

GDS WORKSHOP HELD TO ENHANCE TOURISM IN OMAN

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism organised a workshop on Global Distribution Systems (GDS) for reservations at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC. The opening of the workshop was held under the patronage of Azzan Qassim Ali Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism. **>A3**



imes OF OMAN



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HOTEL REVENUES IN OMAN GROW 27.8%

The revenues of 3-5-star hotels in Oman stood at OMR122,530,000 as at the end of July 2023, up by 27.8 percent over the corresponding period in 2022. Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) show that the total number of hotel guests grew by 25.8 percent to 1,098,157 by the end of July 2023, compared to 872,796 during the corresponding period in 2022. **>B1**



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SCHOOLS REOPEN ACROSS OMAN

More than 780,000 students of the Sultanate of Oman began their new academic year 2023/2024 on Tuesday with enthusiasm and dynamism. They are the torchbearers of knowledge hoping to take the country on a growth path with their hard work and wisdom.



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN ROHM unveils details of new season

1 The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) on Tuesday unveiled details of the programme for the Season 2023/2024. The season, entitled "Stars, Legends, Dreams" is built from an amazing variety of shows, including four popular operas, eight exhilarating Arab music concerts and shows. **>A2**

WORLD UK orders review of air traffic control chaos

2 The British government has ordered a review into the country's air traffic control system on Tuesday after a glitch stranded thousands of passengers and caused delays that are set to last for days. More than 1,500 flights were cancelled on Monday, which was a public holiday. **>A6**

SPORTS Indian team wins women's 5s Asia Cup

3 The Indian women's hockey team won the inaugural Women's Hockey 5s Asia Cup, which also served as Asia's qualifying tournament for the Women's Hockey 5s World Cup, defeating Thailand 7-2 in the final. India qualified for the Women Hockey 5s World Cup Oman 2024. **>A8**

Dhofar Forum 2023

Masterplan of Greater Salalah presented

SALALAH: Dhofar Forum 2023 discussed efforts made to support economic diversification, comprehensive development and sustainable growth in the governorate.

A working paper presented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning outlined Greater Salalah masterplan.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar.

Titiled 'Dhofar Gateway to a Brighter Future', the forum saw the participation of representatives of 150 establishments, including government institutions and units, public firms, small and medium enterprises and other business and professional enti-



ties. The programme of the forum was organised by business world magazine "Alam Al-Eqtisad", with inputs from Dhofar Municipality, the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) and Oman Tourism College.

Discussion sessions and working papers of the forum focused on salient features of development and the prospects of growth in Dhofar. **-ONA**

MANDATORY GUIDELINES ISSUED FOR CONTRACTORS TO

USE LOCAL PRODUCTS

The list has been compiled in coordination with the Commerce Ministry

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Mandatory guidelines have been launched by the Secretariat General of the Tender Board for contractors doing business with the government to purchase the products and services of Omani factories and local suppliers.

The list, which will be included in all tenders and government procurements, was compiled in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

In its first phase, the list will include 9 categories of products of 57 commodities. These cover building materials, electrical appliances, oil equipment, steel products, foodstuff, plastic products, paper tools, furniture, petroleum and chemical materials.

The list also includes 11 categories of services that cover 96 items, namely electrical works, civil and construction works, traffic safety and general maintenance of buildings, primary equipment on the job site, engineering and professional designing, information technology, manpower services, supply of machinery and equipment, supply and transfer of cables and general supplies and services.

This was unveiled during a ceremony on Tuesday to announce In-Country Value (ICV) programmes and initiatives.

Organised by the Tender Board at the Diplomatic Club in Mus-



57
THE LIST WILL INCLUDE 9 CATEGORIES OF PRODUCTS OF 57 COMMODITIES. THESE COVER BUILDING MATERIALS, ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES, OIL EQUIPMENT, STEEL PRODUCTS, FOODSTUFF, PLASTIC PRODUCTS, PAPER TOOLS, FURNITURE, PETROLEUM AND CHEMICAL MATERIALS.

cat, the ceremony was held under the auspices of Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

During the ceremony, the Tender Board launched a programme codenamed "Mu'een" (or aquifer spring), which supports small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by providing training and ongoing education for business owners. The programme is designed

to boost efficiency and working skills through a mentoring system that directly connects business owners with experts in business affairs.

Several agreements were signed on the sidelines of the ceremony. The pacts included an agreement that initiates a cooperation programme for the establishment of SMEs which provide regular maintenance services for government vehicles. **>A5**

TRAGEDY

Shocking! Cricketer collapses during match, passes away

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The cricket fraternity in the Sultanate of Oman is in shock and disbelief after knowing the sudden demise of an amateur cricketer from Pakistan during an unofficial 'afternoon league' match on August 25, Friday.

Muhammad Jaffar, a 38-year-old cricketer, was playing in a tennis-ball league tournament, organised by MOCL, at Al Hail for the Modern XI side.

Speaking to *Times of Oman*, an eye-witness and teammate, Gulam Abbas: "Jaffar had just been dismissed and returned to the temporary team tent. He sat down on a chair and drank a glass of water before collapsing on the ground.

"I along with a few other teammates rushed him to the nearby hospital in Al Hail in my car. The

doctors tried to resuscitate him for 20-25 minutes before declaring him dead."

"Jaffar might have died of a heart attack," Abbas said according to the hospital authorities.

Jaffar, who hailed from Gujarat in Pakistan and has been in Oman for over a decade, is survived by his mother, wife and four children.

Modern XI skipper Harish K.S. told *Times of Oman* that "the teammates and other teams of the league were left shell-shocked on the sudden demise of Jaffar."

The incident happened around 4.30pm and it was quite hot that day.

Harish said: "The scorching heat makes it difficult for players and I request players to keep themselves hydrated and drink a lot of water while playing during the day."

"He used to play for our team

for the past many years. Earlier, he was working in different cities like Salalah and Duqm but recently he had moved to Muscat. Since coming to Muscat, he made it a point to play for us during the weekends. I knew him very well and this is the first time such a fatal incident has happened during my cricket career of the past ten years."

With the support of fellow teammates, league organisers and well-wishers, the team in cooperation with the Pakistan Embassy were able to complete the formalities and repatriate his body in two days. His body was sent back to his home country on August 27

Harish said that the team members and other cricket-loving fans have generously supported the efforts and donated to repatriate his body and the team has now decided to help Jaffar's family finan-



cially. "We plan to send some monetary assistance monthly to the family of Jaffar bhai. The team has joined hands together and we will make sure to help the family back in Pakistan. He was one among us

and we need to provide support for the family," said Harish.

Leading sports injury consultant, Dr E B S Ramanathan at Muscat Private Hospital, said: "Such incidents could be caused by cardiomyopathy, which could lead to heart failure. There could have been a prevailing condition that has not been detected in the player. This is why it is very important to go for tests for sportspersons."

He added: "The most common heart muscle disease that causes sudden cardiac death (SCD) in athletes is called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) - a disease in which the heart muscle becomes abnormally thick. The thickened heart muscle makes it harder for the heart to pump blood sufficiently to the rest of the body."

Dr Ramanathan added: "It is im-

portant for anyone participating in sports to undergo a thorough Pre Participation Evaluation (PPE) to detect hidden abnormalities, which may affect performance and even cause death."

Sudden cardiac death is a tragedy at any age and under any circumstances but is perhaps most tragic when it claims the life of the sportsperson, an individual who epitomises health and a healthy lifestyle. The death of Jaffar is a grim reminder that regular medical check-ups should be done by one and all.

The collapse of Jaffar on the ground is similar to the incident that happened earlier this year when a 38-year-old amateur badminton player collapsed while playing at the indoor courts before being declared dead on reaching hospital.



PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:13pm

Asr.....3:40pm

Maghrib.....6:33pm

Isha.....7:45pm

Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:31am



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Stars, Legends, Dreams: ROHM announces events for new season

The season is built from an amazing variety of shows, including four popular operas, eight exhilarating Arab music concerts and shows, four classical concerts, two extraordinary ballets, one jazz evening, two world music stars, and six spectacular shows

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat is delighted to present the programme for the Season 2023/24. Welcome to a season of highlights and exciting moments! There is such a range of world class performances that there is something for absolutely everyone to enjoy.

The season, entitled Stars, Legends, Dreams is built from an amazing variety of shows, including four popular operas, eight exhilarating Arab music concerts and shows, four classical concerts, two extraordinary ballets, one jazz evening, two world music stars, and six spectacular shows, there is so much magic to enjoy and so much inspiration to be gained.

Operas of Rossini, Donizetti, Puccini, and Britten

The Barber of Seville begins the season in Gioacchino Rossini's much-loved style, quick with wit and pleasing music. Join us on the red carpet to open the season with a stellar cast, the Orchestra Sinfonicadella Rai, Intermezzo Choir, and the Omani Opera Choir, under the baton of Antonino Fogliani (September 28 and 30).The theme of comedy and mischievous trickery is continued later in the season with Don Pasquale, Gaetano Donizetti's opera, a cautionary tale warning old men off marrying young wives! We welcome the Madrid Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Francesco Lanzillotta, with another line up of incredible artists taking the main roles (December 14 & 16).

By contrast, we see the return of ROHM's stunning co-production of Giacomo Puccini's tragic love story, La Bohème, with Opéra de Monte Carlo. Emmanuel Villaume conducts the Orchestra Filarmonica Italiana in a staging which takes the breath away (November 23 & 25).

An exciting highlight is the new opera production, realised in collaboration with Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova and scheduled on the 8 and 10 February 2024, of A Midsummer Night's Dream by Benjamin Britten. The production is staged by Laurence Dale and based on the glorious comedy by



William Shakespeare. While fairies and mortals mingle on stage, ROHM has created a special educational project for children to inspire greater connection to this literary giant.

From Antonino Siragusaas Count d'Almaviva in The Barber of Seville, and Sonya Yoncheva as Mimì in La Bohème, to Ambrogio Maestri as the eponymous Don Pasquale, and Sydney Mancasola as Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream, the stars who are performing in the operas of our season shine very bright indeed.

Arab music stars from across the ages

Programming of Arab Music throughout the season gathers stars and legends in concerts that warm the soul and reconnect with history and tradition. The annual Omani Women's Day concert celebrates an incredible line up of female musicians, including Al Nour wal Amal Orchestra, the only blind all female orchestra playing classical music alongside Majida El Roumi (October 17). A scattering of diamonds light up the season in solo concerts with Arab superstars, Majida El Roumi (Oct 18), Ragheb Alama (February 1 & 2), and Asala (March 1 & 2). Enjoy an incredible first for ROHM, as Asala is invited to perform her concert in the open air of the maidan, ensuring unprecedented access for a wider audience. We revisit legends in a special festival celebrating Mohamed Abdul Wahab's place as one of the greatest musicians in Arab music history.



Enjoy a week-long series of events and exhibitions, combined with two unique concerts to pay homage to his life and work. Cairo Opera brings us the legend of Scheherazade from 1001 Nights. Our annual respectful Ramadan series will take place in the holy month, with guests from Morocco, Syria and Egypt lending their voices to the special moments of reflection. A unique concert opens traditional Yemeni music to symphonic orchestra arrangements in Traditional Symphonies – A Journey through Yemeni Music conducted by Mohamed Al Ghoom.

Classical concerts

Our first orchestral concert of the season features the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai, conducted by Michele Gamba. With pieces from Paisiello, Rossini, and Cimarosa, cellist Ettore Pagano will lift the concert to new heights (September 29).

To add to the big names that feature during the season, legendary Leo Nucci comes on board for a concert in homage to Maria Callas (November 24),and the best bass baritone of our age, Erwin Schrott

performs a concert outside his usual classical repertoire, bringing Spanish song and dance to the opera house stage (December 15).We are privileged to invite you to the opera house to hear the Pipe Organ Concert, the annual presentation which features the magnificent ROHM pipe organ front and centre with international organists, orchestra and choir further enhancing the concert (May 4).

Ballets from the world-famous Bolshoi and the Prague National Ballet

A glorious epic contrasts with aromatic comedy in the two ballets which grace the season. The brilliant Bolshoi Ballet and Opera Theatre Company of Moscow presents Alexander Glazunov's Raymonda (January 25, 26, & 27). The sweet romance between Lise and Colas in La Fille Mal Gardée, with its bucolic setting and farmyard characters is the perfect partner in the season. Sergey Smbatyan returns to the opera house to conduct the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, with dancers from the Prague National Ballet (March 6 & 7).

