

**EVACUATIONS IN INDIA, PAKISTAN
AS CYCLONE BIPARJOY NEARS**

Tens of thousands of people are being evacuated across India and Pakistan before a powerful cyclone hits later this week. Scientists are warning that global warming is making such storms more severe. **>A6**



**REAL ESTATE GENERAL INDEX
IN OMAN UP BY 8.4%**

Residential land prices took the lead in the general index for residential real estate prices in the Sultanate of Oman, posting an increase of 8.4 percent in the first quarter of 2023 at a value of OMR178.9 million. A report on this segment was issued for the first quarter of 2023 by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSD). **>B1**



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HIS MAJESTY GIVES AN AUDIENCE TO SHEIKH SAUD BIN SAQR AL QASIMI



His Majesty and Sheikh Saud Al Qasimi explored cooperation aimed at serving the mutual interests of Omani and UAE people

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq gave an audience to Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, along with his accompanying delegation, at Al Baraka Palace on Tuesday.

During the audience, His Majesty the Sultan and Sheikh Saud

Al Qasimi discussed relations binding the two countries. They explored various aspects of cooperation aimed at serving the mutual interests of Omani and UAE peoples. They also touched on a number of issues of concern to both sides.

On the Omani side, the meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said,

Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior and Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office.

On the UAE side, the meeting was attended by Sheikh Khalid bin Saud Al Qasimi, Sheikh Saqr bin Saud Al Qasimi, Mohammed Hassan Al Shamsi, Adviser to the Ruler, Mohammed Sultan Al Qadhi, Adviser to the Ruler, Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Za'abi, Chairman of Ras Al Khaimah Real Estate, Ahmed Mohammed Al Khatri, Chairman of Ras Al Khaimah Courts Department and Mohammed Ali Al Nu'aimi, Chairman of

Ras Al Khaimah Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Later, His Majesty the Sultan and the Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah held a private meeting in the presence of Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sheikh Khalid bin Saud Al Qasimi and Sheikh Saqr bin Saud Al Qasimi.

Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah arrived in Oman on an official visit on Tuesday.

Sheikh Saud and his accompanying delegation were received upon their arrival by Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, and Mohammed bin Nakhira Al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to Oman. — **ONA**

See also >A2

HM hosts luncheon in honour of Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq hosted a luncheon in honour of Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, and the delegation accompanying him. Later, His Majesty the Sultan bid farewell to Sheikh Saud Al Qasimi and his accompanying delegation, wishing them a safe return back home.

His Majesty the Sultan also wished the UAE further progress and prosperity. For his part, Sheikh Saud expressed his deep thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to him. He wished His Majesty the Sultan good health, happiness and a long life.

He also wished the Omani people more progress under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



MARKET Oman to emerge major hydrogen exporter

2 The Sultanate of Oman is on track to become the sixth-largest exporter of hydrogen in the world, and the largest in the Middle East, by 2030, according to a new report. **>B1**

OMAN Investments in real estate explored

1 Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, OCCI organised a symposium on investment opportunities in the National Initiative for Integrated Residential Neighbourhoods. **>A5**

SPORTS PSG prepared to sell Mbappe this summer

3 PSG are ready to sell Kylian Mbappe this summer rather than risk losing him for free in 12 months' time after their star striker said that he would not extend his contract. **>B6**

BASKETBALL

Omani teenager wins award at NBA camp

Times News Service

MUSCAT: There are not many times when an Omani is part of a joint event organised by the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the International Basketball Federation (FIBA). And to top it all, the talented Omani teenager bagged an award.

Muscat-based Mohammed Salah Al Raisi was the proud recipient of the "Best Sportsmanship Award" at the NBA-FIBA organised Basketball Without Borders (BWB) NBA Abu Dhabi Elite Asia camp that was held from June 2-5 at the New York University campus in the United Arab Emirates.

The camp was held in cooperation with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT-Abu Dhabi). This was the first time the NBA and FIBA's global basketball development and



community outreach programme was held in the GCC region.

BWB Asia 2023 brought together the top 40 male and female players, aged 18 and under, from across Asia to learn directly from cur-

rent and former NBA, WNBA and FIBA players, legends and coaches and compete alongside their peers from the region.

Mohammed was the only one picked by the Oman Basketball

Association (OBA) and not only did he impress the coaches and his peers with his skills, he also was awarded the "sportsmanship award" for his fair play, sporting values, camaraderie, integrity and good behaviour on the court.

Mohammed, 17, and a student of Azzan bin Qais International School (ABQ), also took part in life skills, leadership development and NBA Cares programming.

In his remarks to *Times of Oman*, Mohammed said: "I am very happy to have attended such a top-level camp. It helped me a lot in learning skills and I was fortunate to get guidance from NBA coaches and players."

"I also got the opportunity to meet players from different Asian countries who have distinguished talents. It was a great feeling to be awarded the "Best Sportsmanship Award" at the camp." **>A5**

HM, Ras Al Khaimah Ruler discuss ties



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OFFICIAL VISIT

Ras Al Khaimah Ruler leaves Oman

MUSCAT: Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah left Muscat on Tuesday, following an official visit to Oman during which he was given an audience by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Sheikh Saud Al Qasimi and his accompanying delegation were seen off by Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court and Mohammed bin Nakhira Al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to Oman.

During the visit, the Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah was accompanied by Sheikh Khalid bin Saud Al Qasimi, Sheikh Saqr bin Saud Al Qasimi and a number of officials at the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah. -ONA



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OVER 800,000 VISITED SALALAH DURING KHAREEF SEASON IN 2022

A total of 813,000 people visited during Khareef Season in 2022, an increase of 6 percent compared to 2021 when it was 767,000.

Times News Service

VISITORS' NATIONALITIES

Omanis constituted **69%** of the total number of visitors to Salalah in 2022, as their number reached 562,995. The number of visitors from the GCC countries reached 161,260, up by **24.5%** percent compared to 2019, when there were 129,519 visitors.

FLIGHTS DURING KHAREEF SEASON

Domestic flights estimate **16,114**
The number of domestic flights during the Khareef Season reached approximately 16,114, while in 2019 it was 15,198. The number of international flights during Khareef Season 2022 reached 149,590, while in 2019, the number was 141,083.

International flights estimate **149,590**

LAND PORTS, AIRPORTS

Statistics issued by the National Center for Statistics and Information showed that

80% of the visitors to Khareef Season during 2022 came through the land ports. A total of 647,301 tourists came through land ports in 2022 compared to 610,491 in 2019. In 2022, approximately 165,704 visitors came to the Dhofar Governorate through the airport, an increase of

20.4% over the same period in 2019, which recorded 156,281 visitors.

VISITOR SPENDING

The expenditure of visitors during the Khareef Season 2022 amounted to approximately

OMR86 million

In 2019 the spending was approximately

OMR76 million





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FIRST QUARTER OF 2023

Sohar Industrial City attracts new investments worth OMR44 million

SOHAR: Sohar Industrial City saw a surge in investment activity, according to digital indices of first quarter of 2023.

The industrial hub, affiliated to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), recently drew 24 applications for investment. Sixteen of the applications materialised in the form of contracts signed for investment in industrial, service and commercial sectors to the tune of OMR44 million.

Sohar Industrial City houses 375 projects, with a total investment volume of OMR2.2 billion. The city, which has a total area of 30 million square metres, provides employment for 13,828 workers, of whom 41.7 percent are Omanis.

Eng. Abdullah Ahmed Al Mayasi, Director General of Sohar Industrial City, said that Madayn has made great strides in completing a project to develop the 7th



phase of the industrial city.

“Madayn completed 95 percent of the project, which includes a 32-km road network, a water network and a sewerage network. This is in addition to a treatment plant with a capacity of 2,000 cubic metres, a rainwater drainage network, a dyke for protection against floods, an irrigation network and two water supply tanks having a total capacity of 2,700 cubic metres,” Al Mayasi added.

Al Mayasi explained that Ma-

dayn also floated a tender for a project to study and evaluate phases 1 to 6 in terms of existing infrastructure, development plans and services for a total area of more than 18 million square metres. The upgrade covers the installation of security gates to raise the efficiency of loading and unloading operations and supply chains (namely by monitoring the entry and exit of trucks to and from the city).

Speaking about the Plas-

tic Complex project, Al Mayasi pointed out that the project began to attract investments for producing polyethylene and plastic bags, with investments worth OMR2 million. The project occupies an area estimated of 12,000 sqm, said Al Mayasi, noting that the industrial city embarked in a cooperation bid with OQ Group to market the project abroad. The step includes organising visits to major plastic manufacturers in different countries of the world and to offer several incentives, he said.

Al Mayasi stressed that Sohar Industrial City plans to establish a solar cell plant with a capacity of 86 megawatts, as a first stage, to keep pace with the global transition to clean energy. The project, scheduled to be completed by 2025, is expected to contribute towards the realisation of Oman’s carbon neutrality strategy (zero carbon emissions) by 2050, he affirmed. — **ONA**

SYMPOSIUM ORGANISED

Real estate investment opportunities explored



BARKA: Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Tuesday organised a symposium on investment opportunities in the National Initiative for Integrated Residential Neighbourhoods.

During the seminar, held in the Wilayat of Barka, Governorate of South Al Batinah, emphasis was laid on investment opportunities emerging as part of the initiative and envisaging the establishment

of properties with modern specifications. The event targeted real estate developers in the private sector and it outlined the special features and advantages of the initiative.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of OCCI.

It was attended by a number of government officials and private sector representatives interested in real estate development in the governorates. — **ONA**

OMAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

OOC gives go-ahead for participation in world, Arab, Asian events

MUSCAT: Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) on Tuesday gave the nod for the national team’s participation in major multi-disciplinary sports events in 2023.

The decision was taken at the OOC board meeting that was chaired by Khalid bin Muhammad Al Zubair, the OOC chairman.

Among the major participation for Oman would be the World Beach Games, Pan Arab Games

and Asian Games.

The first of the international multi-disciplinary events where Oman will take part will be the 13th Pan Arab Games in Algeria. The Games will take place for the first time in seven cities in Algeria, from July 5-15. Around 22 Arab League members are expected to compete in 20 sports at the Games. Oman will compete in football, athletics, weightlifting, sailing,

and para athletics at the Games.

Following the Pan Arab Games, Oman are to participate in the second edition of the ANOC World Beach Games which will take place in Bali, Indonesia on August 5-12. Oman beach handball team has already qualified for the Beach Games. Oman are expected to send a large delegation for the 19th Asian Games 2022 in China, which will be held from September

23-October 8. Originally scheduled to take place from September 10 to 25 in 2022, the event was postponed to 2023 due to concerns of COVID-19 pandemic in China. The OOC also approved the participation of national teams in the next edition of the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, scheduled to take place in Bangkok and Chonburi Province in Thailand from November 17-26, 2023.



ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN

Commander of RNO receives AGENOR Task Force official

MUSCAT: Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received at Al Murtafa’a Garrison on Tuesday Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco, Commander of Task Force of AGENOR, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a range of issues related to naval fields, as well as promoting joint cooperation.

The meeting was attended by the Military Attaché at the Italian Embassy in Muscat.

Commander of AGENOR Task Force visits MSC

Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco, Commander of Task Force of AGENOR and his military accompanying delegation visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC) on Tuesday.

Upon their arrival the centre, the delegation was received by Commodore Adil Hamoud Al Busaidi, Head of the MSC.



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

maritime environment. They also viewed its latest equipment and technologies used in carrying out its national duties. — **ONA**

OMANI BASKETBALL PLAYER

Teenager hopes to take up sports medicine in college

He added: “The camp also put up a video clip of my training with a caption: One of the fastest players in training.” Mohammed thanked OBA and his coaches for nominating him for this camp. Mohammed started his career in basketball three years ago, but has been a quick learner and currently plays for Ahli-Sidab youth team. He

has also represented Oman youth team at the GCC Youth Championship last year. A blocker, the tall Mohammed has also been a regular scorer in the youth league.

Mohammed is keen to pursue a career in sports and hopes to take up sports medicine in college. He is an active volunteer at the Dar Al Atta’a charitable organisation.





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Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtaining of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)
173/2023	General maintenance work for the Juvenile Affairs Department building	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree	Monday 3-7-2023 02:00 PM	Monday 24-7-2023 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
174/2023	General maintenance work for the building of the Al-Wafa Center for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in the Wilayat of Taqah	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Monday 3-7-2023 02:00 PM	Monday 24-7-2023 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Wednesday 14/6/2023

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WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

OQ hosts reception to honour accomplished racer Al Harthy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ, the Global Integrated Energy Group, celebrated the achievement of Ahmad Al Harthy, the champion racer who finished second in the 100th-anniversary edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, World Endurance Championship held in France.

The Oman Racing Team made history by achieving such a high placement in a global championship for the first time ever.

During the event, Ashraf bin Hamad Al Maamari, CEO of People, Technology and Culture at OQ, stated, "OQ's sponsorship of the OQ Champion Ahmad Al Harthy epitomises His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's profound interest in sports, as mentioned during his meeting with dignitaries of the South Al Sharqiyah governorate on January 9, 2022.

"His Majesty emphasised that sports has become an industry and an integral part of the country's development process. Additionally, it reflects our belief in the importance of nurturing Omani champions across various sports on a global stage".

Al Maamari expressed pride in the accomplishments of the Omani team led by Ahmad Al Harthy



as they elevate the reputation of the Sultanate of Oman in international sports arenas.

Accomplished athletes

He highlighted that OQ's sponsorship of Al Harthy's participation in international races aligns with the growing significance of sports today. Furthermore, he mentioned OQ's past contributions to sponsoring accomplished athletes such as Mohammed Al Mashaikhi and Omar Al Ghailani, who achieved commendable results in several international tournaments.

Al Maamari highlighted Ahmad Al Harthy's role as a community

role model and the ambassador of Omani brands abroad. Not only does he have an impressive track record of achieving top positions, but he also imparts his experiences to the next generation of aspiring motor racing enthusiasts.

He further affirmed OQ's commitment to supporting Omani athletes, who proudly represent Oman in various international sports competitions.

This dedication stems from the company's national and social responsibility to empower talented Omanis in their pursuit of excellence.

As for Ahmad Al Harthy, he expressed his joy over his second-



place finish and acknowledged the event's significance on an international level.

Ahmad Al Harthy has contributed to the promotion of Omani sports around the world while proudly carrying the flag of the Sultanate to podiums, he said.

Al Harthy extended his gratitude to the OQ Group for their crucial role and generous sponsorship of his participation in international races, which greatly influenced his achievements.

The World Endurance Championship is organised by the International Automobile Federation.

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UNDERGOES ANGIOPLASTY

Nepal President Paudel suffers heart attack

KATHMANDU: Nepal President Ram Chandra Paudel has suffered a "heart attack" and underwent angioplasty on Tuesday after being admitted to Shahid Gangalal National Heart Centre in Kathmandu, sources confirmed to ANI.

The 78-year-old ailing President was taken to the hospital earlier on Tuesday morning after he complained of chest pain. Upon examination, doctors concluded that the President was having "myocardial infarction" colloquially known as "heart attack". "Doctors stated that the situation is caused by decreased or complete cessation of blood flow

to a portion of the myocardium. There was 70 per cent blockage in one of the arteries on the right chamber of his heart," the official at the President's Office told ANI.

The doctors at Shahid Gangalal Hospital, a government-owned cardiovascular hospital have performed "angioplasty", a medical procedure where a balloon is used to stretch open a narrowed or blocked artery.

"President has been advised to stay back at the hospital for the next two days in observation to oversee the functioning of the heart after angioplasty," the official added.

— ANI

AFTER 5-YEAR HIATUS

US decides to rejoin UNESCO

WASHINGTON: US officials had expressed concern that China was filling the gap left by its absence. Beijing said it had no objection to the US joining, as it would need a vote before it's allowed back in the cultural body.

The US plans to rejoin the United Nations' cultural and scientific agency UNESCO as of next month, the UN body announced on Monday, after a five-year absence over what the US had described as pro-Palestinian bias.

Director General Audrey Azoulay told UNESCO representatives in Paris the US intended to renew its membership, describing the move as a "strong act of confidence in UNESCO and in multilateralism."

The US's plan to join would have to undergo a vote by the organisation's 193 members.

A founding member of UNESCO, the US started falling out with the agency in 2011, when the body admitted Palestine as a member state, prompting the ire of both the US and Israel.

— DW

Thousands evacuated in India and Pakistan as cyclone nears



India's met dept said that the storm would hit near the Indian port of Jakhau on Thursday evening



NEW DELHI: More than 40,000 people have left their homes in India and Pakistan as Cyclone Biparjoy approaches across the Arabian Sea, with authorities warning that it could bring gales of up to 150 kilometres per hour (93 miles per hour) to the densely populated coastlines of the two nations.

Biparjoy, whose name means "disaster" in Bengali, is predicted to make landfall as a "very severe cyclonic storm," according to gov-

ernment weather monitors.

Rains and storms ahead of its arrival have already killed seven people in India's states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, including several children.

India's Meteorological Department said the storm would hit near the Indian port of Jakhau on Thursday evening.

In 2021, Cyclone Tauktae hit much the same region, claiming 174 victims — a relatively low figure attributed to extensive preparations having been ahead

of landfall. However, a 1998 cyclone killed at least 4,000 people in Gujarat.

Cyclone Biparjoy follows devastating floods that ravaged Pakistan last year and killed 1,739 people.

Where have evacuations taken place?

Officials in Gujarat said they had moved at least 20,000 people to safety from coastal regions, and authorities in Pakistan's south-eastern Sindh province said they

had also evacuated around the same number.

Pakistan's army and civil authorities say they are planning to evacuate 80,000 people in total.

Fishing has been suspended along the coast of Gujarat, where authorities say as many as 1.6 million people are likely to be affected by the storm.

Authorities also banned gatherings along the beaches and shorelines during the cyclone. All ports, including two of India's largest, Mundra and Kandla, have been

shut down as a precaution.

In Gujarat, two children were killed when a wall collapsed, and a woman was hit by a falling tree while riding a motorbike. Four boys also reportedly drowned in high seas off the western Indian financial hub, Mumbai, in neighboring Maharashtra state.

Cyclones worsening

Scientists are urgently warning that intensity of tropical cyclones will increase as the climate warms due to human activity.

A 2019 report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2019 found that since the 1950s, the fastest sea surface warming has occurred in the Indian Ocean.

This means that the cyclones that have always posed a major threat to the tens of millions of people living on the coast of the northern Indian Ocean are likely to grow in severity, making preparations all the more vital.

— DW

TV METEOROLOGISTS

Explicit link seen between weather extremes and climate change

FLORIDA: "As we go deeper into 2023 and El Nino intensifies, we should expect a stunning year of global extremes which boggle the meteorological mind," warned Florida weather reporter, Jeff Berardelli, in early June as Puerto Rico endured a record heatwave.

Berardelli is among a growing cadre of TV meteorologists in the United States who are making the explicit link between weather extremes and climate change.

"The base climate has heated due to greenhouse warming and a strong El Nino will push us to limits we have yet to observe," Berardelli continued in a series of tweets after meteorologists confirmed the drier and hotter El Nino weather cycle has arrived.

But only a decade earlier, weather presenters were avoiding climate change.

In 2012, Rolling Stone magazine reported that in a year of extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy, record drought and wildfires, few TV meteorologists in the United States mentioned the term global warming. "The reason: There's a shockingly high chance that your friendly TV weatherman is a full-blown climate denier."

The rise of the climate-focused weathercaster

25 years ago, then US President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore hosted 100-odd TV weathercasters in the White House to encourage them to report the link between extreme



weather and climate change.

"That was a great idea," explains Edward Maibach, director of the Washington-based George Mason University's Center for Climate Change Communication. But for the next decade or so, the opportunity was lost.

"Unfortunately, the US government didn't follow up by producing localized materials that would make it easier for weathercasters to report on the local impacts of global climate change," he said.

Some TV meteorologists were instead targeted by climate change deniers. Many of which had links to right wing think tanks with strong fossil fuel ties and which used tobacco lobbying tactics to throw doubt on climate science.

This so-called climate change counter movement "launched a sustained misinformation cam-

paign to convince weathercasters that climate change was 'a hoax,'" Maibach explained.

A 2010 survey by Maibach's team showed that 25% of US weathercasters believed the deniers. Another 25% were "were skeptical that climate change was human-caused."

Part of the problem was the lack of "a go-to source" to clarify complex climate modelling in a local context, said Bernadette Woods Placky. The Emmy-winning former weathercaster is also chief meteorologist and director of Climate Matters, a programme launched in 2010 by Maibach and researchers from the US' National Science Foundation to provide TV meteorologists with local climate information.

Educational programs like Climate Matters have since helped

fulfill Bill Clinton's wish by making weathercasters beacons of climate change information.

"About 95% of them now accept the realities of human-caused climate change, and nearly half of them are reporting on the issue in their community," said Maibach.

So what has changed?

Climate sceptics and conspiracy theorists have lately been attacking national weather bureaus that give TV meteorologists their information. Yet the overwhelming consensus on climate science increasingly drives weather news.

