

**HIS MAJESTY GREETES
PRESIDENT OF HUNGARY**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Katalin Novak of the Republic of Hungary on her country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Katalin Novak and the people of Hungary. — **ONA**



**HIS MAJESTY RECEIVES THANKS
CABLE FROM EMIR OF QATAR**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, in reply to His Majesty the Sultan's condolences cables on the death of Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani. In the cable, Sheikh Tamim expressed his appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's heartfelt sentiments, praying to Allah the Almighty to rest the deceased's soul in peace in paradise. He also prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect His Majesty and the Omani people from harm.



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MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

MSX celebrates the merger of Sohar International Bank, HSBC Bank Oman



MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Sunday rang the market-opening bell to mark the first stock trading of Sohar International Bank after its merger with HSBC Bank Oman.

With the merger of the two entities, the total source capital of Sohar International Bank now exceeds OMR560 million with 5.5 billion shares and more than 6,000 shareholders.

Haitham Salim Al Salmi, CEO of MSX said that the merger of publicly traded companies con-

tributes to establishing solid economic blocs that boost their competitiveness among companies of the financial sector regionally and internationally.

Mohammed Mahfoodh Al Ardhi said that this occasion marks the start of a new era for Sohar International Bank — one that is marked with abundant growth prospects, not only for the bank but also for its stakeholders, investors and customers.

Moreover, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sohar Inter-

national Bank announced that the bank is in the process of signing an agreement to provide continuous orders for supply and demand on the bank's shares, as well as enhance liquidity of the bank's shares on MSX.

The bell-ringing ceremony was held under the auspices of Abdulsalam Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), in the presence of Abdullah Salim Al Salmi, CEO of the Capital Market Authority. — **ONA**

CABLE His Majesty the Sultan greets King of Morocco

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Mohammed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco on his Birthday anniversary.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to King Mohammed VI. His Majesty also prayed to Almighty Allah for the return of this and similar occasions on King Mohammed VI at a time the people of Morocco have achieved aspirations of further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**

MINISTRY SURVEY TO COVER 3,000 PRIVATE SECTOR ESTABLISHMENTS

The survey is expected to begin from September and last for three months

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour (MoL) will begin a survey to understand the needs of the private sector in line with aspirations of Oman Vision 2040.

In remarks to *Maa Al Shabiba* radio show, Huda Al Shibli, director of the survey project at the Ministry of Labour, said: "This is a key survey project which will help us better understand the needs of the private sector with regards to the labour needs."

The survey is expected to begin from September and will last for three months during which a total of 3,000 private sector establishments across 18 economic areas will be covered.

Huda said: "The survey is part of the national policy on employment, which is aimed to improve the labour governance across the private sector establishments in accordance with the market requirements in co-ordination with the Ministry of Higher Education."

The survey project head added: "We aim to identify and measure the labour market

needs and requirements including the jobs and various skills besides identifying the future needs.

"The survey would be conducted every two years, adding that the findings of the survey would help the policy makers to take related decisions and know the current and future demand for jobs and skills.

"It would also help them assess the jobs and the gap in the skills of the current manpower and the new skills required in the labour market. It would also help us know the difficulties the private sector establishments face in terms of their sustainability."

Huda said that the survey will help identify the need of specialisations, skills and jobs that are not available in the current manpower in order to open the door for recruitment of expatriate manpower. "To ensure a smooth conduct of the survey, we have formed a field work team, comprising 61 members from the various governorates, along with a central team for supervision and follow up," added Huda.



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Pact signed for kidney dialysis unit project

1 The Ministry of Health has signed on Sunday an agreement with Oman India Fertiliser Company and Oman LNG to fund the establishment of a dialysis unit project in Bidiyah Hospital, North Al Sharqiyah. **>A2**



WORLD Russia's Luna-25 crashes into moon

2 Russia's moon mission failed after its Luna-25 spacecraft spun out of control and smashed into the moon on Sunday. **>A7**

SPORTS Spain are winners of Women's World Cup

3 Spain reached the pinnacle in Sydney, edging past England 1-0 to win the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time. **>A8**



Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival concludes attracting 60,000 visitors

A4

MONEY EXCHANGE

Oman expats cash in on as Indian rupee weakens

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With the Indian rupee continuing its recent slide against the US dollar, exchange houses in Oman have seen a rise in remittances to India. Indian rupee slid to 83.15 against dollar and was INR216.063 against Omani rial on Sunday after consistent falls in the past few months spurring quick home bound dispatches.

Iftekhhar Ul Hasan Chowdhury, CEO of Gulf Overseas Exchange, admitted that "there has been a rise in the remittances to India with the Indian rupee fetching between INR215-216."

Basheer, an Indian expat living in Oman, said: "I'm not sure what this means for India, but such mo-



ments are favourable for workers like us as we get to send more money home."

Another expat said: "Rupee decline is not good for India's economy but as a worker in Oman, it brings a smile on my face as I am

able to send more money than what I did last month. I don't have much money to send now and am eagerly waiting for my salary. I hope the Indian rupee will stay like this or even go down by the end of the month."



Sashi Bhusan, another Indian expat, said, "In Gulf, people like us are always happy when the rupee weakens. I have asked a friend to loan me some amount so that I can send a good amount back home as I have a wedding by the end of the

year. I will repay my friend in a couple of months' time."

Various factors that have put pressure on the rupee are rising current account deficit, strengthening of US dollar, and rising inflation amid high global commodity prices. Prices of crude oil, which India imports heavily to meet its domestic demand, have also seen a sharp rise from the start of this year. Earlier last week, the Indian rupee weakened to its lowest level in nine months following a broad overnight rally in the dollar and US Treasuries. The rupee was weighed down by a strong greenback overseas and firm crude oil prices in the international markets. Foreign fund outflows also weighed on the local unit.



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MoH signs agreement to set up kidney dialysis unit at Bidiyah Hospital

The signing of the agreement is part of strategic partnership to achieving community common good and upgrading the public welfare services and development projects across the Sultanate of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health (MoH) signed on Sunday an agreement with Oman India Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO) and Oman Liquefied Natural Gas (Oman LNG) to fund the establishment of a dialysis unit project in Bidiyah Hospital, North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

Signing ceremony

The agreement signing ceremony took place at Ministry headquarters and was signed by Dr. Fatima Mohammed Al Ajmi, Undersecretary of Health for Administrative, Planning, and Financial Affairs, Abdullah Humaid Salim Al Hashami, OMIFCO's Chief Financial Officer, and Dr. Amor Al Matani, Chief Executive Officer of Oman LNG Development



Foundation, with the presence of Shiekh Mansoor Al Hajri, Member of Shura Council Representative of Bidiyah. Dr. Al Ajmi stressed the importance of creating partnerships between the government and private sectors to achieve the public's needs.

She also praised the OMIFCO and Oman LNG initiative to finance the establishment of dialysis unit in Bidiyah Hospital.

A strategic partnership

Dr. Al Ajmi added that the signing of the agreement is part of strategic partnership to achieving community common good and upgrading the public welfare services and developmental projects across the Sultanate of Oman. She affirmed that the establishment of dialysis unit in Bidiyah was among Ministry's top priority projects to serve the people of Ash Sharqiyah North Governorate.

Abdullah Humaid Salim Al Hashami, CFO, OMIFCO stated that the company is proud to collaborate with the Ministry of Health to support the establishment of a dialysis Unit in Bidiyah Hospital, which contributes to enhance the health services provided to patients with kidney failure in the North Ash Sharqiyah Governorate.

CSR initiative

The signing of this agreement comes within OMIFCO's corporate social responsibility programmes in the field of enhancing quality of life to support the health services sector, Al Hashami added, pointing out that the health services sector is one of the important and strategic sectors that OMIFCO supports continuously, and this agreement is a part of several national programs and projects that have been imple-

mented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health in the Sultanate. Commenting on the agreement, Dr. Amor Al Matani, CEO of Oman LNG Development Foundation said; "Oman LNG has long prioritised the health sector as one of its key focuses, where this support intends to reflect the strategic partnership efforts between the company and the Ministry of Health.

Better healthcare provision

The Kidney Dialysis Unit Refurbishment Project aims to provide the Unit with the most advanced technical services and cutting-edge medical equipment to accommodate more patients, ensure better healthcare provision and reduce waiting times.

This initiative complements Oman LNG's prior funding of the kidney dialysis units in Dhofar and Muscat.

ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN



Acting RNO Commander and Italian military official meet

MUSCAT: Commodore Mohammed Hamoud Al Zedjali, Acting Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received at Al Murtafaa Garrison on Sunday Aurelio De Carolis, Commander in Chief of the Italian Fleet and his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed means of enhancing military and naval cooperation

between the two sides.

They also exchanged views on various matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Commodore Jasim Mohammed Al Balushi, Director of Operations and Plans at the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) and the Military Attaché of the Italian embassy at Muscat. — **ONA**

MARITIME SECURITY CENTRE

Commander in Chief of Italian Fleet visits MSC

MUSCAT: Aurelio De Carolis, Commander in Chief of the Italian Fleet and his accompanying delegation visited on Sunday the Maritime Security Centre (MSC)

Upon the delegation's arrival at the centre, they were greeted by Commodore Adil Hamoud Al Bussaidi, Head of the MSC.

During the visit, members of

the delegation were briefed on the tactical roles and tasks carried out by the centre in the safety of the Omani maritime environment.

They also toured the Maritime Security Centre's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies used in carrying out its national duties. — **ONA**



MEETINGS

Oman Air and Oman Airports elect new board of directors

MUSCAT: The general assemblies of Oman Air and Oman Airports held separate meetings during which they dissolved their respective boards of directors and elected new board of directors for both general assemblies.

The new board of directors of Oman Air and Oman Airports later held separate meetings for both companies under the chairmanship of Eng. Said Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Chairman of the Board.

The meetings approved Oman Air's new organisational structure and the new committees of the Board of Directors. It also appointed a Deputy Chairman of Board of Directors of the company.

The Oman Airboard of directors also approved the implementation of executive action for its financial sustainability programme.

It underscored the significance



of conducting the programme in accordance with a comprehensive reform vision comprising commercial regulations and corporate governance of human capital.

Meanwhile, Oman Airports Company's Board of Directors reviewed the firm's strategy for the next five years, discussed the

company's financial accounts for the first half of the current year (2023) and approved the formation of new committees for the company's board of directors. It also appointed a Deputy Chairman of Board of Directors.

Al Ma'awali stressed the need to exert concerted efforts during the next stage to enhance the capabilities of civil aviation sector companies in line with the government's directives that focus on maximising investment returns, achieving in-country added value (ICV) and realising financial sustainability in the sector. — **ONA**

SURGERY FOR EPILEPSY

Conference on epilepsy cure

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Lama Polyclinic LLC, Muscat Family Physicians' Group in association with Global Treatment Services organised an international medical conference at Grand Hyatt Hotel, Muscat August 19.

The topic of the conference was 'Surgery for Epilepsy'.

Across the globe a large number of children and adults suffer from epilepsy (Fits as it is called generally) which not only makes the life of a patient difficult but makes them prone to injuries and accidents. Though a few can carry on with the normal life, most are handicapped.

It disturbs the life of entire family. Till now, limited medical treatment with drugs was available for epilepsy. Still, many suf-

fered in silence. Thankfully, now advanced treatment with surgery is available for such patients. Though there is no total solution, it gives a great relief.

The speaker at the conference was Dr. Jayesh Sardhara, Sr. Consultant, Epilepsy Surgery & Minimally Invasive Surgery, Dept. of Neurosurgery, Fortis Hospital, Mulund, Mumbai.

He said: "Epilepsy surgery is a very complex and crippling disorder in pediatric as well as adult patients. 30% of epilepsy cases are drug resistant epilepsy (DRE). Preoperative epilepsy evaluation is a very important tool to decide the possibility of surgery and complete cure. Evaluation includes 24 hour video EEG (electroencephalogram) monitoring to decide where the epilepsy generator or focus is situated in the

whole brain map. It also requires SPECT or PET scan, to confirm it. Early epilepsy surgery in the disease sequence yields better seizure and cognitive outcome. It can be possible now by minimally invasive brain surgery. It is a great help to the people having epilepsy."

The meeting was attended by around 65 doctors which included Neurosurgeons, Neurologists, Pediatricians, Internists, A & E specialists & G.P.s

In concluding remarks, Dr. Sanjay Dalal, Founder Muscat Family Physicians & the main organiser thanked the visiting team of Fortis Hospital, especially speaker Dr. Jayesh for sharing his experience & expertise. Dr. Sanjay also thanked all the attending doctors for their active participation in the interactive session.