Unforgettable Jazz

The jazz concert with Randy Brecker and Igor Butman stands out in this incredible season. These two jazz artists are jazz stars, touring as a sextet to sell out shows all over the world (October 11 & 12).



Icons of world music and culture

With special pride for the ROHM vision for cultural enrichment and global breadth in programming, the opera house has added two artists at the top of their field in a national genre. Nishat Khan takes the meaning of musicality to a whole new level with the sitar, as the best musician of Indian classical music bar none in the world today (November 9 & 10). Cristina Branco will fill the auditorium with the soulful passion of Portuguese fado, hitting notes and emotions that will stir audiences very deeply (April 19).

As always, the opera house strives to present a full and varied programme for every audience member to enjoy. For 2023/24, there are six shows which add a depth to the season, bringing in new and younger audiences, to begin building or develop further their love of musical performance. Annual festivals of military and folk music will take place on the outdoor maidans of the opera house and Royal Opera House of Musical Arts. In addition to these two extravaganzas, the Xi'An Acrobatic Troupe of China will present Swan Lake, a new take on the classical ballet to music from Tchaikovsky (26 & 28 October).

The circus comes to town with acrobatics and breathtaking acts

in Cirkopolis, in a show designed to get more family audiences to find their way to the opera house (December 21, 22, & 23). In the new year, the stage will become an ice rink once again, for the world premiere of Symphony on Ice, a skating performance created especially for ROHM (January 4, 5 & 6). The world-famous show Stomp! finally arrives in the Middle East, after a decade of performing sell out nights across the West End in the UK and Broadway in the US (April 25, 26 & 27).

Educational programme

The 2023/24 calendar of educational events include two Open House days, where the opera house doors are thrown open to students of all ages to take part in workshops and activities. This year, we offer one entitled The Sound of Music (December 16), and one entitled Making Music (February 24). Each one creates opportunities to delve deep into musical performance from a new and exciting perspective with professional musicians and educators. Summer Camp and School Performances are features of the season, and the highlight for 2024 will be the events surrounding the presentation of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, where Shakespeare will inspire games, crafts, activities, and exhibitions all over the opera house.

Outreach activities

The outreach programme includes Lunch Music in the Opera Galleria; Pre-Performance Talks for major productions; Opera Talks with artists in the music library; the Absolute Music Series; the new Open Air Movie Nights on the roof terrace of ROHM, and a special one-off concert entitled Desert Bridge (November 16), where Oman becomes the channel for sharing music and culture between ROSO and a Swiss orchestra.

Season 2023/24 is further distinguished by a new pricing structure designed to encourage and enable wider audiences to access the arts. Major reductions to ticket prices adds even more value to your experience. Dive into another amazing season at ROHM, with new ticket prices starting from OMR3. Make the most of everything on offer at your opera house.

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ONAM CELEBRATED WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM IN OMAN

Onam, the traditional festival of Kerala, was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Oman on Tuesday. The event was celebrated with colourful ‘pookkalam’ of different flowers welcoming the students, parents and teachers in their traditional Kerala attire to wish everyone a happy Onam. The festival is celebrated in the Chingam month, which marks the beginning of the Malayalam calendar. It is celebrated to mark the homecoming of King Mahabali, during whose reign the state was said to have witnessed the golden era.



Stress on GDS use to promote Oman as tourism destination

GDS systems are central booking platforms that provide travel agents with real-time access to tourism services



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism organised a workshop on Global Distribution Systems (GDS) for reservations at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC on Tuesday.

The opening of the workshop was held under the patronage of Azzan Qassim Ali Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. The workshop aims to propel the tourism industry in the Sultanate of Oman towards new horizons by increasing bookings in Omani hotels and enabling tourism establishments to leverage these systems in attracting a larger number of visitors to their facilities.

GDS systems are central booking platforms that provide travel agents from various countries with real-time access to tourism services, such as flight and hotel rates, car rentals, and other essential traveller products. These systems serve as a crucial link between travel service providers (hotels) and reservation sources (travel agents), allowing them to efficiently manage bookings and distribute their offerings on a global scale.

This workshop is part of the implementation of several initiatives and programmes aimed at promoting the Sultanate of Oman as a tourist destination while ensuring a prosperous future for the hotel sector in the country. The event brought together numerous hotel establishments in the Sultanate of Oman, with the presence of two major providers of Global Distribution Systems (GDS) services: Travelport and Amadeus. Representatives of these platforms had a unique opportunity to present their innovative solutions by facilitating direct communication between service providers and the hospitality sector in Oman across its various categories.

The Ministry seeks to enhance Oman's presence in the global tourism market and boost revenue flows in line with the Omani tourism strategy and comprehensive tourism development plan.

In this regard, Haitham Al Ghasani, Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, stated, "The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism recognizes the positive impact that the hospitality sector in the Sultanate of Oman will gain from participating in these platforms. Integrating hotels into these global platforms offer a multitude of benefits, including expanding the reach to a wide network of travel agencies and online booking platforms, leading to a significant increase in reservations from around the world.

This contributes to higher occupancy rates and an overall enhancement of the hospitality sector in the Sultanate of Oman. Additionally, GDS systems simplify the booking process for both travel agents and tourist hotels, providing a seamless and efficient booking experience that enables international visitors to explore the tourism potential of the Sultanate of Oman."

-ONA

Event held on Omani Associations Day

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Tuesday organised Omani Associations Day event with participation of different professional associations.

The event was organised under the patronage of Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

The event aimed at contributing to enhancing the local society of associations, developing cooperation, and exchanging knowledge between them.

This is due to its vital role in strengthening the events industry and promoting the Sultanate of Oman as a hub for the activities of associations, as well as exchanging knowledge, communication and collaboration with international associations.

Khalid Al Zedjali, Director of Oman Office of Conference at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, stated, "By organising this event, we aimed at exploring the various means in which the local associations can further improve their operations, strengthen member services and make a more impactful contribution to their industries and communities by leveraging the valuable insights with best practices for international associations. Further, there were also many key areas where local associations can benefit from the experience and expertise of their international counterparts."

Al Zedjali added that it is important for the local associations to maintain the strong bonds with the international networks, to participate in conferences and events and to search proactively for learning and cooperation opportunities with their international peers. By doing so, local associations can improve their performance and create value addition to their members and stakeholders.

The event included three different sessions. The first session "Building Resilient Communities" explored the vital role that ICCA (the International Congress and Convention Association) played in promoting resilience within communities and highlighting the strength and potential of associations in leading positive change and supporting society development.

The second session included presentations presented by international associations about their best practices. Local associations had the opportunity to learn from these presentations, gain insights about successful strategies and methods implemented by associations. The session aimed at inspiring and providing local associations with practical ideas that can be applied to their associations and promote growth and success in their respective fields.

-ONA



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Oman's trail running champions are poised to shine on the international stage as four exceptional athletes – Hamed Al Harthi, Hamdan Al Khatri, Issa Al Abri, and Mohammed Al Shizawi – prepare for the epic challenge of the 2023 UTMB Mont Blanc event. This year's race will see these exceptional runners from Oman compete across varying distances, embodying the nation's spirit of endurance and adventure.

With the kick-off of the Omani runners' respective distances set for 1 September 2023, these athletes are not only striving for performance goals but also proudly representing Oman on a global platform. The journey that awaits them is a physical one, but also a testament to the nation's spirit and determination.

Hamed Al Harthi, speaking on behalf of the group, emphasised the honour of representing Oman at the UTMB Mont Blanc: "We carry the heart of Oman with us as we prepare to embrace the challenges of this prestigious event. It's not just about competing; it's about showcasing determination and resilience."



Oman's trail running champions at the heart of the Alps to take on the 2023 UTMB Mont Blanc



Al Harthi added, "We are immensely grateful for the support we receive from our technical team representing Himam Trail Run Race, Ahmed Al Fahdi, Ali Al Balushi, and Sultan Al Sherei. Their expertise in preparedness, diet, planning, and recovery are invaluable to our performance."

Hamdan Al Khatri shared a sentiment echoing Hamed's words: "Our participation in the global event is a testament to Oman's growing prominence in the world of trail running. We are excited to showcase what we can achieve and push the boundaries on an international level."

Oman has been witnessing a surge in popularity of trail running, attributed to the country's abundance of natural and traditional trails that span its varied landscapes. The extensive Al Hajar mountain range, with peaks reaching up to 3,000 metres, offers a unique setting for trail enthusiasts. The diversity of terrains and captivating beauty of the Al Hajar Mountains have garnered attention from athletes and adventure seekers around the world.



In a unique synergy, the Himam Trail Run Race will also make its presence felt at the race village, inviting participants to partake in the event scheduled for 23 - 25 November. This race promises an array of distances – from the challenging 110km Al Hajar ULTRA to the Skyward Canyon 55KM, the Scenic Sprint 25KM, and family runs – across four distinct cities in Oman. The event is proudly supported by the Governor of Al Dhakhiliyah and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, reflecting its significance in promoting Oman's diverse natural beauty and spirit of adventure.

The UTMB Mont Blanc, scheduled from 28 August to 3 September 2023, will also include the first UTMB World Series Finals. The event has seen a remarkable increase in applicants, with registrations crossing previous numbers.



MEETING

Royal Office Minister meets top UK military commander

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'mani, Minister of the Royal Office received on Tuesday Gen. Sir Patrick Sanders, Chief of the General Staff of the British Army and his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the march of the historical relations binding the two countries and discussed a set of military topics of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by the Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and the UK appointed-ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

Maritime Security Centre

Gen. Sir Patrick Sanders, Chief of the General Staff of the British Army and his accompanying delegation visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC).

The guest was accompanied by Maj.Gen Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO).

The guest and his accompanying delegation were briefed on the tactical roles and tasks carried



out by the centre in the safety of the maritime environment. They toured the centre's facilities and

viewed its latest equipment and technologies used in carrying out its national duties. -ONA

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING



Meeting discusses GCC joint strategy on women's affairs

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, on Tuesday chaired the 9th meeting of the Committee of GCC social development ministries' undersecretaries.

The meeting, held via videoconferencing, reviewed the decision of the GCC Supreme Council on the unified guiding bylaw (system) for empowerment of people with disabilities.

The meeting also studied the unified guiding bylaw on volunteer action and the GCC Supreme Council's decision on the protection of moral, religious and family values in Gulf societies.

Later, the undersecretaries discussed GCC Supreme Council's decisions on the functions of the GCC charitable action committee. They also elaborated on the GCC joint strategy on women's affairs.

The meeting explored measures

to generalise privileges granted to people with disabilities in GCC states so that the advantages could benefit all citizens in member states. It also looked into the proposal of the State of Kuwait on allocating an award for talented and outstanding people with disabilities in GCC states.

The meeting exchanged views about developing criteria for honouring pioneering social action projects and personalities. -ONA

Ministry holds workshop on monitoring SDGs indicators

The two-day workshop is taking place in the Ministry's General Diwan under the auspices of Prof. Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Education

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Doha, implemented on Tuesday a workshop on preparing reports and monitoring indicators of the fourth goal of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) Education - 2030.

The two-day workshop is taking place in the Ministry's General Diwan under the auspices of Prof. Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of



Education for Education, and head of the team.

The workshop began with a welcoming speech, delivered by Prof. Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, in which he thanked the team members for their presence and dedication in carrying out the tasks entrusted to them.

He also stressed on the importance of this workshop in provid-

ing the members with the skills necessary to draft reports related to the fourth goal and the use of qualitative data to calculate standard indicators, the proposed structure and areas of content, data sources and the analytical plan for the fourth goal report, monitoring, and analysing it.

Farida Abudan, Educational Programmes Specialist at the UNESCO Regional Office for the Arab

Gulf States and Yemen, indicated that this workshop comes within the framework of the UNESCO's cooperation with the Sultanate of Oman with regard to the fourth goal in particular, and the sustainable development goals in general.

This workshop also comes on the sidelines of the Sultanate of Oman preparation for the second voluntary report on the goals of sustainable development - 2030,

which will highlight the efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in comprehensive development in accordance with the principles of Oman Vision 2040.