Woods Placky says that while a minority of climate deniers have a "very loud" and "outsized" voice, 90% of people are open to learning more about how changing weather impacts them.

Viewers exposed to local reports

of climate-driven extreme weather have a greater desire to understand the climate emergency and its impacts, noted a 2020 study of audiences in two US cities that Maibach and Woods Placky co-authored.

Renowned TV meteorologists who report the links between weather and global heating increase "acceptance of, concern about, and engagement with climate change," stated the study.

Moreover, linking local weather experiences to climate has a "much deeper resonance," said Woods Placky.

"When you look out your window and smell the wildfire smoke from Canada, it's very different to seeing a story of someone else across the world experiencing a wildfire," the meteorologist said.

And it is up to TV meteorologists who are also often from the local community and are "skilled communicators" to make this link, she added.

Climate facts versus misinformation

While TV meteorologists have increasingly incorporated climate science into their weather reporting, some have gone further, adopting the language of climate crisis and catastrophe.

Florida TV meteorologist Jeff Berardelli called the severe drought in the western US in 2021 the "worst we have pretty much ever seen." He blamed it on low rainfall linked to "hu-

man-caused climate change" and concluded "this is a climate emergency."

Meanwhile, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis recently dismissed a connection between climate change and hurricanes in his state, rejecting what he referred to as the "politicisation of weather."

And media continues to report on the harassment of TV meteorologists by climate deniers, including in Germany and the UK, where Good Morning Britain weathercaster, Laura Tobin, has been accused of spreading "weather propaganda."

But she had not been deterred from linking weather to climate change.

"Fighting climate misinformation continues to be a challenge," said Maibach, explaining that one of the most recent resources produced by Climate Matters is a "Climate Myth Debunking Handbook for Broadcast Meteorologists."

"To improve effectiveness, addressing misinformation and misconceptions should be approached as a positive, educational opportunity rather than a negative, confrontational exercise," states the handbook.

The goal is not to alienate audiences or choose political sides, but to simply deliver the message.

As Laura Tobin said at the end of her recent report on the Canadian wildfires and their severe impact on air quality in distant cities and communities: "Climate change is happening here and now." — DW

Probe into UK’s handling of COVID-19 pandemic begins

The six-section inquiry into pandemic management was established by Boris Johnson in 2021

LONDON: The UK government’s management of the COVID-19 crisis is to come under scrutiny from Tuesday, with a likely focus to be on the country’s high death toll in the pandemic compared to other European countries.

The public inquiry comes as former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who led the government when the pandemic broke out, is under investigation over whether he may have misled Parliament over alleged breaches of lockdown rules in Downing Street.

The six-section inquiry into pandemic management was established by Johnson in 2021 and is being headed by retired senior



judge Heather Hallett.

The first section is to look at how prepared the UK was for such global health emergencies, with leading epidemiologists Jimmy Whitworth and Charlotte Hammer due to give evidence on Wednesday.

The fact that no relatives of COVID-19 victims are being included to give testimony in the first six-week phase of the inquiry has led to condemnation of the investigation as a “farce” by advocacy groups.

2nd phase will focus on decision-making process

The advocacy group put forward 20 people to be considered as witnesses, but said none had been called to give evidence.

A spokeswoman for the inquiry said, however, that Hallett had not ruled out calling testimony from bereaved people in later phases.

The second phase will focus on government decision-making, with the later ones looking at the UK health service’s performance, vaccines and therapies, and the

impact on the care sector.

The public hearings are scheduled to conclude by the summer of 2026.

Widespread COVID-19 scepticism

As the inquiry begins, a survey carried out for broadcaster BBC revealed that almost a quarter of people living in the UK believe that COVID-19 was probably or definitely a hoax.

The April survey by London-based market research consultan-

cy Savanta found that such conspiracy theories are widely fueled by social media and populist websites such as Breitbart.

Pandemic was a hoax

Responding to the question of whether the COVID-19 pandemic was a hoax, 9% said the statement was true and 14% said it was probably true.

Survey participants were also asked whether “the COVID-19 pandemic was part of a global effort to force everyone to be vaccinated whether they want to or not.”

Here, even more were convinced that this was the case, with 12% saying the statement was true and 19% that it was probably true.

The survey also showed that a sizeable minority is also of the opinion that “the great replacement” — the idea that non-white immigrants are replacing white Americans and Europeans — is happening.

Other common conspiracy theories, such as that the cost-of-living crisis is a government plot and that people weren’t really injured or killed in the 2017 Manchester Arena terrorist attack, also had relatively large groups of believers. — DW

US soldiers injured in helicopter ‘mishap’

DAMASCUS: The US military on Tuesday confirmed a helicopter “mishap” in northeastern Syria over the weekend that left 22 US soldiers injured.

“The service members are receiving treatment for their injuries and 10 have been evacuated to higher care facilities,” US Central Command said.

CENTCOM, responsible for overseeing US troops in the Middle East, said the cause of the incident is under investigation, “although no enemy fire was reported.”

US presence in Syria

Approximately 900 US personnel and an undisclosed number of contractors are deployed in Syria.

They are based primarily in the east as part of the ongoing mission to combat the remnants of the IS.

While the IS’s influence has significantly diminished since its caliphate declaration in 2014, pockets of fighters remain in remote areas beyond the full control of the US-led coalition, Syrian army, and their respective allies, including Russia and Iranian-backed militias.

The incident in Syria follows several incidents with US military helicopters over the past few months. — DW

AUSTRALIA



Driver of fatal crash granted bail, people mourn

SYDNEY: The driver of the bus that veered off the road killing 10 wedding guests in Australia appeared in court on Tuesday.

The man, 58, made an appearance in an Australian court to face charges of dangerous driving leading to the fatal accident.

The accident occurred at 11:30 p.m. local time (1330 GMT) on Sunday near the town of Greta, known for its vineyards and wedding venues. The bus had been chartered to ferry guests from a wedding held at a local winery.

In the rural Hunter region of New South Wales (NSW), where the accident occurred, locals placed flowers near the crash site and gathered at a nearby church for a solemn candlelight vigil.

At the court, magistrate Robyn Richardson expressed concern for the driver’s “wellbeing.”

“I see here before me a man suffering,” she said while granting him bail.

He remained head bowed throughout the proceedings.

According to law enforcement officials, the 58-year-old is accused of driving at excessive speed in what was believed to be foggy weather conditions, causing Australia’s deadliest road accident in the past 16 years.

The bus, carrying a total of 35 passengers, saw the driver lose control while negotiating a roundabout, causing it to topple onto its side, killing nine passengers almost immediately. One other passenger died later in hospital.

Passengers complained of speeding

Authorities conducted initial testing on the driver, which yielded negative results.

However, they have focused their attention on the reported complaints from passengers regarding the driver’s alleged erratic speeding prior to the crash.

Acting Assistant Police Commissioner David Waddell said: “The speed was too quick for him to negotiate that roundabout, causing the vehicle to fall onto its left side.” — DW

CANCER TREATMENT

New blood test can help detect cancer early

LONDON: When he received the diagnosis, it was already too late. The cancer had eaten away at the patient’s pancreas and spread out to neighbouring organs. Surgery was no longer an option. Four months later, at the age of 31, the young man from Germany was dead.

Even though cancer treatment has improved in recent years, therapy often fails because tumors are detected too late. Especially at an early stage, symptoms like stomach pain or fatigue are often vague, making patients see a doctor only when the disease is already hard or impossible to treat.

A blood test called Galleri aims to change this narrative. The developers from American healthcare company Grail say the test is able to detect more than 50 different cancers in a simple blood sample. Earlier this month, scientists presented results from a Galleri study at the world’s largest cancer conference, the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

2 out of 3 times the test got it right

The research team, led by scientists from the University of Oxford, had used the test in more than 5,400 patients showing symptoms indicating that they might have cancer. Before receiving the standard diagnostic exam, patients also gave a blood sample for evaluation with the Galleri test. In two



out of three patients who were ultimately diagnosed with cancer through standard diagnostics, the blood test detected a cancer signal as well. However, the test also said that 79 participants had cancer when they didn’t — making them so-called false positives.

“They can be problematic,” Mark Middleton, the lead researcher of the study, told DW. “The risk is that you turn a healthy individual into a patient by tagging them with a label that’s incorrect.”

This situation can be highly stressful for patients and healthcare professionals alike — emotionally and economically.

Nonetheless, many researchers and clinicians are excited about the idea of a blood test that could help with early detection. When cancer is detected early, before it

has spread, patients’ survival rates are much higher than when the disease is diagnosed in later stages.

Another advantage of the Galleri test: It looks for more than 50 different cancers, including ones that are usually detected very late and have poor survival rates, like ovarian or pancreatic cancer. The list also includes cancers for which there is currently no routine screening.

So how does the test work? When a cell dies, its DNA is shed into the bloodstream. The DNA of cancer cells is different from that of healthy cells in that it has specific markers. More precisely: A specific pattern of methylation.

“There are patterns that are typically only found in cancers,” Niels Halama from the German Cancer Research Center, who was

not involved in the Galleri study, told DW.

The Galleri test is able to detect these patterns

The pattern differs from cell type to cell type, so the test results also indicate where in the body the cancerous cells come from. This way, the researchers were able to say where the tumor was located 85% of the time. “That can be hugely useful in making sure you do the right tests,” Middleton said.

If, for example, the test flags pancreatic cancer, clinicians can immediately do specific testing for this cancer to confirm the diagnosis — without wasting valuable time and money looking for other diseases.

Still a work in progress

Scientists aren’t hailing the test a breakthrough quite yet though. The Galleri test is tricky: It does not work like other tests, with thresholds above or below which a specific condition is present or not. Rather, it’s a pattern decoder.

“It’s like looking at a picture. You can see a picture of the Mona Lisa and say: ‘OK, it’s the Mona Lisa.’ And you can have a picture from Vermeer and say: ‘OK, that’s not the Mona Lisa.’ But there’s all sorts of in between,” Halama said.

Right now, the test is a learning machine: With each new sample, the whole system gets better. At least that’s what the researchers hope.

(As always) there are caveats

At the moment, the test’s strength is that it triggers further testing at an early point in time. Not more. As lead researcher Middleton pointed out: “A positive test result is not a diagnosis of cancer. It says: Do more tests to find the cancer!”

One limiting factor at the moment: The test depends on a certain amount of genetic material being present in the bloodstream. If a tumor cell is not producing enough genetic material, the test cannot detect it. The Galleri test is also not able to find all types of cancers. One reason: There are tumors without the specific markers needed to be detectable by the test.