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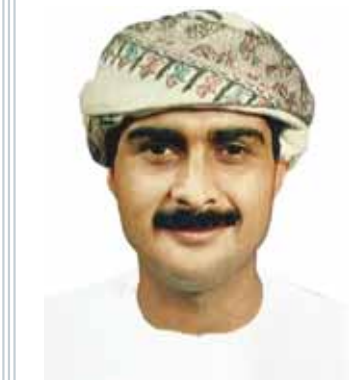


#MAISARAHWORLD



COMMENTARY

Touching base with an old school friend



Saleh Al-Shaibany

I decided to touch base with an old schoolmate when I heard he came over to Oman. We were just in our mid-teens when we last saw each other. I was both amused and shocked to hear that before reaching his middle-age, my friend has been divorced three times. He is now, in his own words, “enjoying” his fourth marriage.

As I was looking at him, my mind drifted to the schooldays. There was nothing there to suggest that this man was going to be prolific in the art of matrimony. But then there is nothing teachers can teach at school to prepare you for such thing.

Marriage, work and responsibilities were far from our minds then. We tried to strike a balance between play and education. I am not sure which of the two has influenced my life more. I wondered if some aspect of play and education had something to do with his taste in marriage. I was tempted to ask him but refrained from doing so. After all, our reunion was supposed to catch up with the lost time and not digging up pains of the past.

He knew what was going in my mind and quickly changed the subject. He talked about our teachers, friends and the events that changed our lives.



We came to a conclusion that, as we went different ways to pursue separate careers, we left behind a life that was different to the one we lead now.

In the middle of these thoughts, I spared a thought for our children, who live in the age of home computers and virtual reality. Learning is much easier now with the presence of all the technology around them. Parents, eager to make something out of their children, provide extra tuition themselves or pay someone else to do it. There are also array of educational softwares and the Internet to tap a wealth of information.

My children did not think much when I told them how I used to struggle with my schoolwork. “We solely relied on the skills of our teachers,” I said to them, “there was no electronic media to fall back to or parents knowledgeable enough to help us.”

They looked at me and their expressions asked, “so what?” My first reaction was to be angry, but then, on second thought, how could I blame them for something they were not responsible for? We all know how they take learn-

ing for granted, something we could never afford to in our day.

One of them, more from curiosity than to challenge me, asked, “what method did you use to study?”

“I wish we could send each other email messages to help with our revision,” I told him.

He told me that was history now because things have changed in the past three years. Now they have websites to help them with their work. They don’t even have textbooks or write notes. Those days we had to write endless notes at a speed of light from the words of teachers. It is all too easy now for them. And it is getting easier by the year.

Getting back to my friend and his marriages, I sincerely hope that none of my four sons would find enough clues to encourage them to marry more than once in their lives. Hopefully, too, they would look into my life, as their father, to be satisfied with one wife only, which is their mother.

I am not saying my friend is wrong to go into multiple marriages, but once is more than enough. At least, that is true to me.

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024



Introductory meeting for new scholarship students organised

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation on Sunday organised an introductory gathering for new students who received admission to foreign scholarships and study grants for the Academic Year 2023/2024.

The meeting, held at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), was aimed at enlightening the students and their parents about the latest developments and scholarship procedures in terms of academic financial and religious aspects. It laid emphasis on security and legal awareness and underlined the issues to which the students should pay attention during their study period.

The students learned about the support that could be extended to them through the Ministry’s Directorate General of Scholarships and offices of cultural attachés abroad. — **ONA**

THREE-DAY PROGRAMME

Events of Startups Entrepreneurship Programme kick off in Salalah

SALALAH: Events of the Startups Entrepreneurship Programme kicked off at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah yesterday. The three-day programme is organized by the Ministry of Education, represented by the Career Guidance and Student Counseling Centre, in cooperation with the Authority of Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED).

The programme seeks to develop innovative entrepreneurial ideas and skills of young people, targeting the age group from 15 to 17 years. — **ONA**



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Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival ends wowing 60,000 visitors

The festival, organised by the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, achieved great success with the outstanding interaction of the attendees and participants

JABAL AKHDAR: The activities of the second edition Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival 2023, organised by the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism from 3 to 19 August concluded in the presence of large audience and participants.

The festival has seen the presence of 60,000 visitors from within and outside the Sultanate who enjoyed the various activities.

The event comprised a number of pavilions, programmes and family entertainment activities including the youth corner, the children corner, the corner of the farmers of Al Jabal Al Akhdar and the young chef corner for providing the children with the opportunity for participation and learning the skills of cooking from a number of Omani chefs.

The festival also saw paragliding shows, international theatrical shows, adventure sports and races, including Al Jabal Al Akhdar cycling among other activities.

Ahmed bin Salim Al Toobi, Director General of Administration and Financial Affairs in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah said that the festival would promote tourism and several service and development projects in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar.

The festival received a big number of visitors from within and outside the Sultanate besides the participation of the SMEs. The number of participating establishments mounted to 34 SMEs and festival has seen the products of 45 families, he added.

Haitham bin Mohammed Al Ghassani, Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism said that the second edition Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival 2023 aimed to attract visitors and tourists to the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar mainly the families to enjoy the various events and activities including the visit to the heritage village.

Eng. Muhammad bin Ali Al-Wardi, Director of the Municipal-

ity Department in the Wilayat of Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar in Al-Dakhiliyah Governorate, said: "With the start of the activities of the Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar Festival 2023, the Wilayat of Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar witnessed an influx of tourists from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman, and a great turnout for visitors to the festival and the accompanying events, which contributed to introducing the ingredients that abound."

He added: "Through our survey of the visitors of the festival, there is satisfaction with the activities held such as the mountain tourist walk, where the number of participants reached more than 125 participants, the events of Al Jabal Al Akhdar Bicycle Race and the activities of paragliding shows, and the activities of Al Jabal Al Akhdar Race for mountain running, in which more than 230 participants participated." - DNA/ Times News Service



THE FESTIVAL ALSO SAW PARAGLIDING SHOWS, INTERNATIONAL THEATRICAL SHOWS, ADVENTURE SPORTS AND RACES, INCLUDING AL JABAL AL AKHDAR CYCLING AMONG OTHER ACTIVITIES





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BILATERAL RELATIONS

Minister of Royal Office receives Iraq, Syria envoys

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office on Sunday Qais Saad Al Amri, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Nu'amani underscored the bilateral relations between Oman and Iraq.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed areas of mutual co-operation and means of enhancing them. They also exchanged views on various matters of common concern.

Syrian Ambassador

Meanwhile, Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office also received in his office Idris Maya, Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Nu'amani highlighted the march of relations between Oman and Syria.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed several matters of mutual interest and means of promoting them.



Khasab Fort an emerging major tourist destination

The number of visitors is between 300 to 400 a day and the number of visitors up to mid-August 2023 totalled 9,525 visitors

KHASAB: Khasab Fort, one of the key landmarks in Musandam Governorate, reflects features of the glorious past of citizens in the Governorate.

The fort was built in 1623 and witnessed renovation works in 2007, which works included the development of the facilities of the fort such as the area designated for the items on display at the traditional room, the Majlis of Women, the room for memorisation of the Holy Quran.

Costume and jewellery room

It also has the costume and jewellery room, the kitchen area, the room for making coffee and the space for the sale of antiques and gifts among other rooms and areas. Dawood bin Sulaiman Al Shahi, supervisor at the fort, said tht the fort has seen additional works at the external yard which works included the clay (bricks) furnace, the manual mill and the summer house among others. The number of visitors is between 300 to 400 a day and the number of visitors up to mid-August 2023 totalled 9,525, he added. — ONA



IN SCOTLAND



Royal Army of Oman band wins big at international music competition

SCOTLAND: The music wing of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) has bagged the first place in the infantry and discipline competition and the second place in playing musical instruments competition, during the international competition for music held at Glasgow city of Scotland in the United Kingdom.

The event has seen the participation of over 180 bands from various countries.

The first competition of infantry and discipline was held at Dundonald city in Scotland, wherein the RAO Music Wing secured the first place.

The RAO Music Wing bagged the second place in the competition for plying musical instru-

ments from among 19 participating bands of various countries.

In the second competition held in Bridge of Allan City, the RAO Music Wing secured the first place in the infantry and discipline competition from among 32 music bands taking part in the competition.

In the third competition held in North Berwick City, the RAO Music Wing secured the second place in playing musical instruments out of 37 music bands of various countries.

In the fourth competition held at Perth city, the RAO secured the second place in the competition for playing musical instruments out of 50 participating bands.

— ONA

SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Bangladesh Social Club spreading its wings across Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bangladesh Social Club, an association of Oman's largest expat community, is expanding its reach with the opening of new wings.

Recently, they got an approval to open two more wings, Greater Noakhali Wing and Greater Comilla Wing.

Bangladesh Social Club, the association representing the Bangladeshi community, started its journey in Oman in 1995.

To perform the socio-cultural activities in Oman, former Ambassador Major General Amin Ahmed along with PSC, Bir Bikram and, Al Numan inaugurated the club during his tenure.

Apart from the socio-cultural activities, the Club is engaged in philanthropic activities like blood donation and helping the community in distress.

The Ministry of Social Development affairs has recognised their contributions towards the community and honoured the Club Chairman Sirajul Hoque for his service recently.

In the past, the Bangladesh Social Club was concentrating on its activities in Muscat only, but in 2017, a new branch was opened in Salalah.

Following the request from the community, the social club is concentrating on opening new wings, added Sirajul Hoque.

He added that during his tenure

as chairman of the club, he obtained the approval for opening the Salalah branch, Greater Noakhali Wing, Greater Comilla Wing and Women's Wing from the Ministry of Social Development Oman.

He expressed his gratitude to the Oman government for extending its support to the club's expansion plan.

He also expressed his gratitude to the Bangladesh Embassy Muscat for extending support and valuable guidance for the betterment of the community.

For the smooth functioning, executive committee members of the club work in perfect harmony.

To build awareness among the community members and to follow the rules and regulations and

the directives of the Ministry of Social Development of Sultanate of Oman, Bangladesh Social Club organises different events and activities.

Moreover to combat money laundering and to encourage expatriates to send their money to the home country through proper channels, Bangladesh Embassy Muscat and Bangladesh Social Club in association with Gulf Overseas Exchange recently organised seminars in different parts of Oman.

'Say No to Hundi' event was also organised in association with the Bangladesh Embassy Muscat, National Bank of Oman (NBO) and Gulf Overseas Exchange, Sirajul Hoque added.

The celebration of Oman National Day, Victory Day of Bangladesh, Boishaki Mela (first day of Bangla new year), Gold Cup Football Tournament and T10 Cricket Tournament are the major annual events organised by the club.

Prominent Bangladeshi artists perform in various events in the presence of thousands of Bangladeshi expatriates.

On a call from the Blood Bank of Oman, Bangladesh Social Club is going to organise a Blood Donation camp in the mid-September this year. Opening of a few more wings like Greater Chattogram Wing, Sports Wing & Youth Wing is under active consideration of the Bangladesh Social Club, added Hoque.



NORTH WAZIRISTAN

11 killed in Pakistan bomb explosion

ISLAMABAD: Eleven people were killed in a suspected militant attack in northern Pakistan, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said on Sunday.

Kakar posted on X that a “terrorist attack” in North Waziristan “claimed the lives of 11 innocent labourers.”

According to security and police officials, a suspected improvised explosive device (IED)

detonated beneath a truck transporting workers to an army construction site in Waziristan, situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province near the Afghanistan border.

No organisation has yet taken responsibility for the incident.

Over the past year, Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in attacks orchestrated by Islamist militants, especially after the dissolution of

a cease-fire agreement between the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and the national government. Other extremist groups, including the so-called “IS,” have claimed responsibility for several attacks. A major explosion at a political gathering in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized by a religious faction last month resulted in the deaths of 45 individuals. -**ow**



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Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
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Over 26,000 people evacuated as wildfire rages in Canary Islands

The report revealed that some 5,000 hectares have been burned so far with a perimeter of 50km

MADRID Thousands of Tenerife residents have been evacuated as a wildfire deemed “out of control” by officials rages on for the fourth day, Al Jazeera reported.

According to preliminary estimates, more than 26,000 people had been evacuated by Saturday afternoon in the Canary Islands, up from 4,500 on Friday. Eleven towns are presently affected.

The Atlantic island has a population of approximately one million people and is a popular tourist destination.

The archipelago of seven islands is located off the northwest

coast of Africa and southwest of mainland Spain. The islands are 60 miles from Morocco at their closest point.

As per the Al Jazeera, the fire flames lit up the night sky overnight and helicopters were seen dropping water on areas close to home where smoke billowed into the air. The report revealed that some 5,000 hectares (12,000 acres) have been burned so far with a pe-

rimeter of 50km (30 miles).

The fire was at a scale never been seen before in the Canary Islands, Tenerife Council President Rosa Davila told reporters. She said the priority was to “protect people’s lives”.

