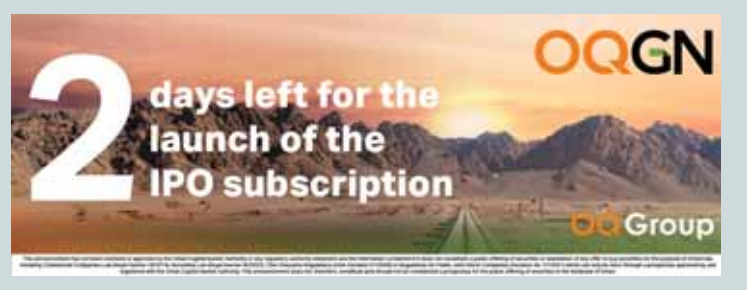


HM SENDS GREETINGS TO SAUDI ARABIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia on the Saudi National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, praying to the Almighty Allah to return this and similar occasions with achievement of aspirations of further progress, development and prosperity for the Saudi people. **-ONA**



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HM sends condolences

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences and sympathy to President Sergio Mattarella of the Republic of Italy on the death of former Italian president Giorgio Napolitano. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his condolences and sympathy to the president, the bereaved family and the Italian people. **-ONA**

His Majesty sends greetings

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Umaro Sissoco Embalo of the Republic of Guinea Bissau on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health and happiness to the president and to his country's people for further progress and propriety. **-ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Sayyid Badr holds talks with officials

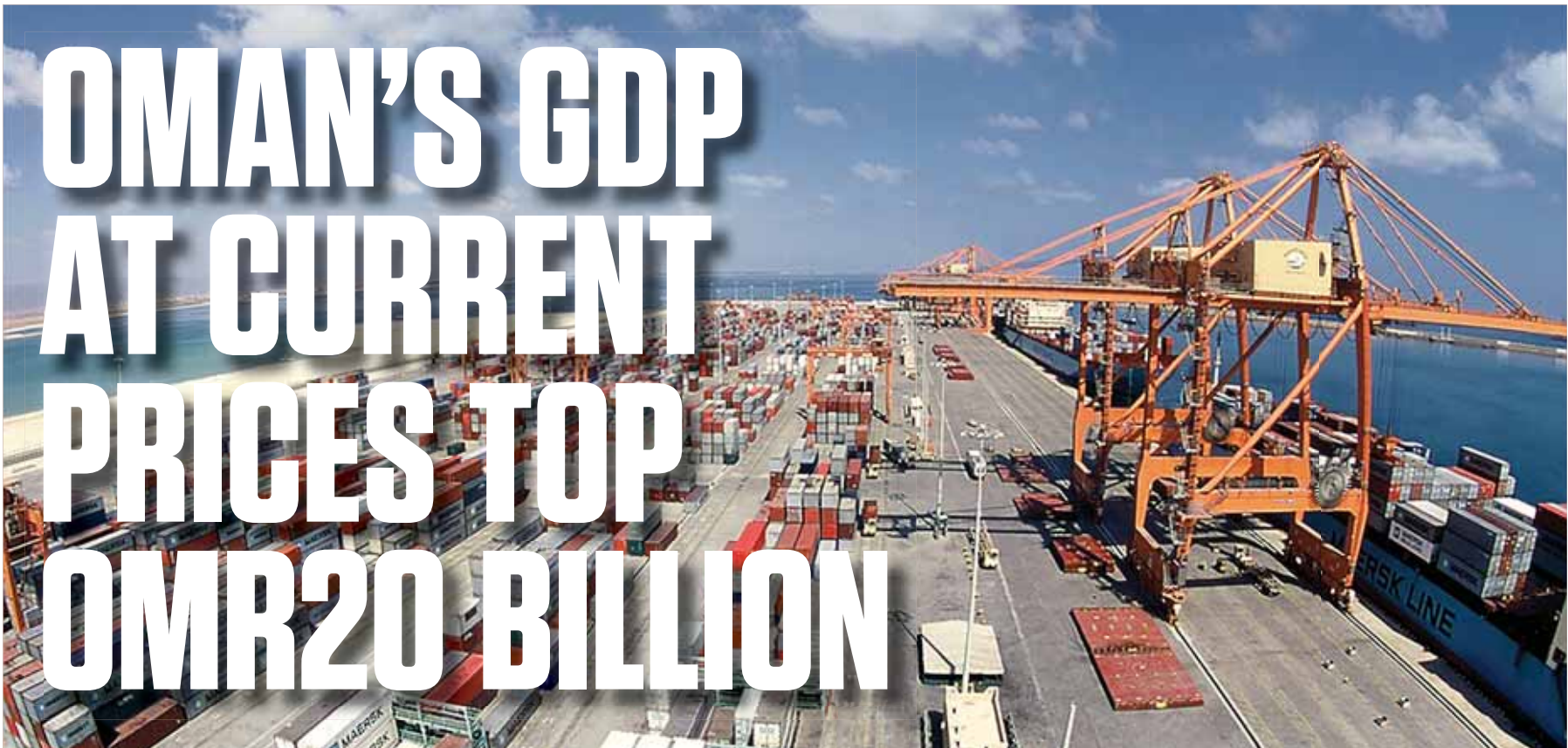
1 Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher on the sidelines of the meetings of the 78th session of the UNGA in New York. **>A4**

OMAN Advanced treatment for oncology offered

2 The National Centre for Oncology at the Royal Hospital provides latest treatments for cancer through its various departments under the supervision of specialised employees, and also offers integrated care for cancer patients in Oman. **>A5**

MARKET Duqm Refinery exports its first diesel shipment

3 The Duqm Refinery has succeeded in exporting the first shipment of high-quality diesel as per international specifications. This coincides with the company getting closer to achieving commercial operations. **>B1**



The activities of agriculture, forestry and fisheries were worth OMR206.100 million while services amounted to OMR5.024bn

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices reached OMR20.394 billion in the first half of 2023 (up to the end of June 2023) compared to OMR20.889 recorded in the same period of 2022, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The NCSI data further revealed that the Oman's GDP at the current price during the second quarter of 2023 reached OMR10.085 billion compared to OMR 11.146 billion during the same period in 2022, reflecting a decrease of 9.5 percent.

This decline in the GDP is basically due to the dip in the oil activities which fell by 18.3 percent to OMR3.646 billion during the second quarter of 2023 compared to OMR4.460 billion during the same period in 2022.

The crude oil activities decreased by 19.5 percent at OMR3.170 billion while the activities of natural gas decreased by 9.2 percent to OMR475.600 million.

The non-oil activities decreased by 3.6 percent during the second quarter of 2023 to OMR6.861 billion compared to OMR7.121 billion at the end of second quarter 2022.

The total industrial activities registered OMR1.630 billion compared to OMR2.225 billion during the second quarter of 2022.

The activities of agriculture, forestry and fisheries were estimated at OMR206.100 million and service activities at OMR5.024 billion.

Oman's outlook
In April 2023, Fitch Ratings had revised Oman's outlook to positive from stable and affirmed the rating at 'BB', in a report.

According to Fitch, the positive outlook reflects a significant reduction in Oman's debt to GDP as a result of fiscal consolidation measures, high oil prices and the associated reduction of external liquidity risks.

The agency said that the measures taken by the government helped to contain public debt, stating that the debt to Gross Domestic Product fell from 61 percent at the end of 2021 to 40 percent at the end of 2022.

- With ONA inputs

ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Omani firm Kahrab Performance pioneers the region's EV future

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An Omani founded company Kahrab Performance stands as a testament to its passion for innovation and carving out a niche in the booming world of electric vehicle (EV) mobility, at a time in which the region has growing ambitions to achieve net zero emissions within the next few decades. The company is transforming the landscape of EVs in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.

Founded in Oman, by Al Munther Al Hashar and his colleague Eng. Samer Mardo, Kahrab Performance is the pioneering EV specialist company in the GCC region and specialises in upgrading, modifying and fabricating electric vehicles

In an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman* Al Munther Al Hashar spoke in detail about the company and its role, particularly in the context of Oman's unique landscape and culture.

"We formed the idea of Kahrab to effectively deliver Elite Electric Performance to the e-moto community we are building," Al Munther Al Hashar said.

The company focuses on creating a sustainable presence in the e-moto division and creating an e-moto powerhouse for regional communities, Al Munther Al Hashar said. "Through our company, the riding community is provided with an engaging platform to voice their input and share their experiences. Beyond this ambition, our team is dedicated to encouraging internal tourism and exploration in the various unique terrains and landscapes Oman has to provide," he further added.

Well known for its ultra-reliability and customisability, Sur-Ron is the main representative of Kahrab - the first EV company in Oman. It is a high-performance electric motorbike company founded in 2014, with \$30 million in initial investment, and started with a team of 40 engineers, Al Munther Al Hashar said.

"Understanding the off-road culture in Oman, we've tested our Sur-Ron motorbikes throughout the Sultanate's toughest terrains—through water in Wadi Al Arbiyeen, dunes in Bidyah, the mountains and plains in Quriyat. We continue to further our experiences and better our services to our riders and community members." **>A4**

ASIAN GAMES

Hockey captain Sami Awadh leads Oman's contingent



Times News Service

MUSCAT: A spectacular and dazzling opening ceremony formally opened the 19th Asian Games in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou on Saturday night.

Chinese President Xi Jinping opened the delayed 2022 Asian Games, which was attended by leaders of different nations. The Sultanate of Oman was represented by Basil Ahmed Al Rawas, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth at the ceremony that was attended by 80,000 in the packed stadium.

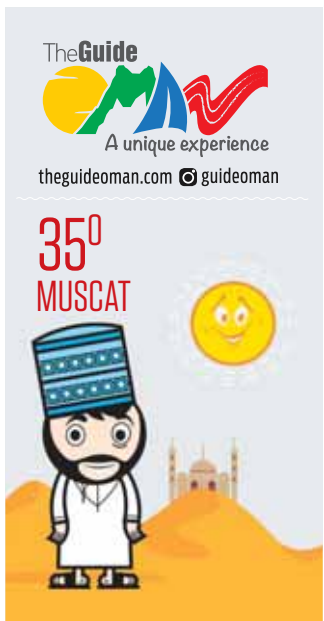
The Games will be China's biggest sporting event in over a decade with around 12,000 athletes from 45 nations competing in 40 sports. After the Chinese flag was brought out, the first team out was Afghanistan, whose female athletes, based abroad due to restrictions, walked together with their male counterparts.

Oman's contingent marched with a majority of the athletes in their traditional dishdashas and musar holding the national flags while the others in the tracksuits.

National hockey team captain Sami Awadh Said Al Laun was the flag bearer at the ceremony and led the Sultanate's contingent at the dazzling ceremony.

In a spell-binding ceremony intended to burnish Hangzhou's status as one of China's centres of technology and creativity, dozens of balletic dancers hovered above a digitally-projected lake in the wake of a flotilla of sail-boards.

For Oman, which has 44 athletes taking part in seven different sports, the start of the Games has been on a positive side as both the teams in beach volleyball have advanced to the last 16 knockout rounds. **>A5**



OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:04pm

Asr.....3:30pm

Maghrib.....6:07pm

Isha.....7:17pm

Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:41am



MEETING

RAF Chief of Staff meets US President’s advisor

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Lieutenant General Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Royal Armed Forces, and the military delegation accompanying him, met with Lieutenant General Terry Wolfe, Advisor to the US President and Military Coordinator for the Middle East, in Washington, DC, as part of his official visit to the United States of America.

During the meeting, Lieutenant General Terry Wolf, advisor to the US President and military coordinator for the Middle East, welcomed the Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces.

A number of topics and a number of matters of common interest were discussed. The meeting was attended by a number of senior officers and officials from both sides.

The Chief of Staff of the Royal Armed Forces and the military delegation accompanying him visited the National Defense College and the Institute for South Asian and Near Eastern Studies (NESA) in Washington, DC, as part of his official visit to the United States of America.

The group listened to a briefing about the Institute of South Asian and Near Eastern Studies (NESA) and the programmes it offers.



AIR FORCE OFFICER RECEIVES SWORD OF HONOUR

Air Lieutenant Qais bin Ahmed Al Subhi from the Royal Air Force of Oman received the International Sword of Honour from the Royal Air College (Cranwell) in the United Kingdom. This award is given to an officer who excels in leadership performance and officer attributes among all the college’s international officers. The sword was given to Air Lieutenant Al Subhi for performance in the year 2022. -ONA



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SalamAir to stop India operations from October 1

Travel agencies have also confirmed that they have been notified on the halt of all operations to India by the airline

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Travel plans of hundreds of India-bound passengers were left in disarray after they received an email that said their bookings on SalamAir from October 1, 2023 onwards will stand null and void.

