driven on the road - is ready to unleash 730 hp of power, enclosed in a design as refined in the harmony of its lines as it is disruptive, in terms of the audacity of its forms. The Trident's new creature has been conceived as being out of the box: only 62 units of this limited-edition super sports car have been produced, dedicated to a selected, highly discerning clientèle in terms of performance, sophistication of design, luxury - all the hallmarks of a Made in Italy product - and extreme driving experience. Presented as the Modena-based brand's most powerful track car, the Maserati MCXtrema is a courageous and exceptional car from all points of view, designed

for purist collectors and for the loyal customers of the brand, who wish to add a new "toy" to their garage that can swallow up the kerbs of the most exciting tracks during private tests. This latest creation from the Italian luxury brand stems from the creative and engineering partnership between the Centro Stile and the Maserati engineering team; it reflects the desire to create a racing car capable of passing on the legacy of the glorious Maserati MC12 in the world of competition, to inspire the Trident's future racing production. In the words of Davide Grasso, Maserati CEO: "Maserati MCXtrema was created with the aim of offering an incredibly exclusive product that can set a new paradigm for our track cars. The project is dedicated to a selected clientèle who are particularly attentive to distinctive details, ranging from the most refined and innovative design to exceptional performance. MCXtrema embodies the sporting spirit typical of Maserati's DNA, a declaration of a new pathway for our brand, devoted to superlative manufacturing."

RECOGNITION

NBO bags 'Best Mobile Banking App' award

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) won the prestigious 'Best Mobile Banking App Oman 2023' award by the Global Business and Finance Magazine, recognising NBO as a class-leader in the industry. Representing the bank's digital transformation strategy, NBO's Mobile App keeps up with the latest technologies and offers customers a seamless experience and solutions that meet their needs. Speaking on the award, Dr Ali Al Shekaili, Assistant General Manager - Head of Digital & E-Channels at NBO commented, "We are delighted to receive this award, which joins a growing list of accolades the app has received since its launch in 2015. This recognition



validates our strategic focus on providing customer-centric digital solutions that surpass our customer's aspirations. Moreover, it also acts as a powerful motivation for us to persistently innovate and

accelerate technology deployment in line with our digital transformation approach." Over the years, NBO has diligently cultivated its mobile app through meticulous market analy-

sis and continuous integration of the most recent trends as the bank aspires to be at the forefront of inventive solutions. The award-winning mobile app boasts advanced features that simplify its customers' experience. These include a convenient digital onboarding service, allowing individuals to open a new account seamlessly and collect their card from any NBO multi-functional kiosks. Customers can also open additional accounts, pay utility and credit card bills, apply for products and make transfers. Embracing modern technology, the app also offers a scan and pay feature for making quick payments at QR enabled terminals across Oman.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Oman Arab Bank's LaunchPad programme set to propel students' career prospects

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) launched its latest program, LaunchPad, an initiative designed to help students get a jumpstart in their careers, under the patronage of Sheikh bin Nasr Al Hosni, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour. The training programme comprises of a series of free workshops to develop participants' skillsets and empower them to enter the workforce with confidence. Open to college students, as well as fresh graduates and professional Omanis with less than five years of work experience, it aims to further support and inspire the next generation of Oman's workforce. Sulaiman Al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said: "The Sultanate's future workforce lies in the capable hands of the next generation, who hold the responsibility of steering the nation forward, bolstering our thriving economy, and fulfilling the objectives set forth in Oman's Vision 2040. At OAB, we are firmly committed to developing the youth of our coun-



try - and LaunchPad is the latest stage of a carefully designed program in which we continue to invest in giving back to the community, with the initiative also forming part of our ongoing 50th anniversary celebrations. I look forward to welcoming our talented students and recent graduates and watching them progress through the training programme."

The training programme will be delivered at the bank's Head Office in Muscat in collaboration with strategic partners IDENTITY, Competence HR, RAB, Performance World and Aspire Muscat. Divided into three categories (beginners, intermediate and advanced) based on the candidates' profiles, the workshops will also be recorded and posted on OAB's

social media platforms. Beginners will learn about building their personal brand, CV writing, interview preparation, career building and time/priority management, while intermediates will be coached on decision making, performance management, project management, crisis management and delivering business presentations. Advanced participants will be taught about change management, innovation and creativity, authentic leadership, strategy thinking and implementation, and digital intelligence. The beginners' workshops are running from August 20 onwards, with dates to be confirmed in due course for intermediate and advanced levels. LaunchPad follows the announcement earlier this year of OAB's Ruwad Al Arabi internship programme, designed to provide meaningful work experience for university and college graduates, nurturing the skills required to bolster employment prospects within or outside the banking sector.