The blaze has not destroyed any homes so far, she added, citing the fire brigade. While the two popular tourist areas of the island have so far been unaffected and

its two airports have been operating normally. The fire is blazing in the steep mountain area with pine trees making it harder for the firefighters to access the location.

The blaze broke out on Wednesday in a mountainous national park around the Mount Teide volcano – Spain’s highest peak – amid hot and dry weather.

The Canary Islands have been in drought for most of the past few

years, just like most of mainland Spain. The islands have recorded below-average rainfall in recent years because of changing weather patterns impacted by climate change, reported Al Jazeera.

Scorching heat and dry weather this year have contributed to unusually severe wildfires in Europe, including in Spain’s La Palma Island in July, and Canada. Blazes on Hawaii’s Maui Island earlier

this month killed more than 110 people and wrecked the historic resort city of Lahaina. Scientists have said climate change has led to more frequent and more powerful extreme weather events.

European Union officials also blamed global warming for the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires in Europe, noting 2022 was the second-worst year for wildfire damage on record after 2017. -**ANI**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

‘Terrible loss’ from wildfires, says Canada’s Premier Justin Trudeau

TORONTO: Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Saturday that the latest wildfires have caused “terrible loss,” after meeting evacuees from the far-north city of Yellowknife as they arrived in Edmonton, Alberta.

Tens of thousands of people in the Northwest Territories and British Columbia scrambled to evacuate Saturday as raging fires encroached on two metropolitan areas

Canada is experiencing a record-setting wildfire season, with more than 1,000 active wildfires burning across the country as of Friday, over half of them out of control.

Four people have died so far and officials say over 13.7 million hectares (33.9 million acres) of land have been scorched.

Around 19,000 people were evacuated from Yellowknife to Alberta province over the past two days — over 15,000 of them by road, while 3,800 have been airlifted, officials said.

The city, home to some 20,000, was largely a ghost town following the largest-ever evacuation from the region.

“We’re by no means out of the woods yet,” wildfire information

officer Mike Westwick told the Associated Press. “We still have a serious situation. It’s not safe to return.”

On Saturday, air tankers continued to drop water and fire retardant on the flames.

Around 1,000 essential staff have remained to erect defenses from the flames.

A 10-kilometre (6-mile) fire line was dug, and firefighters deployed 20 kilometers (12 miles) of hose and a plethora of pumps in the fight to keep the fire at bay.

The Canadian military has been drafted in to help. The fires had been expected to reach the city by Saturday but over-

night rain brought a sharp dip in temperatures.

Long lines of cars had crammed onto the lone highway connecting the area to Alberta province to the south ahead of the Friday deadline. Airtankers flew several missions overnight to help keep the highway open, as fires burned on either side of the road.

Some 35,000 people in British Columbia were under an evacuation order on Saturday, while a further 30,000 were under evacuation alert.

“The current situation is grim,” Premier Daniel Eby told reporters. The wildfires in British Columbia are centered around the

city of Kelowna, 300 kilometers (180 miles) east of Vancouver, along with the Westbank First Nation communities.

One of the blazes, around West Kelowna, which sits across Lake Okanagan, grew more than a hundredfold in just 24 hours, broadcaster CBC said.

The fire destroyed several properties, including the Lake Okanagan Resort.

Exceedingly thick smoke meanwhile made it difficult for firefighters to respond effectively, Nicole Bonnett, a BCWS fire information officer said Saturday.

Eby said the province is in dire need of shelter for both evacuees and firefighters, and he has ordered a ban on non-essential travel to make more temporary accommodation available.

Some 5,000 customers are also without electricity in interior British Columbia due to the fires, the main utility company said.

Kelowna is nestled in the Okanagan Valley which is home to some of the country’s top wineries. Experts say climate change, driven by emissions from fossil fuel use, has exacerbated the wildfire problem. -**ow**

PAKISTAN OPPOSITION LEADER

Shah Mehmood Qureshi arrested

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan opposition leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi was detained on Saturday, a spokesman said, part of a widening crackdown on the former ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

Qureshi, who served as foreign minister under ousted prime minister Imran Khan, was arrested in the capital Islamabad shortly after giving a press conference in which he vowed to challenge any delay to the country’s election in the courts.

Party spokesman Zulfi Bukhari told Reuters the specific reason for the detention of Qureshi was not immediately clear.

Bukhari, however, condemned the arrest on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, saying he was “arrested for doing a press conference and reaffirming PTI stance against all tyranny and pre-poll rigging that is going on currently in Pakistan.”

Dawn newspaper reported that Qureshi was arrested under the Official Secrets Act in connection with a case of a missing diplomatic cable that Khan had previously said was part of a conspiracy to remove him from office.

The newspaper cited Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti as saying the arrest had nothing to do with

the press conference.

“It will be unconstitutional if the 90 days deadline [for the election to take place] is breached,” Qureshi had told the press conference. He said the party planned to contest any delay at the Supreme Court.

Authorities have made widespread arrests targeting Khan’s party in recent months, crushing his grassroots power by rounding up thousands of his supporters as well as senior leaders.

Khan, a former international cricket star turned politician, was jailed earlier this month after being convicted of graft.

The case was one of more than 200 he has faced since being ousted in a no-confidence vote in April 2022. -**ow**

TREATED RADIOACTIVE WATER

Japan PM visits Fukushima plant ahead of radioactive water release

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Sunday paid a visit to the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant as the government is planning to release treated radioactive water stored at the facility into the sea, Kyodo News reported.

This move from the government is also facing opposition from the fishermen’s community and some neighbouring countries.

Kishida’s visit comes a day before his meeting with ministers aimed to discuss when to start the release of water.

He told reporters: “I believe we have reached the final stage where the government should make a decision based on comprehensive consideration” of issues such as minimizing the impact on fisheries as much as possible.”

The process will begin possibly between late August and early September, Kyodo News reported citing government sources.

The government is at “the final stage” of procedures before deciding on the time of the water release, Kishida told reporters in Washington on Friday after attending a trilateral meeting with the United States and South Korea.

Since the Fukushima Daiichi plant was destroyed by an earthquake and following the tsunami in 2011, a tremendous amount of contaminated water has been generated in the process of cooling melted reactor fuel.

The water has been stored in tanks after passing through an innovative liquid processing system that removes most radionuclides

except tritium, but the tanks are nearing capacity. Tritium is less dangerous than other radioactive elements such as cesium and strontium.

Treated water

About 1.34 million tonnes of treated water was stored in tanks at the Fukushima nuclear complex, as of late July, reaching 98 per cent of storage capacity, according to the plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc.

The treated water, which contains trace amounts of tritium, will be diluted to one-40th of the concentration allowed by Japanese safety requirements before being released through an under-sea tunnel one kilometre from

the power plant.

During his visit, Kishida is expected to inspect the facilities.

Fishermen and some neighbouring countries continue to resist the idea, and China has implemented blanket radiation testing on Japanese fish imports.

According to government sources, as cited by Kyodo News, Kishida also plans to meet with the head of the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations on Monday.

The Japanese government has been debating when to release the water since the International Atomic Energy Agency stated in its final assessment last month that the scheduled outflow will meet worldwide safety requirements, Kyodo News reported. -**ANI**

Luna-25 probe crashes into moon: Russia

The Roscosmos space agency had earlier reported an “abnormal situation” on Luna-25, Russia’s first moon probe in almost 50 years



MOSCOW: Russia’s space corporation Roscosmos said on Sunday that its Luna-25 spacecraft crashed into the moon after it spun into uncontrolled orbit. The mission was the first stage of Russia’s new lunar program and Luna-25 was Moscow’s first moon probe since 1976. The Russian space agency on Saturday said there had been an “abnormal situation” during an operation to bring the craft into a landing pre-orbit. Preliminary findings, it said on Sunday, showed the lander “has ceased to exist following a collision with the Moon’s surface.” “During the operation, an un-

planned situation arose on board the automatic station, which did not allow the maneuver to be carried out under the given parameters.” Specialists are investigating the incident to determine the cause, Roscosmos said. The probe had been due to touch down near the lunar South Pole on Monday. Among its tasks was a search for water, with Russia aiming to establish a base on the Moon by 2040. The rocket took off last week from the Vostochny Cosmodrome, in Russia’s Far East region. Roscosmos had originally cooperated with the European Space Agency (ESA) on the lunar program. However, after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in Feb-

ruary 2022, ESA ended its work with Moscow. Russia’s access to Western technology has been curtailed since sanctions were imposed over the invasion. The Luna-25 had been set to carry a small moon rover, but that plan had to be abandoned to reduce weight and improve reliability. Moscow Russia has considered various moon missions in the past decades, but all had to be delayed or shelved. The failure of Russia’s 2011 Phobos-Grunt mission to one of the moons of Mars highlighted the challenges that have faced Russia’s space programme. The spacecraft did not even fully exit the earth’s orbit and fell into the Pacific Ocean more than two months after launch. -aw

Chandrayaan-3 set to land on the moon on August 23

NEW DELHI: Chandrayaan-3 is set to land on the moon on August 23, 2023 (Wednesday), around 18:04 IST, the ISRO announced officially on Sunday. The spacecraft is now just three-day away from its final destination, the moon’s south pole. ISRO is bidding to make a successful soft landing on the moon, which will make India the fourth country in the world to achieve the feat after the United States, Russia and China. Live actions will available on ISRO website, its YouTube channel, Facebook, and public broadcaster DD National TV from 17:27 IST on Aug 23, 2023.



India’s Chandrayaan-3 mission marked giant leap in its lunar quest as the ‘Vikram’ lander module of the spacecraft successfully separated from the propulsion module on Thursday, and subsequently underwent crucial deboosting manoeuvres and descended to a slightly lower orbit. The Chandrayaan-3 mission’s lander is named after Vikram Sarabhai (1919–1971), who is widely regarded as the father of the Indian space programme. A GSLV Mark 3 (LVM 3) heavy-lift launch vehicle was used for the launch of the spacecraft that was placed in the lunar orbit on August 5 and since then it has been through a series of orbital manoeuvres been lowered closer to the moon’s surface. It has been a month and six days since the Indian Space Research Organisation launched the Chandrayaan-3 mission on July 14. The spacecraft was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh’s Sriharikota. Chandrayaan-3 components include various electronic and mechanical subsystems intended to ensure a safe and soft landing such as navigation sensors, propulsion systems, guidance and control, among others. The stated objectives of Chandrayaan-3, India’s third lunar

mission, are safe and soft landing, rover roving on the moon’s surface, and in-situ scientific experiments. The approved cost of Chandrayaan-3 is Rs 250 crores (excluding launch vehicle cost). Chandrayaan-3’s development phase commenced in January 2020 with the launch planned sometime in 2021. However, the Covid-19 pandemic brought an unforeseen delay to the mission’s progress. Chandrayaan-3 is the ISRO’s follow-up attempt after the Chandrayaan-2 mission faced challenges during its soft landing on the lunar surface in 2019 and was eventually deemed to have failed its core mission objectives. The key scientific outcomes from Chandrayaan-2 include the first-ever global map for lunar sodium, enhancing knowledge on crater size distribution, unambiguous detection of lunar surface water ice with IIRS instrument and more. During the Chandrayaan-1 mission, the satellite made more than 3,400 orbits around the moon and the mission was concluded when the communication with

the spacecraft was lost on August 29, 2009, according to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), S Somanath last week expressed confidence in the progress of the Chandrayaan 3, providing reassurance that all systems were operating as planned. Chairman S Somanath said, “Everything is going fine now. There will be a series of manoeuvres until it lands (on the Moon) on 23rd August. The satellite is healthy.” Moon serves as a repository of the Earth’s past and a successful lunar mission by India will help enhance life on Earth while also enabling it to explore the rest of the solar system and beyond. Historically, spacecraft missions to the Moon have primarily targeted the equatorial region due to its favourable terrain and operating conditions. However, the lunar south pole presents a vastly different and more challenging terrain compared to the equatorial region. -ANI

PARDONS SEVERAL PRISONERS

Egyptian President pardons jailed activist Ahmed Douma

CAIRO: Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has pardoned a number of prisoners, including prominent Egyptian activist Ahmed Douma, Al Jazeera reported quoting state television and lawyers. Douma, 37, a key figure in the pro-democracy uprising that overthrew Hosni Mubarak in 2011, was sentenced to 15 years in jail in 2019 for rioting and attacking security forces, a reduction from a prior 25-year term handed out in 2015. According to lawyer Tarek Elawady, a member of the presidential pardons committee, “President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi... has used his constitutional powers” to pardon several prisoners, including Douma. Meanwhile, prominent human rights lawyer Khaled Ali posted on social media that he was waiting outside Badr jail on Cairo’s outskirts awaiting the activist’s release, as reported by Al Jazeera. At the time, the judge stated