They have been told that they would receive the refund for their bookings.

SalamAir is a low-cost airlines from the Sultanate of Oman and currently flies to four major cities



across India.

From Jaipur and Lucknow in North India to Calicut and Thiruvananthapuram in the South, the carrier provided good and affordable options for thousands of expatriates in Oman.

Travel agencies have also confirmed that they have been notified on the halt of all operations to India by the airline.

The email from SalamAir team read: "Dear Trade Partners, We regret to inform you that we are discontinuing our flights to/from India from 01 October 2023. This decision was not made lightly, but due to the limitation of flight rights allocation to India.

"We understand that this news may cause inconvenience, and we apologise for any difficulties that this may arise.

"We have done our very best to ensure that our customers have been cared for throughout this process. Thus, we will fully refund all the passengers who have made reservations to these destinations.

"If you have any questions about the refund process, please do not hesitate to contact our team. We thank you for your understanding and support, and we will continue to work together to ensure that our customers are taken care of during this process."

JEBEL SHAMS RESORT

EA opens camp for celestial events

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA) opened on Saturday the second astronomical environment camp at Jebel Shams Resort in Al-Hajar Al-Gharbi Starlights Reserve in Al-Hamra. It will continue until September 23.

The opening of the camp stems from the importance of the loca-

tion of the Western Hajar Reserve for starlight, and the elements that it abounds with. The camp's activities include practical applications such as explaining the sky page, astronomical observations, and other related activities.

The opening ceremony of the camp was sponsored by Sheikh Dr. Al-Khattab bin Ghalib Al-Hinai, Vice President of the State

Council. Ahmed bin Salem Al Amiri, Director of the Environment Department in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, said: "The opening of this camp comes within the plans of the Environment Authority to activate this reserve, by gathering specialists in scientific and practical workshops to exchange experiences and knowledge.



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Foreign Minister discusses ties with a number of officials in New York



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, held discussions on the sidelines of the meetings of the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York

Times News Service

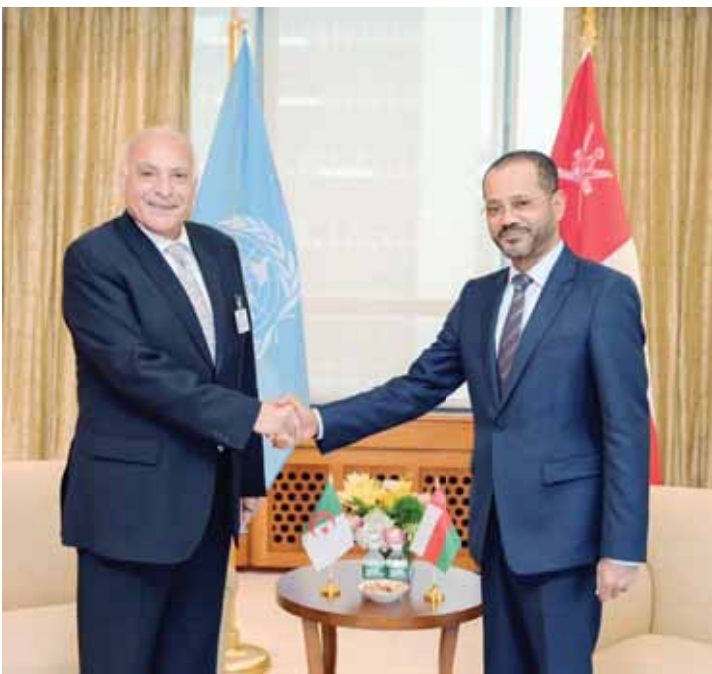
MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary of State of the Vatican City for Relations with States and International Organisations, on the sidelines of the meetings of the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

During the meeting at the headquarters of the Sultanate of Oman's permanent delegation to the United Nations in New York, Sayyid Badr discussed topics of common interest, and the two sides affirmed their support for dialogue between civilisations and cultures and their commitment to the values of tolerance, understanding and respect, the rules of international law and the United Nations Charter.

They agreed to enhance constructive cooperation and common benefits for the good and harmony among nations.

During the reception of Mohamed Salem Ould Marzouk, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Mauritians Abroad, the two sides discussed cooperation between the two countries in various fields and ways to enhance and develop them in a way that serves the common interests of the two brotherly people. The two sides also exchanged views on a number of regional and international issues.

In a meeting with Miguel Moratinos, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations, Sayyid Badr discussed the efforts made to promote understanding and tolerance and combat the phenomena of hatred,



intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion or race, as they exchanged views on enhancing cooperation and partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations.

On the other hand, Oman's Foreign Minister received his Serbian counterpart, Ivica Dačić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed various aspects of bilateral cooperation between the two countries and ways to

enhance them, in addition to exchanging opinions and viewpoints on a number of current regional and international issues of common interest.

Within the framework of strengthening bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Serbia in various fields, two memorandums of understanding were signed regarding political consultations and cooperation in the fields of diplomatic studies and training between the two

diplomatic academies of the two foreign ministries.

The agreement was signed on the part of the Sultanate of Oman by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and on the Serbian side by Ivica Dačić, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Foreign Minister met with Ahmed Attaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the National Community Abroad of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, during which bilateral relations between the two coun-

tries were reviewed, and various aspects of cooperation and ways to enhance them were discussed, and viewpoints were exchanged on a number of current regional and international issues of common interest, and the two sides agreed to hold the next session of the Omani-Algerian Joint Committee within the next few months in Algeria.

The meeting of Sayyid Badr with his Belarusian counterpart, Sergei Aleinik, touched on friendly relations and coopera-

tion and ways to enhance them in various fields to serve the aspirations of both countries, and discussed the most prominent developments in the regional and international arenas.

The meetings were attended by Ambassador Dr. Mohammed bin Awad Al Hassan, Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations in New York, Sheikh Humaid bin Ali Al Maani, Head of the Global Affairs Department, and a number of officials from both sides.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Bikes provide a thrilling and unique riding experience

<FROM A1 "With extreme success, the motorbikes always prove to be more than capable of conquering any and every terrain we have encountered," he added.

Elaborating about what inspired Al Munther Al Hashar to venture into the electric vehicle business, he said, "I grew up around bikes, and I love the riding experience dearly. Just before the COVID-19 pandemic, I owned a traditional dirt bike

which had its challenges in terms of downtime, breakdowns during rides."

"Many of these challenges added up. I had to keep the motorbike upright to avoid leakage, the heavy weight, hefty fuel prices, complex mechanisms that are prone to failure, and general unreliability, after a while, it felt like a burden rather than something I could enjoy."

In major contrast, Sur-Ron motorbikes, particularly starting with the pioneer, The Light Bee

X (LBX), has been beyond reliable and convenient. It provides a thrilling and unique riding experience which motivated the team to dwell into the field of alternative energy.

"During the first 30 days that I owned my first LBX, my colleague Mariam H and I, crossed over 1,000km of various terrains without any major issues that we couldn't solve on the spot with a few Allen keys," Al Munther Al Hashar said.

Explaining Oman's commit-

ments to a greener environment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 how the company would ensure the country's long-term goals on EV infrastructure for environmental conservation and responsible tourism, he said, "Kahrab aims to become a leader in the shift towards electric energy in Oman. We are looking to further our movement to provide clean energy transportation solutions," he said.

"For example, we now proudly offer the first road-legal, Royal

Oman Police (ROP) approved, electric motorbikes," Al Munther Al Hashar added.

When asked about the electric motorbike industry evolving in Oman in the next few years, and the impact the company's unique product hopes to make, Al Munther Al Hashar said, "We predict widespread adoption of electric motorbikes due to their user-friendly nature, and we find that the local culture is shifting to towards more adven-

turous local tourism."

"We are proud that our motorbikes provide such a unique exploring experience allowing adventurers to reach beyond what they could have with any traditional vehicle. Our riders can reach uncharted peaks and wadis," he said.

"We hope to stoke this growing interest in outdoor expeditions and hope to inspire others to explore the hidden gems that The Sultanate has to offer," he added.

National Centre for Oncology offers advanced treatment at Royal Hospital

The oncology centre provides specialised services as per the latest treatments available in genetic or cellular oncology

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The National Centre for Oncology at the Royal Hospital provides the latest treatments in oncology through its various departments under the supervision of a specialised medical staff, and provides integrated care for cancer patients in the Sultanate of Oman, for which it has obtained international accreditations.

The centre witnessed a quantitative expansion and qualitative development in the use of treatments through many clinics, including specialised clinics for children in oncology and haematology, a joint clinic for treating breast cancer, a clinic for treating colorectal cancer, a clinic for treating urinary system, a joint specialised clinic for treating ear, nose and throat cancers at Al Nahda Hospital, and a gynaecology clinic in radiation, a lung cancer clinic and another for haematology.

The centre provides its specialised services according to the latest treatments available in genetic or cellular oncology and targeted and immunotherapy treatments, including immunotherapy to treat children with neuroblastoma, which is one of the most common malignant tumours in children under the age of 5 years.

This treatment is one of the advanced treatments that raise recovery rates to more than 40 per cent above the internationally approved cure rates.

Among the most prominent positive indicators is the centre's ability to receive a newly diagnosed patient on the same day from all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, as the average life expectancy of patients has reached ad-



vanced stages in some types of cancer thanks to the treatment and modern medical technologies available.

The National Centre for Oncology at the Royal Hospital is an integrated centre providing all types of treatment for cancerous tumours by providing chemotherapy and immunotherapy directed through the latest scientific findings of modern genetic medicines.

Statistics issued by the centre indicate that the total number of visitors to the centre during the past year until August amounted to 140,373 patients, distributed among the centre's various departments.

The total number of visitors during this period to the clinical haematology department reached 20,760, and in the adult oncology department, it reached 13,157. In the Department of Pediatric Hematology, it reached 41,657, and in the Department of Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy, 25,760.

The Centre's Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Department receives children under the age of 13, and thus it is the only department in the Sultanate of Oman that specializes in treating solid somatic tumours (children's category), which are musculoskeletal tumours, abdominal tumours, lymphomas, and nervous system tumours. As for cancer and benign and acquired blood diseases, it is treated in mutual coordination with Sultan Qaboos University Hospital.

The total number of patients

received by the centre last year reached 142 children with various cancerous tumours in a year, with brain cancer representing the highest percentage, at 28 per cent, with 40 patients, followed by leukaemia, at 21 per cent, with 30 patients, and then the rest of the tumours.

The centre's pediatric haematology and oncology department is equipped with the latest devices and equipment and has a capacity of up to 24 beds. It receives from 6 to 8 children in one day. The total average number of hospitalised patients is 30, including those in intensive care.

It has a specialised medical staff a highly skilled nursing staff, and doctors on duty around the clock. The Pediatric Outpatient Department includes 3 daily clinics that receive children with leukaemia, brain diseases, sarcoma, and neuroblastoma, with a distinguished medical team of consultant doctors, specialists, and nursing staff.

The Adult Oncology Department provides service around the clock with a distinguished medical team of specialized doctors and qualified nursing staff. Its capacity is 24 beds, 6 of which are for daily care in the ward, 4 for private rooms, and 12 beds for daily care.

The ward receives from one to 12 patients on a daily basis. The daily clinic receives patients for short doses from 7:30 until 2:30, and it includes 12 beds, including 6 for men and 6 for women.

The centre's adult clinical haematology department operates

with a capacity of 12 beds, in addition to 4 beds in isolation rooms. The average patient receives 2-3 patients in the emergency department.

The centre's radiation therapy department provides several services, including in specialized clinics equipped with the latest medical devices and equipment, while radiation therapy patients are placed under medical observation when they need to be admitted. Radiation therapy is a type of cancer treatment by uses intense energy beams to eliminate cancer cells.

Among the achievements that the center has achieved is its obtaining many international and global accreditations since its opening in 2004, including the European UICC accreditation and it's joining the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), where the national centre has been accredited as an integrated centre for providing treatment and palliative care for cancer patients since 2013. The centre was re-accredited again by the European Society for Oncology (ESMO) between 2020-2025 for the coming period after meeting all the requirements of the European Society for Oncology, including the accession of palliative care to the centre.

In terms of international participation, the centre is a member of the International Children's Cancer Society and the SIOB Children's Cancer Society and was recently chosen to be a participating member of the larg-

est American hospital, St. Jude, where joint plans are developed in the treatment of children's cancers to achieve the highest levels of quality in the service provided (PROFILE). It is also a member of POEM Middle East for Pediatric Cancers.