The workshop, presented by Dr. Subramaniam Venkatraman, an international expert specialised in the reports of the fourth goal and monitoring related indicators related, included several themes, including: indicators of the fourth goal of the sustainable development goals, issues related to data, challenges of their availability during the preparation of reports, and their standards and quality that affect the monitoring of the fourth goal of sustainable development goals.

The workshop's themes also included the use of qualitative data, the preparation of case studies, and the use of national surveys to monitor the fourth goal of the sustainable development goals, contents, data sources and analytical plan.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Training programme for new supervisors being implemented

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, has implemented an introductory programme to prepare new supervisors to work in the educational supervision sector. The program targets 80 supervisors from various educational directorates in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The programme aims to prepare new supervisors to work in the educational supervision sector and to provide new supervisors with basic supervisory skills and competencies, knowledge of the administrative and legal aspects related to supervisory work. It also aims to identify supportive supervisory models, ways to activate them, and instill reflection on supervisory practices.

The programme started with a speech by Dr. Sulaiman Al-Jamudi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision.

The introductory programme included a number of papers presented over the span of two days.

The first day of the programme began with a paper entitled: "Planning in Supervisory Work," presented by Bader Al-Akhzami, General Supervisor of School Sports Subject. Another paper was titled "Tasks and Roles of the Educational Supervisor," presented by Dr. Ali Al-Shukaili, General Supervisor of the Islamic Education subject.

TENDER BOARD

FROM A1 Agreements signed



The agreement was signed by the National Employment Programme (NEP), the Ministry of Labour, the Tender Board, the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (AS-MED) and Muscat Municipality.

The Secretariat General of the Tender Board also signed a cooperation programme with Invest Oman Lounge to localise investment opportunities and industries. The agreement provides for the exchange of data, information and expertise in investment fields, in addition to publishing a list of investment opportunities on the lounge's platform with the purpose of promoting local content in the industries sector.

The Tender Board also signed a financing agreement with Bank Dhofar to simplify financing procedures for self-employed entrepreneurs who own commercial registers. The agreement gives the entrepreneurs access to government tenders and procurements floated via "Isnad" platform.

The mandatory list establishes competition between companies and prompts them to meet the requirements of local content, so that their products could be considered for support through government purchases. The trial version of the mandatory list will be activated for a period of 6 months. -ONA

Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Directorate General of Khoula Hospital invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref	Description	Last date for Collection of tenders Documen:	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 09:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
MOH/DGKH-33 /3174/2023	Supply and Installation of Bed Head Unit with Nurse Call System at Al Nahdha Hospital, Directorate General of Khoula Hospital	07/Sep/2023	04/ Oct /2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 25.000

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200, Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

REPORT

Kenya’s debt level reaches record high

NAIROBI: Kenya’s debt level has reached record highs despite President William Ruto’s vow to tame the country’s appetite for loans, according to news reports, Portal Plus reported.

As per data, the total public debt of Kenya has risen by a record 10.8 billion US dollars to 70.75 billion US dollars, breaching the debt ceiling amount set in June 2022 by the parliament and exceeding the previous year’s debt by more than 18 per cent. The increase in public debt was attributed to external loan disbursements, exchange rate fluctuations and the uptake of domestic and external debt.

As per reports, the loan repayment costs, mainly to China, have shot up as the local currency trades at record lows of around 144 shillings to the dollar. The cost of debt servicing in the fiscal year that ended in June was USD 2.7 billion, of which the highest payment - 107 billion shillings (USD 743 million) - went to China.

Kenya’s debt repayment to China continues to rise, as per the citizen website. An increase in debt repayment was due to factors like the maturity of some of the loans taken from China. For example, the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) was financed by a loan from China Exim Bank that matures in 2027. The government is also repaying loans taken from China to finance other infrastructure projects, such as the Mombasa Port expansion and the Lamu Port and Lamu-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor. — **ANI**



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UK orders independent review into air traffic control chaos



More than 1,500 flights were cancelled on Monday, which was a public holiday and one of the year’s busiest travel dates as school holidays draw to a close



LONDON: The British government has ordered a review into the country’s air traffic control system on Tuesday after a glitch stranded thousands of passengers and caused delays that are set to last for days.

More than 1,500 flights were cancelled on Monday, which was a public holiday and one of the year’s busiest travel dates as school holidays draw to a close. Transport Secretary Mark Harper said the incident was the worst of its kind for “nearly a decade” and ordered an independent review. “This was a technical fault,” he told GB News. “We do not think this was a cybersecurity incident.”

Delays for days

Although the system was brought back online within hours, the United Kingdom’s National Air Traffic

Services said the backlog of flights would last for “several days.”

That’s because airline schedules have been disrupted, and many flight crews are still out of place.

“I know people will be enormously frustrated by the disruption that’s impacting them,” Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in a broadcast statement.

“Thankfully things like this are rare and the issue itself was fixed in a matter of hours, but the disruption obviously is continuing and will last for a little while longer.”

Airlines battle travel chaos

British Airways was the worst-affected airline.

It said it was working “to get back on track” and offered short-haul passengers the option to change their flight dates for free.

Meanwhile, budget carrier Ryanair said on Tuesday that it expected “considerable flight delays” plus some further flight cancellations.

The UK’s busiest airport, London Heathrow, told passengers to contact their airline before travelling to the airport on Tuesday.

— **DW**



LIVE INTERVIEW

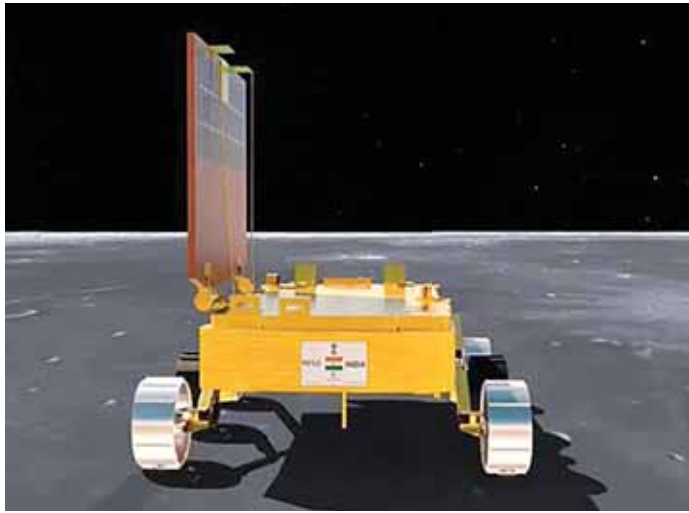
Emirates launches ‘out of this world’ interview with astronaut live from the space

ABU DHABI: Going to the ends of the Earth in a quest for the best entertainment is nothing new for Emirates Ice, and this time the award-winning inflight entertainment system will feature a live interview with UAE astronaut Sultan Al-Neyadi, chatting about his ‘in-flight experience’ in space — as he fearlessly floats 400 kilometres above our planet.

Sprinkling some stardust on the ice experience, the interview will be live on the Emirates World Channel from September 1, the same day the esteemed astronaut will begin his journey home to Earth, having completed a six-month science mission aboard the International Space Station. The journey home from space is expected to take up to 16 hours, just one hour shorter than Emirates’ longest flight duration – 17 hours from Auckland to Dubai.

The interview for Emirates Ice was conducted from the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre Mission Control Centre, via NASA in Houston, through a space-to-ground communication link. Interviewed by Emirates SVP of IFE & Connectivity, the discussion eclipses expectations as AlNeyadi fondly describes his inflight meals, how he stays connected to family and the entertainment available on-board the spacecraft, with Patrick drawing parallels with the Emirates experience. — **ANI**

INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION



‘On my way to uncover..’ Chandrayaan-3 Pragyan Rover’s message from lunar surface

BENGALURU: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Tuesday shared a fresh update on Chandrayaan 3’s Pragyan Rover which is on its expedition on the Lunar south pole.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), ISRO said that the rover is now on its way to uncover Moon secrets. “Hello earthlings! This is #Chandrayaan3’s Pragyan Rover. I hope you’re doing well. I want to let everyone know that I’m on my way to uncover the secrets of the Moon. Me and my friend Vikram Lander are in touch. We’re in good health. The best is coming soon,” ISRO InSight posted on X (formerly known as Twitter).

Earlier on August 28, ISRO informed that Pragyan Rover came across a 4-meter diameter crater on the lunar surface.

Taking to X (former Twitter), ISRO said, “Chandrayaan-3 Mission: On August 27, 2023, the Rover came across a 4-me-

ISRO said that the rover is now safely heading on a new path

ter diameter crater positioned 3 meters ahead of its location. The Rover was commanded to retrace the path.” ISRO said that the rover is now safely heading on a new path. India took a giant leap on August 23, as the Chandrayaan-3 lander module successfully landed on the moon’s South pole, making it the first country to have achieved the historic feat.

The country became the fourth— after the US, China, and Russia – to have successfully landed on the moon’s surface.

— **ANI**

AFTER UNGA SESSION

Nepal PM Dahal to embark on visit to China

KATHMANDU: Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal will embark on a visit to China at the end of next month, following his visit to the United Nations General Assembly session.

PM Dahal informed the parliament that the “new border points and follow-up on earlier accords” will be on the agenda during his visit to Beijing.

“During my scheduled visit to China, talks about opening new border points between Nepal and China have been finalized. The Nara Lagna border point in Mugu, I am aware about the issue as being informed from the local authorities as well as the locals from the district, I will attempt to make a decision over it,” Prime Minister Dahal said while replying to a question raised by lawmaker Aain Bahadur Shahi.

In response to another question raised by lawmaker Uday Shumsher JB Rana, PM Dahal said, “During the visit, enforcements of accords and understandings signed earlier will be given priority. The economic relation between the countries would be further enhanced through the operationalization of the border points between the two nations and opening of new border points are agendas of the visit.”

Meanwhile, the Nepal PM is scheduled to visit the United States in the second week of September to address the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) on September 22. After addressing the 78th session of the UNGA, he is expected to fly to China but the cabinet is yet to approve it. — **ANI**

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN



Eminem bars Republican Vivek Ramaswamy from using his music

WASHINGTON: Rap superstar Eminem demanded that Vivek Ramaswamy, who is running against Donald Trump to secure the Republican presidential nomination, refrain from using the artist’s music as part of his campaign, media reported on Monday.

Music company BMI wrote to Ramaswamy, in a letter dated August 23, saying they would no longer grant his campaign the licence to play Eminem’s music.

“BMI has received correspondence from Eminem, whose professional name is Marshall B. Mathers III, expressing objection to the use of his musical creations (collectively referred to as the ‘Eminem Works’) in the Vivek Ramaswamy campaign. In line with this objection, Eminem has requested that BMI remove all Eminem Works from the existing Agreement,” the company said.

Ramaswamy’s campaign confirmed to CNN that they intend to honor Eminem’s request and stop playing his music in their campaign activities.

Ramaswamy who does not have a political background, has been gaining traction in certain public opinion polls. He has distinguished himself by labeling his competitors as “influenced by monetary interests.”

During his days as a student at Harvard University, he used to rap libertarian lyrics with the stage name “Da Vek.” He has continued to employ this gimmick since declaring his intention to run for the Republican nomination.

The 38-year-old is a former



biotech executive and is reported to be worth around \$950 million (€878 million).

Ramaswamy is currently in third place among the Republican candidates who are in the running for the 2024 presidential primary elections, but far behind former President Trump.

He stood out during the recent Republican primary debate — which Trump did not attend — by mimicking Trump’s antagonistic style. Some observers believe he is looking to be picked as the former president’s running mate. — **DW**

Biden will reaffirm US commitment of economic cooperation at G20 Summit

Biden “will travel to Hanoi, Vietnam, on September 10 following his participation in the G20 Summit in New Delhi.”

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will “reaffirm US commitment to the G20” as the premier forum of economic cooperation globally and will also speak about a range of issues, including the social effects of Russia’s war in Ukraine, the White House said on Tuesday.