Douma was part of a crowd that broke into parliament and damaged parts of it, describing them as doing the work of “devil”. Douma, like several other prominent Egyptian activists, was imprisoned under Mubarak, the succeeding ruling military council, former President Mohamed Morsi, and el-Sisi. The activist published a collection of poems titled “Curly” in 2021, which he wrote while being

detained in solitary confinement. The collection was displayed at the Cairo International Book Fair that year, but it was promptly removed for “security reasons.” Douma, in one of his poems from prison wrote, “There’s no time for depression, no opportunity for sadness, the flood is raging.” He was arrested as part of a crackdown following the military ouster of Mubarak’s successor, Mohamed Morsi, in 2013, according to Al Jazeera. Authorities also released Egyptian rights researcher Patrick Zaki and lawyer Mohamed el-Baqer last month after el-Sisi pardoned them. Since late 2021, Egypt has taken some steps to improve human rights, including amnesties for some prominent convicts. According to Egyptian rights monitors, authorities have released 1,000 political prisoners with much fanfare since April last year, but have imprisoned almost 3,000 more. -ANI

REMARKABLE JOURNEY

India launches drive to promote country as wedding destination

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Tourism on Saturday launched a campaign to showcase India as a premier wedding destination globally, by enticing couples from around the world to embark on a remarkable journey to celebrate their special day in India. This campaign also envisions exploring avenues of great potential, for scaling tourism in India to new heights, the ministry said in the statement. “Building upon the vision of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Developing Tourism in Mission Mode,” the Ministry of Tourism unveiled an ambitious campaign aimed at showing India as a premier wedding destination on the global stage. This campaign seeks to explore avenues of great potential, for scaling tourism in India to new heights,” the Ministry of Tourism said on Saturday. The campaign seeks to expand India’s wedding industry, by enticing couples from around the world to embark on a remarkable journey to celebrate their special day in India. Launching the campaign, Union Minister for Tourism G Kis-



han Reddy said, “Today marks the beginning of a remarkable journey. A mission to position India as the epitome of wedding destinations worldwide.” Reddy said the “360-degree approach” of the campaign will “ensure that every moment, from the first ‘hello’ to the final ‘I do’ is a testament to India’s warm embrace and rich heritage”. The campaign begins with profiling about 25 key destinations across the country, exploring how India fits into their wedding aspirations in more than one way. From breathtaking landscapes to sacred traditions, from tantalising culinary delights to cutting-edge infrastructure, this campaign captures the essence of

India’s grandeur, inviting couples to say “I do” against a backdrop that transcends imagination. It celebrates the fusion of India’s ancient heritage with modern elegance, weaving a narrative that entices the world to embark on an unforgettable journey of love and celebration. A key highlight of the campaign lies in its collaborative approach, developed in close consultation with industry experts, associations, and seasoned wedding planners. Their invaluable feedback has shaped a comprehensive narrative that unravels India’s allure as a wedding tourism destination, addressing diverse aspirations and showcasing the myriad facets of this incredible nation. -ANI

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SPORTS

Sensational Spain are champions of the world

La Roja edge past England in the final for a historic title as they become the second nation to win both the men’s and women’s World Cup

SYDNEY: History was made on Sunday. Against the odds and amid a backdrop of turmoil, Spain reached the pinnacle in Sydney on Sunday, edging past England 1-0 to win the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup for the first time.

Olga Carmona’s wonderful 29th-minute strike proved to be the winner. Spain could even afford to miss a second-half penalty as La Roja became only the second country, after Germany, to win both the men’s and women’s World Cups.

As Spain’s players celebrated by forming a joyful heap of red on the Stadium Australia pitch, many of England’s players were in tears as hopes of becoming the country’s first senior football world champion since 1966 were ended by a brilliant Spain, full of flair and creativity.

For possession and attempts on goal, there was only one team in it – Spain outplayed England. But there is some consolation for England which, like Spain, was competing in a Women’s World Cup final for the first time, because the team has progressed further than ever before in this competition.

But it is Spain’s future which shines the brightest, especially if off-pitch issues can be resolved, because now, incredibly, the Iberian nation is a World Cup winner at Under-17, Under-20 and senior level.

Spain’s progress to the final, given the tumultuous year the na-



tional team had experienced, was remarkable. La Roja triumphed against the reigning European champion and pre-match favourite in spite of the disputes and divisions which has clouded the national team throughout the tournament makes this achievement extraordinary.

England’s players fell to their knees in tears at the final whistle



as Spain celebrated inside their area after dealing with a final corner kick in the 14th minute of nerve-wracking stoppage time.

England manager Sarina Wiegman, who has now lost two successive World Cup finals, introduced Lauren James and Chloe Kelly at half-time but Spain maintained control despite the Lionesses’ best efforts.

England, who played in front of a sold-out Wembley crowd last summer to win the Euros final, had hoped to rely on experience and they started brightly, testing Spain’s defence with balls over the top and in behind.

Manchester City forward Lauren Hemp was direct and aggressive, and had England’s best chance but her curling effort from 15 yards hit the crossbar.

But Spain, packed with Barcelona stars who won their second Women’s Champions League title this season, imposed their quality and worked out how to deal with England’s high press.

They grew into the game, exposing the spaces left by England’s attacking full-backs and took their chance when Bronze cut inside from the right and lost the ball in the centre circle. Spain intelligently switched play to their left and Carmona ran on to a simple pass from Mariona Caldentey and stroked the ball low past Earps.

Spain had several chances to extend their lead - Earps blocked

shots from Ona Batlle, Caldentey and Alba Redondo in each half - while Salma Paralluelo’s first-time strike brushed the post on the stroke of half time.

It was a deserved victory for Spain but it will feel like a missed opportunity for the Lionesses, who have found a way to win so often under Wiegman but could not find the answers in the biggest game in their history.

Prior to this year’s competition, Spain had only ever won one Women’s World Cup match.

They had suffered defeat at the hands of England in the Euro 2022 quarter-finals but unlike that evening in Brighton when the Lionesses came from behind to win 2-1, Spain stuck to their task and saw out victory.

The streets of Sydney, which had been draped in green and gold for most of the competition, were transformed on Sunday to represent Spain and England’s colours.

England fans came dressed in costumes, banging drums and chanting on the city’s trains en route to the stadium and though they dominated numbers in the crowd, it was Spain’s supporters celebrating at full time.

Bronze, 31, was in tears lying on the pitch at full-time and had to watch on as many of her Barcelona team-mates danced for the cameras while they prepared the stage for the trophy celebration.

She has won almost everything in the game but still cannot get her hands on the most desired trophy of them all.

Meanwhile, Spain’s achievement is a remarkable one given manager Jorge Vilda survived a player revolt less than 12 months ago and because of it they were missing Sandra Panos, Mapi Leon, Patri Guijarro and Claudia Pina, who all helped Barcelona win the Champions League in June.

Their victory could transform women’s football in Spain, which has been thrust into the limelight in recent years following Barcelona’s domestic success. - Agencies

2024 IPL

Malinga named Mumbai’s fast bowling coach

MUMBAI: Lasith Malinga will return to Mumbai Indians for IPL 2024, this time as their fast bowling coach. He will replace Shane Bond, who had held that position for the past nine seasons.

After retiring in 2021, Malinga had joined Rajasthan Royals in 2022 as their fast-bowling coach, a position he served for two seasons. This will be Malinga’s second stint in Mumbai’s support staff, having served as their mentor in 2018. A year later, Malinga returned to the field to share the bowling duties with Jasprit Bumrah, with the pair playing a key role in Mumbai winning their fourth IPL title.

Overall, Malinga won five titles with Mumbai: four IPLs (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019) and the Champions League T20 in 2011. Malinga played 139 matches for Mumbai in all, taking 195 wickets at an economy rate of 7.12. Out of those, 170 wickets came in the IPL, the joint-sixth-most in the league.

Meanwhile, MSK Prasad,



the former India wicketkeeper and chief selector, has taken up the role of strategic consultant with the Super Giants franchise, which owns Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL and Durban’s Super Giants in the SA20.

Prasad played six Tests and 17 ODIs for India from 1998 to 2000. In 2016, he replaced Sandeep Patil as the chairman of India men’s selection committee and served in that role till 2020. Apart from that, he was also the director of cricket operations at the Andhra Cricket Association. - ANI

THREE-MATCH T20I SERIES

UAE upset New Zealand to level series

DUBAI: UAE recorded a historic win over New Zealand in the second T20I of the three-match series on Saturday to draw level.

The hosts stunned the Kiwis by seven wickets for their first T20I win in Dubai in their eighth attempt and their first triumph in any format over New Zealand.

For New Zealand, it was their first loss in 39 matches against non-Test-playing nations across formats.

The win was set up by 17-year-old left-arm spinner Aayan Afzal Khan, who returned career-best figures of 3 for 20 to help UAE restrict New Zealand to 142 for 8. That the visitors reached there was down to Mark Chapman’s 46-ball 63 as only two other New Zealand batters got into the double-digits.

Muhammad Waseem then made sure UAE did not repeat the mistakes from the first T20I as he got the side off to a flyer, smoking a 29-ball 55. Asif Khan and Basil Hameed then kept their heads to take UAE over the line with 26 balls to spare.

Waseem got Aayan into the game in the second over itself. He was pumped for a six by Seifert but returned strongly to claim back-to-back wickets. He first cleaned up Mitchell Santner. The very next



ball, he sent back Dane Cleaver with a straighter one that kept low.

Aayan then brought his guile into play to account for Chad Bowes for a run-a-ball 21. That left New Zealand stumbling at 38 for 4 in the seventh over.

Chapman watchful at the start, dealing in singles before targeting newbie Mohammed Faraazuddin, smacking him for two fours and a six across two overs. With momentum on his side, Chapman opened his shoulders a bit more. He pumped Zahoor Khan for back-to-back sixes to bring up his sixth T20I fifty before eventually falling in the final over.

New Zealand started their defence of 142 in a stunning fashion

with James Neesham pulling off a screamer flinging himself to his right at first slip to remove Aryansh Sharma for a third-ball duck. The wicket also took Tim Southee level with Shakib Al Hasan for the most wickets in T20Is. However, Waseem, who fell for a first-ball duck in the opening T20I, ensured his team was ahead of the asking rate at most times.

He got a reprieve on 5 and then again on 41, and made New Zealand pay. He first added 40 off 32 balls with Vriitya Aravind and then 56 off 31 with Asif. He struck four fours and three sixes during his innings. By the time he fell, UAE needed just 47 from nine overs.

There were no panic stations when Waseem fell. Hameed came in and made sure to rotate the strike at every chance, while Asif also curbed his aggressive style of play to take UAE closer. Only when the required runs were in the 20s did Asif go about his shot-making.

He first clubbed Neesham for two fours in the 15th over before hacking Southee over long-on for a six. Fittingly, it was Asif who finished the game with two successive fours, leading to celebrations in the UAE camp.

Brief scores: UAE 144/3 (Waseem 55, Asif 48*; Santner 1-26) beat New Zealand 142/8 (Chapman 63, Aayan 3-20, Jawadullah 2-16) by seven wickets

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS



Spain take second race walking gold in Budapest

BUDAPEST: Spain took the second race walking gold at the World Athletics Championships as Maria Perez crossed the finish line first in the women’s 20km race here on Sunday.

As her compatriot Alvaro Martin achieved in the men’s 20km event on Saturday, Perez broke from the leading group with 5km to go, winning her first world title in one hour 26 minutes and 51 seconds.

“I cannot even put into words how important it was for me to win this first global gold, especially at the 20km. Victory at this distance was my main goal for Budapest,” said Perez, who was fourth in the event at the Tokyo Olympic Games, but was disqualified at last year’s World Championships.

Jemima Montag from Australia finished second in 1:27:16 as Italian Antonella Palmisano

took the bronze medal 10 seconds later.

Chinese Yang Jiayu, who holds the world record of 1:23:49, seized a good position in the leading group after the start, but faded bit by bit in the final laps.

The 2017 world champion was placed 12th in 1:31:54, more than five seconds away from her season best.

27-year-old Perez revealed that she was too nervous to sleep

last night and had to ask for help from the doctor. She needed some medicine to finally take a rest, but she held her nerves on Sunday morning to put everything under control.

“I put all my power into this race. I knew I had a very good gap before the last kilometer, but the last lap was extremely fast. I had to give my maximum,” she said.

But Perez indicated that she

might withdraw from the 35km race as she suffered a hamstring cramp in the last minutes this morning.

“I need some consultation and medical examination from our doctors to see whether it will be possible to compete at 35km. Maybe it will be better to start recovering as next year is the Olympic one and I would like to stay healthy to prepare for Paris at the highest level,” said Perez. - xinhua

LNG SUPPLIES

Prospective strike action by workers at Australia's second-largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant is being closely watched by European policymakers with concern that a second winter of soaring energy prices could cause inflation to rebound.

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MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,772.77 points, down by 0.26 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.22 per cent at 477.64 points. Al Jazeera Services, up 5.22 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non-convertible Bonds 2020, down 2.86 per cent, was the top loser.