The centre has activated several multi-speciality tumour boards. Where complex or rare cancer cases are discussed, and all newly diagnosed cases are discussed among oncologists and all the specialities that require their presence, such as radiologists, surgical specialities, and histology, so that an integrated treatment plan is drawn up for patients.

The Centre provides its services at international levels by adopting high-quality indicators to verify that it is following high levels of service, including providing treatment to patients diagnosed with blood diseases for adults and children in less than 48 hours from the time the referral arrives to the specialised departments, and that the waiting time for appointments for new cases does not exceed 3 weeks, as countries European and developed countries allow up to 8 weeks and sometimes 3 months to wait for hormonal treatment for breast cancer, for example.

Among the Centre's ongoing and continuing achievements, it launched radiosurgery services in the Department of Radiation Therapy at the National Radiation Center in 2020, which relies on stereotactic radiosurgery and 3D imaging to direct high doses of radiation to the affected area with minimal impact on the surrounding healthy tissue, in addition to the expansion of the marrow transplant unit.

The centre treats rare cancer cases such as heart cancer, where radiation therapy for heart cancer is provided using the latest technologies in the field of radiation. It is rare for the heart to be exposed to radiation, with the patient being able to tolerate treatment for 6 weeks without health problems. A research paper in this regard was published in the journal British Cambridge for the rarity of the event.

The Centre always seeks to find out the latest developments in the treatment of malignant tumors, and has organised annually since

2009 the Muscat Oncology Conference with international and global participation, the most recent of which was the conference held in March of this year.

As is known, health care costs are constantly rising due to the expansion of specialised health services and modern technologies and the rise in drug prices to keep pace with the needs of various medical conditions, such as oncology and cancer medications and newly approved medications, which are expensive medications with limited resources and for which no other therapeutic alternatives are available.

With the development of treatment and modern technologies, cancer patients today enjoy better chances of survival and better health.

This development is accompanied by a continuous escalation in healthcare costs, and this poses a challenge to the health system. Sometimes a medical drug or new technology can deplete the budget allocated to medicines, for example, the cost of 7 medicines. The amount of immunotherapy increased by 25 per cent within one year, and the cost of one dose jumped from OMR630 to OMR 1,068. From this standpoint, the Ministry of Health has implemented several policies to manage drug costs.

The latest report on cancer incidence in (2019) issued by the Ministry of Health, represented by the National Cancer Registry in the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases at the General Directorate of Primary Health Care, reveals that the number of Omanis with cancer reached 2,089 cases by the end of 2019, an increase of 20.4 per cent compared to 2015 (1,735 cases).

At a rate of 78.7 per 100,000 population. The report indicates that the cases of women reached (1,158 cases) more than the cases of men (931 cases) and that colorectal cancer represents the largest percentage among males (13.3 per cent), followed by prostate cancer (12.1 per cent), then stomach cancer (6.9 per cent), while Breast cancer is the most common among females at 29.2 per cent, followed by thyroid cancer at 16.0 per cent, while colorectal cancer represents 7.7 percent.

ROYAL ARMY OF OMAN

Oman's skydiving team takes part in Switzerland event

Times News Service

BERN: The national skydiving team of the Royal Army of Oman participated in the World Skydiving Championship, which began its activities on Saturday in Locarno, Switzerland.

The competition saw the participation of 41 parachute teams representing 16 countries.

The national skydiving team is participating in the 'Accuracy on Target' competition, where the team confirmed its readiness to take on the challenge.

The national skydiving team had held a training camp in the city of Ferrara in Italy.



ASIAN GAMES

Knockout rounds from Sunday

<FROM A1 The pairs of Nuh Al Jalboobi and Mazin Al Hashimi qualified as the best second team in Pool H with two wins from three matches while the other duo of Ahmed Al Hosni and Haitham Al Shreiqi finished No.2 in Pool G.

They will play the knockout rounds on Sunday.

The national hockey team will begin their campaign against China on Sunday. They will then meet Malaysia before facing Thailand in the third pool game on Thursday. Oman will clash with Indonesia on September 30 before concluding their pool engagements against fancied South Korea on October 2.



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA
P B No. 598, P C 611, Thymssa, Nizwa,
Sultanate of Oman

TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are invited from potential vendors / agencies / contractors / companies / individuals for providing the following service for the school for the period from 01-01-2024 to 31-12-2024.

1. Cleaning contract for school building, playground and gardening.
2. Annual Maintenance Contract for Cooling Devices (AC, Water coolers, Refrigerator, etc.)
3. Annual Maintenance Contract for Electrical and plumbing works.
4. Annual Maintenance Contract for Pest Control.
5. Annual Maintenance Contract for Sewage Water removal.

The completed tender/s shall be submitted (in sealed envelopes) directly in the school office during school working hours (latest by 2.30 pm).

The respective tenders shall clearly describe the "name of the service quoted for" on each envelop by the bidding party.

The tenders may also be sent via couriers/speed post to:
The Principal, Indian School Nizwa, PB No. 598, PC - 611, Thymssa, Nizwa, Sultanate of Oman.

The last date of submission of the tenders is within 15 days from the date of this advertisement.

For more details, log on to: www.isnizwa.org (Home page -> RFQ ->)



Tender

Oman chamber of commerce and industry would like to announce the following public tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (irrevocable)	Specialized companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender submission
5/2023	Visual identity design for Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry	100 /-R.O For All companies 25/-R.O for companied holding Riyadh	Companies specialized in visual identity designs and media work	8 October 2023	Before 12 pm 15 October 2023

Companies may obtain the tender documents from the Administration Department at the Second Floor of the chamber's Headquarters in Ruwi, during the official working hours against the payment of tender fees.

Tender Terms:
Provide valued CR,OCCI membership ,Tender Board membership and taxation certificate .

Interested companies should enclose their bids a 1% Bank guarantee/ certified cheque of proposal value issued by one of the banks operating in Oman valid for 90 days from the deadline of submitting the bids addressed in the name of **Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry**. The bids without this temporary guarantee will not be considered.

The bids should be submitted in red waxed envelopes addressed to - Head of main tendering Committee, OCCI, written outside the Number and title of the Tender. No indication about the bidder is allowed on the envelope.

Offers should be deposited in the tender box kept at the Administration Department in the Second floor of OCCI Head office.

OCCI is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bids. It has the right to accept or reject any bids without showing reasons.

Interested companies should submit the Tenders before 12 pm on 15 October 2023
For any inquiries please call : 24763881
Email : Shahla.zadjali@omanchamber.om



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OMAN/WORLD



Oman celebrates 93rd Saudi National Day at Empty Quarter crossing

The celebrations reflect the strong relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the KSA



IBRI: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the 93rd Saudi National Day the celebrations organised by the Secretariat General of the National Celebrations in co-operation with Royal Oman Police (ROP).

The celebration was organised at the Empty Quarter Border Post in the presence of Dr. Mohammed

Al Feraih Al Sharari, Advisor at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in Muscat.

The celebration comprised events welcoming the guests participating in the event from Saudi Arabia besides a number of banners reflecting the deep-rooted and historic relations between the two countries.

ROP Music Wing played pieces

of music accompanied by paragliding show and followed by a song (Oman congratulates KSA) in the company of Al Razha Troupe and other traditional songs in the Governorate of Al Dhahirah.

Dr. Mohammed Al Sharari, Advisor at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Muscat said that the celebrations reflect the strong relations between the Sultanate of



Oman and the KSA. He also hailed the brotherly relations between the two countries and reaffirmed that the Empty Quarter Border Post is vital for land transport and exchange of trade between the two countries.

A number of officials from the two sides and citizens attended the celebration.

-ONA



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GENDER EQUALITY

UNHRC welcomes passage of the Women's Reservation Bill in India

GENEVA: The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk has welcomed the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill in India, which will reserve one-third of seats in the country's Parliament and state assemblies for women.

This historic measure would constitutionally enshrine women's representation in parliament and will be a game-changing step in defending women's right to participation and gender equality in India.



Passed by both Houses
It was passed by both Houses of Parliament.

According to the Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ravina Shamdasani, the UN High Commissioner called on parliamentarians around the world to adopt legislative measures – including, where necessary, gender quotas – in order to ensure women's voices at the centre of their nations' political discourse, in full parity with others.

The Bill requires ratification by at least 50 per cent of the states, and we call for their swift support.

The High Commissioner calls on the Government to implement

the new system as soon as possible, alongside the existing reservation for 'scheduled castes' and 'scheduled Tribes'.

Enabling environment
“We stress the importance of fostering an enabling environment for the participation of women from all backgrounds in public life – which can have profound, positive implications for society as a whole,” the official release read. This is an important step towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as India's obligations under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. – ANI

AT BERLIN'S CHARITE HOSPITAL

Tanzanians demand return of ancestral skulls

BERLIN: Zablon Kiwelu never knew that his grandfather's skull had been gathering dust in a Berlin cellar for decades.

The news was only confirmed at the beginning of September during a workshop at the foot of Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro, where he was presented with a document from the Berlin-based Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (SPK).

“Positive” was written on the document, confirming Kiwelu's relationship to one of the skulls stored at Berlin's Charite hospital.

“I was so happy that after more than a hundred years, we finally know where my grandfather remained,” said the Tanzanian.

“Akida” is written on the skull – the name given to the high-ranking warriors and advisors of the then-leader of the Chagga people in Tanzania.

Zablon Kiwelu's grandfather, Sindato Kiwelu, was the advisor to Chief Mangi Meli, the leader of the Chagga people of Kilimanjaro, during his lifetime, grandson Kiwelu explained. German troops hung him and 18 other Akidas and chiefs in the 19th century.

According to the evidence, the German colonial rulers shipped Sindato Kiwelu's severed skull to Berlin after his execution.

“For the German occupiers, the bones, especially the skulls, were war trophies, for one thing,” explained Valence Silayo, an archaeologist and genealogist at Tanzania's University of Dar es Salaam. On the other hand, the skulls were taken away for scientific research – mostly with racist motives, he said.

Silayo led the search for relatives in Tanzania as well as the workshop and ultimately presented the DNA results to the families.

In a major research project, scientists from Berlin's Museum of Prehistory and Early History, together with colleagues from Rwanda, investigated the origin of around 1,100 human skulls



from Germany's former colonies in East Africa.

Hermann Parzinger, president of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, told DW that it was “a small miracle” to find living relatives for three skulls through DNA analysis and that it was like finding a needle in a haystack.

In addition to the skull of Sindato Kiwelu, two other skulls stored in Berlin could also be assigned without doubt using saliva samples – namely to the Molelia family, whose members live in Kibosho, a district in Tanzania's Kilimanjaro region. One of the two skulls is apparently the descendant of Chief Mangi Sina, who ruled a powerful kingdom in Kibosho during colonial times.

After prolonged warfare, Mangi Sina's army defeated the German Schutztruppen in 1891, but the Germans took revenge in another campaign in 1893. Mangi Sina was defeated, his fortress destroyed and his fighters arrested. The chief died only a few years later, in 1897.

But his son and heir to the throne, Molelia, was a proud warrior who attacked the Germans again, Silayo said. But he was captured.

“On March 2, 1900, he was hanged by the Germans,” he noted. They shipped Molelia's severed head to Berlin. There it lies to this day.

The fact that the Chagga could not bury their leader at the time according to their traditional rituals has had consequences for them to this day, Silayo

acknowledged.

“Because the Chagga follow the iron rule that all relatives may only be buried at Kilimanjaro, nowhere else,” said Silayo.

If the rites are not followed, and the dead are not buried properly, then “their spirit continues to wander to this day,” the archaeologist explained.

“Since then, the Chagga explain many epidemics, economic failures, crop failures or other bad things with this spirit that finds no rest.” Relatives are therefore calling for the human remains to be returned to Tanzania as soon as possible.

“For the Germans, it may be a symbolic act,” Silayo said. But for the descendants in Tanzania, the whole thing has much greater significance.

Silayo pointed out that Germany is now a close partner country of Tanzania, and the German government finances numerous development projects in the country, but the colonial history should not be forgotten because of that.

“The Germans have to take responsibility and acknowledge that what they did was against human rights. That it was not right and that they apologize for it,” said Silayo. “And then these aid projects will have more meaning.”