White House press secretary, Karine Jean Pierre made the remarks during a media briefing. Announcing the President’s schedule, Pierre said that Biden “will travel to Hanoi, Vietnam, on September 10 following his participation in the G20 Summit in New Delhi.” Responding to a question on

topline goals President Biden hopes to accomplish at G20, the White House press secretary said, “President Biden will reaffirm the US commitment to the G20 as the premier forum of economic cooperation globally.” She also said that President Biden will “discuss a range of joint efforts to tackle global issues, from

the clean energy transition and combating climate change to mitigating the economic and social impacts of Russia’s war in Ukraine, to increasing the capacity of the multilateral development banks to better fight poverty and take on the significant transnational challenges that are afflicting countries across the world.”

US President Joe Biden will travel to India on a four-day visit to attend the G20 Leaders’ Summit in September in New Delhi during which he will discuss joint efforts to tackle global issues like climate change, including the Ukraine war with member nations, White House confirmed in a statement on August 22.

Clean energy transition

It said Biden and G20 partners will also discuss clean energy transition and combating climate change increasing the capacity of multilateral development banks. India is set to host G20 Summit on September 9 and 10. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the US in June, where Biden had said he was looking forward to the G20 summit in September in New Delhi. While in New Delhi, President Biden will also commend Prime Minister Modi’s leadership of the G20 and reaffirm the US commit-

ment to the G20 as the premier forum of economic cooperation, including by hosting it in 2026, the White House announced earlier on August 22. “President Joseph R Biden, Jr will travel to New Delhi, India, from September 7-10 to attend the G20 Leaders’ Summit,” the White House statement read. “President Biden and G20 partners will discuss a range of joint efforts to tackle global issues, including the clean energy transition and combatting climate change, mitigating the economic and social impacts of Putin’s war in Ukraine, and increasing the capacity of multilateral development banks, including the World Bank, to better fight poverty, including by addressing global challenges,” it added. India assumed the G20 presidency for a year from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023, and has been hosting several meetings across the country. — ANI

ANTIGEN TESTS
COVID-19 testing for inbound travellers to China lifted

BEIJING: China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday announced that inbound travellers will no longer require any pre-entry nucleic acid or antigen tests for COVID-19. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin took to his official social media ‘X’ and tweeted, “Starting from August 30, 2023, inbound travellers will no longer be required to take pre-entry nucleic acid or antigen tests for COVID-19.” Less than 122,000 Covid-related deaths have been documented in China among its 1.4 billion people, according to the WHO. — ANI

London expands ULEZ toll zone for polluting vehicles

LONDON: London’s Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) was set to be extended across the whole of Greater London on Tuesday, following months of debates and attempts to stall the move. Mayor Sadiq Khan, and other advocates, said that the extended zone would help bring down pollution and enhance air quality throughout the British capital. However, critics have warned against the financial strain amidst a cost-of-living crisis. The pollution-fighting policy was first brought in for a small section of central London in 2019, before being expanded in 2021. Tuesday’s expansion will see a further 5 million people being included in the zone.



The scheme mandates a payment of 12.50 pounds (\$16, €14.60) for drivers of highly-polluting vehicles on days they drive on the roads. Failure to comply can incur a fine of up to 180 pounds per day.

London’s ULEZ closely resembles similar low-emission zones adopted by over 200 cities in 10 European countries to enhance air quality. Vehicles registered as petrol cars prior to 2006 and diesel ve-

hicles registered before September 2015 are unlikely to meet the mandated emissions standards. Transport for London (TfL) estimates that fewer than 200,000 such vehicles currently access the new zone, based on existing ULEZ camera data. However, the RAC motoring group revealed, through a freedom of information request, that over 850,000 ineligible vehicles are registered in London alone. Khan says the measure will cut air pollution that contributes to about 4,000 deaths per year. The figure came from research conducted by Imperial College commissioned by City Hall. But critics say suburban residents who are dependent on their

cars will bear the brunt. This move is also said to have contributed to the recent defeat of the opposition Labour Party in a by-election within former Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s previous parliamentary seat. Opponents had tried to block the expansion from going ahead, with some regional councils bringing legal action. Even Khan’s own Labour Party boss Kier Starmer called on him to reconsider the move. Angrier motorists took more radical steps, with police on Tuesday saying that hundreds of license plate-reading cameras had been damaged, disconnected or stolen by vigilantes calling themselves the Blade Runners. — DW

AN UNPRECEDENTED CASE



Live parasitic worm removed from Australian woman’s brain

CANBERRA: Scientists this week published information on an unprecedented case in Australia, where they found and extracted a live parasitic worm from the brain of a woman in Canberra. The worm was some 8 centimetres (just over 3 inches) long and is a roundworm most commonly seen in python species, known as *Ophidascaris robertsi*. It was found in the brain of a 64-year-old woman after she had complained of a variety of changing symptoms and afflictions over a prolonged period. **‘Just get it out of my forceps!’** Neurosurgeon Hari Priya Bandi found and removed the parasite with forceps during a biopsy. “I used tumour-holding forceps and lifted out something that I definitely was not expecting: a linear, squiggling line,” Bandi told DW on Tuesday. “And my junior doctor said, ‘is that an artery?’, because that’s what it looked like. And I said, ‘it’s not an artery, we’re nowhere near any artery!’ And I noticed it was moving and I went, ‘just get it out of my forceps!’ So we rapidly put it in a pathology pot, and it was a vigorously wriggling worm.” Asked whether it was fair to assume the worm had been moving



around inside, Bandi said it was and that their scans demonstrated as much. The woman’s symptoms had started as lung, liver and abdominal problems, Bandi said, but evolved towards problems like depression, presumably as the animal’s activities kept affecting different parts of the brain. Her psychiatrist had conducted CT scans in which what was later identified as the worm was first visible, and later MRI scans to prepare for the procedure had then shown how the abnormality was moving. “When you operate on someone’s brain and you take a biopsy or something, you never expect to encounter something living,” Doctor Sanjaya Senanayake, who co-authored the study with Bandi,

told Reuters. “[It] was certainly something we’ll never forget.” The paper on the case was published in the Emerging Infectious Diseases journal on Monday. Bandi and Senanayake speculated that the woman might have been exposed to the parasite when foraging for wild grasses to make a dish similar to spinach, when she might have been exposed to python feces. The worm was successfully removed last year. The woman, whom Senanayake praised as being “very courageous and patient,” returned to normal life after the operation to remove the parasite, but medical professionals have continued to monitor her. “Obviously, because this was an unusual case at so many levels, we’re keeping a close eye on her and keeping in touch,” Senanayake said. Senanayake said the discovery came as a surprise, but that they were aware of the possibility, particularly as human and animal habitats continue to overlap more and more. “Other snakes around the world carry this parasite, so it is quite likely that other new cases will be documented,” he said. “So hopefully, raising awareness of that will help other healthcare workers around the world.” — DW

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Djokovic to replace Alcaraz as world No.1 after first round win

The 23-time Grand Slam champion from Serbia marked his return at the US Open following a one-year hiatus

NEW YORK: Novak Djokovic will replace young rival Carlos Alcaraz as the men's world No.1 after a routine win on his US Open return on Monday.

Serbia's Djokovic, who lost the Wimbledon final to Alcaraz, won 6-0, 6-2, 6-3 against France's Alexandre Muller in Monday's night session in New York.

Djokovic, 36, was not allowed to play in the United States last year because he was not vaccinated against Covid-19.

He has returned knowing another title will be a record-equalling 24th major.

Matching Australian Margaret Court's all-time tally is Djokovic's target and he made a statement start by breezing past 84th-ranked Muller.

"I started tremendously well, we started quite late but nevertheless I was excited to go out on the court - it has been a couple of years," said Djokovic, who will spend a record-extending 390th week at the top of the ATP rankings.

"In the second and third sets I dropped the level of my serve and I had to work for the points a bit more. Nevertheless I played



great and I liked the level."

Having not started until 23:00 local time, the three-time US Open champion showed he did not want to hang around and only dropped eight points in a 23-minute opening set.

Djokovic, who won the Australian Open and French Open earlier this year, is aiming for a fourth title at Flushing Meadows and will play Spain's Bernabe Zapata Miralles in the second round. He will return to

world No.1 after the tournament.

Top seed Alcaraz, 20, won his first major at the US Open in Djokovic's absence last year and starts the defence of his crown against Germany's Dominik Koepfer.

Alcaraz and Djokovic are the joint favourites for the men's singles title having developed a fascinating rivalry over the past 12 months.

Alcaraz and Djokovic cannot meet at the US Open until the final as a result of being the top two seeds.

Djokovic won the first round of a major for a men's record 67th consecutive match.

Also on Monday, China's Zhang Zhizhen celebrated his first main draw win at the US Open, defeating Jeffrey John Wolf of the United States 7-5, 7-5, 6-7, 4-6, 6-3 in a grueling match that lasted four hours and 29 minutes.

World No. 7 Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece advanced, besting Canada's Milos Raonic 6-2, 6-3, 6-4. However, fourth-seeded Holger Rune of Denmark was upset by Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena, who won 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

On the women's side, American Coco Gauff rallied into the second round, coming from behind to outpace Laura Siegemund of Germany. The 19-year-old, viewed as a potent threat to champion Iga Swiatek, lost the opening set 6-3 but responded with scores of 6-2, 6-4 in the subsequent sets.

World No.1 Iga Swiatek of Poland dominated, crushing Sweden's Rebecca Peterson 6-0, 6-1 in just under an hour.

Fourth-seeded Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan progressed smoothly, defeating Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk 6-2, 6-1.

Greek eighth seed Maria Sak-



kari was the biggest casualty on day one.

Sakkari, 28, has now lost in the first round of three consecutive majors after she was beaten 6-4, 6-4 by Spanish world No.71 Rebeca Masarova.

Elsewhere Brazilian 19th seed Beatriz Haddad Maia beat 2017 champion Sloane Stephens. Stephens, who was the last American to win the singles title, was beaten 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 by Haddad Maia with five breaks traded in a thrilling deciding set.

Danish former world No.1 Caroline Wozniacki, who retired in January 2020 and has since had two children, marked her return to Grand Slam action in style with a 6-3, 6-2 win against Russian qualifier Tatiana Prozorova.

"It feels amazing to be back. I was nervous coming out here but to get a win under my belt feels so special," said two-time US Open runner-up Wozniacki, who plays 11th seed Petra Kvitova next.

Victoria Azarenka, a three-time finalist who is seeded 18th, made light work of France's Fiona Ferro in a 6-1, 6-2 win.

Czech 10th seed Karolina Muchova clinched a 6-4, 6-0 win over Australia's Storm Sanders, while Kvitova won 6-1, 7-6 (7-5) against Spain's Cristina Bucsa.

Swiss 15th seed Belinda Bencic cruised past Kamilla Rakhimova 6-2, 6-4 and plays British qualifier Lily Miyazaki next.

Former Australian Open finalist Jennifer Brady won a match at a Grand Slam for the first time since 2021.

The American has struggled with injuries over the past two years but claimed a 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) win over Australian Kimberly Birrell. - Agencies

INDIA TEAM

Rahul to miss first two Asia Cup games

COLOMBO: KL Rahul has been ruled out of the Pallekele leg of India's Asia Cup campaign (first two matches) that begins against Pakistan on September 2. He will also not travel to Sri Lanka on Wednesday with the rest of India's squad, *ESPNews* reported.

Instead, he will continue to work with the NCA physios in a bid to be "fully fit" and available for the Super 4s stage of the competition. Rahul will undergo a fitness assessment on September 4 before a call will be taken on his travel.

Head coach Rahul Dravid said Rahul "had been progressing really well" and that they don't see his unavailability for the early part of the campaign as a setback.

"KL has had a good week here [at India's conditioning camp] with us," Dravid said in Alur on Tuesday. "He's trained well and done a lot of things. He's progressing really well on the route that we want to take. But he will be unavailable for the Kandy leg of the trip.



"The NCA [National Cricket Academy] will be looking after him for the next few days while we are travelling. We will reassess on September 4 and take it from there. But the signs are looking good and he's progressing really well."

On Tuesday, the final day of India's six-day camp, Rahul hit the nets and batted for nearly 35 minutes, facing up to pace, spin and the throw down specialists after some light warm-up drills. He didn't keep wickets though.