NKK Investments and UrbanKisaan unite to pioneer sustainable farming

By harnessing the power of hydroponics and vertical farming, the joint venture seeks to empower local farmers to cultivate higher yield varieties with significantly fewer resources, consequently enabling them to invest wisely in the future of farming

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Nailesh Kanaksi Khimji (NKK) Investments, a visionary company in the AgriTech, Green Hydrogen and Sustainability sectors, has announced a strategic partnership with UrbanKisaan, an acclaimed agri-tech startup from the United States, with its research centre in India.



This alliance is set to transform hydroponic farming practices in Oman, UAE and Saudi Arabia. Under the umbrella of this joint venture, NKK Investments aims to introduce UrbanKisaan's advanced hydroponic and vertical farming technology to Oman. The focal point of this venture is to popularise UrbanKisaan's innovative farming techniques, rendering them more affordable and accessible to Omani farmers. By harnessing the power of hydroponics and vertical farming, the joint venture seeks to empower local agriculturalists to cultivate higher yields with significantly fewer resources, consequently enabling them to invest wisely in the future of farming. A key facet of this collaboration lies in the intent to extend UrbanK-

isaan's revolutionary technology across Oman's borders, to benefit farmers in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. This technology, proven to be environmentally conscious and resource-efficient, allows crops to flourish with minimal water and land utilization in comparison to conventional methods. The result is not only a reduction in the carbon footprint but also the production of highly nutritious crops that contribute to a healthier populace. Shedding light on the joint venture, Chirayu Khimji, Director of NKK Investments and KR Group stated, "We would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water, and allied authorities, for providing a robust framework to support this Joint-Venture. Our partnership with UrbanKisaan

aligns perfectly with our commitment to fostering sustainable advancements in agriculture within the Sultanate. Most importantly, we will be able to serve our customers with technology to allow them to grow more with less." "By combining NKK Investments' strategic insights with UrbanKisaan's pioneering technology, we are poised to reshape the future of farming in Oman and help our nation achieve food security targets in line with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's Oman Vision 2040. We are confident that the proliferation of our technology within the Sultanate will allow the people of Oman to enjoy pesticide and GMO-free fruits and vegetables at the lowest pricing to date," he continued. Sharing his perspective, Vihari



Kanukollu, CEO and Co-founder of UrbanKisaan mentioned, "Our collaboration with NKK Investments marks a significant step forward in realizing our mission to make advanced farming technology accessible to a global audience. Together, we are creating a more sustainable and productive agricultural landscape." **Empowering Omani farmers** The core mission of this partnership is to equip Omani farmers with state-of-the-art hydroponic and vertical farming technology to allow them to grow more produce with far fewer costs. By offering access to cutting-edge solutions, the collaboration aims to amplify agricultural output while keeping investments within reach.

Sustainability leading the way By revolutionising traditional farming practices, NKK Investments and UrbanKisaan are steering Oman towards a greener and more self-sustaining agricultural future, fostering positive impacts on both the environment and the local community. **Reducing carbon footprint** The infusion of hyper-local urban farms into Oman's agricultural landscape is anticipated to create a substantial reduction in the carbon footprint associated with the traditional supply chain. UrbanKisaan's innovative farming methodologies not only conserve water but also promise higher yields, setting a benchmark for environmental stewardship in the region.

STANDARD SPECIFICATION

Ministry issues new clarification on liquid synthetic detergents for fabrics and clothes

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The requirements and controls related to the Omani-Gulf Standard Specification No. (OS GSO 2059/2022) for the standard specification of liquid synthetic detergents for fabrics and clothes has been clarified by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP). The specification clarifies the requirements that must be met in liquid synthetic detergents that contain effective synthetic materials for the purpose of using them in washing fabrics and clothes by washing machines and hand wash.

Technical requirements The standard specification aims at setting characteristics, technical requirements and explanatory data for liquid synthetic detergent products for fabrics and clothes, to ensure for manufacturers, traders and consumers, the quality and safety of these products before being traded in the markets. Suad bint Fahd Al-Houtiyah, a specification specialist at the Directorate General of Standards and Metrology at the MoCIIP, said: "(Detergent) means any substance or mixture that contains soap and/or a substance with surface activity used in washing and cleaning operations, as detergents can be in any form (liquid), gel, powder, paste, cut, mould, moulded pieces,



shapes, etc. while this product is being marketed for use in household consumer purposes." She added: "As for liquid detergents for fabrics and clothes, they are a detergent in the form of a liquid, gel, or capsules for washing clothes for use by non-specialists and public laundries for cleaning clothes. It can be high or low foam, depending on the type of washing machine designated for use or for washing by hand." Elaborating about the technical requirements of this standard specification she further said, "The detergent should be homogeneous and stable under normal conditions, i.e. its solid or liquid components do not separate, it does not have sedimentation or turbidity, and it must have an acceptable odour, suitable for use in soft and hard water, and to be easy to be removed with water, with the possibility of adding allowed brighteners and colour enhancement." Suad Al-Houtiyeh pointed out that there is a difference in the pH limits between washing machines and manual washing, as the pH

limits in manual washing range between 6-9, while pH limit in washing machines is ranges from 6-11, in addition to other technical requirements in terms of the total number of active ingredients. The totality, pH and wires are calculated in the form of silicon dioxide and phosphate. She stressed that the product must be packed in suitable containers that do not affect the product and must be clean and well-sealed in order to protect the product from damage during transportation and storage. **Explanatory data** She further added: "The product must include many explanatory data, while each package must bear a non removable clear written label in Arabic or in both Arabic and English, including the name of the product, its type, the name of the factory-supplier-or its trademark, size or Net weight, production date and/or batch number, expiry date, country of origin, ingredients, and instructions for use and storage (if any).

looned to some \$117 billion, or 3.1 trillion lira, around a quarter of total bank deposits. This has been stoked by a roughly 68% fall in the lira in the last two years. To cover KKM depreciation costs, the central bank paid an estimated 300 billion lira (\$11 billion) in June and July, when the lira plunged again. This month's costs were estimated at 350 billion lira. The lira has been stable over the last month and closed last week at 27.02 to the dollar, an all-time low. -BNA

ORTHODOX POLICIES

Türkiye begins rolling back costly FX-protected deposits

ANKARA: Türkiye's central bank began rolling back on Sunday a growing and costly scheme that protects lira deposits from FX depreciation, marking another move toward more orthodox policies following a shift toward interest rate hikes. The central bank said in the early hours on Sunday that it lifted targets applied to banks for certain levels of conversions of foreign-exchange deposits to the lira-protection scheme, known as KKM, Reuters reported. In a reversal, the central bank now wants lenders to set a new goal of transitioning KKM accounts into regular lira accounts, in part by dissuading companies and individuals from renewing the KKM accounts. According to a separate decree in the Official Gazette, the central bank also raised lenders' reserve requirement ratios for FX deposits, further nudging customers into regular lira accounts. President Tayyip Erdogan's government introduced the KKM scheme in late 2021 to arrest a historic plunge in the currency. KKM accounts have since bal-



looned to some \$117 billion, or 3.1 trillion lira, around a quarter of total bank deposits. This has been stoked by a roughly 68% fall in the lira in the last two years. To cover KKM depreciation costs, the central bank paid an estimated 300 billion lira (\$11 billion) in June and July, when the lira plunged again. This month's costs were estimated at 350 billion lira. The lira has been stable over the last month and closed last week at 27.02 to the dollar, an all-time low. -BNA

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE

Commercial records registered in South Al Sharqiyah reach 19,470

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of commercial registries that were completed reached 19,470 while the number of industrial registries completed touched 1,153 during the first half of this year in the Governorate of A'Sharqiyah South. Moreover, the number of foreign projects registered with the department in the governorate reached 124 with an investment value exceeding OMR108 million till the end of the first half of this year 2023, the Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in the Governorate of A'Sharqiyah South said. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), said on Sunday that the Governorate of Al Sharqiyah South is ready to host many investment and economic projects, whether local or foreign investments. The Department of Commerce,



Industry and Investment Promotion in the governorate of Al Sharqiyah South and the other concerned authorities are exerting their utmost efforts to provide the required facilities for investors,

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion said that Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah is ready to host many investment and economic projects, whether local or foreign investments

the ministry said in a statement. Khalid bin Hamad Al-Saadi, Director of the Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in the Governorate of Al Sharqiyah South, said: "The governorate enjoys a unique geographical nature and important historical and archaeological sites, where the coasts of the governorate extend through four out of five wilayats, while the governorate of Al Sharqiyah South is one of the

most important centers for providing and exporting fish wealth." **Attractive destination** He further said, "Al-Sharqiyah South is considered an attractive destination for the economy, as it embraces various investment projects. Some of these include among others the Blue Project, Al-Diyar project in Niabat Ras Al-Hadd at Wilayat of Sur. Many food security and agricultural projects at

Wilayat of Al-Kamil and Al-Wafi, two shrimp farming projects at Wilayats of Jalan Bani Bu Ali and Jalan Bani Bu Hassan and the Sur Sea Port project." "All these projects are vital economic tributaries and one of the most important development projects for the governorate, as this project contributes to increasing the flow of foreign investment as well as providing promising job opportunities," he added. Khalid Al-Saadi further said: "Through the Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in the Governorate of Al-Sharqiyah South, in cooperation with the Governor's Office and government and private entities in the governorate, we are setting a plan for developing the Governorate of Al-Sharqiyah South by participating in facilitating procedures for holding annual events and activities in the governorate, like the Maritime History Forum

of the Governorate, the Summer Forum, and a number of economically stimulating exhibitions and activities in the governorate." **Campaign** He further pointed out, "The Made in Oman campaign contributes to promote the Omani product and highlighting it in the domestic markets, acquainting the consumer and resident with Omani industries, as well as encouraging local producers, manufacturers and motivating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to enrich the commercial markets in Various governorates with more products in order to achieve diversity and enhancing competition and sustainability." He further stressed that the campaign comes within the framework of the MoCIIP's endeavour towards integrative roles between the public and private sectors to enhance the business environment.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Jazeera Services, up 5.22 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non-convertible Bonds 2020, down 2.86 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,772.77 points, down by 0.26 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.22 per cent at 477.64 points. Al Jazeera Services, up 5.22 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non-convertible Bonds 2020, down 2.86 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 397 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR6.88 million, with more than 12.06 million shares changing hands. Out of 42 traded securities, 11 advanced, 10 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR72,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR48,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR23,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,770.68 points, down 0.38 per cent. Prices of Muscat Finance, United Finance, Al Sharqia Investment were up by 1.85 per cent, 1.67 per cent, 1.39 per cent respectively.

Prices of Sohar International Bank, Takaful Oman, Global Financial Investments, Al Anwar Investment, Bank Nizwa were up by 2.78 per cent, 1.82 per cent, 1.70 per cent, 1.22 per cent, 1.02 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,992.95 points, down 0.31 per cent. Prices of Raysut Cement were up by 3.05 per cent respectively. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Al Anwar Ceramics, Galfar Engineering were up by 2.40 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 0.61 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.53 per cent before closing at 1,672.62 points. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Phoenix Power, Oman Telecom, Renaissance Services, Abraj Energy were up by 5.22 per cent, 1.64 per cent, 1.08 per cent, 0.49 per cent, 0.34 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %	
MSX 30 INDEX	4,826.75	4,766.88	4,772.77	4,785.26	-12.49	-0.26	
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,866.96	7,770.68	7,770.68	7,900.70	-30.02	-0.38	
Industry Index	6,013.39	5,992.95	5,992.95	6,011.48	-18.52	-0.31	
Services Index	1,672.62	1,663.85	1,672.62	1,663.85	8.77	0.53	
MSX Shariah Index	478.81	474.44	477.64	476.57	1.07	0.22	
MSX TR INDEX	6,351.90	6,273.12	6,280.87	6,297.31	-16.44	-0.26	
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,584.30	8,479.24	8,479.24	8,512.00	-32.76	-0.38	
SERVICES TR IDX	1,846.37	1,836.68	1,846.37	1,836.68	9.68	0.53	
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,423.80	6,401.97	6,401.97	6,421.75	-19.79	-0.31	
Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
12,069,040	6,882,622	397	24,140,824,031	11	10	21	42