Zablon Kiwelu said he does not know what will happen to his grandfather's remains. The idea of displaying the skull in a museum has been considered. – nw

Full story @timesofoman.com/world





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Australia backs India, Japan to be made permanent UNSC members

During her address at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Wong stressed for greater permanent and non-permanent representation for Africa, Latin America, and Asia

NEW YORK: Calling for Security Council reforms, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong backed India and Japan to be made permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. During her address at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Friday, Wong stressed for greater permanent and non-permanent representa-



tion for Africa, Latin America, and Asia. “For UNSC’s contribution to African Union-led operations. Our commitment to peace and security is why Australia seeks a seat in the Security Council for the year 2029-30. And it is why we pur-

sue Security Council reforms. We must ensure greater permanent and non-permanent representation for Africa, Latin America, Asia including permanent seats for India and Japan. And we must demand more of permanent members including constraints on the

use of veto,” she said during her address. Earlier on Wednesday, Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa had also backed India and Brazil to be given permanent membership of a reformed Security Council.

“...The concept of security corresponds to a world that no longer exists. Portugal has defended that countries like Brazil and India become permanent members. This decision should be made. These countries cannot be ignored,” he said during his address at the UNGA session. Earlier, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, during the G20 summit, had also made an endorsement of India’s bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council and said his nation would be “proud” if a country like India became a full member of the UNSC. “We would be proud if a country like India became a permanent member of the UN Security Council. As you know, the world is bigger and larger than five (permanent members). And when we say the world is larger than five, what we mean is that it’s not only about the US, UK, France, China and Russia. We don’t want to have just these five countries on the Security Council,” he said on the concluding day of the G20 Leaders Summit in New Delhi. Notably, reforms in the global systems have been an issue continuously raised by India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the

global stage. During his concluding address at the G20 Leaders Summit here in the national capital, PM Modi reiterated his stance of making global systems in accordance with the “realities of the present” and took the example of the United Nations Security Council. “When the UN was established, the world at that time was completely different from today. At that time there were 51 founding members in the UN. Today the number of countries included in the UN is around 200. Despite this, the permanent members in UNSC are still the same,” he said. The Prime Minister said that a lot has changed in the world since that time, be it transport, communication, health, or education, every sector has been transformed. “These new realities should be reflected in our new global structure. It is a law of nature that individuals and organisations that fail to adapt to changing times inevitably lose their relevance. We must think with an open mind as to what is the reason that many regional forums have come into existence in the past years, and they are also proving to be effective,” he further said.

— ANI

EMBASSY IN KATHMANDU

India, Nepal development partnership has gathered further momentum

KATHMANDU: The Indian Embassy in Nepal on Saturday said the India-Nepal development partnership has gathered further momentum. “India-Nepal #DevelopmentPartnership gathers further momentum! Translating commitment made during PM @cm-prachanda visit to India (June 2023) to strive for increasing quantum of electricity import to India to 10,000 MW in the next 10 years,” the Indian Embassy in Nepal wrote on ‘X’ formerly Twitter on Saturday. “Additional 180 MW of electricity export to India approved. Nepal can now export 631 MW power to India, medium term and real-time markets for export of power available, besides day ahead market, addition of 132 kV Tanakpur-Mahendrangar transmission line for power export,” the embassy wrote. The Embassy said that further impetus has been provided to the India-Nepal development partnership since Nepal PM Prachanda’s visit to India in 2023. The embassy gave examples of the Kurtha-Bijalpura rail link operationalization to enhance people-to-people connectivity and the inauguration and handing over of community development projects built by Indian grant.

The Embassy said that further impetus has been provided to the India-Nepal development partnership since Nepal PM Prachanda’s visit to India in 2023.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently had a telephone conversation with Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ and reviewed several aspects of India-Nepal bilateral cooperation. Moreover, the two leaders also followed up on discussions held during Prachand’s India visit in order to advance the bilateral partnership and strengthen the two countries’ deep bonds of friendship, the Prime Minister’s Office said in an official release.

— ANI

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I2U2 Group announces joint space venture

WASHINGTON, DC: The I2U2 group of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the United States on Friday announced a new joint space venture that aims to create a “unique space-based tool” for policymakers, institutions, and entrepreneurs. The I2U2 group of nations made the announcement on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The US Department of State spokesperson in a press release said, “Under the I2U2 group’s focus area of space, the governments of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States, all signatories of the Artemis Accords, announced a new joint space venture on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.” The press release further reads, “Primarily using the space-based observation data and capabilities of the four I2U2 partner countries, this project aims to create a unique space-based tool for policymakers, institutions, and entrepreneurs, enabling their work on environmental and climate change challenges and furthering our cooperation in the applications of space data for the greater good of humanity.” Following the triumphant soft landing of Chandrayaan 3 on the lunar South Pole, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) also launched the Aditya-L1 Mission. This historic mission



heralds India’s first venture into space-based solar observatories, aiming to study the Sun in unprecedented detail. As India now stands alongside the United States, Russia, and China as one of the selected few nations to achieve a successful lunar soft landing, it is evident that India is charting a bold trajectory in space exploration. The I2U2 grouping consists of India, Israel, UAE and the US. The I2U2 Grouping was conceptualized during the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the four countries held on 18 October 2021, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. I2U2 is aimed to encourage joint investments in six mutually identified areas such as water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security. On Thursday, the I2U2 group launched a website to strengthen the public-private partnership in several sectors and invited private

nesses to interact and collaborate on projects and partnerships in different parts of the world.” The I2U2 aims to mobilize private sector capital and expertise to achieve a variety of goals, including modernizing infrastructure, advancing low-carbon development pathways, and improving public health, according to the US Department of State. United States official Jose W Fernandez said, “We are thrilled to launch (the website). This is a new public-private enterprise partnership between the I2U2 member states. Together we will work to increase the awareness of I2U2 initiatives for business communities.” Israeli official Ronen Levi called on private companies from relevant sectors to “get on board and take part in new rising business opportunities.” The I2U2 website will be an important platform for private sectors which will enable private countries to submit their project details and increase their ability to share new technologies and trade collaboration between four nations,” said the Director-General of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meanwhile, UAE’s Minister of State Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh asserted that the creation of a website will help modernise infrastructure in the member countries, decarbonise industries, enhance public health and promote the development of green technologies.

— ANI

FORMER PENTAGON OFFICIAL

‘Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made huge mistake’

WASHINGTON DC: Former Pentagon official Michael Rubin has said Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made a huge mistake by alleging that India had links with the killing of Khalistan terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar and said that the premier has not been able to back his allegations. “Prime Minister Trudeau I think has made a huge mistake. He has made allegations in a manner which he hasn’t been able to back. Either he was shooting from the hip and he doesn’t have the evidence to support the accusations he made against the government. There is something there, in which case he needs to explain why this government was sheltering a terrorist,” the former Pentagon official said when asked about his views on the Canadian PM’s allegations against the Indian government. Trudeau had on Monday inside Canada’s Parliament accused the Indian government of being behind the fatal shooting of Nijjar.



Nijjar, a designated terrorist in India, was gunned down outside a Gurdwara, in a parking area in Canada’s Surrey, British Columbia on June 18. On Friday the Canadian PM said that Ottawa had shared allegations regarding the killing of Nijjar with India weeks ago. While addressing a joint press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Trudeau said, “In regards to India, Canada has shared the credible allegations that I talked about on

Monday. With India, we did that many weeks ago. We are there to work constructively with India and we hope that they engage with us so that we can get to the bottom of this very serious matter.” Rubin who is also a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where he specializes in Iran, Turkey, and South Asia, said: “As a former consumer of intelligence, I can say that oftentimes the intelligence we see whether it’s a telephone intercept or something else, isn’t as black and white, isn’t as cut and dry. I mean, certainly, that was the case with regard to the Iraq War.” He further added: “So when you have a situation like this, perhaps Prime Minister Trudeau raised the issue, but there wasn’t necessarily consensus on what he meant. And regardless, let’s not fool ourselves, Nijjar was not simply a plumber, any more than Osama bin Laden was a construction engineer. He had blood on his hands from multiple attacks.”

— ANI

Sultanate of Oman MINISTRY CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH					
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby given notice of tenders for the following projects					
TENDR. No.	Project Category	LOCATION	Grade In Tender Board Registration	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
17/2023	Services	CLEANING SERVICES TO ENTIRE CAMPUS AND FACILITIES TO MINISTRY'S VARIOUS BUILDINGS AT MUSCAT GOVERNORATE FOR THE PERIOD OF 1ST JANUARY 2023 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2023	Excellent Grade	05/10/2023	30/10/2023
18/2023	Services	MAINTENANCE OF LANDSCAPING WORKS TO MINISTRY'S CAMPUSES IN MUSCAT GOVERNORATE FOR THE PERIOD OF 1ST JANUARY 2023 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2023	First Grade	05/10/2023	30/10/2023
19/2023	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	MAINTENANCE & OPERATION OF ELECTRO-MECHANICAL AND AIR-CONDITIONING UNITS TO MINISTRY'S VARIOUS BUILDINGS IN MUSCAT GOVERNORATE FOR THE PERIOD 1st JANUARY 2023 TO 31st DECEMBER 2023	First Grade	05/10/2023	30/10/2023
20/2023	Services	CONSTRUCTION OF GRASSED FOOTBALL PITCH WITH AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM, SUPPLY AND INSULATION OF FLOOD LIGHT AT ALSALAM SPORT CLUB (SHINAS BRANCH)	Excellent & First Grade	05/10/2023	30/10/2023
21/2023	Supply	SUPPORT LIBRARIES WITH THE BASIC EQUIPMENT OF THE OPERATING SYSTEM R'D TECHNOLOGY	Third Grade	05/10/2023	30/10/2023
Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om) The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site					
INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402210 or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om					

Team India makes history

Following the win in the Mohali ODI against Australia on Friday, India are now the top-ranked team in ODIs and also occupy No.1 spot in Tests and T20Is

MOHALI: India have moved past Pakistan to become the No. 1 ranked team in ODIs ahead of the World Cup at home. As a result, they now occupy the top spot across formats, having already been No. 1 in Tests and T20Is. India are only the second team in men's cricket history to achieve this feat after South Africa did it in August 2012. India are on 116 rating points,



one ahead of Pakistan, after their victory over Australia on Friday. However, they could still slip down the table if Australia win the remaining two matches in the series. Over the course of this month, India, Pakistan and Australia were all in contention for the top spot. Pakistan emerged with it at the end of the Asia Cup, even though they had a poor tournament.

Australia's challenge fell away after they lost three straight ODIs to South Africa. India went on to win their eighth Asia Cup title after consigning Sri Lanka to a heavy defeat in the final and backed that performance up by dispatching Pat Cummins' team with ease on Friday. Mohammed Shami picked up a career-best five-for (5/51) and four of their top six scored half-centuries.

India also have four players occupying the No.1 positions across formats: Suryakumar Yadav is the No.1 batter in T20Is, Mohammed Siraj is the No.1 bowler in ODIs while R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are at the top of the bowling and all-rounder charts in Tests. On Friday, Suryakumar Yadav hit 50, his highest score in 20 ODI innings, thus helping India successfully chase 277 after they had lost 4 for 43 during a tense middle-overs period. KL Rahul, the stand-in India captain, continued easing back into international cricket with an undefeated 58, while openers Shubman Gill and Ruturaj Gaikwad also scored fifties. India are set to play two more ODIs against Australia, in Indore and Rajkot respectively. They will also be playing two World Cup warm-up matches before opening their campaign in the tournament proper against Australia on October 8 in Chennai. **Brief scores:** Australia 276 (David Warner 52, Josh Inglis 45; Mohammed Shami 5-51) lost to India 281/5 in 48.4 overs (Shubman Gill 74, Ruturaj Gaikwad 71; Adam Zampa 2-57).

HASAN ALI NAMED REPLACEMENT

Pakistan's Shah ruled out of World Cup due to injury

LAHORE: Pakistan pace bowler Naseem Shah on Friday was ruled out of their squad for the 50-over World Cup in India because of a shoulder injury. Shah suffered the injury on 11 September in Pakistan's Asia Cup match against India and requires surgery, then three to four months recovery. The 20-year-old has taken 32 wickets in 14 one-day internationals (ODIs). Fellow right-arm quick Hasan Ali, who has taken 91 ODI wickets in 60 games, replaces Shah. Haris Rauf, another right-arm quick bowler, is included as he recovers from a right side strain suffered in the Asia Cup. Chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq said: "This team has performed wonderfully well over the last couple of years and that is why we have shown faith in the same bunch."