INAUGURAL WOMEN HOCKEY 5S ASIA CUP

Indian women emerge champions

MUSCAT: India won the inaugural Women's Hockey 5s Asia Cup on Monday, which also served as Asia's qualifying tournament for the FIH Women's Hockey 5s World Cup 2024, defeating Thailand 7-2 in the all-important final in Salalah.

The win helped India qualify for the FIH Women Hockey 5s World Cup Oman 2024, finishing first in the Elite Group. For India, Mariana Kujur (2', 8'), Monika Dipi Toppo (7'), Jyoti (10', 27'), Navjot Kaur (23'), and Mahima Choudhary (29') were on target.

For Thailand, Kunjira Inpa (5') and Sanpoung Kornkanok (5') were on target.

India made an aggressive start in the opening minutes of the first half as Mariana Kujur (2') gave India the lead scoring an excellent field goal.

However, Thailand scored two goals in quick succession through Kunjira Inpa (5') and Sanpoung Kornkanok (5') to put India on the back foot. India responded immediately through the in-form Monika Dipi Toppo (7') as she



made a brilliant penetration and scored a fine field goal to level the scores. India then took the lead through Mariana Kujur's strike (8'). With four minutes remaining in the first half, Jyoti (10') extended India's lead to 4-2. At the end of the first half, India was leading Thailand by 4-2.

At the start of the second half, a charged-up India continued to play

announced INR2 lakh (OMR930) to each player of the team, while INR 1 lakh (OMR465) each for the support staff.

Congratulating the team on qualifying for the FIH Women Hockey 5s World Cup Oman 2024, Hockey India President Dr Dilip Tirkey said, "I congratulate the Indian women's team for an excellent outing and qualifying for the FIH Women Hockey 5s World Cup Oman 2024.

"This was a brilliant team effort by everyone involved and I wish the team the best of luck for the FIH Women Hockey 5s World Cup Oman 2024."

Hockey India secretary general Bhola Nath Singh said, "Huge congratulations to the Indian women's hockey team on winning the Women's Asian Hockey 5s World Cup Qualifier and subsequently qualifying for the next year's World Cup. You have made the entire country proud. It has been an exciting tournament and all the efforts and training over the past few months have paid off with this win." - ANI

FIRST MEETING OF OMSC

Maritime body hopes for more support from private sector

MUSCAT: Sheikh Ali Said Ali Fadhil, the new chairman of Oman Maritime Sports Committee (OMSC), is committed to the spread of maritime sports in the Sultanate of Oman.

Chairing the first meeting of the new committee that was formed after a ministerial decision on August 1, Ali Fadhil thanked the previous committee members for their work and contribution in promoting maritime sports.

The OMSC is responsible for sports such as sailing, rowing including traditional rowing, diving and spearfishing.

Besides Ali Fadhil, the committee comprises Abdulaziz Al Shidi as secretary and three members in Yahya Al Hooti, Ibrahim Al Balushi and Ruqaya Al Mashari.

At the meeting, Mohammed Al Amri, Director General of Sports Activities at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and the former OMSC chairman, congrat-



ulated the new committee members and wished them the very best in their endeavour to promote maritime sports activities.

Ali Fadhil hoped that there would be more cooperation from private sector to promote maritime sports, which has a long history in the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, it was also announced that the ministry is considering setting up a permanent headquarters for various national sports committees next to

the Seeb Sports Stadium.

Ruqaya Al Mashari, said: "I thank the previous board, and I appreciate their work, and we will strive to complete their successful work. We realise the challenges, but we hope to overcome them.

Ali Fadhil said, "We have a long and glorious maritime history. We have great opportunities to achieve glory in this field. We hope our sportspersons can raise the Sultanate's flag high at international events."

SAYYID MUNTHER PRESIDES OVER OEF BOARD MEETING

Sayyid Munther Al Busaidi, the president of the Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF), chaired the first meeting of the newly constituted OEF board on Monday. During the meeting, ways were discussed to promote equestrian activities in the Sultanate of Oman. The board thanked His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for merging the Royal Horse Racing Club with the OEF. Various committees were also formed for the smooth functioning of the federation while the schedule of events and races for the next season 2023/2024 were also discussed.



OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by October 2023 reaching \$86.48, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 34 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$86.82. -ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,780.81 points, up by 0.24 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.20 per cent at 472.73 points. Gulf International Chemicals, up 9.59 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 5.36 per cent, was the top loser.

Marafiq implements new water network expansion in Sezad

The new expansion aims at raising the efficiency of the potable water sector at Sezad and enabling the zone to attract new projects in the areas where the expansion projects were executed



MUSCAT: The Centralised Utilities Company (Marafiq), a joint venture owned by OQ, a subsidiary of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), implemented a water network expansion project in parts of Sayy neighbourhood at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad). This move stems from Marafiq's plan to connect different investment projects as well as residential and commercial properties with its water network.

Commenting on the project, Eng. Said Ali Al Sarhani, Acting Chief Operations Officer at Marafiq said that the new expansion aims at raising the efficiency of the potable water sector at Sezad and enabling the zone to attract new projects in the areas where the expansion projects were executed. He stressed that the company's strategy focuses on the availability of water in sufficient quantities and of high quality in various in-

vestment and residential areas at Sezad with attention to enhancing efficiency and sustainability of water resources and making optimal use of them. Al Sarhani added that Marafiq is working according to a timeline that includes the expansion of the network in a number of schemes in Sezad on an ongoing basis in line with urban growth, investment demand and population increase in the region. The new project, according to Al

Sarhani, included the expansion of the water distribution network in parts of the Sayy neighbourhood (schemes 53, 54 and 55) with a length of 15 km. The company completed last year's water network expansion project in Sayy's new commercial district with a length of 19 km, which contributed to linking the existing projects in this area to the water network and thus reducing dependence on drinking water transportation tanks. "Currently, the length of pipe-

lines transporting water in the region is 46 kilometres, while the length of the pipelines of the water distribution network is 131 kilometres," he indicated. During the project implementation period, Marafiq awarded a number of works to small and medium-sized enterprises, such as drilling and pipe installation, Al Sarhani explained, pointing out that companies operating in the water sector have achieved many gains as a result of the water net-

work expansion, in addition to the other economic and social benefits. Al Sarhan added that the schedule followed by Marafiq in cooperation with the Sezad also includes the expansion of the network in 3 new areas, stressing the company's keenness to enhance the performance of the drinking water sector in the zone, as the number of subscribers to the water network service reached about 2,720 subscribers by the end of last June. -ONA

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE



Oman sees rise in industrial licences and customs exemptions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of industrial licences and customs and tax exemptions during the first half of 2023 stood at 11,845 compared to 6,998 applications during the same period of 2022, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) said on Tuesday. The ministry further said the statistics showed that the number of industrial licences amounted to 11,540 licences and the number of customs and tax exemption decisions reached 305 applications during the first half of this year. The statistics show that the applications submitted to import raw materials and machinery for

which a tax exemption was issued for industrial facilities and which were cleared through the Bayan system amounted to 2,871 permits for the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)). The ministry further confirmed that industrial establishments must apply for customs exemption before importing their imports through the Bayan system. Noting that the investors' orientation to the electronic services provided by the Invest Easy portal and the Bayan system contributed to accelerating the completion of transactions, facilitating and smoothing the movement of incoming and outgoing goods to and from the Sultanate of Oman, as well as reducing the cost of import and export operations.

FIRST HALF OF 2023

OAB reports 64% increase in net profit

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) has reported a consolidated net profit after tax of OMR11.5 million for the first half of 2023, up 64 per cent against the same period of last year. The increase represents the highest year on year growth of the banks listed at the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), after an OMR7 million net profit for OAB in the first half of 2022. The profit rise led to a positive set of figures that also saw half-year net loans and advances, including Islamic finance, grow 12 per cent to OMR 3,258 million (OMR 2,907 million in H1 2022), with half-year customer deposits up 11 per cent to OMR 3,201 million (OMR 2,889 million in H1 2022). Net interest income from conventional banking and net income from Islamic financing grew to OMR 49 million for the six-month period ending 30 June, compared to OMR 48.9 million for the same period in 2022. Operating income remained steady from last year's first-half results at OMR 61 million, while operating expenses were down 1 per cent versus the same period in 2022 at OMR 35.8 million. Sulaiman Al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said, "Our performance, which leads the industry in Oman in the first half of 2023, demonstrates Oman Arab Bank's ever-increasing profile. These gains have been powered by the hard work and dedication of our team, hand in hand with the introduction of several market-leading banking solutions and innovative promotions during this period. OAB's successes reflect positive movements across



the banking sector in Oman and the nation's overall economic performance going from strength to strength, continuing to increase the Sultanate of Oman's regional and global standing. We will be striving to build further on these figures in the second half of 2023, as the bank marks 50 years at the pinnacle of the industry in Oman." OAB's figures were a highlight of results announced for Omani banks listed at the MSX, with combined half-year net profits rising to OMR235.3 million, up 17.5

per cent. The assets of the eight banks listed on the MSX at the end of June rose to OMR38.0 billion, growing 4.6 per cent. The bank, which is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary, had its outlook raised to 'positive' by Capital Intelligence Ratings (CI Ratings) in April, with its Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating (LT FCR) and Bank Standalone Rating (BSR) revised from 'stable'. The bank's achievements continue to be recognised with awards and accolades, including win-

ning Domestic Retail Bank of the Year - Oman and SME Payment Solutions of the Year - Oman at the prestigious Asian Banking & Finance (ABF) Retail Banking Awards 2023, emerging victorious as Best Online Platform in Oman at the 2022 MEA Business Awards and receiving the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI-DSS) certification, reaffirming OAB's high security standards in protecting customers' payment card data, as set by the PCI Security Standards Council.

OIL PRICES

Oil slips as demand worries outweigh supply concerns

SINGAPORE: Oil prices slipped on Tuesday as worries that further possible US interest rate hikes could pull down demand outweighed concerns that a tropical storm off the US Gulf Coast may impact supply. Brent crude was down 19 cents, or 0.2 per cent, at \$84.23 a barrel by 0640 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude shed 24 cents, or 0.3 per cent, to \$79.86. Investors await key US economic data later this week that will help determine the path of interest rates this year and next.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Friday said the US central bank may need to raise rates further to cool stubborn inflation, Reuters reported. Oil prices slipped on Tuesday as worries that further possible US interest rate hikes could pull down demand outweighed concerns that a tropical storm off the US Gulf Coast may impact supply. Brent crude was down 19 cents, or 0.2 per cent, at \$84.23 a barrel by 0640 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude shed 24 cents, or 0.3 per cent, to \$79.86. -BNA

NCSI DATA

Hotel revenues in Oman rise by 27.8%

MUSCAT: The revenues of 3-5-star hotels in Oman stood at OMR122,530,000 at the end of July 2023, up by 27.8 per cent over the corresponding period in 2022. Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) show that the total number of hotel guests grew by 25.8 per cent to 1,098,157 by the end of July 2023, compared to 872,796 during the corresponding period in 2022. Hotel occupancy posted a growth of 10.3 per cent. The number of Omani guests reached 411,551. Meanwhile, the

number of guests from the GCC countries stood at 99,947, marking a rise of 19.1 per cent. The number of European guests also increased by 44.4 per cent to stand at 259,649. The Americans were 33,420 were Americans (up by 3.3 per cent), 6,365 were citizens from African countries (37 per cent up), while the number of hotel guests from Asian countries stood at 163,779, marking an increase of 47.1 per cent. The number of hotel guests from Oceania countries surged by 242.7 per cent to 24,755. -ONA



MARKET

MSX index ends higher



Gulf International Chemicals, up 9.59 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 5.36 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,780.81 points, up by 0.24 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.20 per cent at 472.73 points. Gulf International Chemicals, up 9.59 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Fisheries, down 5.36 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 781 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.9 million, with more than 19.41 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded securities, 20 advanced, 13 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR54,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR40,000, followed by domestic investors for OMR14,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,785.54 points, up 0.18 per cent. Prices of Muscat Finance, Al Madina Investments, Al Anwar Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, Oman United Insurance were up by 3.70 per cent, 2.56 per

cent, 2.50 per cent, 1.43 per cent, 0.74 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Batinah Development Company, Ahli Bank were up by 2.90 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 0.58 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,984.62 points, up 0.42 per cent. Prices of Gulf International Chemicals, A'Saffa Foods, Galfar Engineering, Raysut Cement were up by 9.59 per cent, 8.07 per cent, 3.23 per cent, 1.29 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Al Maha Ceramics, Al Anwar Ceramics, Voltamp Energy, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 5.36 per cent, 1.75 per cent, 0.90 per cent, 0.79 per cent, 0.75 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.26 per cent before closing at 1,659.22 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Barka Water & Power Company, National Gas, Phoenix Power, Renaissance Services were up by 8.82 per cent, 2.63 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 1.67 per cent, 0.97 per cent respectively. Prices of Majan College, Oman National Engineering, Oman Oil Market- ing were up by 1.87 per cent, 0.94 per cent, 0.80 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,785.07	4,769.35	4,780.81	4,769.35	11.46	0.24
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,807.77	7,771.45	7,785.54	7,771.45	14.09	0.18
Industry Index	5,984.62	5,931.40	5,984.62	5,950.37	25.25	0.42
Services Index	1,659.22	1,650.85	1,659.22	1,654.94	4.28	0.26
MSX Shariah Index	473.90	472.11	472.73	473.65	-0.93	-0.20
MSX TR INDEX	6,297.05	6,276.37	6,291.45	6,276.37	15.08	0.24
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,519.71	8,480.08	8,495.45	8,480.08	15.37	0.18
SERVICES TR IDX	1,831.57	1,822.33	1,831.57	1,826.85	4.73	0.26
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,393.07	6,336.21	6,393.07	6,366.09	26.97	0.42

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.....	Up.....	Down.....	Equal.....	Sec. Traded
19,412,077.....	3,903,639.....	781.....	23,825,084,469.....	20.....	13.....	15.....	48.....