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 20

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																	
	OM0000002236	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	580	137	3	0.230	0.242	0.230	0.242	0.230	0.012	5.217	0.242	0.225	0.239	0.100	14,811,434
	OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	211,500	12,902	6	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.001	1.667	0.061	0.060	0.062	0.100	21,723,765
	OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	9,600	701	1	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.001	1.389	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.100	6,570,000
	OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	632,975	646,134	57	1.022	1.030	1.016	1.030	1.019	0.011	1.079	1.030	1.024	1.030	0.100	772,500,000
	OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	137,688	55,977	15	0.412	0.412	0.402	0.407	0.405	0.002	0.484	0.407	0.407	0.407	0.100	96,218,870
	OM0000003968	OOREDOO	854,421	324,455	38	0.379	0.381	0.379	0.380	0.379	0.001	0.264	0.380	0.379	0.380	0.100	247,358,807
	OM000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	13,065	3,558	7	0.270	0.275	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.270	0.274	0.100	27,000,000
	OM000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,053	311	1	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.000	0.295	0.295	0.298	0.100	484,532,014
	OM000001533	OMINVEST	300,000	115,510	13	0.385	0.386	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.000	0.000	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.100	257,320,689
	OM000001749	OMAN CEMENT	11,990	4,197	1	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.000	0.000	0.350	0.350	0.375	0.100	115,805,449
	OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	293,476	82,579	23	0.281	0.282	0.281	0.281	0.281	0.000	0.000	0.281	0.272	0.282	0.100	2,109,297,574
	OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	69,082	5,022	7	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.070	0.074	0.100	14,373,763
	OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	1,500	159	2	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.107	-0.001	-0.935	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.100	15,900,000
	OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	375,000	21,820	12	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.058	0.059	-0.001	-1.695	0.058	0.058	0.059	0.100	11,600,000
	OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	65,688	15,096	10	0.230	0.230	0.225	0.225	0.230	-0.005	-2.174	0.225	0.225	0.228	0.100	49,500,000
	OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	905,128	95,239	37	0.115	0.115	0.105	0.105	0.108	-0.003	-2.778	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.100	574,128,293
	Total	16	3,882,746	1,383,797	233												
Parallel Market																	
	OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	60,770	9,797	14	0.161	0.169	0.160	0.169	0.164	0.005	3.049	0.169	0.161	0.169	0.100	33,800,000
	OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	8,000	440	1	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.054	0.001	1.852	0.055	0.000	0.055	0.100	16,893,048
	OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	15,612	943	5	0.060	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.061	0.001	1.639	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.100	90,681,291
	OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	229,288	67,406	39	0.293	0.296	0.293	0.294	0.293	0.001	0.341	0.294	0.293	0.294	0.100	226,438,800
	OM000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	234	1,170	1	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	0.000	0.000	5.000	4.920	5.100	1.000	15,000,000
	OM000001095	DHOAFAR INSURANCE	27,000	5,400	2	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.190	0.200	0.100	21,832,973
	OM000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	708	1,204	3	1.705	1.705	1.700	1.700	1.700	0.000	0.000	1.700	0.000	1.700	0.100	85,000,000
	OM000001982	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	1,480	59	2	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.038	0.040	0.100	3,400,000
	OM000002804	ASAFPA FOODS	170,000	5,219	2	0.307	0.307	0.307	0.307	0.307	0.000	0.000	0.307	0.305	0.315	0.100	36,840,000
	OM0000004735	SEMBORIP SALALAH	180	16	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.000	0.102	0.100	95,457,195
	OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	168,500	4,550	7	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.000	0.000	0.027	0.027	0.029	0.100	18,231,961
	OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	64,977	1,754	4	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.000	0.000	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.100	19,288,971
	OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	52,262	7,466	6	0.142	0.145	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.142	0.145	0.100	237,056,220
	OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	103	1	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.094	0.100	0.100	20,600,000
	OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	2,497	332	2	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.000	0.000	0.133	0.000	0.133	0.100	10,044,426
	OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	5,000	590	1	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.118	0.122	0.100	50,122,885
	OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	179,286	29,224	19	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.164	-0.001	-0.610	0.163	0.163	0.180	0.100	33,088,791
	OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	63,432	6,149	6	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.098	-0.001	-1.020	0.097	0.097	0.098	0.100	216,984,444
	OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	53,950	4,374	8	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.100	16,686,000
	OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	35,000	2,894	6	0.083	0.084	0.080	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.818	0.084	0.080	0.085	0.100	13,500,000
	OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	73,441	8,960	15	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.125	-0.003	-2.400	0.122	0.122	0.125	0.100	9,931,136
	Total	21	1,079,597	158,051	146												

AMBITIOUS STRATEGY

Delivering carbon neutrality for ASEAN could unlock up to \$5.3 trillion economic opportunity

SEMARANG, INDONESIA:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is setting course for a carbon-neutral future, with ASEAN Economic Ministers endorsing a visionary ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality. The Strategy is designed to complement the ASEAN Member States' national initiatives in meeting their respective Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

This ambitious strategy, commissioned by the ASEAN Member States and with the support from the Australia for ASEAN Futures (AUS4ASEAN) initiative, frames the need for ASEAN to pursue carbon neutrality with utmost urgency, and in doing so unlock the huge value potential of a green transformation of the region.

ASEAN is acutely exposed to climate change, with five of the world's 20 most at-risk countries located in the region. Unchecked

The visionary ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality frames the need for ASEAN to pursue carbon neutrality with utmost urgency, and in doing so unlock the huge value potential of a green transformation of the region

climate change could drive down regional GDP by 11 per cent by 2100, and lead to displacement of 87 million people in high-risk flood areas in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

Addressing ASEAN's carbon burden will not only help mitigate these critical risks, but offer a path to unlock a significant socio-economic opportunity. According to analysis conducted by Boston Consulting Group, driving towards a carbon-neutral future could un-

leash between \$3.0 and \$5.3 trillion GDP value-add by 2050, attracting a substantial \$37 to \$67 trillion green investment and unlocking between 49 and 66 million additional jobs for the ASEAN region.

Dr Kao Kim Houn, Secretary General of ASEAN, emphasised that "ASEAN has reached an inflection point, where decarbonisation is paramount for the region's continued economic growth. The ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality will provide the springboard to

propel forward our green transition while unlocking huge economic potential for ASEAN's citizens."

The economic benefits of carbon neutrality would be accrued across all ASEAN member states. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam are projected to enjoy the greatest uplift, ranging from 9 per cent to 12 per cent of GDP by the end of the century. Middle-income countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand would see an increase of 4 per cent to 7 per cent. High-income countries of Singapore and Brunei would enjoy a more modest uplift of 1 per cent to 2 per cent.

ASEAN needs to bridge a 2.6 gigatonne (GT) CO2 gap to achieve its carbon-neutrality goals, but has encouraging foundations to act. The region has one of the lowest CO2 emissions per capita globally, at just 3.9 tonnes of CO2 (tCO2) per capita, below the global average of 4.8 tCO2. — **WAM**

CONCERN

Why Europe is spooked by strike at Australia's second-largest LNG plant

BRUSSELS: Prospective strike action by workers at Australia's second-largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant is being closely watched by European policymakers, concerned that a second winter of soaring energy prices could cause inflation to rebound.

European natural gas futures spiked 40% last week in reaction to the threatened walkout, at one stage reaching €43 (\$46.75) per megawatt-hour (MWh). On Friday, the futures price remained elevated at €36.90.

Workers at Western Australia's Gorgon plant and the Wheatstone downstream facility, both majority-owned by Chevron Corp, have begun voting on whether to take industrial action in their dispute over pay and job security.

"These facilities represent 10% of global LNG exports," Ana Maria Jaller-Makarewicz, Europe energy analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), told DW. She added that until the disputes are resolved, European gas prices could remain volatile.

European economies are still recovering from last year's energy crisis, sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As part of Western sanctions on Moscow, European Union nations raced to reduce their dependence on Russian energy and secure alternative supplies. The decision sent natu-



ral gas prices skyrocketing.

While European gas prices remain substantially lower than last summer when gas futures hit record highs of €340 per MWh, they remain well above levels seen in previous years. Gas prices could reach €50 by winter, which would lead to much higher bills for businesses and consumers.

EU nations are keen to avoid a freezing winter like the one narrowly avoided last year after Russia crippled gas supplies to Europe and the final authorization for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline linking Russia and Germany was shelved.

"We were lucky with a mild winter last year, but this time, the market is pricing in a possible worst-case scenario," Thierry Bros, an energy expert and professor at Paris' Sciences Po university, told DW.

EU gas storage nearly full

Europe is, however, better prepared this time. On Thursday, the EU's gas storage facilities reached 90.12% capacity, the equivalent of more than 93 billion cubic meters (BCM) of natural gas. The target was achieved three months ahead of schedule. However, this amount only covers up to a third of the bloc's winter gas demand.

"Even with storage almost full, it's the minimum amount required for a safe winter," Bros warned. "Europe will still need additional gas flows, and we will definitely need more LNG than last year."

As gas prices soared last year, European nations had to outbid South Asian countries for LNG supplies from the United States, Norway and Qatar. The likes of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh,

in turn, were forced to rely more heavily on coal and faced more power blackouts due to shortages.

Asia's thirst for Australian LNG

While Europe gets very little of its LNG from Australia, large Asian powers Japan, China and South Korea heavily rely on imports from down under.

"If Australian LNG supplies are missing this year, you can bet that China will fight against Europe for US or Qatari gas supplies, especially as China has very few gas storage facilities," said Bros.

"When there is a shortage, there will always be a mad scramble for the last available supplies, and that's where we could see insane prices."

Mild winter, renewables could save Europe

Europe's increasing switch to renewable energy could be a saving grace this winter, Jaller-Makarewicz told DW, noting how the EU's gas consumption declined 12% year-on-year in July while LNG imports were also lower.

"If this trend continues, the impact of any strikes could be much lower," she said, adding that Europe could reduce its susceptibility to high gas prices by further reducing consumption. A second mild winter across much of Europe could be another positive. — **DW**

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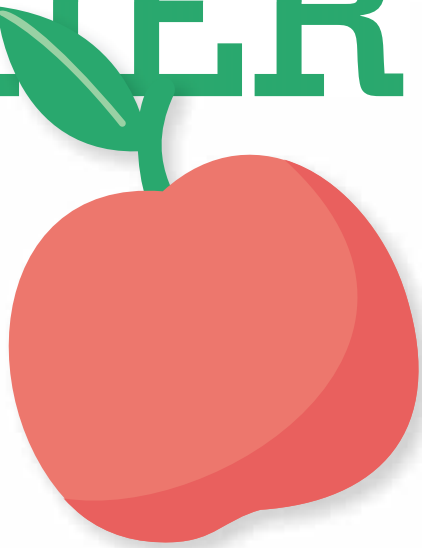
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Children with HEALTHIER EATING HABITS



have better cognitive
development: Study



Reasoning is an important talent for learning, academic performance, and problem-solving in everyday life. A recent study from the University of Eastern Finland discovered that a better overall diet, less red meat consumption, more time spent reading, and participation in organised sports improved children's reasoning skills over the first two years of school.

"Children with healthier eating habits showed greater cognitive development than other children. Specifically, better overall diet quality, lower red meat consumption, and higher low-fat dairy product intake were linked to better reasoning skills," said Doctoral Researcher Sehrish Naveed of the University of Eastern Finland.

Children who spent more time reading and participating in structured sports performed better in reasoning tests than their peers. Excessive computer uses and unsupervised leisure-time physical activity, on the other hand, were linked to weaker thinking skills. Screen usage, active school transportation, playtime physical activity, and intensity of physical activity were not related to thinking skills.

Over half of the children participated in a two-year family-based and individualised diet and physical activity intervention. However, the intervention did not impact reasoning skills, with the children in the intervention and control groups exhibiting similar cognitive development.

"In the lives of growing children, diet and physical activity intervention is just one factor influencing lifestyle and reasoning skills. Based on our study, investing in a healthy diet and encouraging children to read are beneficial for the development of reasoning skills among children. Additionally, engaging in organised sports appears to support reasoning skills", Dr Eero Haapala points out. -ANI

SPORTS



Messi leads Inter Miami to Leagues Cup crown

Argentine superstar scores his tenth goal in seven games as Inter Miami lift their first trophy

FLORIDA: Argentine superstar Lionel Messi was hailed as the “best in the world” as he scored a 10th goal in seven games to help his Inter Miami side to their first trophy. The 36-year-old Argentinian fired into the top corner from outside the box to give Miami the lead against Nashville SC in the Leagues Cup final. Fafa Picault levelled in the second half to send the game to penalties.