The World Cup starts on October 5, with Pakistan's first game against the Netherlands in Hyderabad the following day. Pakistan are seeking to win the tournament for the first time since 1992. **World Cup squad:** Babar Azam (c), Shadab Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Mohammad Rizwan, Saud Shakeel, Iftikhar Ahmed, Salman Ali Agha, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Afridi, Mohammad Wasim. Travelling reserves: Mohammad Haris, Abrar Ahmed and Zaman Khan. - Agencies

TOURNAMENT STARTS ON OCTOBER 5

ODI World Cup 2023 winner to receive US\$4mn in prize money

DUBAI: As in 2019, the winner of this year's ODI World Cup will be awarded prize money of US\$4mn. The ICC has allocated a total of \$10mn for the tournament, which begins on October 5 in Ahmedabad. US\$2mn have been set aside for the runner-up while the losing semi-finalists can also bank on a sum of US\$800,000. The other six teams will exit the competition at the end of the group stages with US\$100,000 each, which essentially means everyone taking part in the World Cup are assured of this sum of money. The winner of each league match is also assured \$40,000. India qualified by virtue of being hosts while New Zealand, England, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Australia, Afghanistan and South Africa progressed from the



2020-23 ODI Super League. Sri Lanka and the Netherlands came through the qualifying tournament held in June and July 2023. This World Cup follows a simple round-robin format with all teams playing against each other for a total of 45 league match-

es. The top four will qualify for the semi-finals, to be played in Mumbai on November 15 and in Kolkata on November 16. The semi-finals and the final will have reserve days. The defending champions England and the runner-up in 2019 New Zealand will kick off the competition in two weeks' time. The hosts, India, will begin their campaign against five-time winners Australia on October 8 and then build up to the group stage's marquee clash with Pakistan on October 14. The matches are spread across 46 days and 10 cities with the final scheduled on November 19 in Ahmedabad. After the recent ICC decision to offer equal prize money for both men's and women's events, this sets the precedent for the next Women's World Cup in 2025.

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CRUDE OIL DELIVERY RISES
The actual delivery volumes of Oman crude oil on the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) at the end of the first half of 2023 increased by 18 percent, while the trading volumes of the crude witnessed a remarkable growth of 15 percent. **> B2**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX WEEKLY TRADING
The Omani stock market extended its decline this week, recording a three-week long slide compared to last month's levels and closed below the previous resistance level, according to an analyst. **> B2**

Duqm Refinery exports its first diesel shipment

This coincides with the company getting closer to achieving commercial operation, with trial operations continuing to progress, exceeding 81 percent, while the percentage of construction work has exceeded more than 99 percent



exporting products at the Port of Duqm, all of which were successfully tested.
During the past months, the Ras Markaz crude oil tanks received more than three million barrels of Omani and Kuwaiti crude oil, which were later pumped from Ras Markaz to the refinery complex in Duqm via the oil transportation pipeline. The trial operations also included the export of the first shipments of naphtha and fuel oil via product storage and export dock at Duqm Port.
It is noteworthy that the Duqm Refinery Project is a joint project between the OQ Group and Kuwait Petroleum International Company and is located in the heart of the Special Economic Zone in Duqm, which is distinguished by its strategic location, which is a competitive advantage due to its location on the path of international shipping lines on the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, and this would facilitate marine transportation activities to and from the region.

The project includes three main packages capable of producing diesel, jet fuel, naphtha, liquefied petroleum gas, sulfur, and petroleum coal. The first package includes the main processing units at the refinery, the second package includes facilities and services, and the third package includes three sub-packages: storage and export facilities for liquid and bulk petroleum products located in the port of Duqm, crude oil storage facilities in Ras Markaz, and a pipeline to transport crude oil from Ras Markaz to Duqm Refinery with a length of 81km.
Duqm Refinery is the first Gulf refinery to rely on imported crude oil in its operations and is the largest investment project between two Gulf countries in the refineries and petrochemicals sector. The vision of Duqm Refinery is to become a world-class refining company committed to providing high-quality oil products to customers all over the world, which is Which would enhance economic

growth in the Duqm region, as well as enhance the Sultanate's refining position to exceed 500,000 barrels per day of refined products upon the start of operations of the Duqm refinery, which has a capacity of 230,000 barrels per day and is capable of dealing with various types of crude oil, including Omani and Kuwaiti crude.
The refinery is considered one of the most prominent tributaries of development in the economic zone, with the direct and indirect job opportunities it provides and growth and development opportunities for projects directly and indirectly related to the refinery.
The project is also one of the major projects being implemented in the economic zone, and it serves as the starting line for the plan to transform Duqm into one of the major projects implemented in the economic zone. It is the largest industrial and economic centre in the region, and there is no doubt that this step will yield many positive results for the local community.



Credit extended to banks in Oman grows 8.7% to over OMR30 billion

MUSCAT: The report issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) indicated that credit granted by banks in Oman increased by 8.7 percent to reach OMR30.3 billion at the end of July 2023.
The report issued by the CBO indicated that the amount of credit granted to the private sector rose by 9.3 percent to reach OMR25.5 billion at the end of July 2023.
Data related to its distribution among various sectors indicate that non-financial corporations held the largest share, which amounted to 45.9 percent at the end of July 2023, followed by the household sector at 44.5 percent. The remaining was distributed among the financial companies sector at 5.9 percent and other sectors at 3.7 percent.

Total deposits in the banking sector recorded a growth of 7 percent, reaching OMR27.6 billion at the end of July 2023.
Within this total, private sector deposits in the banking system witnessed an increase of 6.5 percent to reach OMR18.2 billion at the end of July 2023.
When looking at the distribution of the total deposit base of the private sector among the various sectors, the numbers indicate that the household sector held the largest share, which amounted to about 51.1 percent, followed by the non-financial corporations and financial companies with a share of 30.4 percent and 15.6 percent, respectively, while the remaining 2.9 percent was distributed among other sectors. **-OMA**



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GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR SWITZ GROUP FACTORY



Ground Breaking Ceremony for Switz Group Factory, Sohar Industrial Area, Sohar, Oman.

Ashiq Arif Operations head, Bilal Potrick Director of Operations Javed Potrick Director Purchase and contact Project Engineers and Abrar site team

SOHAR: Abrar Middle East, a reputable construction firm with a legacy dating back to 2006, has been chosen as the lead contractor for the reconstruction of Switz Group's Sohar factory.

Following a devastating fire incident, Switz Group's decision to partner with Abrar Middle East underscores the company's reputation for excellence. The revamped Sohar factory will boast advanced refrigeration systems and a sturdy concrete structure tailored for frozen product manufacturing. Remarkably, Abrar Middle East

is committed to completing this ambitious project within just nine months. Noteworthy is the two-phase expansion plan, demonstrating Switz Group's dedication to innovation and growth. Phase one will restore the factory's previous functionalities, while phase two will enhance its capacity to meet growing market demands.

Amidst excitement, the ground-breaking ceremony took place on April 18, with the project team and key members, including Javed Potrick, Director Purchase and Contracts, Bilal Potrick,

Director of Operations, and Ashiq Arif, Operation Head, in attendance. This milestone marks a remarkable opportunity for the company to spread its wings in Sohar, as they look forward to executing more projects while adhering to client budgets and timelines.

Mujeebur Rahman, the Managing Director at Dimx Atelier, the Dubai-based consultant for the project, extended his best wishes to both parties and reassured them of his unwavering support throughout the project until its completion and handover. Imran Potrick, Chairman of Abrar Middle East, pledges to complete the project ahead of schedule, backed by a stellar track record of timely completions.

Abrar Middle East has established a strong presence in Oman and the UAE, successfully executing a diverse range of projects including industrial complexes, warehouses, logistics centers, data facilities, and upscale villas. With ambitious expansion plans into Saudi Arabia and Qatar, they remain steadfast in their commitment to delivering exceptional results that meet their clients' specific needs.



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MARKET

Forum to focus on promoting investment in green industries

Duqm Economic Forum will address current advancements in the green industry sector as well as the most prominent initiatives that have attracted investment to Sezad and the Sultanate of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Duqm Special Economic Zone (Sezad) will host the Duqm Economic Forum on October 16 and 17.

The event is organised by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) with the support of several government agencies and the participation of many private sector companies.

Over two days, the forum will address current advancements in the green industry sector as well as the most prominent initiatives that have attracted investment to Sezad and the Sultanate of Oman as a whole.

These topics will be discussed in light of the growing local and international trend towards green industries and renewable energy.

This is in line with Opaz’s focus on green industries, encouragement of investment in this field in response to the directives of His

Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the fact that 2050 has been set as the goal year for achieving carbon neutrality at all levels.

Among the strategic investments that Sezad attracted in the green industries sector are the Vale Green Iron Production Complex, the Jindal Shadeed Group’s green iron production initiatives, and the reduced iron factory that Kobe Steel and two Japanese companies, Mitsui and Partners Limited, will construct. The local economy will be valued more and small and medium-sized companies will have more business opportunities, among other economic benefits. These activities are crucial from a strategic standpoint to achieve the Sultanate of Oman’s goals of reducing carbon emissions.

Several discussion sessions covering the benefits of renewable energy in Duqm, supply and demand trends, consumer requirements, and chances for successful invest-



This talk will also cover the interest in green industries. The debate will also examine the opportunities for Duqm to attract these industries, as well as the general demand for these products.

The forum will showcase significant investments made in the Duqm refinery and crude oil storage terminal, the largest oil storage and export project in the Middle East, as well as the opportunities it offers to petrochemical manufacturers looking to tap into the expanding markets associated with the switch to clean energy and modern technology.

Additionally, the emphasis will be on decarbonisation methods, the volume of petrochemical demand, facilities for converting crude oil into chemicals, chemical recycling, research and development, innovation, and cutting-edge technology in the industry.

Several local, regional, and international companies that invest in Sezad will attend the discussion. The forum is anticipated to host in-depth discussions from a large number of experts, specialists, and potential investors in the green industries sector and other sectors from the Sultanate of Oman and abroad. The attendees will get the chance to learn more about the current initiatives in the area, its favourable investment environment the right climate for Duqm, and its significance for the achievement of investment in the region’s many economic sectors.

REMARKABLE GROWTH

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT

Oman crude oil delivery through DME rises 18% in first half of 2023

DUBAI: The actual delivery volumes of Oman crude oil on the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) at the end of the first half of 2023 increased by 18 percent, while the trading volumes of the crude witnessed a remarkable growth of 15 percent.

Raed bin Khalifa Al Salami, Director General of the DME, explained that the Oman crude oil futures contract continues to attract a large number of traders from around the world, which confirms the status and importance of the contract in global oil markets as an ideal tool for hedging and managing financial risks.

He told the Oman News Agency that trading volumes for the month of delivery rose from 361 million barrels in the first half of 2022 to 415 million barrels during the



same period of the current year, and trading volumes reached 106 million barrels from March to August 2023, compared to 90 million barrels for the previous year.

Raed Al-Salami added that the first half of the current year was characterised by positivity at various levels. This is due to the DME’s

continued commitment to transparency and providing an integrated and secure trading platform, stressing the DME’s keenness to provide traders with the tools that enable them to manage financial risks in the oil markets, which are characterised by daily fluctuations and fluctuations. - ONA

JPMorgan to add India to its emerging-markets bond index

NEW DELHI: In a significant development that could pull in foreign funds into India’s debt market JPMorgan Chase & Co will add Indian government bonds to its benchmark emerging-market index starting June 28 in 2024.

The inclusion of the index follows the Indian government’s introduction of the “FAR program in 2020 and substantive market reforms for aiding foreign portfolio investments,” the American multinational investment bank JP Morgan said in a statement on Thursdays.

The inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JPMorgan Government Bond Index-Emerging Markets index could be seen as yet another sign of its growing appeal to global investors as it continues to remain one of the fastest-grow-



ing major economies.

This development holds significance particularly as various global manufacturing behemoths are looking at India to set up shop as part of their China+1 diversification strategy in a post-pandemic world order.

JP Morgan on Thursday said India is expected to have a maxi-

mum 10 per cent weightage in its Government Bond Index-Emerging Markets.

“Inclusion of the IGBs will be staggered over a 10-month period starting June 28, 2024, through March 31, 2025 (i.e., inclusion of 1 per cent weight per month),” JP Morgan added.

Currently, as many as 23 Indian government bonds with a combined notional value of USD 330 billion are index-eligible.

Foreign investors are already making a beeline to place their bets in India’s equity markets. Since March through August, foreign portfolio investors have remained net buyers in Indian stock markets. In September, however, the quantum of fund inflow had slowed and remained on the negative side. -ANI

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MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

Omani stock market extends its decline in weekly trading

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market extended its decline this week, recording a three-week long slide compared to last month’s levels and closed below the previous resistance level, according to an analyst.

“The main index saw significant volatility and could continue trending toward its lowest point this year,” said Hani Abuagla, Senior Market Analyst at XTB.

“While the market has been trading with some volatility and in an unclear direction throughout the year, it could be under additional selling pressure if it breaches below support levels,” he added.