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 29

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFR	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	905,357	65,228	94	0.068	0.074	0.068	0.074	0.068	0.006	8.834	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.100	14,773,034
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	7,000	497	2	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.001	1.429	0.071	0.070	0.073	0.100	6,390,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	740,803	309,626	43	0.418	0.418	0.417	0.418	0.414	0.004	0.966	0.418	0.418	0.420	0.100	98,819,380
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	696,175	708,860	54	1.017	1.025	1.016	1.025	1.017	0.008	0.787	1.025	1.025	1.025	0.100	769,570,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	3,000	816	2	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.270	0.002	0.741	0.272	0.270	0.275	0.100	27,200,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	684,742	265,320	34	0.383	0.393	0.390	0.392	0.390	0.002	0.513	0.392	0.392	0.392	0.100	261,999,247
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,380,633	677,821	107	0.285	0.286	0.284	0.285	0.284	0.001	0.352	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.100	2,139,323,163
OM000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	235,000	70,041	14	0.298	0.300	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.000	0.298	0.298	0.299	0.100	484,532,014
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	129,897	7,804	9	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.062	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	33,500	33,902	10	1.012	1.012	1.012	1.012	1.012	0.000	0.000	1.012	1.012	0.000	0.100	69,828,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	14,000	826	1	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.059	0.050	0.100	11,800,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	8,009,295	849,212	15	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.000	0.000	0.106	0.106	0.108	0.100	579,596,181
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	743,481	286,530	34	0.385	0.386	0.385	0.386	0.386	0.000	0.000	0.386	0.386	0.388	0.100	251,264,473
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	1,000	85	1	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.085	0.086	0.100	14,875,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	9,000	2,394	2	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.268	-0.002	-0.746	0.266	0.264	0.266	0.100	33,222,857
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	133,900	29,458	13	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.222	-0.002	-0.901	0.220	0.210	0.220	0.100	48,400,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	162,458	17,063	6	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.105	0.106	-0.001	-0.943	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	15,750,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	1,406	394	1	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.285	-0.005	-1.754	0.280	0.275	0.287	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	51,096	3,466	3	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.067	0.069	-0.002	-2.899	0.068	0.068	0.069	0.100	5,165,625
Total		19	14,940,683	3,332,342	435											

Parallel Market

OM0000000208	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	1,000	80	1	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.073	0.007	9.589	0.080	0.000	0.080	0.100	1,680,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	13,900	4,244	5	0.300	0.335	0.300	0.335	0.310	0.025	8.065	0.335	0.306	0.330	0.100	40,200,000
OM0000001500	MUSCAT FINANCE	57,950	3,164	10	0.054	0.056	0.054	0.056	0.054	0.002	3.704	0.056	0.054	0.056	0.100	17,200,194
OM0000003321	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	428,345	67,875	50	0.157	0.160	0.157	0.160	0.155	0.005	3.226	0.160	0.159	0.165	0.100	32,477,831
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	30,000	1,160	2	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.001	2.632	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.100	6,240,000
OM0000001982	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	37,963	1,519	2	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.039	0.001	2.564	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.100	3,400,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	368,162	29,651	32	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.002	2.500	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	16,892,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	2,000	186	3	0.092	0.094	0.092	0.094	0.092	0.002	2.174	0.094	0.092	0.095	0.100	7,990,000
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	943	58	1	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.001	1.667	0.061	0.059	0.061	0.100	89,218,689
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	413,112	64,914	35	0.155	0.160	0.155	0.157	0.155	0.002	1.290	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.100	31,400,000
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	25,000	2,589	3	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.001	0.971	0.104	0.101	0.102	0.100	20,800,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	438,346	131,763	83	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.300	0.298	0.002	0.671	0.300	0.300	0.320	0.100	231,060,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	13,774	7,578	5	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.570	0.570	0.000	0.000	0.570	0.550	0.570	0.100	89,775,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIDWA	1,370,000	135,281	64	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	219,050	5,476	4	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.024	0.025	0.100	16,872,186
OM0000004833	AL SUWADI POWER	790,816	19,770	7	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.024	0.026	0.100	17,860,159
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	21,162	3,071	5	0.147	0.147	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.000	0.000	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.100	242,064,450
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	1,512	262	1	0.173	0.173	0.173	0.173	0.174	-0.001	-0.575	0.173	0.165	0.000	0.100	408,490,742
OM0000003861	VOLTAMP ENERGY	56,720	7,090	4	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.126	-0.001	-0.794	0.125	0.125	0.129	0.100	10,175,344
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	252	249	2	0.990	0.990	0.990	0.990	0.998	-0.008	-0.802	0.990	0.000	0.990	0.100	60,662,250
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	13,000	1,586	3	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.124	0.124	-0.002	-1.613	0.122	0.120	0.122	0.100	51,821,966
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	8,167	872	2	0.107	0.107	0.105	0.105	0.107	-0.002	-1.869	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.100	9,450,000
OM0000002986	ALBATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO.	200	18	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.092	-0.002	-2.174	0.090	0.084	0.101	0.100	2,700,000
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	2,000	196	1	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.101	-0.003	-2.970	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.100	93,548,051
Total		24	4,313,374	488,652	326											

SUPPLY AGREEMENT

Al Maha signs major agreement for lubricants supply to Saudi market

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co recently signed a supply agreement with Now Fuel Company, Saudi Arabia, for the supply of Ampro Lubricants for Saudi market.

The agreement was signed for Al Maha by the CEO Eng. Hamed bin Salim Al Maghdri and for Now Fuel by the CEO Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Qarawi in the presence of Dr. Saleh bins Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and other top management members of both companies.

Commitment

Speaking on the occasion, Eng. Hamed underscored Al Maha Petroleum's commitment to establishing professional collaborations that propel regional business growth. "Now Fuel has the



right experience and expertise to sell our products in these markets," he said.

Mohammed bin Hamad Al-

Qarawi, the CEO of Now Fuel said that his company had been looking for a suitable Omani partner for sourcing, marketing and sell-

ing lubricants and found the right choice in Al Maha Petroleum, who are well established in the business for the past 30 years.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Visa partners with Lahunna Oman to shape young Omani women leaders

MUSCAT: Visa, the world's leader in digital payment, partnered with Lahunna Oman to shape young women leaders and strengthen financial literacy through a local initiative with Sidrah, a youth leadership programme for Omani women.

The Sidrah leadership programme supports young women through mentorship and leadership training for personal and professional development. It is a holistic learning experience that focuses on nurturing leadership qualities and personal and professional development and encourages young women to envision themselves as future leaders and change-makers.

From workshops to outward-bound experiential learning and networking opportunities, the program equips young women with the skills and knowledge needed to face their future with confidence.

Taking the initiative to a broader audience, another initiative was introduced called Rialy; which included workshops and a gamified online competition for more than 1,000 students across various educational institutions across the Sultanate of Oman. Students were exposed to essential financial concepts while enjoying a fun and engaging learning experience which fostered motivation among learners as top performers were also rewarded with prizes.



"The positive impact of the Sidrah programme is evident in the growth and achievements of our participants. Visa's support has made it possible to reach a wide audience, ensuring that Sidrah has a far-reaching impact. By partnering with Lahunna Oman, Visa continues to focus on upskilling women and nurturing growth in the workforce," said Carl Manlan, Visa's Head of Inclusive Impact & Sustainability for Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa region. "We are confident that the skills acquired will inspire them to embrace opportunities, break barriers, and make a significant difference in their lives and their communities."

As a testament to the success of the Sidrah Leadership Program, the young women cited several opportunities that resulted from taking part in the program, including internships, job opportunities, scholarships, public speak-

ing opportunities and presenting projects to Oman Vision 2040.

Shatha Al Maskiry, Founder of Lahunna Oman said, "Visa is a strong ally and by leveraging their extensive knowledge base, we were able to conduct an array of workshops and interactive sessions to equip youth with fundamental financial literacy acumen to allow them to confidently navigate their financial future."

Amal Al Mazroei, an engineering graduate who participated in the Sidrah programme said, "I am proud to participate in one of the greatest programmes, Sidrah 2.0, which guarantees positive change and growth for Omani Women! I am more confident than ever that I have so much to give back to myself, my community and my beloved Oman."

By inspiring young women to pursue leadership roles, Visa continues to drive positive change by supporting women leaders for the next generation.

IRENA REPORT



LIFESTYLE



6-hour eating

14-hour fasting

INTERMITTENT FASTING SHOWS POTENTIAL OF SLOWING DOWN ALZHEIMER'S PROGRESSION

Scientists may have uncovered a breakthrough strategy to aid in the slowing down of Alzheimer's progression in humans, as per the findings of one latest study.

Researchers from the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) conducted a study using a mouse model of Alzheimer's.

With the study, the researchers managed to regularise the circadian clocks of the mice effectively through an intermittent

fasting regimen.

It is worth noting that circadian clocks are disrupted by Alzheimer's leading to altered sleep patterns, increased cognitive impairment during evenings, and sleep-related difficulties.

The study's findings have been published in Cell Metabolism.

The research team imposed a time-restricted feeding schedule on the mice, resulting in noticeable enhancements in their memory function. Furthermore, the accumulation of amyloid proteins, a hallmark of Alzheimer's, was reduced in the brains

of the fasting mice.

Mice adhering to the feeding schedule displayed more regular sleep patterns, reduced nighttime hyperactivity, and fewer sleep disruptions compared to mice with unrestricted eating times.

The mice were confined to a six-hour eating window daily, equivalent to a 14-hour fasting period within a 24-hour cycle for humans. This fasting approach appeared to reset the natural circadian rhythms disrupted by Alzheimer's.

-DNA

Atletico Madrid score seven in record La Liga victory

Diego Simeone's side register biggest away win in the league with a 7-0 rout of Rayo Vallecano

MADRID: Atletico Madrid hammered city rivals Rayo Vallecano 7-0 for their biggest ever away win in La Liga on Monday, with substitute Álvaro Morata scoring twice and midfielders Saúl Ñíguez and Rodrigo De Paul giving two assists each.

Diego Simone's side were 3-0 up inside 36 minutes as Antoine Griezmann, Memphis Depay and Nahuel Molina got on the scoresheet. Griezmann netted a close-range volley in the second minute from a De Paul cross.

Depay almost extended Atletico's lead two minutes later but his point-blank strike was brilliantly stopped by goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski. He ended up scoring in the 16th minute after Saul delivered a low cross and the Dutch striker tapped in from just inside the six-yard-box.

Depay had to be substituted a few minutes after as he injured his leg. De Paul then found Molina and the defender netted a tidy finish past Dimitrievski.