“So they will most likely never be detectable with this type of test,” said Halama.

Future studies

The present study only included patients who already had symptoms. It was more accurate in older patients, those with more advanced cancers, and upper gastrointestinal tumors. Future studies will need to show how it will perform in patients without symptoms, less progressed cancers and cancers outside the gastrointestinal tract.

Right now, scientists are examining whether the Galleri test has the potential to work as a general health screening in a study with 140,000 participants in the UK.

— DW

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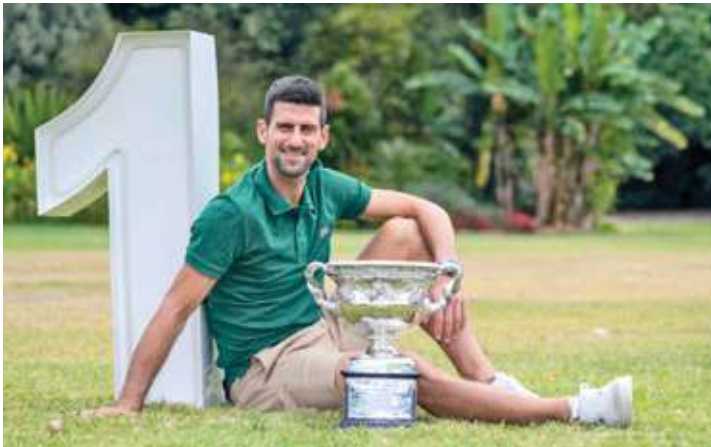
ATP RANKINGS

Djokovic returns to world No.1 spot, Nadal out of top 100

PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic reclaimed the world No. 1 ranking from Carlos Alcaraz after winning his men's record 23rd Grand Slam title at the French Open on Saturday, while Rafael Nadal dropped out of the top 100 for the first time in 20 years.

Djokovic, 36, began his record-extending 388th week at the summit on Monday, jumping two places in the standings after his victory in Paris at the weekend. He beat Spaniard Alcaraz in the semi-finals of the tournament.

Alcaraz dropped to second place while Daniil Medvedev,



who crashed out in the first round, also slid one place down to third. Roland Garros runner-up Casper Ruud remained in fourth place. Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas moved up to fifth position. Russian Karen Khachanov has returned to the top 10 position.

Djokovic continues to extend his lead in the Big Titles race [Grand Slam titles, Olympic singles gold medals, ATP Finals, and ATP Masters 1000 competitions], Djokovic has pulled far ahead of Nadal and Roger Federer (now retired).

The Serbian holds the record for most major championship wins

(23; solo record), ATP Finals victories (6; tied with Federer); and Masters 1000 victories (38; solo record). He currently has 67 Big Title victories against Nadal's 59 and Federer's 54.

Nadal, the 22-time Grand Slam champion and a 14-time French Open champion, has endured an injury-plagued season and not played since January because of a hip injury sustained during the Australian Open.

The 37-year-old has dropped from 15th to 136th in the rankings due to his continued absence from the tour. He underwent surgery

earlier this month and is expected to be out for five months.

In the women's rankings, Iga Swiatek retained top spot after defending her French Open title. She has held the ranking since April 2022. Aryna Sabalenka, who lost to Karolina Muchova in the semi-finals, remained in second place. French Open finalist Muchova climbed from 43rd to a career-high 16th.

Reigning Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, who withdrew before her third-round match in Paris due to illness, climbed up one place to third. -Agencies

India to begin next WTC cycle with series in WI



The tour, starting on July 12, also includes three ODIs and five T20Is



MUMBAI: India will begin their 2023-2025 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle with a two-match series against the West Indies on July 12, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Tuesday.

Dominica will host the first Test, which will be India's first at the venue in over a decade. The Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad will stage the second - and final - Test from July 20.

The Test series will be followed by three ODIs and five T20Is, with the tour set to end on August 13. The final leg of the tour - the last two T20Is - will be hosted at the ground in Lauderhill in Florida, USA.

The first ODI will be played on July 27 at the Kensington Oval, Barbados. The second ODI will be played at the same stadium on July 29. The third and the final game of the series will be played on August 1 at the Brian Lara Cricket

Academy, Trinidad.

After the ODI series, a five-match T20I series will be played between both teams.

The first match will be played at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Trinidad on August 3.

The second T20I match will be played at the Guyana National Stadium, Guyana on August 6. The third T20I match will be played at the same stadium on August 8. The fourth and the fifth T20I games will be played at the same stadium, Broward County Stadium, Florida

on August 12 and 13 respectively.

"We also look forward to hosting India in the white ball fixtures and welcoming fans to attend the matches across the region, as well as in the United States," Johnny Grave, Cricket West Indies (CWI) CEO, said in a media statement.

"It will be 18 days of entertainment for cricket lovers to enjoy and savour."

India had faced West Indies in the first-ever Test in Dominica, at Windsor Park, in July 2011.

West Indies' home series against

India is set to begin three days after the end of their ODI World Cup Qualifier campaign in Harare on July 9.

Should West Indies make the final, their Test specialists will have a short turnaround before the Test series opener in Dominica.

There is also a possibility of the Test players being pulled out of the final leg of the World Cup Qualifier to prepare for the home Test series.

West Indies' recent Test record at home is encouraging: they have won their last two series, against Bangladesh and England. India, too, have a strong Test record in the Caribbean, having won their last four Test series in the country.

India's Test team is facing some questions after their disappointing performance in the WTC final against Australia earlier this week.

They have played both finals of the World Test Championship so far but were unable to win silverware.

Rohit Sharma, in the aftermath of the defeat at The Oval, has asked for the team to play differently in ICC tournaments. "For the last eight-nine years we have been thinking the same way," he said. "That this match is important or this event is important, and it's not happening for us. So we have to think differently and do things differently. Our message and focus will be on trying to do things differently," he added -Agencies

ZIMBABWE THE HOSTS



UAE name squad for CWC Qualifier

DUBAI: United Arab Emirates have announced their 15-member squad for ICC Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier in Zimbabwe which is set to begin on June 18.

UAE featured in the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier playoffs in Namibia earlier this year. During that tournament, they secured the second position. This result was enough for them to seal a spot for the CWC Qualifier 2023 in Zimbabwe where 10 nations are in fray for two spots in the Cricket World Cup in India.

Mohammad Waseem will lead the side, and along with him veteran players like Asif Khan, Zahoor Khan and Rohan Mustafa have also made their way into the squad.

Asif made headlines in March, when he slammed a 41-ball hundred against Nepal, which was also the fourth-fastest hundred in ODI cricket. He was also the leading run-scorer in the Qualifier playoffs, as she struck 296 runs at a batting average of 59.2.

UAE are placed in Group B of the Qualifier, where they will face Ireland, Oman, Sri Lanka and Scotland.

Squad: Mohammad Waseem (c), Ethan D'Souza, Ali Naseer, Vriitya Aravind, Rameez Shahzad, Muhammad Jawadullah, Asif Khan, Rohan Mustafa, Aayan Khan, Junaid Siddique, Zahoor Khan, Sanchit Sharma, Aryansh Sharma, Karthik Meiyappan, Basil Hameed. -ANI

PITCH INVASION

Bordeaux miss out on promotion from Ligue 2

PARIS: Bordeaux will not be promoted from Ligue 2 after French football's governing body (LFP) handed them a loss for an abandoned match with Rodez, according to a BBC report on Tuesday

The game on June 2 was called off when Rodez goalscorer Lucas Buades was pushed over by a pitch invader.

The LFP's decision means Bordeaux finished third, while Rodez avoided relegation at the expense of Annecy.

Bordeaux have said they plan to appeal the decision to the French Olympic Committee.

They have also been docked

a point for next season and ordered to close their south stand for four games, with two of those suspended.

Bordeaux had to better Metz's result in the final round of matches to win promotion and Rodez needed a victory as they sought to avoid relegation.

Buades was attacked as he celebrated giving his side the lead and was removed on a stretcher.

The referee abandoned the game, saying the midfielder had suffered a concussion injury.

Metz beat Bastia 3-2 to move into second place and will now be promoted alongside champions Le Havre.

MALIKZAI QUILTS

Khan returns as Afghanistan chief selector

KABUL: Asadullah Khan returned as Afghanistan's chief selector and will move back to Kabul after a stint with Qatar as head coach, according to Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Tuesday.

He will replace Noorulhaq Malikzai, who had stepped down from the role but will continue to work as a committee member.

"It has been a privilege to serve as the head of the selection committee for the esteemed Afghanistan Cricket Board," Malikzai said.

"Due to personal and family commitments, I am unable to continue in this significant position. I have requested to continue my association with ACB as a member of the committee, and I am committed to providing my utmost cooperation to Asadullah Khan and the board."



With Khan as the chief selector, Malikzai, Mir Mubarez and Ahmad Shah will work as supporting selectors in the panel. Taj Malik Alam and Mohammad Khan Zadran are

retained as domestic selectors.

"I am honoured to be entrusted with the responsibility of heading the selection committee of players," Khan said in a statement.

"ACB is not a new organisation for me as I have rich experience working for this great organisation. I am committed to identifying talented players and providing them with opportunities to represent our country and achieve success on the international stage."

Khan had been involved with Afghanistan cricket in various capacities before moving to Qatar. He had also worked as acting CEO briefly in 2019 and was one of the most noteworthy figures working in the domestic set-up as a coach and video analyst.

Afghanistan are presently in Bangladesh to play an all-format series including one Test followed by a packed home season, hosting Zimbabwe, India, and Pakistan with the Asia Cup and World Cup this year. -ANI

OPEN-TOP BUS PARADE

Man City fans, players celebrate historic treble in the rain

LONDON: Thousands of jubilant Manchester City fans gathered to celebrate their team's historic treble as they staged an open-top bus parade through the city on Monday.

Blue flares were set off and fans threw inflatable bananas in the air as several of the players went shirtless in the heavy rain.

Manager Pep Guardiola was seen puffing on a cigar as fans climbed lamp-posts.

The parade was delayed by lightning storms. City beat Inter Milan 1-0 in the Champions League final in Istanbul on Saturday.

It comes after the club clinched the Premier League and FA Cup this season.

Guardiola said his side's Champions League success following Rodri's 68-minute goal was "written in the stars".



A drenched Guardiola was seen pumping his fists to the crowd as the players showed off all three trophies. Defender Ruben Dias and striker Erling Haaland were among several players who went shirtless after they were drenched in the rain.

Haaland, 22, led the dancing players onto a stage as midfielder Calvin Phillips serenaded England defender John Stones.