The market recorded significant declines across the financial, industry and services sectors with only a minority of stocks recording a positive performance, said Hani Abuagla.

“The main index was weighed by the negative sentiment and fell despite the large increase in trading volumes and value which neared the highest levels this year. Stocks reacted with significant volatility after the Federal Reserve interest rate meeting,” he added.

The US central bank maintained a hawkish tone and has indicated its expectations for interest rates to remain at high levels for a long-

er period of time. “Maintaining a tight monetary policy could continue to weigh on the Omani stock market and on the local economy as a whole. In this regard, traders could continue monitoring new economic data for clues about how monetary policy could evolve,” said Hani Abuagla.

While bank loan volumes in Oman continue to see growth, a tight monetary policy could weigh on demand as financing costs could remain elevated for longer. As a result, the Omani banks could see some risks to the downside over the medium term.

On the other hand, the developments in oil markets could support the market to a certain extent as prices could continue to in-

MSX index falls 49 points

MUSCAT:

Trading data issued by the Muscat Stock Exchange indicated the main index fell by 49 points and closed at 4,676 points, and the financial sector index recorded the highest declines at 126 points, the industrial sector index declined 90 points, the services sector index 44 points, and the Sharia index fell by 5 points.

The demand of individual investors led to an increase in the number of deals executed last week to 2,329 deals, compared to 1,655 deals in the previous week, recording an increase of 40 percent, and the trading value rose from about OMR11.7 million to

more than omr16.4 million.

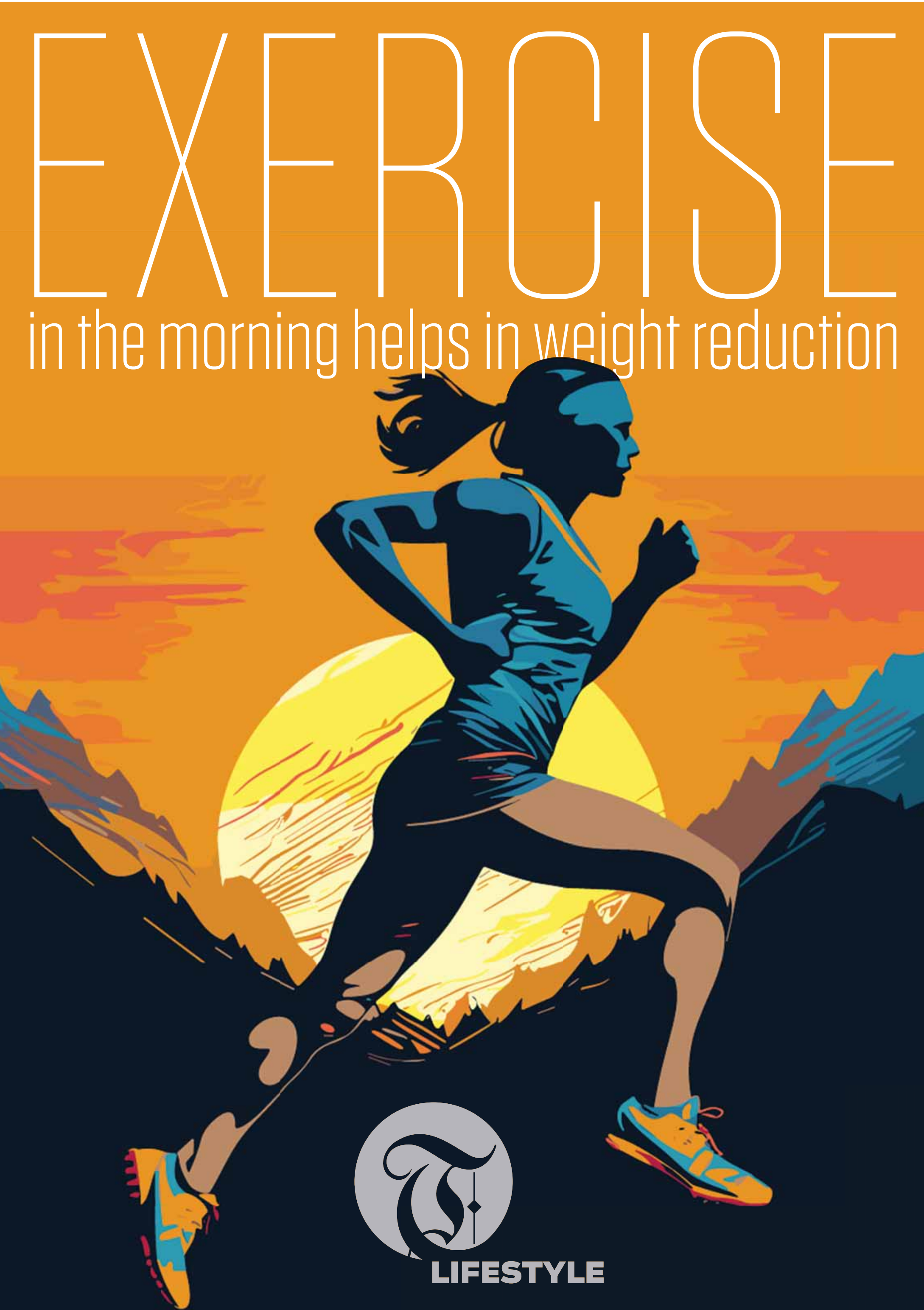
Al Nahda Services stock came at the forefront of the most traded stocks in terms of trading value with OMR5.3 million, representing 32.2 percent of the total trading value, Omantel came next with OMR3.5 million and Bank Muscat saw trades worth OMR2.58 million. Ooredoo trades amounted to OMR1.33 million and Bank Nizwa ranked next with trades worth OMR866,000.

The shares of Building Materials Industry, Oman Qatari Insurance, Tajaer Finance, Oman Cables Industry, and Oman United Insurance were at the forefront of the most rising stocks. -ONA

crease. Oil markets have been on a strong uptrend and have benefited from tight supply levels.

“The Omani stock market followed other markets. In the US and Europe, stocks recorded losses as well. In the GCC, the Saudi

stock market also recorded a negative week while the Abu Dhabi and Qatar stock markets were trading sideways. Conversely, the Dubai stock market was able to rebound strongly,” said Hani Abuagla.



Despite conflicting epidemiological results regarding the best time to exercise for weight loss, a study suggests that the best time of day to increase the relationship between daily moderate to vigorous physical activity and obesity is between the hours of 7 and 9 in the morning.

The study was published in Obesity, the premier magazine of The Obesity Society (TOS).

Researchers investigated whether the diurnal pattern of accelerometer-measured moderate to vigorous physical activity changes the association between such human movement and obesity in the current study.

“Our study provided a novel tool to explore the diurnal pattern of physical activity and to investigate its impact on health outcomes,” said Tongyu Ma, PhD, assistant professor, Health Sciences Department, Franklin Pierce University, Rindge, N.H.; and the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytech-

nic University, Hong Kong, China. Ma is the corresponding author of the study.

Previous study has focused on the frequency, intensity, and duration of physical activity, according to experts. A Little research has looked into the diurnal pattern of accelerometer-measured physical activity to classify the time of day when people move. It is unknown whether cumulative physical activity at various times of the day is similarly associated with obesity.

Furthermore, it is unclear if fulfilling the physical activity standards (150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity) in various patterns is equally beneficial for reducing obesity.

Researchers used data from the 2003–2004 and 2005–2006 cycles of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention because accelerometry was implemented during that time. A total of 5,285 participants were cross-

sectionally analyzed.

The diurnal pattern of objectively measured moderate to vigorous physical activity was classified into three categories by K-means clustering analysis: morning, mid-day and evening. K-means is an established algorithm that is commonly used to identify hidden patterns in unlabeled data sets.

Results revealed a strong linear association between moderate to vigorous physical activity and obesity in the morning group, whereas a weaker curvilinear connection was found in the midday and evening groups.

Participants who met the physical activity guidelines in the morning cluster had a lower body mass index and waist circumference than those in the other clusters. Self-reported dietary recall indicated that participants in the morning cluster had a healthier diet and less daily energy intake per unit of body weight compared with other clusters.

The study’s authors also found that participants in the morning cluster

spent a significantly higher amount of time on sedentary behaviour than the participants in the other clusters. Despite the longer duration of sedentary time, the lower body mass index and waist circumference outcomes in the morning group persisted.

Overall, participants in the morning cluster were 10-to-13 years older than the two other groups. The morning cluster also had the highest percentage of female participants among the three groups. The majority of participants in the morning group were primarily non-Hispanic White, had a college or higher education, and had never used tobacco or alcohol.

“Our findings propose that the diurnal pattern of moderate to vigorous physical activity could be another important dimension to describe the complexity of human movement,” Ma and his colleagues stated in the study.

Rebecca Krukowski, PhD, a clinical psychologist with expertise in behavioural weight management, commented, “This is exciting new research that is consistent with a

common tip for meeting exercise goals—that is, schedule exercise in the morning before emails, phone calls or meetings that might distract you.”

However, Krukowski said, since this is a cross-sectional study, “it is not known whether people who exercise consistently in the morning may be systematically different from those who exercise at other times, in ways that were not measured in this study. For example, people who exercise regularly in the morning could have more predictable schedules, such as being less likely to be shift workers or less likely to have caregiving responsibilities that impede morning exercise.

Predictable schedules could have other advantageous effects on the weight that were not measured in this study, such as with sleep length/quality and stress levels. In addition, the ‘morning larks’ who consistently rise early enough for morning exercise may be biologically different from their ‘night owl’ counterparts.” -ANI

Verstappen bags Japanese pole

Red Bull driver returns to form after his disappointment in Singapore to qualify on top at Suzuka

SUZUKA: Red Bull's Max Verstappen put in a stunning performance to set pole position for the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka on Saturday.

The Dutchman was a massive 0.581 seconds clear of the impressive Oscar Piastri in second, 0.035secs ahead of McLaren team-mate Lando Norris.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was fourth, ahead of Red Bull's Sergio Perez, who was 0.773secs slower than Verstappen.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was sixth, ahead of Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and George Russell.

Alpha Tauri's Yuki Tsunoda earned a cheer from the local fans with ninth place, ahead of the Aston Martin of Fernando Alonso.

Verstappen came to Suzuka expecting to return to form after his record run of 10 consecutive victories was ended in Singapore, as well as Red Bull's clean sweep of the season so far.

His rivals said that, everything being normal, Red Bull would dominate in Japan, and so it has proved.

The 25-year-old topped all three practice sessions and all three parts of qualifying. He will surely take his 13th victory in 16 races on Sunday if he has a problem-free race.

"Incredible weekend so far and



especially in qualifying when you can really push it to the limit, the car felt really nice," Verstappen said.

"We had a bad weekend in Singapore but I already felt from the preparation we had that this was going to be a good track.

"You never know how good it is going to be but from lap one it has felt really nice and to be on pole is fantastic."

Piastri excelled on his first visit to Suzuka, renowned as the most challenging and rewarding circuit on the calendar, and pipping Norris at such a venue underlines why McLaren extended his contract to the end of 2026, a new deal announced on Thursday before the weekend.

He went second fastest on his first run but failed to improve on his second, admitting to making

mistakes in the second and third sectors after improving in the first.

Piastri, who was last on the front row for the sprint race at the Belgian Grand Prix, said: "It has been a really good weekend for the team so far. We have some upgrades on the car, happy to be second and third.

The three drivers were well clear of the field - Verstappen was 0.240 seconds ahead of the McLarens with Sergio Perez's Red Bull 0.5secs further back.

After a difficult three races, in which he was beaten by Sainz, Leclerc won the internal Ferrari battle convincingly in Japan, ending up 0.308secs ahead of the Spaniard.

Perez managed to split the Ferraris but his deficit to Verstappen was humbling for the Mexican.

It proved a difficult weekend for Mercedes, the car's weakness in

high-speed corners exposed, and Hamilton was a second slower than his 2021 title rival, but managed to end Russell's run of form and beat the younger man by 0.311secs.

Towards the back, Logan Sargeant did his hopes of staying at Williams next year no good at all by crashing at the end of his first lap in the first session out of the last corner.

The car snapped under power and then spun into the wall, bringing out a red flag.

Sergeant admitted the crash had been caused by "a heavy right foot". Amid speculation that he could be replaced by Liam Lawson, who has impressed for Alpha Tauri as a stand-in for the injured Daniel Ricciardo, he said: "These mistakes are killing me, but it is what it is." - Agencies

FLICK'S SUCCESSOR



Former Bayern boss named Germany coach

BERLIN: Germany have appointed Julian Nagelsmann as manager of the national team on Friday on a contract until July 2024. The 36-year-old succeeds Hansi Flick, who was sacked after a poor run of results, culminating in a 4-1 friendly defeat by Japan recently.