Four goals in 13 second-half minutes then completed the rout. Morata, who had replaced De-



pay, netted twice, while Ángel Correa fired a brilliant dipping strike over the goalkeeper. Marcos Llorrente was also on target as a rampant Atletico ripped apart their rivals to secure a second win in three

games this season. Atletico are second in the La Liga standings, level on seven points with Barcelona and Girona. They trail leaders Real Madrid by two points, while Rayo are eighth with six points.

"We had a great game from the start, with a lot of intensity," said France forward Griezmann.

"The first goal gave us peace of mind and we earned three very important points. Let's rest and think



about the next one now. I'm very happy with the team's work."

The only blemish on the result for Atletico was losing Dutch forward Depay to injury in the first half.

The result was only the second time Atletico Madrid have scored seven goals in a La Liga match in the 21st century, after beating Getafe by the same scoreline in 2013. - Agencies

SERIE A



Inter Milan sink Cagliari, Salernitana settle for draw

ROME: Inter Milan maintained their winning streak in the new Serie A season with goals from Denzel Dumfries and Lautaro Martinez securing a 2-0 victory over Cagliari on Monday.

They began the season with a 2-0 triumph over Monza and displayed a dominant performance from the outset against Cagliari.

Lautaro's attempt in the 14th minute hit the woodwork. However, Inter soon took the lead when recent addition Marcus Thuram set up Dumfries, who netted from a challenging angle.

The visitors doubled their advantage in the 30th minute. Federico Dimarco delivered a cross from the left, which Lautaro controlled and adeptly evaded defenders to conclude with a ground shot.

Earlier on Monday, Salernitana and Udinese settled for a 1-1 draw. - Xinhua

TRANSFER

Chelsea's Lukaku closes in on Roma loan move



LONDON: Chelsea striker Romelu Lukaku is set to join Serie A side Roma on a season-long loan, *BBC Sport* reported on Tuesday.

The deal includes an US\$10mn loan fee and Roma will be covering the 30-year-old Belgium international's wages.

Inter Milan had hoped Lukaku, who is not part of Mauricio Pochettino's plans at Chelsea, would return to the club where he spent last season on loan.

But the forward was unhappy coach Simone Inzaghi did not start him in the Champions League final. Juventus were also keen to sign Lukaku but were un-

able to make the changes required to their squad. There are still some details to be finalised but the agreement for his return to Italy is essentially done.

A source close to Roma owners the Friedkin family, who took over the club in 2020, said the transfer demonstrated their commitment and desire to "achieve the glory the club and the fans deserve".

The move to Roma means Lukaku will be reunited with Jose Mourinho, who persuaded him to join Manchester United ahead of Chelsea when he moved to Old Trafford from Everton in 2017.

Lukaku moved back to Chelsea from Inter Milan for US\$122.7mn

in August 2021 on a five-year-deal for his second spell at Stamford Bridge, but has struggled to establish himself and this season has been training away from the first team. He has scored 15 goals in 59 games for the Blues in two spells.

"When he is conditioned and fit he is a real handful," former Chelsea striker Chris Sutton said.

"He has had a brilliant career but, at 30, he has to prove himself again.

"The Chelsea thing is baffling in some respects, that he seemed to be frozen out and Chelsea have a striker crisis, yet they weren't bringing him back into the fold which was slightly odd." - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE



Fulham sign Belgium defender Castagne from Leicester City

LONDON: Fulham have signed Belgium full-back Timothy Castagne from Leicester City on a four-year deal, *BBC Sport* reported on Tuesday.

Castagne, 27, departs Leicester after three seasons at the King Power Stadium.

He has joined the Cottagers for an undisclosed fee until the summer of 2027, with an option to extend his deal by a further 12 months.

"It's been a long transfer window, but finally I'm here, and I'm happy to be here," Castagne told FFCtv.

"It's a big relief. I've talked to the manager and I just can't wait to start training and playing."

The Belgium international made 112 appearances for Leicester, scoring five goals, and featured 37 times in the Premier League last term as they suffered relegation from the Premier League.

Castagne has not played under new Leicester manager Enzo Maresca this campaign and returns to the top flight with Fulham.

The former Atalanta and Genk defender is Marco Silva's fourth addition to the senior squad this summer, following the arrivals of Adama Traore, Raul Jimenez and Calvin Bassey.

Fulham's vice chairman Tony Khan said: "I'm excited to welcome Timothy Castagne to Fulham."

"He's a versatile and very talented defender with great experience in the Premier League and international competition for Belgium."

"I'm pleased that Timothy has committed to a four-year contract with us, and we believe that he'll be an excellent addition to Marco's squad."

Castagne could make his Premier League debut for Fulham in Saturday's trip to Manchester City. - Agencies

CONTROVERSY

'Spanish football president Luis Rubiales should resign immediately'

MADRID: Spanish Football Federation regional leaders have called on president Luis Rubiales to immediately resign after he kissed player Jenni Hermoso, *BBC Sport* reported on Tuesday.

Rubiales, 46, has been widely criticised after the incident following Spain's Women's World Cup final win. Hermoso, 33, said the kiss on her lips was not consensual.

Earlier, Spanish prosecutors opened a preliminary investigation into whether the incident amounts to a crime of sexual assault. In other developments on Monday, Rubiales' mother Ange-



les Bejar locked herself in a Spanish church and went on a hunger strike in protest of the treatment of her son. In the evening, hundreds of people gathered in the centre of Madrid in protests called by femi-

nist groups in support of Hermoso and against Rubiales.

Rubiales was suspended on Saturday by world football's governing body FIFA, a day after he had insisted he would not resign and claimed the kiss was "mutual and consensual".

"After recent events and the unacceptable behaviour that has seriously damaged the image of Spanish football, the presidents' request that Luis Rubiales resign immediately as president of the RFEF," the federation (RFEF) said in a statement on Monday, after an extraordinary meeting of its regional presidents.

Interim RFEF chief Pedro Rocha called the "extraordinary and urgent" meeting to discuss the federation's response to the incident. The regional presidents gave "unanimous support" to Rocha in a statement released after the meeting, though they disagreed with an earlier statement requesting UEFA to strip Spanish clubs of their places in Europe because of government interference in the Rubiales saga.

They asked Rocha to withdraw the statement, which could have seen Real Madrid and Barcelona thrown out of the Champions League, though European foot-

ball's governing body had already rejected the request anyway.

The statement also called for an overhaul of the federation's management. UEFA has been in contact with FIFA but has not commented because the incident took place at a FIFA event, so the European organisation feels it is right the world governing body takes the lead on the investigation.

The suspension FIFA has imposed also has global status, so that already means Rubiales will not be in Monaco for the Champions League draw on Thursday or the UEFA executive committee meeting in Cyprus next month.

When FIFA announced Rubiales had been suspended on Saturday, it ordered him, the RFEF and its officials and employees not to attempt to contact Hermoso, whom the RFEF had threatened with legal action earlier that day.

Meanwhile, Spain's Sports Tribunal also met on Monday to discuss the Spanish government's request to suspend Rubiales, with a decision yet to be announced.

Spain's top criminal court said it was opening its investigation in light of the "unequivocal nature" of Hermoso's statements, saying it was necessary "to determine their legal significance". - Agencies

Mobility Auto introduces Lynk & Co in Oman redefining mobility forever

Under the exceptional new line of auto business called ‘Mobility Auto,’ Lynk & Co, in partnership with Oman’s Towell Group, commits to providing clients with unparalleled attention, guaranteeing an extraordinary experience

MUSCAT: Lynk & Co, the premium global automotive brand jointly owned by Volvo & Geely, announced the grand opening of its first Lynk & Co showroom in Muscat.

Under the exceptional new line of auto business called ‘Mobility Auto,’ Lynk & Co, in partnership with Oman’s Towell Group, wholeheartedly commits to providing clients with unparalleled attention, guaranteeing an extraordinary experience.

Prepare to be amazed as our state-of-the-art showroom showcases our extensive range of vehicles, including the highly anticipated Lynk & Co 09, making its debut in Oman for the very first time.

Founded in 2016, Lynk & Co seamlessly blends innovative design, advanced technology, new experiences, and dynamic new energy. With an impressive presence of five design centres across various continents and a cutting-edge research and development centre, we have achieved an outstanding milestone of close to a million units sold by July 2023.

Lynk & Co has been steadily solidifying its footprint in Oman, having already introduced the acclaimed 01 and 05 models through both online and offline channels. The opening of new Lynk & Co Centre on August 22 reaffirms our unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional experiences to the customers in Oman.

Situated in the Ghala Heights, Lynk & Co showroom promises a fully integrated experience encompassing sales, after-sales service, and spare parts. Towell Auto group, will offer top-notch after-sales services tailored specifically to Lynk & Co customers. With their state-of-the-art facilities and skilled technicians, Towell Auto Group ensures that Lynk & Co owners receive unparalleled customer service and support throughout their ownership journey. This unwavering dedication reinforces our commitment



to delivering unmatched quality and customer satisfaction in the Omani market.

Riyadh Ali Sultan, General Manager of Towell Auto Group, highlighted the brand's unique ability to seamlessly integrate technology into the lifestyles of modern customers. He added, “Lynk & CO is a brand that comprehends and meets the evolving demands of today's consumers. It caters to the desires of today's connected generation for

vehicles that effortlessly align with their tech-driven lives, thus setting it apart from traditional brands.”

In response to inquiries about Lynk & CO's new store opening in Muscat, Derek Peng, Marketing Head of Lynk & Co Asia Pacific, highlighted that the new store in Muscat marks a progressive stride in Oman. “Driven by the brand's core values of ‘Personal,’ ‘Open,’ and ‘Connected,’ Lynk & Co is introducing high-value products

targeted at engaging potential Omani consumers aspiring to enrich their lifestyles. Nestled in Ghala Heights, the strategically located Lynk & Co Centre emanates a serene ambiance with its gentle gray and white tones, open-layout design, and ample space ensuring a comfortable and delightful car-shopping experience for its customers,” he said.

Furthermore, he highlighted, “Situated in the esteemed Ghala

Heights area of Muscat, along the Sultan Qaboos Highway close to the Towell Group head office, the Lynk & Co Centre enjoys a strategic location and showcases an elegant colour palette of gray and white tones. The centre's thoughtfully designed open-layout creates a serene and inviting shopping environment. Its distinctive features and spacious layout are carefully crafted to ensure an enjoyable and seamless car-buying experience for our esteemed customers, free from unnecessary hassles.”

The Lynk & Co Centre in Muscat is poised to introduce a fresh and innovative automotive retail experience. Serving as a true one-stop destination, this centre allows customers to embark on a seamless journey from consultation to test drive, new car delivery, and vehicle maintenance. Adorned with a harmonious blend of gray and white, the centre's open layout exudes comfort, making visitors feel right at home.

In our showroom, automotive enthusiasts will have the opportunity to explore and acquire a range of Lynk & Co's esteemed models. Our lineup includes the versatile 01, which embodies the standard of “Premium is Standard” with its fusion of sportiness, comfort, and a 5-star safety rating. The audacious 05 lives up to its “Ultimate

is Standard” tagline, showcasing impressive acceleration and all-wheel drive prowess. The 03 and 03+ models offer a thrilling experience with their powerful performance and sportier design. Finally, the newly unveiled 09 stands as a luxurious SUV built on the SPA architecture, seamlessly integrating premium hardware with cutting-edge digital features.

As Lynk & Co continues to revolutionise the automotive industry, the Lynk & Co Centre in Muscat serves as a testament to our unwavering dedication to crafting a new era of automotive excellence — a symphony the forthcoming Lynk & Co Centre in Muscat is set to introduce a fresh and innovative automotive retail experience. Our centre is a true one-stop destination, offering a seamless journey from consultation to test drive, new car delivery, and vehicle maintenance. With its harmonious blend of gray and white tones, the centre's open layout creates a comfortable and inviting shopping environment.

Lynk & Co's dedication to crafting a new era of automotive excellence is evident in the opening of the Lynk & Co Centre in Muscat. We invite you to join us on this extraordinary journey, where design, innovation, and technology converge to redefine the automotive industry.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

United Private Schools celebrates outstanding Cambridge results, unveils brand new campus and offers scholarships

MUSCAT: United Private Schools (UPS) has set a new gold standard in academic achievement with its stellar performance in the latest Cambridge IGCSE and AS Level examinations.