Guardiola hailed the fans for coming out in the storms. He said: "We had to be the best parade with this



rain, otherwise it is not Manchester. "We don't want sunshine, we want rain, so it was perfect. The fans are used to the rain."

England midfielder Jack Grealish said: "For the past 24 hours, I have had the best day and night. To

be fair, I don't think I have slept."

The team had departed from Tonman Street, Deansgate, at the slightly delayed time due to stormy weather and travelled to St Mary's Gate.

The delays did not dampen the spirits of the fans.

Michael and his family said they were looking forward to seeing Guardiola, Rodri, Bernardo Silva and Phil Foden.

He said: "This goes down in history for us. Pep [Guardiola] has just redesigned the football world. It's a big statement but it's true."

The parade travelled through Cross Street and King Street, before finishing on the corner of Princess Street and Portland Street.

Manchester City became just the second English men's team to win the treble, following in the

footsteps of rivals Manchester United, who achieved the feat in 1999 under Sir Alex Ferguson.

The team were welcomed back by fans at Manchester Airport on Sunday after travelling from Istanbul, where the UEFA Champions League final was played.

A mural has been created on New Cathedral Street celebrating the team's success

Former Manchester City manager Joe Royle said Guardiola's current side was one of the best teams English football had ever seen.

Royle, 74, who led the club from the third tier to the Premier League after back-to-back promotions in 1999 and 2000, told BT Sport: "There's no doubt about it. They're one of, if not the best English club side there has been." -Agencies

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by August 2023 reaching \$72, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 40 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$72.40. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,696.64 points, down by 0.02 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.03 per cent at 466.82 points. Al Omaniya Financial Services, up 9.02 per cent, was the top gainer while Construction Materials, down 9.52 per cent, was the top loser.

INTEGRATED ECONOMIC CITY

Minister of Finance briefed on Khazaen's City projects in operation



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance, visited Khazaen Economic City in Barka.

The visit included an introductory presentation about the city's readiness, infrastructure, and projects in operation such as Khazaen Dry Port, Logistics Park and Wakud Bio-Fuel Factory, in addition to undergoing projects such as Khazaen Central Fruits & Vegetables Market, Labour Village and Human Vaccination Factory. A brief of up-to-date achievements and efforts in attracting foreign direct investments and domestic direct investments were also discussed.

Eng. Salim bin Sulieman Al Thuhi, CEO of Khazaen Eco-

nomnic City, said, "Total attracted investments touched OMR280 million until the end of the first quarter of 2023 in various sectors such as logistics, industrial, food, pharmaceutical and clean energy sectors. The total investment value of attracted foreign direct investments reached OMR150 million, while the total amount of domestic direct investments reached OMR130 million.

"As a diverse investment destination, Khazaen attracted over 16 investor nationalities from around the globe and contributed to providing more than 300 direct job opportunities for national resources in various sectors, confirming its role as a project of national importance."

Khazaen is an integrated economic city being developed in Barka, Governorate of South Al Batinah. It is the first project of its kind as an integrated economic city and a free zone being developed in partnership between the public and private sectors. It is located strategically on the Al Batinah expressway, half away from Muscat International Airport, Al Suwaiq Port and about two hours away from Sohar Port.

Among the most prominent Khazaen Economic City projects are Khazaen Dry Port and Food City, which includes Khazaen Central Fruits and Vegetables Market, Logistics Park, Labour Villages, Pharmaceutical factories and light and medium factories.

Oman on track to become Middle East's largest hydrogen exporter

Oman aims to produce at least 1 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen a year by 2030, up to 3.75 million tonnes by 2040 - and up to 8.5 million tonnes by 2050



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman is on track to become the sixth-largest exporter of hydrogen globally, and the largest in the Middle East, by 2030, according to a new report.

"Oman's high-quality renewable energy resources and vast tracts of available land make it well placed to produce large quantities of low-emissions hydrogen, a fledgling industry today and can attract investment to diversify and expand the country's export revenues while reducing its natural gas consumption and emissions," the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its latest.

Oil and gas today represent around 60 percent of Oman's export income, and domestic natural

gas accounts for over 95 percent of the country's electricity generation. In 2022, Oman announced a target to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and began reducing fossil fuel use in its domestic energy mix.

Oman aims to produce at least one million tonnes of renewable hydrogen a year by 2030, up to 3.75 million tonnes by 2040 - and up to 8.5 million tonnes by 2050, which would be greater than the total hydrogen demand in Europe today. The 2040 hydrogen target would represent 80 percent of Oman's current liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports in energy-equivalent terms while achieving the 2050 target would almost double them.

IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol presented the new report, Re-

newable Hydrogen from Oman: A Producer Economy in Transition, to Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi during a round-table meeting with senior IEA leaders and analysts at the Agency's headquarters in Paris. It is the first IEA report of its kind that analyses renewable hydrogen potential in a fossil fuel producer country. The analysis builds on the IEA's ongoing technical cooperation with Oman to support the country's clean energy transition.

"Oman is an oil and gas producer country that is taking an enlightened approach to its energy future, with a clear long-term vision and strong net zero ambitions," said Dr Birol. "Thanks to its huge potential for low-cost solar and wind, renewable hydrogen is set to bring

multiple benefits to Oman. The IEA is very pleased to be working with Oman on policy and technical matters as the country moves ahead on its journey to a net zero economy and shows other producer countries what is possible."

"From an energy perspective, Oman is better known for being an oil and gas developer, however, it is also blessed with globally competitive solar and wind energy resources, and the most economically rational action for us is to embark on using this as the most viable and sustainable energy of tomorrow, including decarbonising the power generation, local industry and hydrogen production for export," said Al Aufi. "We're pleased to be working with the IEA on key aspects of our transition

and are very encouraged by the insights offered by this report."

Oman's hydrogen projects will use electrolyzers powered by renewable electricity to extract hydrogen from desalinated seawater. Oman benefits from high-quality solar PV and onshore wind resources, as well as vast amounts of available land for large-scale projects. It is also conveniently situated along important market routes between Europe and Asia, with existing fossil fuel infrastructure that can be used or repurposed for low-emissions fuels.

Oman has extensive expertise in handling and exporting both LNG and ammonia which is directly applicable to renewable hydrogen and hydrogen-based fuels.

Oman is implementing concrete measures to achieve its ambitious targets. In 2022, the government established an independent entity, Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom), to lead and manage its hydrogen strategy. So far, 1 500 square kilometre of land has been put aside for development by 2030 - and up to 40 times more land has been identified for potential production in the long term. Six projects have already been allocated land for renewable hydrogen in the country's first such auction process.

Oman's renewable hydrogen exports are likely to be transported initially in the form of ammonia, the report says. While Oman already exports around 200 000 tonnes of ammonia a year, its ammonia export capacity would need to be 20 to 30 times higher by 2030 if it wants to become a significant

international hydrogen supplier in that timeframe, requiring significant and timely investment, especially for storage tanks and dedicated deepwater jetties.

Meeting Oman's hydrogen targets will require a massive increase in renewable power, with around 50 terawatt-hours of electricity needed to meet the 2030 target, greater than the current size of the country's entire electricity system.

This is expected to further accelerate cost reductions and benefit the country's power system as well. Based on recently awarded bid prices in the region, utility solar PV and wind are likely already competitive with electricity generation from natural gas in Oman.

The IEA report's analysis indicates that Oman can cost-effectively achieve its targets of renewables reaching 20 percent of the country's electricity mix by 2030 - and 39 percent by 2040.

Scaling up the production of renewable hydrogen in Oman to one million tonnes by 2030 would require a cumulative investment of around \$33 billion. An additional \$4 billion would be required to bring renewables' share of the national electricity mix to 20 percent, the report says. Achieving its targets and using one-third of renewable hydrogen for domestic uses would significantly contribute to Oman's clean energy transition. The benefits would include reducing domestic use of natural gas by 3 billion cubic metres a year and avoiding 7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

NCSI DATA



Real estate general index rises by 8.4% to reach OMR178.9mn

MUSCAT: Residential land prices took the lead in the general index for residential real estate prices in the Sultanate of Oman, posting an increase of 8.4 percent in the first quarter of 2023 at a value of OMR178.9 million.

A report on this segment was issued for the first quarter of 2023 by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The report showed that the residential land price index registered a growth of 17.2 percent and stood at OMR126.4 million.

However, the apartment price index went down by 9.6 percent at a value of OMR19.4 million, followed by the downtrend by the price index for villas, which dropped by 6 percent to OMR27 million. The value of other homes shrank by 14.1 percent to OMR6.1 million.

Apartment prices

Compared to Q1 in 2022, the general index of residential real estate prices grew by 1.2 percent, at a time the residential land price index went up by 6.4 percent. Yet, the

prices of apartments went down by 7.8 percent, villas by 8.6 percent, and other homes by 16.7 percent.

The NCSI statistics showed that the number of transactions on selling residential properties at the end of Q1 of 2023 dropped by 12.1 percent, as against the corresponding period last year (2022). Residential land plots constituted 88.2 percent of the real estate transactions, as against 5.4 percent for residential flats, 3.5 percent for villas and 2.9 percent for other households. - **ONA**

BLOCKS 3&4

Tethys' May oil production reaches 278,831 barrels in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before government take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore in the Sultanate of Oman, in May 2023 amounted to 278,831 barrels of oil, corresponding to 8,995 barrels of oil per day.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for May 2023 was \$78.49 per barrel. The OSP, as published by the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.

Tethys Oil, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Tethys Oil Block 3 & 4, has a 30 percent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East with 20 percent and the operator CC Energy Development (Oman branch) holding the remaining 50 percent.

Tethys Oil is an oil exploration and production company with a focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN



CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR12mn

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR12 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The value of the allotted Treasury bills amounted to OMR10 million, for a maturity period of 28 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR99.660 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.660 per OMR100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.43214 per cent and 4.44726 per cent, respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR2 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.765 for every OMR100, and the mini-

mum accepted price arrived at OMR98.765 per OMR100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.95357 per cent and 5.01551 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). The interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5.75 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.25 per cent. - **ONA**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower



Al Omaniya Financial Services, up 9.02 per cent, was the top gainer while Construction Materials, down 9.52 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,696.64 points, down by 0.02 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.03 per cent at 466.82 points. Al Omaniya Financial Services, up 9.02 per cent, was the top gainer while Construction Materials, down 9.52 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of United Finance were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Sohar International Bank Perpetual Bonds were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 420 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.83 million, with more than 5.66 million shares changing hands.

Out of 44 traded securities, 11 advanced, 15 declined, and 18 remained unchanged.