Nagelsmann has been out of work since he was sacked by Bayern Munich in March after less than two years in charge.

Germany are hosts of next summer's European Championship finals, which run from 14 June to 14 July 2024. "We have a European Championship in our own country. That's something special - something that happens every few decades," said Nagelsmann. "I have a great desire to take on this challenge. We will be a close-knit group next year."

Nagelsmann's first match in charge will be a friendly against the United States in Connecticut on 14 October. - Agencies

LAVER CUP

Team World dominate day one against Team Europe

VANCOUVER: Defending champions Team World won all four matches against Team Europe to dominate day one of the Laver Cup on Friday.

Ben Shelton, Francisco Cerundolo and Felix Auger-Aliassime all triumphed in their singles matches in Vancouver.

Frances Tiafoe and Tommy Paul then completed a clean sweep in the doubles for Team World.

The three-day team tournament is viewed as tennis's answer to golf's Ryder Cup but is missing the likes of Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

The first team to reach 13 points will lift the trophy. Matches on day one were each worth one point (meaning Team World are 4-0 up), with two points on offer for each victory on Saturday and three points for each win on the final day.

US Open semi-finalist Shelton of the United States came back from 1-4 down in the first set tie-break to come through 7-6 (7-4), 6-1 against Arthur Fils of France.

"It's different pressure, for sure," said Shelton. "I love the type of pressure of playing for a team.

"In the back of your head, it's always that you don't want to let



them down, but also, the win is so much greater when you get to do it for them and Team World, not just for yourself."

Argentina's Cerundolo marked his Laver Cup debut with a 6-3 7-5 victory over Spanish player Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

Home favourite Felix Auger-Aliassime made it a hat-trick of singles wins for Team World with a 6-4 6-3 victory over French veteran Gael Monfils.

Tiafoe and Paul then combined to defeat Fils and Andrey Rublev 6-3, 4-6, 10-6. - Agencies

FIFA PUSKAS AWARD 2023

Enciso and Kerr among nominees

LONDON: Julio Enciso's goal for Brighton against Manchester City and Sam Kerr's World Cup wonder strike are among 11 nominations for the FIFA Puskas Award.

Enciso, 19, produced a stunning finish to the top corner from 25 yards against City in the Premier League in May.

Australia's Kerr struck in the semi-final against England, receiving the ball in her own half before running at defenders and firing past Mary Earps.

The award recognises the best finish in world football during the year.

There are three female players on the shortlist, with Beatriz Zaneratto and Linda Caicedo also scoring memorable World Cup goals.

Brazil's Zaneratto provided the finishing touch for a wonderful team goal against Panama and Caicedo curled in for Colombia against Germany.

The nominations include an audacious 'rabona' by Nuno Santos of Sporting Lisbon and Guilherme Miranda's remarkable overhead kick from outside the penalty area for Botafogo.

The MLS is represented by Argentine Alvaro Barreal of FC Cincinnati, who struck a thunderous volley from an out-swinging



corner against Pittsburgh Riverhounds in the US Open Cup, while UD Ibiza's Ivan Morante scored in similar circumstances - but first controlled the ball past a defender before guiding it into the top corner.

The awards puts the emphasis on spectacular goals in all their forms.

South Korea Under-20 international Kang Seong-jin dribbled past three players and then produced several step-overs before scoring with a terrific 20-yard finish against Jordan.

Kazakhstan's Askhat Tagybergen and Brian Lozano of Mexican club Atlas both found the target with sensational long-range strikes to also be included in the vote. - Agencies

OMAN CRICKET

Third Gary Kirsten Cricket camp in Oman from October 26

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Following the success of previous two coaching camps since October 2022, Oman Cricket (OC) is now gearing up to host the third edition of the Gary Kirsten Cricket (GKC) coaching camp at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat from October 26-30.

OC's endeavour to promote cricket at grassroots level has been one of the primary goals of their development programme and the hosting of coaches from the renowned GKC is part of the efforts to achieve their goals.

GKC hosted the inaugural camp last year and was attended by near-



ly 100 students and the second camp saw the visit of the famed cricketer Gary Kirsten to Muscat in February earlier this year.

According to Evert Laubscher,

Oman Cricket Academy manager, the five-day camp will be split into grassroots development and high-performance camps.

Laubscher said: "The Gary

Kirsten coaching team have really done a tremendous job to get to know and understand the young aspiring cricket players of Oman. We look forward to building on this relationship.

"This time we are also including T20 matches along with the coaching sessions. These matches will also be closely observed by the Gary Kirsten coaching team, which will then allow them to help us identify future talent and also provide the players with valuable feedback."

Another bonus for cricketers who attend the forthcoming GKC camp will be a 20 percent discount at the Oman Cricket Academy for three months, beginning from No-

vember. Jimmy Cook, a leading trainer from GKC will be part of the coaching team during the third camp next month.

The grassroots development camp will be for beginners and Omanis will be provided free lessons while the others will have to pay OMR10 for the camp.

T20 games during camp

The high-performance camp will be for under-14 and under-19 players and the four-day camp will also include three T20 matches at the Oman Cricket grounds and two days of coaching lessons. The fee for this camp is OMR60 with discounts available for siblings.

During his maiden visit in Feb-

ruary, Gary Kirsten, the former World Cup-winning coach, had highlighted the role of parents in nurturing young cricketers. Kirsten had visited Oman during the second camp.

The South African great lauded the cricket system adopted by Oman Cricket and was impressed by the enthusiasm and eagerness to learn from the youngsters in Oman. Since his retirement in 2004, Kirsten, a former opening batter, has devoted his time to running GKC, coaching international teams and franchises and tasted tremendous success, leading India to a World Cup title in 2011 and as a mentor of Gujarat Titans in IPL 2022.

ROUND-UP

MUCH-COVETED ACCOLADE

Sohar International’s Ahmed Al Musalmi named ‘CEO of the Year’ for the third consecutive year

MUSCAT: In a remarkable testament to his commitment to excellence, Mr. Ahmed Al Musalmi, the Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, has been once again honored with the prestigious ‘CEO of the Year’ title. The much-coveted accolade not only underscores Mr. Ahmed Al Musalmi’s visionary leadership that embraces robust growth—most recently exemplified by a seamless national-scale merger, continuous innovation, and premium levels of customer-centricity, but also highlights his exceptional ability to align Sohar International’s strategic endeavours with the national agenda. This alignment continually contributes to the development of a resilient banking ecosystem, spearheads economic diversification, and empowers the broader community.

Commending the efforts of Mr. Ahmed Al Musalmi, Mr. Mohamed Mahfoodh Al Ardhi, Chairman of Sohar International said, “Going beyond navigating the complexities of a continuously evolving market, Sohar International has solidified its position as a trailblazer in the financial sector. Acting as a catalyst for transformation and progress, Mr. Ahmed Al Musalmi has taken the lead to steer the bank to greater heights. His capacity to instill purpose and clarity of objectives within the organisation has been pivotal to the bank’s extraordinary journey toward excellence.”

Mr. Al Ardhi added saying, “At Sohar International, we are firm believers that achieving strategic transformation necessitates a deeper comprehension of customer needs, a nurturing culture that fosters innovation, and an unwavering determination to embrace change. As our bank continues its journey towards progress, these awards will serve as a powerful catalyst, propelling us even further along the path to success.”

The awards event, held on 20 September 2023 at Sheraton Oman Hotel, welcomed as its Chief Guest His Highness Sayyid Melek bin



Shihab Al Said, in the presence of a diverse gathering of industry leaders, market experts, CEOs, senior government representatives, and influential decision-makers. The awards felicitated not only the top-ranking companies in the Sultanate but also celebrated changemakers whose achievements transcend the balance sheet. These prestigious awards aim to empower executive leaders in various fields, foster a spirit of competition, and strengthen the financial and business communities.

Commenting on receiving the award, Mr. Ahmed Al Musalmi said, “While I am indeed honoured to have been bestowed with this prestigious award, it signifies much more than a personal achievement – it is a reflection of the collective efforts of the bank’s dedicated team. At Sohar International, we believe that leadership goes beyond titles or positions; it translates to influence and impact. As an organisation that is deeply rooted in the local community, Sohar International has consistently

contributed to the socio-economic progress of the nation, driving purposeful change, empowering individuals, and championing innovation across all domains. This award will serve both as a recognition as well as a motivation to continue our growth trajectory, achieving greater wins together.” Leveraging a blend of strategy, exceptional interpersonal skills, and a deep understanding of the local market, Mr. Ahmed Al Musalmi has ensured impressive results across all operational domains. In doing

so, he has played a quintessential role in positioning Sohar International as a prominent entity with the capability to reshape the Omani banking landscape. Under his sagacious stewardship, Sohar International marked a historic milestone with the seamless merger between the bank and HSBC Oman, charting a course for long-term value creation and an enhanced value proposition for all stakeholders. The bank’s post-merger market capitalisation stood at approximately \$1.5 billion (OMR

500 Million). The bank also witnessed a significant 50% increase in market share and an expansive 118% growth in market coverage. Furthermore, the workforce burgeoned by nearly 80%. These figures serve as an unequivocal testament to Sohar International’s unwavering commitment to strategic and sustainable growth, all while remaining steadfast to its overarching vision of creating winning journeys for shareholders, customers, employees, and communities.

COMMENTARY



Collaborative Approach of Professional Development – Omani CFO Programme



On a Saturday morning 40 enthusiastic Omani professionals primarily from finance and accounts background seating in OCCI auditorium and listening to experienced and qualified mentors who are in various leadership roles tells a lot about something very progressive happening in Oman. The number of Omani male and female participants are almost equal, and it suggests how Omani females’ participation and contribution in Oman’s finance and accounts professional landscape is continuously rising. These participants are future aspiring CFOs and CXOs who are ready to give up their Saturday morning in exchange of professional growth and

development. This is very promising for Oman’s professional environment. The Omani CFO Program is a joint initiative of ICAI Muscat Chapter, Ministry of Commerce Industry and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP), Ministry of labour, Chamber of Commerce and Industry and General Federation of Oman Workers to bring together an educative, finance knowledge enhancing and interactive program for the aspiring Omani CFOs. ICAI Muscat Chapter was formed in 2008 under the sponsorship of College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS). The Chapter conducts various professional programmes in the form of seminars, panel discussions, IFRS & other certification courses in line with guidelines of ICAI and local sponsor - CBFS. Such quality education and professional enhancement programs involve eminent speakers on the most significant and contemporary topics, not only for its professional members but also for others in finance and non-finance field. The objective of the Omani CFO Programme is to share knowledge and experience with real life practical examples with the participants and

provide the required mentorship. The participants are encouraged to ask questions and think originally. The programme runs every Saturday for 3 hours and spread over 8 weeks. The programme is free of any fees. Both participants and mentors were selected after a detailed review process so that most deserving participants get the right mentorship from the most suited mentors having rich experience and qualifications. Majority of the qualified mentors have long working experience in Oman and in the region and they are quite enthusiastic to share their knowledge and experience with the young aspiring CFOs. Such professional enrichment programmes with more practical approach will certainly help in creating an already growing a vibrant professional environment in Oman. This program is being currently done in Muscat and Salalah. Further details on this program can be provided by sending an email to muscat@icai.org. Writer is one of the mentors in the Omani CFO programme. He had worked in various CXOs’ role in Oman and in the region and currently providing business transformation advisory. vishalm3@yahoo.com

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ROUND-UP

Best time to own new Mitsubishi is now



The promotion is part of GAC’s longstanding efforts to create a plethora of ownership opportunities for the Mitsubishi brand

MUSCAT: General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor of Mitsubishi vehicles in Oman, has rolled out exciting EMI offers ranging between OMR67 and 180 on select models, including the ASX, Montero Sport, Out-

lander, L200, and Mirage.

The promotion is part of GAC’s longstanding efforts to create a plethora of ownership opportunities for the Mitsubishi brand. The campaign will run until 30th November 2023 and will feature a

range of high-value added benefits for new car buyers. These include up to 5 years or 50,000kms of Free Service for Mirage, Free First-Year Insurance on Mirage & Outlander, and Free Llumiar Classic Window Tinting on Outlander & Montero.

All models come with attractive Cash-Backs up to OMR7,381, up to 2 years or 30,000 kms of Free Service, Free Private Registration, Six-Year Roadside Assistance, and six years Unlimited Mileage Warranty. Customers looking to exchange their current vehicles can additionally avail of a trade-in facility where they can get good value for their existing vehicles.