Miami sealed a 10-9 shootout win when Drake Callender saved Nashville goalkeeper Elliot Panico's spot-kick. The 36-year-old former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain forward converted the first spot-kick of the penalty shootout. Miami had the worst record in Major League Soccer this season before World Cup-winning forward Messi arrived last month alongside former Barcelona teammates Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets. They are now unbeaten in seven games on their way to winning the Leagues Cup, a tournament featuring MLS and Mexican Liga MX clubs. It was the club's first trophy since being formed in 2020. They also have the chance to reach another final when they play Cincinnati in the semi-final of the US Open Cup on Wednesday. Co-owner David Beckham said the former Barcelona trio were

instrumental in the club's change in fortunes: “It is like a movie, you watch these players play and, emotionally, everything about their play is beautiful.” Spain midfielder Busquets added: “The team is growing by leaps and bounds and we are very happy. “We are making a solid team - and then we have Leo, who makes a difference because he's the best in the world.” The win also meant seven-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi - who was named player of the tournament - has now won 44 trophies, more than any other player. Inter Miami manager Gerardo Martino hailed Lionel Messi after the Florida club won the Leagues Cup title. “I think that when you mention Leo you say that he is the best player in the world. There is no greater praise than that. And he does it game after game,” said Martino, who was also Messi's manager at Barcelona and with Argenti-

na's national team. Despite sitting last in Major League Soccer's eastern conference, Inter Miami have won all seven of their matches since Messi arrived along with Martino in mid-July. “Leo has said that he came to Miami to compete and to win, which is very important,” Martino said. “[Sergi] Busquets and [Jordi] Alba said the same thing. Obviously somebody has to lose but this time they have won.” “Somehow, I think we have greater clarity about what could happen in the future, having won this title 30 to 35 days after I started working at this club,” Martino said. “We are happy about what happened today, but unfortunately there is not much time to celebrate. On Wednesday we have another important game,” he added. The Leagues Cup is an annual competition featuring clubs from the United States, Canada and Mexico. - Xinhua

PREMIER LEAGUE

Alvarez gives City victory; Liverpool, Tottenham win

LONDON: Julian Alvarez scored the only goal of the game in the first half as Manchester City made light of any tired legs from Wednesday's European Supercup final to beat Newcastle United 1-0 in the Premier League on Saturday night. The Argentinean hit a powerful shot into the top corner of the net in a game where City had the better of the chances against the side that finished fourth in the table last season. Pape Sarr scored his first goal for Tottenham as Ange Postecoglou celebrated his first home league game in charge in north London with a win as his side beat Manchester United 2-0. Tottenham were not in their best form in the first half of an entertaining game, but were on top after the break and after Sarr's header, they sealed the match after Lisandro Martinez deflected Ben Davies' scuffed volley into his goal with seven minutes left to play. Spurs fans will be pleased at their side's attacking attitude without Harry Kane, but United again disappointed after last weekend's scrappy win over Wolves.



Liverpool came back from a shaky start that saw them concede a third minute goal from Antoine Semenyo at home to Bournemouth to win 3-1. Luis Diaz's overhead kick leveled in the 28th minute and Mohamed Salah put Liverpool ahead in the 36th minute, poking home after Neto had saved his penalty. Alexis Mac Allister was sent off for a high challenge in the 58th minute, but Diogo Jota secured Liverpool's win just moments later. Brighton took a 15th minute lead against Wolverhampton through Kaoru Mitoma's excellent opening goal, which saw him beat four defenders before scoring and they went on to win 4-1 with Pervis Estupinan added a second at the start of the second half, before Solly March added further goals after 51 and 55 minutes.

Hwang Hee-chan netted a consolation for Wolves, who ended with 10 men after Matheus Nunes was shown a red card deep into injury time. Brentford had a comfortable 3-0 win away to Fulham, who have just sold striker Aleksandar Mitrovic to Saudi Arabia for a club-record transfer fee. Yoane Wissa opened the scoring in the 44th minute and Bryan Mbeumo scored in the 66th and 92nd minutes, with the first of those from the penalty spot after Tim Ream was sent off to leave Fulham with a man less. Chris Wood scored a last-minute winner to hand Nottingham Forest their first triumph of the campaign and break Sheffield United's hearts on Friday night. Taiwo Awoniyi headed Forest in front in just the third minute, but Gustavo Hamer's curling shot three minutes into the second half looked as if it had earned a point for the newly promoted “Blades” before substitute Wood scored another headed goal to decide it at the death. - Xinhua

SERIE A

Napoli, Inter start new season on right foot

ROME: Napoli started their title-defence campaign on Saturday as they kicked off the 2023-24 Serie A season with a 3-1 comeback victory over Frosinone, while Inter also registered an opening win after beating Monza 2-0. The Partenopei claimed their first Serie A champion in 33 years last season but found themselves on the back foot just seven minutes into the game as Abdou Harroui converted a penalty to give the newly-promoted an early lead. The defending champion pulled back on level terms in the 24th minute as a rebound kindly fell for Matteo Politano to hit in a missile out of the box. The away side turned around the game before the break when Giovanni Di Lorenzo rolled across from the right and the best scorer of last season, Victor Osimhen opened his account by sweeping it home. Osimhen got his second in the 74th minute as the Nigerian was sent clear to beat the goalkeeper one-on-one. Also on Saturday, Inter entered



into the new season by hosting Monza at San Siro. Lautaro Martinez's tap-in on Denzel Dumfries' cross in the 8th minute put the Nerazzurri in front and in the second-half new signing Marko Arnautovic provided another assist for the Argentine to slide it in at the back post. Elsewhere, Fiorentina dominated Genoa 4-1 while Hellas Verona edged past Empoli 1-0. - Xinhua

LA LIGA

Bellingham on target again as Madrid defeat Almeria

MADRID: Jude Bellingham scored twice as Real Madrid came from behind to win 3-1 away to Almeria in Spanish La Liga on Saturday. The home side took the lead in the third minute with a header from Sergio Arribas, with the player, who has just joined Almeria from Madrid showing his former club may have made a mistake. Bellingham leveled midway in the 19th minute after the VAR gave the goal as good after he used his shoulder to control the ball and shoot home. Bellingham finished his brace with a header in the second half following a Toni Kroos cross and Vinicius Jr added a third with a shot that took a slight deflection on its way to goal. Athletic Club Bilbao recovered from last week's defeat to Real Madrid with a 2-0 win away to Osasuna thanks to first half goals from Inaki Williams and Gorka Guruzeta, both of which came from passes from Nico Williams.



Osasuna pressed hard in the second half and Athletic were down to 10 men on the hour when Oihan Sancet was sent off for a second yellow card. Ander Barrenetxea's 22nd minute header looked as if it was going to give Real Sociedad their first win of the season as they faced Rafa Benitez's Celta Vigo in the Reale Arena, but Oscar Mingueza's close range finish in the fourth minute of injury time saved a late point for the visitors

and left the home team with two draws from first two matches played. In Friday night's games, Gerard Moreno's close-range finish gave Villarreal a 1-0 win away to Mallorca to help his side recover from last weekend's defeat to Betis, while Pepelu's goal for Valencia allowed Ruben Baraja's side to maintain their 100 percent start to the campaign with a 1-0 win at home to newly promoted Las Palmas. - Xinhua

BUNDESLIGA

Leverkusen overpower Leipzig 3-2

BERLIN: Bayer Leverkusen staged a powerful performance and smoothed the win with two first-half goals, upsetting Leipzig 3-2 in the first round of Bundesliga on Saturday. The Werkself opened the scoring through Jeremie Frimpong who benefitted on Victor Boniface's cutback pass in the 24th minute. Leverkusen gained momentum and doubled its advantage 11 minutes later when Jonas Hofmann's pinpoint corner kick allowed Jonathan Tah to nod home the 2-0 lead from central position. Leipzig eventually halved the deficit out of the blue in the 39th minute after Dani Olmo headed home David Raum's corner at the near post to stun Leverkusen before the break. Leverkusen assumed control again after the restart as Hofmann passed into the path of Florian Wirtz, whose well-placed shot got defused by Janis Blaswich's great reflex on the goal line. Wirtz remained in the thick of things and restored Leverkusen's two-goal lead at the hour mark after chipping the ball over goalkeeper Blaswich. Leipzig's resilience wasn't broken as the visitors reduced the arrears again as Lois Openda's Bundesliga maiden goal made it 3-2 on the scoreboards. Elsewhere, Jonas Wind's brace helped Wolfsburg to start with a win into the season after easing 2-0 past newly promoted Heidenheim. Freiburg edged Hoffenheim 2-1 thanks to an own goal from Attila Szalai and a goal from Roland Sallai. Borussia Monchengladbach gave away its lead and shared the spoils with Augsburg following an eight-goal thriller. Stuttgart trashed Bochum 5-0 and Dortmund moved 1-0 past stubborn Cologne courtesy of Donyell Malen's late winner. - Xinhua

LIGUE 1

Mbappe scores but PSG held to draw at Toulouse

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe scored a penalty on his Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) return as they were held to a frustrating 1-1 draw at Toulouse in Ligue 1 on Saturday. France captain Mbappe, 24, put reigning champions PSG ahead just 11 minutes after coming on as a substitute. He had been reintroduced to Luis Enrique's squad after a lengthy contract stand-off over the summer. However, Morocco forward Zakaria Aboukhhal levelled for the

hosts late on - also from the penalty spot. Mbappe's appearance was his first for PSG since a friendly on 21 July after he was omitted from their pre-season tour to Japan and South Korea and then missed their opening 0-0 league draw against Lorient. He had been training with players the club are trying to offload after he refused to sign an extension to his PSG deal, but he was brought back into the fold last Sunday after holding ‘constructive and positive discussions’. - Agencies



ROUND-UP



CHANGAN UNI-V'S UNMATCHED PERFORMANCE AND STYLE PROMISES EXHILARATING DRIVE

This exceptional model is loaded with state-of-the-art and opulent features, including a retractable rear spoiler, seamlessly integrated concealed door handles, and sumptuous leather seats, all contributing to its unparalleled allure



MUSCAT: Luxury sedan Changan UNI-V promises an exhilarating driving experience while embodying a perfect blend of sportiness, sophistication, and security.

This exceptional model is loaded with state-of-the-art and opulent features, including a retractable rear spoiler, seamlessly integrated concealed door handles, and sumptuous leather seats, all contributing to its unparalleled allure.

Moreover, the Changan UNI-V impresses with its cutting-edge technology, boasting a striking 10" instrument cluster, a 10.25" infotainment screen, and convenient wireless chargers, ensuring you stay connected and charged throughout your journeys.

Safety takes the centre stage in the Changan UNI-V, as it comes

equipped with a comprehensive suite of protective features, such as a 360° HD Camera, automatic emergency braking, forward collision warning, and intelligent adaptive cruise control.

With these advanced safety measures, you can enjoy every ride with peace of mind, knowing you are well-protected on the road. In essence, the Changan UNI-V is a masterpiece that elevates your driving experience to new heights, offering both luxury and performance in perfect harmony.

Spokesperson for Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE) says, "The premium UNI-V is a visually stunning masterpiece that leaves a lasting impression with its opulent interior, remarkable performance, and an

extensive array of cutting-edge safety, security, and driving assistance technologies."

Under the hood, the Changan UNI-V harnesses the mighty Blue Core 1.5 L turbocharged engine, a true powerhouse that unleashes a remarkable 188 horsepower and an astonishing 300Nm of torque. Its prowess is seamlessly paired with a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission, ensuring a smooth and efficient distribution of power to the front-wheel drive system.

As a current mainstream standard A-class sedan, the Changan UNI-V boasts ideal dimensions, measuring 4680x1838x1430mm in length, width, and height, while its generous wheelbase spans

2750mm. These well-balanced proportions contribute to the UNI-V's overall stability and agile handling on the road.

The UNI-V continues its family tradition of a borderless grille and adapts a more agile and accurate design to help the model feel much sportier. It has exterior features that make it unique including 18" Alloy Wheels, Panoramic Sunroof, Split and Auto LED Headlamps, LED DRLs, ORVM – electrically folding, hidden door handles and rear spoiler.

Changan UNI-V's extraordinary interior looks formidable with its black interior, leather seats and contrast coloured seat belts which gives the Changan a luxury yet sporty feel. It boasts of ventilated

six-way electric adjustable driver seat and four-way electric adjustable passenger seat.

The Changan UNI-V boasts a wide range of safety features, ensuring comprehensive protection for passengers. These include front airbags, side airbags, curtain airbags, BS + EBD + ESP + TSC + HHC + HDC + TPMS auto hold function, front and rear parking sensors, 360° HD Camera, 360° dashcam, adaptive cruise control, forward collision warning, automatic emergency brake, and lane departure warning.

Infotainment attributes include 10" instrument cluster, 10.25" infotainment screen, Navigation, Voice Control Function, mirror

link with Apple CarPlay, wireless chargers, radio, Bluetooth, USB (front and rear) and eight speakers. It has comfort features such as electronic parking brake, keyless entry with push start button, remote engine start/stop, rear air outlet, paddle shifter, electric tailgate and rear seat centre headrest.

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment which is part of Bahwan International Group has set up a spacious and state-of-the-art Showroom in Al Qurum, Al Mawalah and Sohar and service centre in Azaiba, Muscat.

AGAE has already tied up for Periodic Maintenance Services in many cities including Salalah, Sohar, Sur, Nizwa, Ibra, Ibri and Barka etc.