At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR1515,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR1322,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR193,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,640.85 points, up 0.37 per cent. Prices of Al Omaniya Financial

Services, Al Madina Investments, Global Financial Investments and Sohar International Bank were up by 9.02 per cent, 4.76 per cent, 1.70 per cent and 0.98 per cent respectively. Prices of Taageer Finance, United Finance, Al Madina Takaful, Al Anwar Investment and Bank Nizwa were up by 3.16 per cent, 1.72 per cent, 1.19 per cent, 1.12 per cent and 1.04 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,064.50 points, down 0.4 per cent. Prices of Raysut Cement and Oman Cement were up by 0.58 per cent and 0.56 per cent respectively. Prices of Construction Materials, Al Maha Ceramics and Galfar Engineering were up by 9.52 per cent, 5.88 per cent and 1.05 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.06 per cent before closing at 1,693.62 points. Prices of Sharqiyah Desalination, Abraj Energy and Phoenix Power were up by 6.56 per cent, 2.74 per cent and 1.52 per cent respectively.

Prices of SMN Power Holding, Oman Oil Marketing, OIFC and Oman Telecom were up by 2.44 per cent, 1.72 per cent, 1.11 per cent and 0.41 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,701.45	4,687.16	4,696.64	4,697.39	-0.75	-0.02
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,646.86	7,601.15	7,640.85	7,612.55	28.30	0.37
Industry Index	6,091.87	6,064.50	6,064.50	6,088.74	-24.24	-0.40
Services Index	1,698.15	1,683.68	1,693.62	1,692.63	0.99	0.06
MSX Shariah Index	471.69	466.82	466.82	471.69	-4.87	-1.03
MSX TR INDEX	6,181.00	6,162.22	6,174.65	6,175.66	-0.96	-0.02
FINANCIAL TR IDX.	8,330.02	8,280.22	8,323.47	8,292.64	30.83	0.37
SERVICES TR IDX	1,866.81	1,850.90	1,861.83	1,860.75	1.09	0.06
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,507.63	6,478.39	6,478.39	6,504.29	-25.90	-0.40

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
5,660,254	2,831,655	420	23,745,946,745	11	15	18	44

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 13

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000003125 GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	200	12	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.001	1.695	0.060	0.058	0.064	0.100	12,000,000
OM0000003398 SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	205,345	20,940	7	0.102	0.103	0.101	0.103	0.102	0.001	0.980	0.101	0.101	0.102	0.100	472,776,416
OM0000001749 OMAN CEMENT	5,500	1,961	1	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.360	0.002	0.556	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.100	119,775,921
OM0000002168 AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,097	296	1	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.000	0.000	0.272	0.280	0.282	0.100	59,840,000
OM0000002226 ALJAZEERA SERVICES	8,602	2,151	4	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.250	0.250	0.255	0.100	15,301,068
OM0000002549 BANK DHOFAR	39,000	6,825	6	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.158	0.175	0.100	524,361,501
OM0000003000 AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MKRTG	230	261	1	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.135	0.000	0.000	1.135	0.000	1.135	0.100	78,315,000
OM0000003968 OOREDOO	171,000	61,902	11	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.000	0.000	0.362	0.362	0.364	0.100	235,641,811
OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	803,414	213,932	28	0.266	0.267	0.265	0.266	0.267	-0.001	-0.375	0.266	0.265	0.266	0.100	1,996,701,618
OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	627,085	611,057	19	0.972	0.988	0.972	0.976	0.980	-0.004	-0.408	0.976	0.976	1.075	0.100	732,000,000
OM0000001525 OMAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE	131,161	11,665	15	0.089	0.090	0.088	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.089	0.090	0.100	22,147,550
OM0000004768 MADINA TAKAFUL	60,895	5,069	8	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.083	0.084	-0.001	-1.190	0.083	0.083	0.084	0.100	14,535,000
OM0000002374 UNITED FINANCE	899,363	51,890	30	0.058	0.058	0.057	0.057	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.057	0.058	0.100	20,299,256
OM0000004248 SMN POWER HOLDING	346,447	27,769	36	0.081	0.083	0.080	0.080	0.082	-0.002	-2.439	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.100	15,970,848
OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	4,626	1,480	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.340	-0.020	-5.882	0.320	0.320	0.340	0.100	17,600,000
Total	15	3,303,965	1,017,242	169											

Parallel Market

OM0000002077 AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	40,000	5,310	4	0.132	0.133	0.132	0.133	0.122	0.011	9.016	0.133	0.000	0.133	0.100	40,920,696
OM0000004669 SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	5,000	650	1	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.122	0.008	6.557	0.130	0.125	0.125	0.100	12,714,281
OM0000001962 AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	60,000	2,620	4	0.042	0.044	0.042	0.044	0.042	0.002	4.762	0.044	0.042	0.044	0.100	3,740,000
OM0000008934 ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	827,228	247,829	145	0.292	0.302	0.292	0.300	0.292	0.008	2.740	0.300	0.300	0.302	0.100	231,060,000
OM0000005963 PHOENIX POWER	19,484	1,274	3	0.063	0.067	0.063	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.067	0.064	0.068	0.100	97,994,298
OM0000000847 OMAN REIT FUND	158,200	13,983	12	0.088	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.088	0.001	1.136	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.100	41,935,588
OM0000004118 RAYSUT CEMENT	93,000	16,182	6	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.173	0.001	0.578	0.174	0.173	0.176	0.100	34,800,000
OM0000001178 DHOFAR GASES	2,830	311	2	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.105	0.110	0.100	3,300,000
OM0000001301 DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	200	18	1	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.087	0.089	0.100	7,195,650
OM0000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE	1,000	58	1	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.056	0.057	0.100	17,814,487
OM0000002275 SHELL OMAN MARKETING	25,999	24,959	3	0.960	0.960	0.960	0.960	0.960	0.000	0.000	0.960	0.960	0.960	0.100	91,300,000
OM0000002580 OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INV.	6,600	1,452	1	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.000	0.000	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000003661 VOLTAMP ENERGY	551	54	4	0.094	0.098	0.094	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.094	0.098	0.100	7,977,470
OM0000004735 SEMBCORP SALALAH	42,000	4,158	3	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.095	0.099	0.100	94,502,823
OM0000004933 AL SUWADI POWER	10,600	286	2	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.000	0.000	0.027	0.025	0.028	0.100	19,288,971
OM0000008710 BARKA DESALINATION	4,013	538	2	0.135	0.135	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.000	0.000	0.133	0.133	0.135	0.100	10,044,426
OM0000008968 THE PEARL REEF	5,000	600	2	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.125	0.100	53,945,817
OM0000004420 BANK NIZWA	206,029	19,973	14	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000007910 AMAN REAL ESTATE	53,600	5,092	2	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.096	-0.001	-1.042	0.095	0.095	0.097	0.100	10,000,000
OM0000003521 GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	6,500	1,222	2	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.190	-0.002	-1.053	0.188	0.187	0.191	0.100	38,161,452
OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	69,500	6,153	8	0.090	0.090	0.088	0.088	0.089	-0.001	-1.124	0.088	0.088	0.090	0.100	17,600,000
OM0000002572 OMAN OIL MARKETING	120	137	1	1.145	1.145	1.145	1.145	1.165	-0.020	-1.717	1.145	0.000	1.145	0.100	70,159,875
OM0000003281 TAGHEER FINANCE	600,000	54,800	9	0.090	0.092	0.090	0.092	0.095	-0.003	-3.158	0.092	0.090	0.104	0.100	24,272,823
OM0000001411 BARKA WATER AND POWER	60,212	2,117	7	0.038	0.038	0.035	0.038	0.038	-0.003	-7.865	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.100	5,600,000
OM0000001368 CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	50,000	2,850	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.063	-0.006	-9.524	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.100	3,562,500
Total	25	2,347,666	412,326	240											

SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND INSTITUTE

Indian investors at London Global Wealth summit explore ways to enhance sustainable investments

MUMBAI: The Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI) successfully concluded the Global Wealth Conference (GWC) in London last week, following three days of intensive discussions.

Pivotal

This event has proven to be a pivotal moment for the Indian investment sector, propelling the nation towards a promising era of economic influence. The conference examined the evolving dynamics of sustainable investments in India under the guidance of SWFI by bringing together sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, family offices, and asset owners from more than 20 countries.

Milestone

The GWC achieved a significant milestone by attracting an impressive \$5.3 trillion in assets under management over two and a half days of high-level discussions at

the iconic House of Commons and Guildhall. This prestigious event showcased the participation of more than 20 sovereign wealth funds, 40 family offices, 30 pension, and public funds, along with an impressive assembly of over 50 global asset managers.

The strong presence of key investment decisionmakers and sectoral experts from across India became a notable talking point to the proceedings.

Prominent personalities led the agenda toward actionable outcomes, including Lord Dominic Johnson, UK Minister for Investment; Bollywood star Vivek Anand Oberoi; Mohammed bin Abdulaziz AlAjlan, Deputy Chairman, Ajlan & Bros Holding; Jitendra Bisessur, Chief Executive Officer, Mauritius Investment Corporation; Minister Abdurehman Eid Tahir, Chief Executive Officer, Ethiopian Investment Holdings; The Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson MP,

UK House of Commons; Prof Lord Meghnad Desai, UK House of Lords; and David Papazian, Chief Executive Officer, Armenian National Interests Fund.

Both Michael Maduell, President of SWFI, and Lakshmi Narayanan, chairman of SWFI and a partner at the Patel Family Office, expressed their delight over the conference's significant effects on the Indian economy. In a joint statement, they said that "this conference marks a turning point for the Indian investment landscape. Powerful investors and brilliant minds have teamed up with the goal of fostering economic progress in India and other places. The partnerships and discussions formed at this conference will significantly change the prosperity of the nation, and we are pleased with the significant interest expressed by global asset owners in investing across diverse sectors of the Indian economy".

The conference served as a pivotal driver of investment evolution, highlighted by the announcement of a new USD 5 billion 'MEGAM' fund, a collaboration between US-based Patel Family Office and KSA's Ajlan & Bros Holding, which aims to raise an impressive USD 20 billion by investing in the thriving MENA hospitality sector.

Economic potential

The initiative is poised to unlock the economic potential of the region, presenting a compelling opportunity for global investors.

SWFI unveiled GlobalCrypto News.com, a comprehensive resource on cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology. The Patel Family Office also introduced FORT Global, an innovative platform connecting Family Offices worldwide, leveraging disruptive technologies and sustainable finance for sustainable growth and prosperity. — **NewsVoir/ANI**

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CONCERN

AI: Are stock markets ready for it?