“The concept of this promotion is to benefit those who have set their sights on owning technologically superior vehicles with advanced safety features, while offering current owners the perfect opportunity to upgrade their vehicles. The monthly scheme plan makes owning the all-new Mitsubishi a dream come true with multiple benefits as a bonus,” said Aftab Ahmed Khan, Sales head for Mitsubishi Motors Oman.

“We greatly treasure our customers and our offers reflect our longstanding commitment to give the people of Oman a seamless purchasing experience,” he added.

AREEJ VEGETABLE OIL



AVOD’s Khafeef light frying oil adds sizzle to Salalah’s Khareef season with spectacular promotion

MUSCAT: Areej Vegetable Oil and Derivatives (AVOD) made an impressive splash this Khareef season in Salalah.

The brand’s highly popular Khafeef Light Frying Oil, enriched with essential vitamins A & D, took centre stage as part of a promotion that added to the lushness of the Khareef experience, with popular Omani food blogger and influential social media figure Mohammed Al Mukhaini becoming a key driver of the campaign’s success.

Addressing the millions of visitors to Khareef festival and his own 1.3 million strong followers, Mukhaini expressed his sense of honour in being associated with an iconic Omani brand such as AVOD, its Khafeef, Sultanate’s first-ever light frying oil. He also elaborated on the wholesome goodness of Khafeef Light Frying Oil by highlighting its many benefits.

Enriched with anti-oxidants and Vitamin E, the oil is high in nutritional value. Its stability under high temperatures ensures that food retains its flavour. Moreover, it also does not turn thick and sticky when heated. With no trans-fatty acids, Khafeef is the perfect blend of mono and polyunsaturated fatty acids, making your daily cooking experience not just tasty but also healthy.

Eng. Salem Bortmany- CEO, AVOD, expressed his delight over the success of the campaign and said, “I am extremely pleased that through our current Khareef promotion, Khafeef has continued to add a touch of health-conscious satisfaction to kitchens of Oman. Lightness, in taste and life, is what Khafeef Light Frying Oil brings to the table.

“When we created Khafeef, we not only ensured that it underscored AVOD’s ‘Eat Right, Live Well’ philosophy but also became a key driver of the company’s transformation strategy. Along with all our products, Khafeef has forged a bond with our consumers, earning their trust and loyalty and we are proud that it has become a national product with global appeal. The success of the promotion is a testament to this fact.”

The month-long promotion saw Khafeef Light Frying Oil extending its reach across all supermarkets and retail outlets, with the offers receiving a resounding stamp of approval from consumers. Consumers were also handed out samples at popular Salalah tourist spots and public arenas.

Khafeef Light Frying Oil is manufactured in AVOD’s modern hygienic plant, which is upgraded constantly with state-of-the-art technology thus allowing AVOD to meet international standards and offer only top-quality products to their wide customer base in Oman, the region, and the world markets.

With more than three decades of expertise, AVOD has the distinction of being the first company in Oman to fortify and enrich its cooking oils with vitamins A & D. All products, including its flagship brands Minara, Khaeef, Sohar, Jabal Akhdar, Muscat Margarine and Areej cooking oil, are a perfect blend of health and quality.

A heritage brand that knows that at the heart of good health is nutrition; AVOD has earned the reputation for having the best practices in the industry, setting it a class apart from its competition and a trusted companion in every kitchen in Oman.

PARTNERSHIP

Bank Muscat Children account opening service available at selected Lulu Hypermarket locations

MUSCAT: In emphasis of its customer-centric vision and commitment to enhancing financial inclusion through the delivery of various banking services that cater the needs of all segments of the society, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, remains committed to consistently providing the best services and products to children of different age groups and which feature multiple distinguished advantages helping them achieve their financial needs.

Bank Muscat children saving accounts targeting different age groups constitute an excellent opportunity for customers to enhance their financial awareness and be encouraged to embark on a regular saving practices at an early stage of life for a financially secure future.

As part of its endeavour to make the services of opening children saving accounts accessible to customers, Bank Muscat has partnered with Lulu Hypermarket Oman, one of the biggest retail chains, by allocating specific Kiosks in various Lulu Hypermarket

locations across the Sultanate. This partnership came with the aim to serve the community and allow them to enjoy the various facilities offered across the Lulu Hypermarket locations all over the Sultanate on all days of the week, from 5m. to 9 pm, until September 30. Therefore, customers are able to benefit from account opening services in the Lulu Hypermarket at Maabala North, Mall of Muscat, Oman Avenues Mall, Al Amerat, Al Khaboura, Barka, Al Suwaiq, Al Rustaq, Ibri, Al Buraimi, Ni-zwa, Salalah, Salalah Grand Mall, Sohar, Sur and Ibra. Bank Muscat customers may also opt to request



for opening children accounts online through the Internet Banking services and mBanking App.

In line with Bank Muscat’s commitment to its vision “To serve you better, everyday” and to enhancing convenience and easy access for customers, the Bank has recently announced extra working hours at a number of 42 select branches across the Sultanate until September 30, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., from Sunday to Thursday, to allow customers to open children account seamlessly. The working hours are extended at the branches in Al Mahaj Al Amerat, Madinat Al Nahda, Al Khoudh, Muscat City Centre, Qurrm, Maabala, Maabala Industrial, Oman Avenues Mall, Jibroo, Seeb, Azaiba Round About, Al Wadi Al Kabir, Al Hail, Markaz Al Bahja, Bausher, Quriyat, Al Kamil, Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Sur Al Afiah, Sinaw, Bidiya, Ibra, Musanna, Al Washil- Rustaq, Barka Souq, Al Bidaya, Bat’ha Hilal- Suwaiq, Thar-mad, Saham Corniche, Shinas, Falaj Al Qabail, Sohar, Al Khaboura, Der-eez, Izki, Firg, Samail, Bahla Souq, Ibri Jubail, Salalah 23rd July Street, Taqa, and Al Buraimi- Main Road.

Parents may take advantage of this opportunity by visiting the nearest branch or sending an email to the relevant email address attaching the required documents for opening children accounts. Further to that, customers may follow the steps illustrated on the website for opening the saving account specified.

Bank Muscat’s children accounts of different age groups feature multiple advantages. For children under 13 years old, Bank Muscat offers the children’s saving account to meet the needs of this age group and help them practice healthy saving habits. The account features benefits such as free life insurance, no minimum balance fee, and the guardian’s view of the child’s account through the mBanking App. For children aged 13-17 years old, Bank Muscat offers the “Floosi” account with a personalized debit card thereby customers may initiate transactions with a limit of OMR50 per day and a cumulative limit of OMR200 per month inclusively for Point of Sale (PoS), E-commerce transactions, and ATM withdrawals.

CHINA INITIAL QUALITY STUDYSM

Chery Automobile No. 1 Chinese brand in J.D. Power 2023 China IQS



MUSCAT: Recently Chery Automobile took the first spot among all Chinese automotive brands in J.D. Power 2023 China Initial Quality StudySM(IQS). Chery vehicles in the list included the Chery Arrizo 5 and the Chery Tiggo 5X which won the first place in the compact sedan and compact SUV market segments respectively.

The Initial Quality Study SM(IQS) is one of J.D. Power’s global flagship industry joint studies. The study covers 230 models of 48 brands, focusing on the quality problems encountered by owners of fuel vehicles with a vehicle ownership period of 2 to 6 months.

The specific diagnostic questions include 218 problems in 9 categories (body appearance, body interior, driving experience, configuration / control system / dashboard, infotainment system, air conditioning, seating, powertrain, and driver assistance). Expressed as the number of problems per 100 vehicles (PP100), the lower the score, the fewer the number of problems and the better the quality.

In recent years, Chery has kept performing well in major J.D. Power awards. In the “2023 Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout Study SM (APEAL)” model ranking recently released by J.D. Power,

Chery’s Tiggo 7 series and Tiggo 8 series products won two market segments of mid-sized economical SUV and mid-sized SUV respectively.

In “2022 Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout Study SM (APEAL)”, the Chery Arrizo 5 PLUS won the first place in the mid-sized basic sedan market segment. In the “2021 China Vehicle Dependability Study SM (VDS)”, the Chery Tiggo 3X won the champion of the mini SUV segment. Numerous awards have fully confirmed the strength and excellent quality of Chery’s products.

Chery has always adhered to the concept of “creating excellent brands with craftsmanship” and regarded quality as the life of the enterprise. Chery continuously improves product quality and wins users’ trust with its full life cycle quality management and upgraded driving experience brought to users.

It is foreseeable that Chery Automobile, adhering to the brand core of “green, technology, family, and companionship”, will establish a closer emotional bond with consumers under a strict quality management system and become a value leader in the market.

Chery will soon be launched in the Oman market by Saud Bahwan Group.







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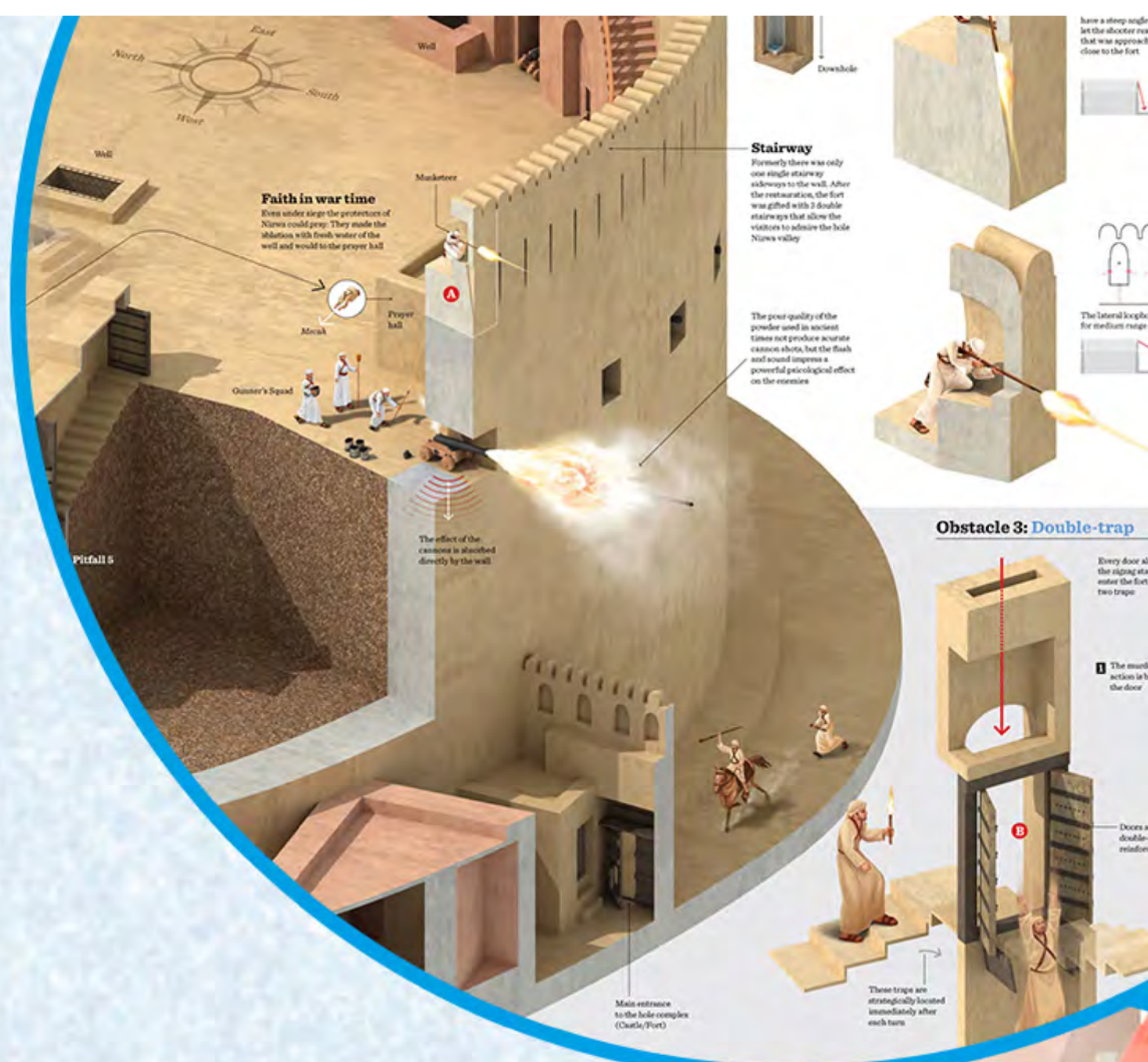
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