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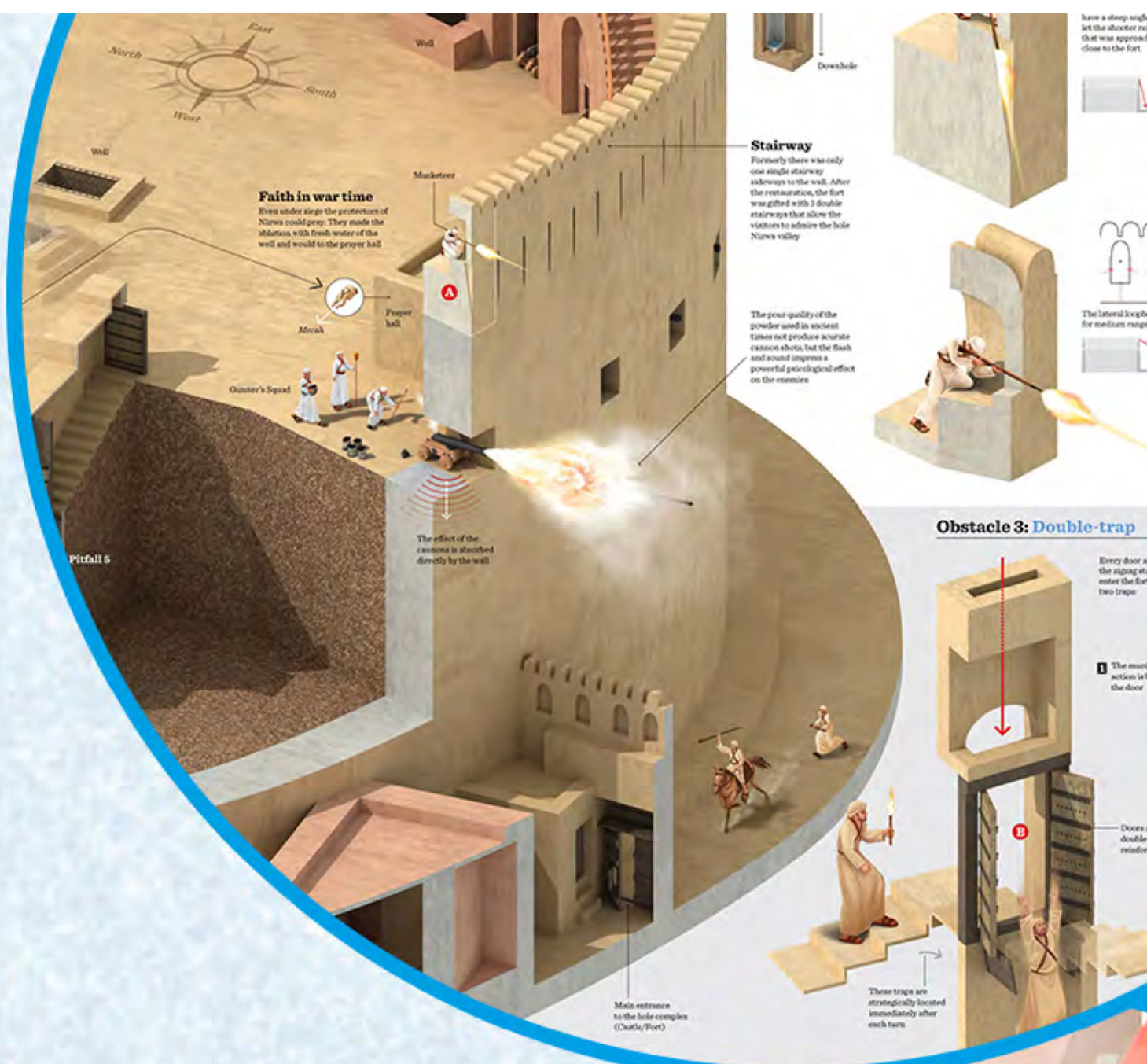


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