ROUND-UP

Swiss company’s Aramedes Mecca collection: A watch for the spirited

The Mecca collection from Aramedes comprises 4 watches - Mastertimer Qibla, Mastertimer Sawm, Mastertimer Salah and Mastertimer Salah Tourbillon Automatic - designed as restrained and timeless pieces with subtle echoes of the 1960s and ‘70s style

MUSCAT: Time management is crucial for success as sustaining focus on both ‘work’ and ‘personal’ aspects of life is increasingly becoming difficult in a world flooded with newer technologies.



Paradoxically, smartwatches enter our lives in the garb of ‘wellness’ gadgets but make us hyperfocus on the ‘trackers’ while ignoring the traditional way of life that nurtures not just our bodies but the very spirit.

Taking cognizance of this gap, Swiss watch company - Aramedes has launched a constellation of beautiful mechanical watches under its ‘Mecca collection’ to pay tribute to the Muslim way of life.

Interestingly, the name Aramedes is an acronym that encapsulates the makers’ intent. ‘AR’ stands for the Arabian Peninsula because it is the cradle of the Islamic

world with a rich history in timekeeping, astronomy and mathematics. M stands for Mecca or Medina, the two holy cities. DES stands for Design Engineering Switzerland,” reveals Tom Morf, Aramedes Founder and CEO who is a recipient of prestigious awards in his 25-year-long career.

The Mecca collection from Aramedes comprises 4 watches -- Mastertimer Qibla, Mastertimer Sawm, Mastertimer Salah and Mastertimer Salah Tourbillon Automatic - designed as restrained and timeless pieces with subtle echoes of the 1960s and ‘70s style.

To assist in the spiritual practice,



the watches come with innovative features like Qibla – the Mecca Compass, Salah - Prayer time indicator and Sawm- Fasting Indicator.

Connected with the variables of sunrise and sunset time and geographic location, these features were easier conceptualised than crafted. As Tom puts it, the challenge was to integrate “electrical engineering, IT software into a mechanical movement, and to bring it into a watch that looks like a Swiss watch with a timeless design, that has got substance.”

Driving “innovation while preserving heritage,” Aramedes collaborated with Supercomputing

Systems to patent a module to solve these challenges. “The AraTec 1 module is a tiny layer of electronics that does complicated calculations. Made in Switzerland, it calculates the location of the wearer via mobile radio triangulation that helps locate the direction of Mecca,” reveals Per Trifunovic, Chairman of Aramedes Board, who studied software engineering at the prestigious Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

The module uses Bluetooth to pair up with a mobile phone through an app that helps locate the change in geographical location and shift in timezones - basis the phone’s GPS.

Not only does this preserve the integrity of the mechanical watch but also eliminates the need for frequent battery changes. The small lithium battery that powers the module can last for 5 years.

The watches that started as an idea in 2016, finally were unveiled at the 2021 Dubai Watch Week to an enthusiastic response after years of passionate research and innovation.

Paying homage to the Islamic way of life, the Aramedes collection tells the story of cultural heritage with fascinating details. The back of the dial has beautiful engraving and the logo Gentle Lion adorns the crown –the protective ‘Coat of Arms’ from Zurich. Controlling the heart of the watch as you unwind it, the lion reminds you that at its very heart, it is Swiss Design Engineering!

Speaking on behalf of Mistal, Aramedes’ partner in Oman, Dharmesh A. Khimji, Managing Director of Mistal said: “With great pride, we bring this special collection that pays homage to our heritage and culture while staying ahead of the innovation game. The watches can be customised and make for great gifts and keepsakes.”

The Aramedes Watch Collection will be available exclusively at the luxury watch and jewellery boutique Mistal in Muscat.

POPULAR ISLAMIC BANKING



Enjoy exciting journeys in Toyota Corolla

MUSCAT: Toyota’s popular Corolla has for generations been a preferred travel partners for many across the world. The Corolla’s impressive fuel-efficiency, easy maintenance and overall ownership period experiences have contributed immensely to the Corolla’s success.

Powering the Corolla is a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 hp and 20.39 kg-m of torque. For more immersive driving experiences, the engine is paired to a Direct Shift CVT transmission.

Customers looking for a more fuel-efficient option can choose the 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine Corolla that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque. This is paired with a CVT transmission.

The Corolla’s interior adopts a simple yet appealing style, with impressive space and integrated functional parts that combine to create a refined elegance. The ergonomically designed seats feature new cushion material, while the armrest and ample legroom offer superior comfort for the rear-seat passengers.

Bank Nizwa’s Sharia-compliant minor account sees overwhelming response

MUSCAT: The leading Islamic banking institution in Oman, Bank Nizwa, has been receiving an overwhelmingly positive response to its fully Sharia-compliant minor account.

Thoughtfully created for parents to secure their children’s future, the Minor Account, aligned with the principles of Islamic finance, is one of Bank Nizwa’s key propositions in the Sultanate of Oman’s competitive finance landscape.

Ever since its rollout, the bank has recorded registrations in substantial numbers – a key indicator of the growing need for Sharia-compliant banking solutions in Oman.

Bank Nizwa’s Minor Account offering is a well-rounded solution to parents seeking to secure their children’s financial futures in alignment with Islamic finance best practices. The bank’s move to facilitate a strong financial foundation for children is being received with much admiration and approval across communities. It also serves the key pillar of Oman Vision 2040 that outlines the promotion of social protection and



social responsibility, more so by supporting the needs of Oman’s future generations. To cater to the high demand for enrolment, the bank has extended its opening hours from 3pm to 5pm at selected branches across the Sultanate to make it more convenient for parents to open Minor Accounts.

Commenting on the immensely positive response The Bank has received, Khaled Al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa stated, “At Bank Nizwa, we have always strived to offer our customers with full-fledged Islamic banking solutions that cater to their every need. We believe that

instilling a savings mindset and essential money management skills in the younger generation is of utmost importance to their personal growth as well as to the Sultanate’s progress. Our Minor Account promotes the concept of savings for parents, and fosters a sense of financial responsibility among children, a trait that will serve them well throughout their lifetime. We are proud to see the turnout this product is garnering and look forward to serving more customers with our Minor Account.”

Owing to its commitment to developing an array of Islamic bank-

ing products and services for its customers, Bank Nizwa’s Minor Account gives parents the opportunity to not only ensure their children are set up for bright futures brimming with endless possibilities, but also helps them inculcate the core values and ethics of Islamic finance in their young ones. The Minor Account is a pivotal step in a child’s financial journey. By adopting early savings and investment for their children, parents can pave the way for them to excel in education, pursue their dreams, and achieve their life goals.

The Minor Account has a variety of savings solutions including Savings Account, Recurring Deposit Account and Mudaraba Investment Account. In addition, it offers exclusive merchant promotions and competitive profit rates on education finance. It offers attractive high returns, providing parents with an opportunity to watch the savings and investment for their children grow steadily over time while adhering to the best practices of Sharia. Moreover, the Minor Account is accessible to all with no minimum balance fee.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Meethaq Children Savings Account suitable choice to enhance savings habits

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat continues to enhance its partnership with the community by encouraging people to develop healthy savings habits and enhance financial literacy.

Throughout the past years, Meethaq has been keen to customise its services and products to meet the needs of different segment in society. Children are one of the most important segments as they can learn through the customised account to build a foundation to grow enhancing their financial management practices, which are bound to assist them later in life.

Meethaq Children Savings Account includes two age groups.

For children under the age of 14, Meethaq offers Baraem Children savings account, and for minors in the age range of 14 to 17, they can benefit from a regular savings account. Children can enjoy profit at competitive rates credited to the account on monthly basis and with no minimum balance requirement for profit eligibility. It offers Tiered/Slab based profit-rates, so the higher the average balance the higher the profit. Profit rates vary each month based on Mudarabah pool calculation. Any parent or legal guardian can open the account for his/her children under the age of 18 years, from any Meethaq branch with a hassle-free process



and minimum documentation. They can enjoy as well from cash withdrawal services through any Meethaq branch.

Sami Bait Rashid, Assistant

General Manager - Meethaq Personal Banking, said: “Meethaq has been keen to provide services that cater to the need of different age groups in society. The chil-

dren account was developed to enhance savings habit concept for the younger generation and help parents prepare future plans for their children, guide them to learn financial management skills and introduce them to some banking concepts and concepts of Sharia in this regard in an exciting manner. We are really pleased to see the positive feedback the account is receiving. We will continue Meethaq’s journey to further develop its products to meet customers’ needs and aspirations.”

In addition to the benefits mentioned, Meethaq offers as well Baraem complimentary Takaful cover. Parents can insure their

children’s future education with Meethaq’s complimentary child education Takaful cover by maintaining RO. 5,000 and above in the child’s Baraem savings account (max up to 4 kids with 4 separate Baraem accounts).

To open the account, parents or legal guardians can visit any Meethaq branch and bring with them their ID card, Birth Certificate if child is younger than 14 years, and ID card for minor in the age range of 14 to 17 years, children’s minor account opening form, in addition to Omani minor account opening form and savings and deposit terms and conditions form for new Meethaq customers.



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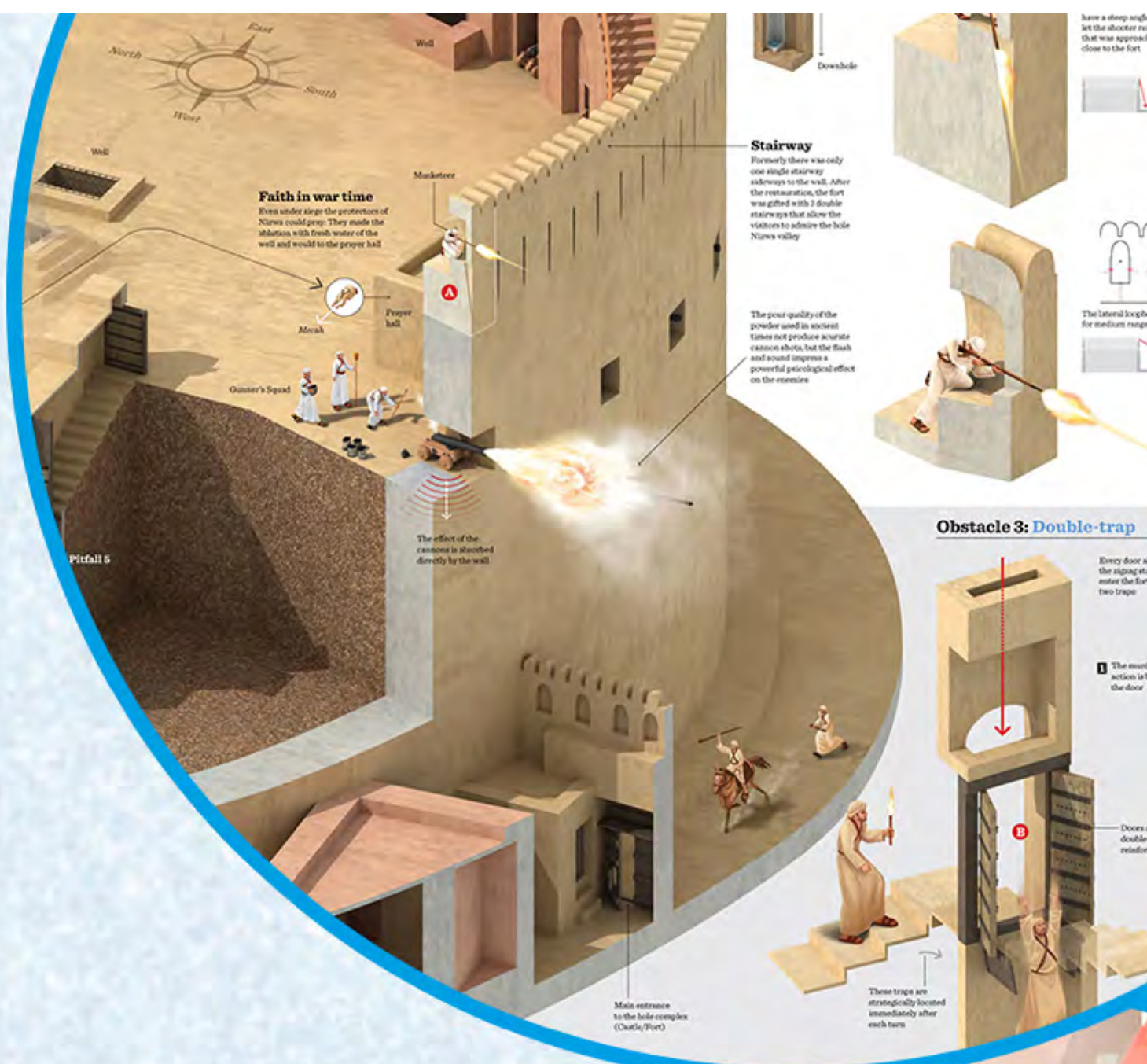
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