NEW YORK: On one Monday morning in May, US financial markets took a sudden dip. A photo of an explosion at the Pentagon near Washington D.C. was spreading on social media and spilling over onto popular investing websites.

Was it an attack? Investors seemed to think so. Stocks tend to perform poorly in the early stages of international conflict. The S&P 500 declined by 0.3 per cent — a session low — and safe havens like gold and treasury bonds started to climb.

But within a couple of hours, everything had returned to normal. The image was fake, it turned out, likely generated by artificial intelligence (AI), experts said.

But that flash of investor panic raises questions about what AI means for market stability, with fake images becoming ever more realistic — and even easier to make.

Algorithmic trading could fall prey to AI fakes

There's no lack of concern about the dangers of the AI boom. Disinformation, deepfakes and the extinction of the human race are just a few worries that have entered the public debate around the technology. Last month, the head of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Gary Gensler, said the technology could pose a "systemic risk" capable of triggering the next financial crisis. He and others are particularly wary of the fallout caused by what's known as generative AI. Generative AI, which includes



ChatGPT, can produce complex texts, sounds and images, like the one of the Pentagon.

Regulators in the United States and European Union are currently working on regulation for the technology. When it comes to the issue of fake images, until there's an easy way to spot a fake, the more realistic and more common they become, the greater a threat they could be to financial markets.

According to Adam Kobeissi, editor-in-chief of industry publication The Kobeissi Letter, this is because market moves are becoming more reactive to major breaking news.

"A lot of these moves are happening because of high-frequency trading, algorithmic trading," he told the Associated Press. "Which is basically taking headlines, synthesising them and then breaking them down into a trade on a millisecond basis."

Algorithmic trading is a type of automated trading done by a

computer using an algorithm that has been trained to recognize past patterns and make trades based on those patterns.

"It's basically like you're pulling a trigger every time a headline comes out," he added.

AUDIENCE HAS GIVEN TOO MUCH LOVE:

SRK

ON HIS BOLLYWOOD JOURNEY

Shah Rukh Khan is called the King for a reason. The actor - who has been entertaining millions since 1988 has created a niche for himself in the Bollywood industry. SRK's journey is an inspiration for all his fans.

On Monday, the 'Pathaan' actor conducted an #AskSRK session on Twitter, where he answered all his fan's questions. When a user asked him about his journey in the film industry by coming from a middle-class background. "Sir coming from a middle-class background, how difficult was this journey for you?"

To which King Khan responded, "Life overall has been very good to me. Audience and everyone has given too much love...so not difficult at all really."

SRK's charismatic personality radiates in the massive fan following. The superstar has given the audience memorable films like 'Baazigar', 'Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa', 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai', 'Kal Ho Naa Ho', 'Veer Zara', and many more.

Shah Rukh made his comeback after a hiatus of 4 years with Siddharth Anand's action thriller film 'Pathaan' which was released in January this year.

The film also starred Deepika Padukone and John Abraham in the lead roles. It is the highest-grossing Hindi film of all time.

The film is now ready to release in dubbed versions across Russia and CIS countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

As per a statement shared by YRF, the dubbed version will release on July 13 across 3000+ screens.

Meanwhile, SRK will be next seen in director Atlee's action thriller film 'Jawan' which is all set to hit the theatres on September 7.

Apart from that, he also has director Rajkumar Hirani's next 'Dunki' opposite actor Taapsee Pannu in his kitty. -ANI



LIFESTYLE

SPORTS

SERIE A



Ranieri secures promotion for Cagliari in Italy

MILAN: Claudio Ranieri, the 71-year-old manager, has written another fairytale story as Cagliari earned a promotion back to Serie A on Monday.

Ranieri was the mastermind who scripted Leicester City's Premier League success in the 2015-16 Premier League season.

This time the moment was different, the venue was different and the stakes were running high.

Cagliari managed to pull off a 1-1 draw against Bari in the first leg of their playoff final.

In the second leg, an injury-time victory over Bari helped Cagliari gain promotion back into Serie A. Leonardo Pavoletti's strike in the injury time sealed their fate in the Serie A for next season.

After the match in the midst of emotions, Ranieri was left in tears. Pavoletti's goal brought a

happy end to yet another story in Ranieri's career.

One year ago, Ranieri had to leave Watford following a 3-0 home defeat by Norwich City that left the team second from the bottom of the Premier League table with 14 points from 20 matches.

Ranieri has had a special bond with the Italian club since he took up the managerial job. In his decorated career, this was the third time in his career that the Italian has guided Cagliari to promotion.

At the beginning of his career, he helped the Italian club to achieve back-to-back promotions and reach Serie A from Serie C within two seasons. Ranieri will now look to take the club to new heights as he has a contract with the club valid until 2025. -ANI

PSG prepared to sell Mbappe this summer



French striker has a July 31 deadline to inform club of his decision to trigger a one-year extension to his current deal but has informed that he will not renew

PARIS: French champions Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) are ready to sell Kylian Mbappe this summer rather than risk losing him for free in 12 months' time after their star striker told the club he would not extend his contract, according to various media reports.

Mbappe, whose current contract expires at the end of the 2023/24 season, has the option to extend for another year, and the

France international has a July 31 deadline to inform PSG of his decision to renew until 2025.

After months of talks, he has sent the club a letter saying he will not.

PSG's record goalscorer would be free to leave for nothing at the end of next season and the move could be a negotiating tactic.

However, as the French champions try to readjust their team-

building policy after years of buying star players with no obvious coherent strategy, PSG have resolved not to let Mbappe go for nothing, with the club irritated that the letter was leaked in the media before they saw it.

It means that unless they get assurances about the 2018 World Cup winner's future intentions, they will sell him in a move that would put Europe's leading clubs on alert.

Spanish giants Real Madrid are long time admirers of the Frenchman and he rejected a move to the Bernabeu to stay at PSG last year.

The exit of Karim Benzema to Saudi Arabia means Real need a striker, although it had been thought Tottenham's Harry Kane was at the top of their list.

Mbappe, who joined PSG in 2017 initially on loan from Mo-

naco, has scored 212 goals in 260 games. He has 38 goals in 68 games for France, including a hat-trick in last year's final in Qatar, as France lost to Argentina on penalties.

Mbappe finished as Ligue 1's top scorer in each of the last five seasons and has won five league titles in his six seasons at PSG.

PSG ended 2022-23 with just the Ligue 1 title after once again failing to win the Champions League, losing to Bayern Munich in the last-16.

Mbappe would be the second high-profile forward to leave the Parc des Princes this summer, after Argentina forward Lionel Messi left at the end of his two-year contract to join Major League Soccer's Inter Miami. Neymar, the third member of PSG's superstar frontline last season, has been linked with a big-money move to Saudi Arabia. -Agencies

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Dutch defender de Ligt ruled out of semi-final vs Croatia

AMSTERDAM: The Netherlands football team suffered a big blow as their leading defender Matthijs de Ligt will be out of the squad as he suffered a calf injury.

The Netherlands are scheduled to take on Croatia in the semi-final of the UEFA Nations League on Thursday.

During a practice session for the upcoming semi-final clash, 23-year-old de Ligt suffered a calf injury.

Daley Blind has now been called up to replace de Ligt in coach Ronald Koeman's squad.

According to the official website of Bayern Munich, "As the Dutch FA, the KNVB confirmed on Monday, the 23-year-old suffered a calf injury during preparations for the semi-final against Croatia."

De Ligt had previously played for Ajax and Juventus before joining Bayern Munich.

For Dutch club, Ajax, he played 117 matches and scored 13 goals and gave seven assists.

For Juventus, de Ligt played 117 matches, scored eight goals and gave three assists.



At Bayern Munich, the 23-year-old has played 43 matches and scored three goals and given one assist.

He was named the 'Football of the Year' of the Netherlands in 2019.

De Ligt won the Italian Serie A

title with Juventus in the 2019/20 season. Later in 2020/2021, he won the Italian Super Cup and the Italian Cup with Juventus.

De Ligt's recent silverware came with Bayern Munich when they were crowned as the Bundesliga champions. -ANI

LA LIGA

Nacho to remain with Real Madrid

MADRID: Real Madrid defender Nacho Fernandez has confirmed that he will sign a new one-year contract with the club.

The 33-year-old Nacho has spent his entire career with Real Madrid since joining as an 11-year-old, and although he is rarely the first choice, his ability to play across the back four means he has made 319 appearances for the first team since his debut in 2013.

Nacho's contract expires at the end of June and it had been thought he could take the opportunity of a free transfer to move elsewhere, with Villarreal and Inter Milan mentioned in the Spanish press as possible destinations, but speaking on Spanish TV network, RTVE, Nacho said he would be staying where he is.

"I am going hand in hand with my club and my family," he said. "There are always offers, but I have decided to stay for another year and I am very happy with the decision and I want to stay



with Real Madrid," added the defender.

Nacho is currently with the Spain national team squad, to prepare for Thursday's UEFA Nations League semi-final against Italy.

"We are all together and united here, not just the coach (Luis de la Fuente), who is optimistic and dedicated, and between the young players here and the veterans, we can win the Nations League," he commented. -Xinhua

RECOGNITION



Barcelona's ter Stegen wins La Liga MVP award

BARCELONA: Barcelona's goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen has won the La Liga MVP award for the 2022/23 season. The 31-year-old was adjudged the best player of the La Liga 2022/23 campaign after he kept 26 clean sheets in 38 games. He only conceded 18 goals this season.

The German national got the better of Robert Lewandowski and Antoine Griezmann to win the La Liga MVP award.

Marc Andre ter Stegen is the second goalkeeper to win this award after Jan Oblak won it in the 2020/21 season.

The right-footed goalkeeper has been exceptional throughout the season. He made incredible saves and helped his team clinch the La Liga league title.

The Barca style of play has always been based on a goalkeeper who can get the ball into play with his feet, and there are few, if any, people who can do that quite as well as Marc-Andre ter Stegen. He made a staggering 1,225 passes in La Liga 2022/23."

Barca website wrote about the keeper. It said: "Ter Stegen has a natural talent for reading the game. He can consistently be seen with the ball at his feet and weighing up the situation, looking around him and often far up the pitch.

"He needs to find a free man, and one who will be able to go on and construct a play from there." -ANI

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY

Germany grab late draw with Ukraine in Bremen

BERLIN: Late goals from Kai Havertz and Joshua Kimmich helped Germany to clinch a 3-3 stalemate against resilient Ukraine in an international friendly in front of 35,975 spectators at the Weser stadium in Bremen on Monday.

The Germans assumed control from the kick off as Niclas Fullkrug came close with only two minutes played.

Fullkrug remained in the thick of things as he opened the scoring four minutes after deflecting Marius Wolf's dangerous shot.