The IGCSE outcome was particularly striking, boasting a 100% A*-C pass rate in key subjects including biology, business studies, economics and ICT.

Further enriching this feat, over 90% of the student body attained A*-C grades in other pivotal disciplines such as chemistry, English, and mathematics. One student even earned the distinction of a perfect 100 per cent score in mathematics, encapsulating the school's academic ambition.

Amal al-Abri, Executive Principal at UPS, conveyed her pride and gratitude, saying, “Our students' remarkable achievements stand as a testament to their unwavering dedication, both to academic rigor and the values that define us. We function as one tightly-knit team where each member — be it



students, teachers, or parents — contributes to our collective triumph. Our teachers deserve special recognition for their tireless commitment. Their pedagogical expertise and devotion have been crucial in setting our students on the path to success.”

The AS Level results further amplified UPS's scholastic prowess. The top-achieving student dazzled with straight A's, while the institution recorded an overall pass rate of 94.4%. In a show of academic muscle, nearly 40% of

the students seized the top grade, markedly exceeding the UK's 28% rate for top A-Level grades.

Cambridge Programmes Director, Hamza Plummer, took the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments, stating, “Congratulations to our deserving students. These Cambridge qualifications are more than academic achievements; they serve as pillars for future success in a rapidly evolving world. All praise be to Allah for showering us with such accomplishments.”

Simultaneous to these academic triumphs is the unveiling of UPS's state-of-the-art campus, strategically situated in Al Khoudh, Seeb. This ultramodern edifice offers students an expansive learning environment infused with the time-honoured Omani and Islamic values that are the cornerstone of the school's comprehensive curriculum.

Scholarships

To make these academic opportunities accessible to a broader



demographic, UPS is announcing exclusive scholarships in both the Cambridge AS and A-Level programs. Open to Omani and expatriate students alike, these scholarships underscore the institution's commitment to cultivating a diverse and inclusive learning community.

United Private Schools invites prospective students and their families to become part of this trailblazing journey toward academic and personal excellence. As a bastion of values, cutting-edge

educational facilities, and unparalleled scholastic achievements, UPS is committed to shaping well-rounded individuals capable of navigating the complexities of the modern world.

As we look to the future, UPS warmly invites potential students to explore what we offer. Registration remains open, and scholarship opportunities for our esteemed Cambridge AS and A-Level programmes are still available. Discover a place where values meet excellence.

ROUND-UP

MHD-ITICS wins contract for ODB’s digital banking platform

As per the agreement, the Digital Business Unit of MHD-ITICS Technology and Communications Division will create a custom platform aligned with ODB's digital transformation goals

MUSCAT: Mohsin Haider Darwish Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions (MHD-ITICS) announced its recent triumph in securing a significant contract for the design, development, deployment, and maintenance of Oman Development Bank's (ODB) digital banking platform.

This prestigious project underscores MHD-ITICS' commitment to driving digital transformation in Oman's banking sector.

The contract was officially signed on the bank's premises, in the presence of Hamed Bin Salim Al Harthy, Acting CEO of ODB, Jayaprakash Menon, CEO of MHD-ITICS, and key stakeholders. As per the agreement, the Digital Business Unit of MHD-ITICS



Technology and Communications Division will create a custom platform aligned with ODB's digital transformation goals.

"MHD-ITICS is poised to set new benchmarks for customer experiences at the intersection of finance and technology," stated Jayaprakash Menon, CEO, MHD-ITICS on the sidelines of the signing ceremony. "In line with this, we are pleased to contribute to, and work closely with Oman Development Bank on their transformative journey. This collaboration reaffirms our dedication to providing cutting-edge solutions in the banking and financial services sector."

Hamed Bin Salim Al Harthy,

Acting CEO of Oman Development Bank, expressed his optimism about the project: "Our commitment to delivering innovative banking services that meet the evolving needs of our customers led us to select MHD-ITICS for this pivotal project. We believe this collaboration will enable us to establish new standards in digital

banking and enhance customer satisfaction."

MHD-ITICS secured this opportunity through a rigorous selection process, triumphing over strong global and local competition. The project is slated for completion and launch by December 2023; and is a testament to MHD-ITICS' unwavering ded-

STATE-OF-THE-ART DESIGN

FIRST HALF OF 2023



Experience futuristic drive with Jetour Dashing

MUSCAT: The latest addition to the Jetour line-up from Mohsin Haider Darwish Automobiles, the official distributor of Jetour in Oman, the Jetour Dashing embodies a harmonious blend of groundbreaking technology, sleek design and uncompromising comfort. Moreover, the vehicle marks a significant leap forward in the realm of automotive excellence and smart innovations.

Highlighting the technological aspects of the Jetour Dashing, Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles, said, "We believe that the innovative Voice Command feature, seamlessly integrated into the Jetour Dashing will elevate our customers' driving experience by allowing them to control almost every feature of the vehicle with voice commands.

This not only enhances convenience but also adds a layer of safety, allowing them to stay focused on the road ahead.

"Combined with the JETOUR Dashing's array of advanced and smart features, this innovation emphasises the futuristic drive experience that is vehicle is renowned for, enabling our customers to take on even more enjoyable journeys."

The Jetour Dashing hosts a 1.6TGD1 turbocharged 4-cylinder engine, capable of generating up to 197hp and 290nm of torque, ensuring enhanced power and stability. Notable features of the vehicle include the cutting-edge Intelligent Voice Control, smart keyless entry and remote start. In addition, the Dashing hosts Intelligent Driver Assist Systems includ-

ing adaptive cruise control to ease long rides and advance hill ascent and gentle descent systems for effortless performance.

The interior encompasses sport-designed seats, a spacious 5-seater cabin configuration, 15.6-inch smart touchscreen. Other features also include a panoramic sunroof, smart safety assistance such as a 360° panoramic visual parking assist, AEBs (Advanced Emergency Braking System), LDWS (Lane Departure Warning System and RCTA (Rear Side Collision Alert) to ensure safe driving.

The Jetour brand is created for those who desire modern technology, comfort, adventure and affordable luxury. Jetour commits to creating the best Chinese luxury cars covering SUV/MPV at an affordable price.

Bank Muscat provides 85 scholarships, conducts 414 training courses for staff

MUSCAT: Working toward enhancing its leadership role in developing human resources in the banking sector in Oman, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, is celebrating its achievements in learning and training designed for employees during the first half of the year.

The bank's strategy in this regard contributed to improving the skills of employees and refining their talents, thereby supporting Omani cadres to this vital sector. The programmes and training courses conducted for employees in various specialities and departments enabled them to carry out their responsibilities and gave them the opportunities for growth.

The bank organised, since the beginning of the year until June 2023, 414 courses which witnessed the participation of a large number of employees from different departments and branches of the bank. The courses offered covered different areas related to banking, soft skills and innovation. The bank also provided 85 scholarships for employees to complete their higher studies in reputed universities inside and outside the Sultanate. During last year, Bank Muscat organised 1023 training programmes as part of the bank's strategy to develop human resources and maximise their performance.

Bank Muscat has a full-fledged Learning and Development department –Jadara Academy– which is affiliated with the Global Association of Corporate Universities and Academics. The department focuses on developing skills



and capabilities through e-Learning modules, scholarships, professional certifications, Management and leadership training programmes. The development of human resources is a priority in the bank with a substantial budget allocation for training and development in all functions. The training and development programmes are carried out through specialised educational courses conducted by accredited training centers or through academic links with colleges, universities and leading training institutes at the regional and global levels.

Said bin Salim Al Aufi, General Manager, Human Resources & Administration, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank Muscat is proud of the achievements done by the Omani cadres. Until the end of July this year, the number of the bank employees reached 4099, with an Omanisation ratio of around 94%. Most of the senior and middle management staff have been promoted from among the bank's employees. The bank will con-

tinue to maintain its position as the leading provider of training and development opportunities for employees, to achieve strategic goals in terms of developing Omani human resources and the financial sector."

The training courses cover all employees, including new employees who undergo intensive programmes. They get introduced to the most important modern methods of customer service, the importance of business ethics and how they can be applied in the work environment, professional communication skills in addition to improving their ability to assume responsibilities and adhere to the highest standards of integrity at work.

The bank continues to invest in the development of its Omani cadres in various specialities, and seeks to enhance their career and future ambitions in the banking field, while providing the appropriate working environment for employees to carry out their duties to the fullest.





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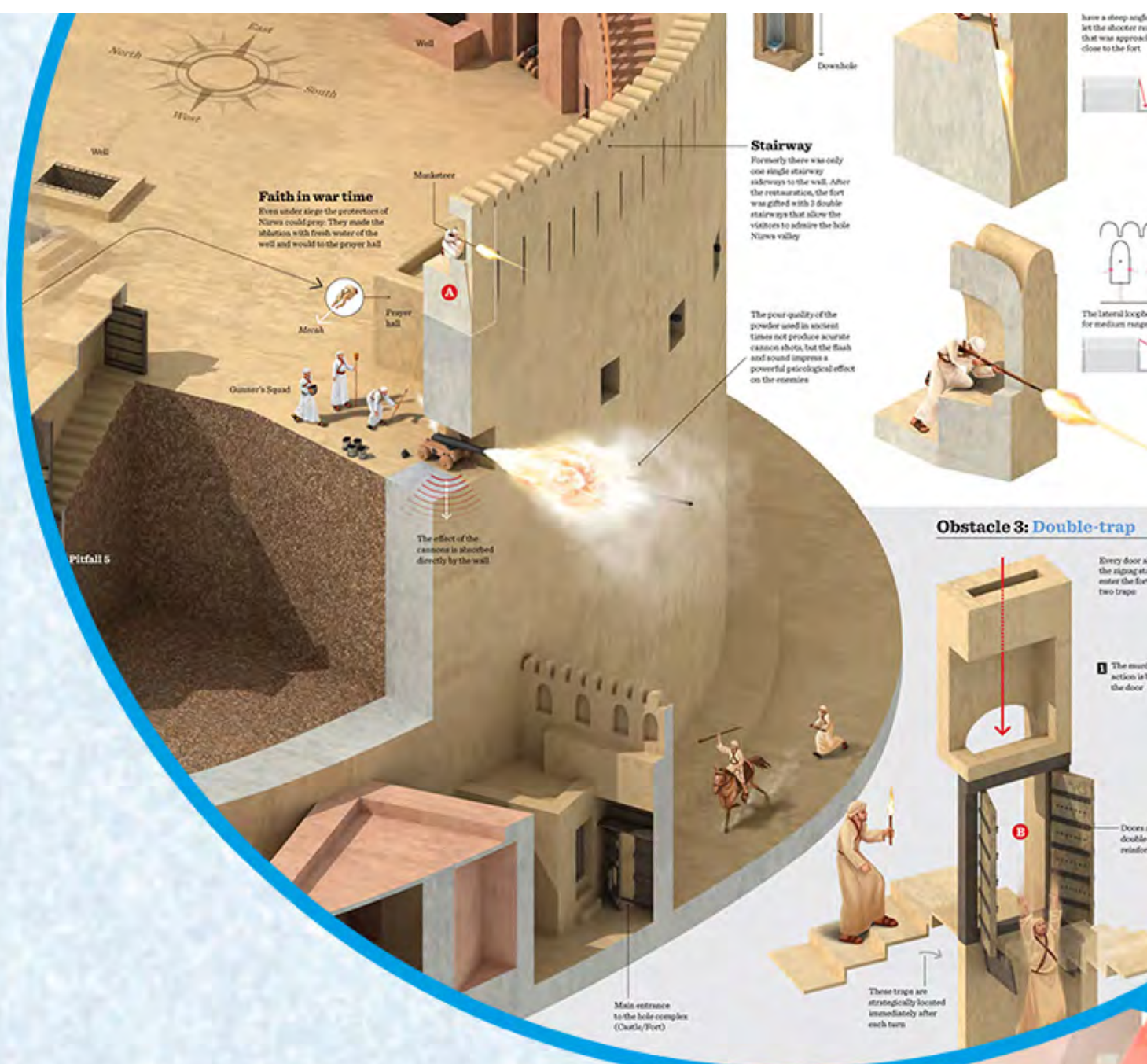
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