The hosts should have made it two but for all that Julian Brandt rattled only the side netting from promising position in the 11th minutes.



The visitors from the Ukraine sparked to life out of thin air as Brandt's misplaced pass allowed Oleksandr Tymchyk to set up for

Viktor Tsygankov, who beat Germany goalkeeper Kevin Trapp with a low shot from a tight angle in the 18th minute.

Serhiy Rebrov's boys gained momentum and turned the tides five minutes later when Antonio Rudiger deflected Mykhailo Mudryk's volley to make it 2-1 for Ukraine.

Germany nearly restored parity just before the break but Leroy Sane's free kick hit only the cross-bar.

The visitors grabbed a bright start into the second half and shocked Germany with the 3-1 lead as Artem Dovbyk dispossessed Matthias Ginter inside the box before squaring into the path of Tsygankov, who made no mistake and sewed up his brace into the empty goal in the 56th minute.

Germany pressed frantically and got rewarded in the closing

stages as Havertz controlled a long ball before beating Ukraine goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin from close range in the 83rd minute.

The hosts remained on the front foot and restored parity in the dying minutes as Joshua Kimmich converted a foul play penalty to make it 3-3 on the scoreboards.

"The result shows the shape of the squad. We started well, we had everything under control but then we gave things out of our hands. We must see how we can improve things as we still have coordination problems on the pitch," said Germany head coach Hansi Flick.

"We played very well over ninety minutes and gave our very best," said Ukraine head coach Serhiy Rebrov. -Xinhua

IN PICTURES



Kajol and Ajay Devgn at a trailer launch event
Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn and his wife and actress Kajol pose for a picture at the trailer launch of the web series 'The Trial: Pyaar Kanoon Dhokha', in Mumbai on Monday. *ANI Photo*



Water levels recede in flood-affected areas near Kakhovka dam
People receive life supplies in Afanasiyivka, Mykolaiv region. The Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant was destroyed causing a decrease of the dam water level and massive flooding in nearby areas. *Xinhua*



Firemen try to put out fire in Bhopal, India
Flames and smoke come out from a building in Bhopal, capital of India's Madhya Pradesh state. *Xinhua*



Green Rural Revival Programme lifts image of countryside in Zhejiang
In this aerial picture tourists enjoy beside the Baima Lake in Yiting Town of Shaoxing, east China's Zhejiang Province. In June 2003, Zhejiang launched the Green Rural Revival Programme, which plans to renovate about 10,000 incorporated villages and transform about 1,000 central villages among them into examples of moderate prosperity in all respects. *Xinhua*



Romanian PM resigns in agreed power swap
Romanian Prime Minister Nicolae Ciuca leads a government meeting at Victoria Palace in Bucharest, Romania. Romanian Prime Minister Nicolae Ciuca said he expected the country's new government to be inaugurated "by the end of the week." *Xinhua*



Tibet implements rural revitalisation strategy
This aerial picture shows Yumai Township in Shannan City, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. Located on the China-India border, the township was once known as China's least populated township. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Meethaq Credit Cards offer exclusive privileges and great travel and shopping benefits



Meethaq’s Credit Cards are Sharia compliant as they are based on the concept of Ujrah with no interest-based fees and the benefits consider the needs of different customer segments



MUSCAT: In line with its commitment towards serving customers better everyday, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat offers several Credit Cards with a number of exclusive benefits to customers.

Meethaq’s Credit Cards are Sharia compliant as they are based on the concept of Ujrah with no

interest-based fees and the benefits consider the needs of different customer segments. Meethaq customers will particularly enjoy a large number of travel and shopping benefits which are available to its customers.

Speaking on the occasion, Sami Arfah Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager – Meethaq Personal

Banking, said: “Meethaq is keen to develop and offer the latest features and services through its credit cards to its customers so that they can enjoy the best possible experience when shopping and while travelling. I would like to express my happiness and delight at the excellent feedback we have received from customers since the launch

of Meethaq’s Credit Cards. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all customers for their strong confidence in Meethaq Islamic Banking and its cutting-edge products and services.”

Meethaq Credit cardholders can enjoy 52 days credit period, a 24-hour cash advance facility from ATMs worldwide and secure

Internet shopping via online OTP service. Travel benefits on the cards include free travel takaful for tickets bought with the card, offers at some of the most iconic and distinctive hotels worldwide as well as discounts at a number of merchants worldwide. The cards feature both contactless and Chip and PIN payments at PoS terminals for

highly secure transactions and are accepted worldwide at more than 30 million locations.

Customers also benefit from Meethaq’s Easy Payment Plan facility wherein they can pay for their high-value purchases at selected merchants in Oman for 12 months, without needing to pay any extra amount for the extended credit facility.

Importantly, every Meethaq product goes through the process of Shari’a compliance certification by the Shari’a Supervisory Board and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman. As the leader in the Islamic banking industry in Oman, Meethaq has a strong track record of winning many prestigious local, regional and international awards for its outstanding achievements in Islamic banking.

Accolades won in the past include the Best Islamic Bank in Oman award from Islamic Finance News (IFN), Oman’s Most Trusted Brand (Islamic Banking) from Apex Media, Leading Islamic Banking Brand in Oman Award from Global Brands, the Best Islamic Digital Bank Award from Global Finance and the GIFA Market Leadership Award.

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

National Finance organises blood donation initiative



MUSCAT: National Finance, a leading financial services provider, has successfully concluded its blood donation initiative, held in commemoration of World Blood Donor Day.

Selfless act

The event, hosted at the company’s headquarters, witnessed an overwhelming response from employees, who wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity to make a difference. Their selfless act of donating blood exemplified a remarkable sense of unity.

Impressively, a significant count of individuals registered forward as blood donors, totalling 150.

This notable participation contributed to the cause of saving lives and addressing the ongoing chal-

lenges related to the blood supply. A commendable number of units of blood were collected during the drive. These notable statistics stand as a testament to the generosity of the National Finance team, actively supporting the well-being of the community.

Tariq Al Farsi, the Chief Executive Officer of National Finance, expressed his gratitude and pride for the enthusiastic participation of employees and the successful outcome of the blood donation drive.

Significant impact

He remarked, “We are thrilled to have made a significant impact in the lives of others through our blood donation Initiative. Our employees’ overwhelming response and active involvement showcase

their compassion and dedication to making a difference. We believe in the power of collective action and this event exemplifies the spirit of giving back to the community that lies at the core of National Finance’s values.”

National Finance continues demonstrating its strong commitment to community service and belief in the spirit of volunteerism. The successful organisation of the blood donation drive reaffirms the company’s position at the forefront of initiatives that positively impact society.

As the company moves forward, it remains steadfast in its pursuit of initiatives that foster unity, compassion and a profound sense of responsibility towards the community it serves.



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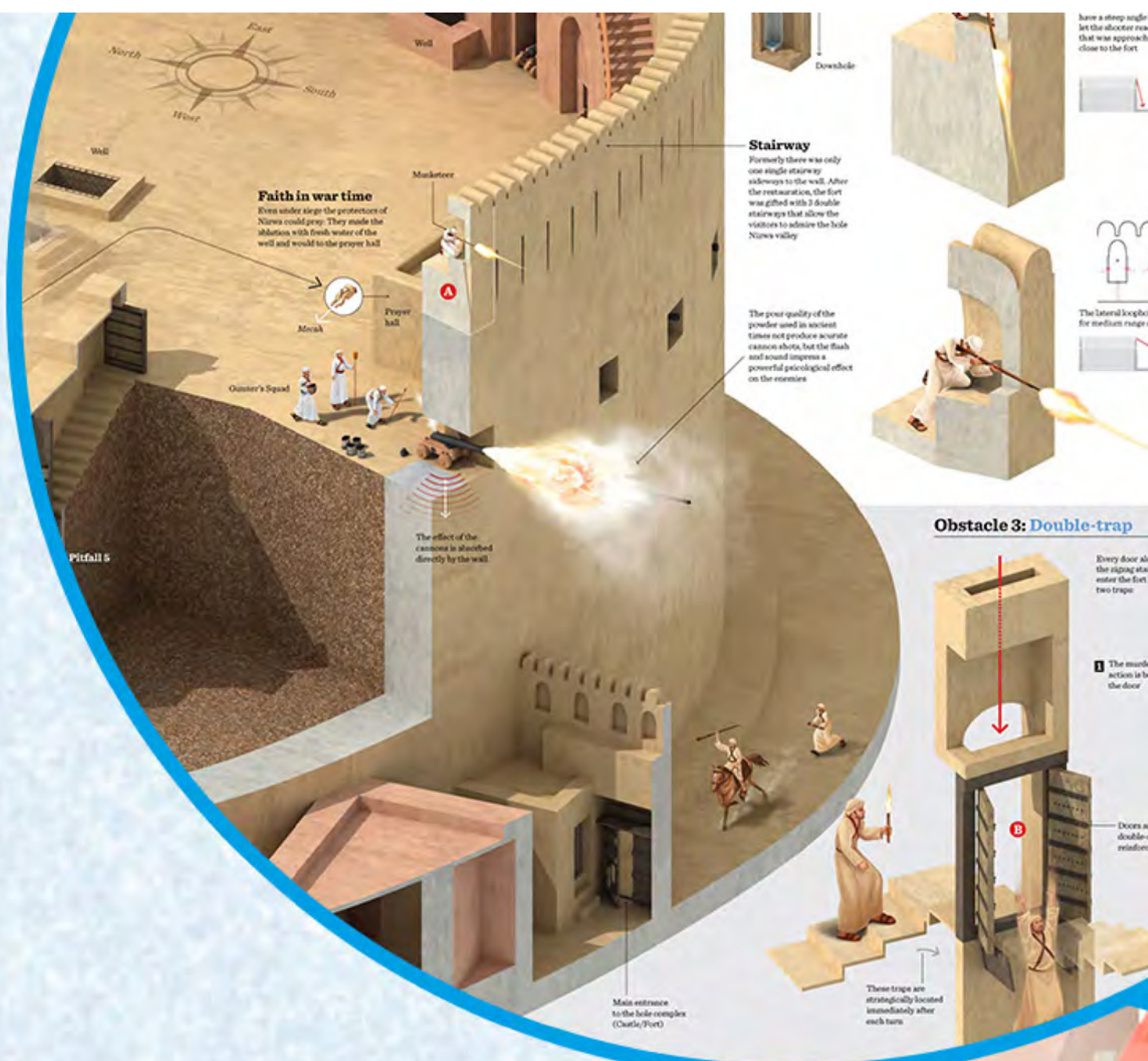
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