

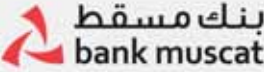


HIS MAJESTY SENDS GREETINGS TO REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Vahagn Khachaturyan of the Republic of Armenia on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to the president and his country's people. — **ONA**

Founded 1975 · Volume 49 No. 141 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group





Start saving with Meethaq account

2465 6666



CR No: 1/14573/8

DHOFAR KHAREEF

Dhofar visitors top one million mark

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of visitors to Dhofar Khareef from the beginning of the season until the end of August 2024 amounted to about 1.663 million, an increase of 9 percent compared to the last season in 2023, when 924,127 tourists visited the region.

The figures issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the number of Omani visitors increased by 8.7 percent, reaching 713,105, while the number of visitors from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries amounted to 171,762 compared to 156,953 dur-

ing the same period in 2023. The number of visitors from other nationalities amounted to 121,767 compared to 111,055 visitors last year.

Moreover, the number of visitors arriving through land ports reached 786,107 until the end of August, and 220,528 came via air route, recording an increase of 5.2 percent compared to the same period in 2023.

Meanwhile, Dhofar Governorate on Saturday welcomed the spring season, which is locally called 'Sarbi'. It affects the coastal areas of the governorate from Dhalkut in the west to Mirbat in the east.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Musandam Winter season to begin in November

1 The upcoming Musandam Winter season officially kickstarts in November and will continue till April next year. Celebrating the unique beauty and culture of Oman's northernmost peninsula, this edition of Musandam Winter promises to be bigger and better. **>A5**

WORLD

Indian PM Modi arrives in US

2 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Delawar on Saturday morning ahead of Quad Leaders' Summit. **>A6**

SPORTS

Bangladesh at 158/4 during tough chase

3 Three wickets from Ravichandran Ashwin pushed back Bangladesh in their massive 515 run chase in the first Test against India. **>A8**

JOBS FOR YOUTH A TOP PRIORITY

HM presides over Council of Ministers meeting in Salalah



Full story on > A4

His Majesty allocates OMR72 million for the Family Income Support Benefit Programme

Council of Ministers allocates an additional OMR50 million for the jobseekers

OMR40 million to be added to the current 5-year plan for the construction of new schools

His Majesty commends the efforts made by teachers and academics for the new session

HM directs to launch an electronic platform for receiving complaints from beneficiaries

His Majesty the Sultan expressed his satisfaction over the decline in the volume of public debt

نور غزال
NOOR GAZAL



FOODS & SPICES



HONOURING THE LIFE & LEGACY OF OUR CHAIRMAN

Our sincere condolences go out to the family of our beloved **Chairman P B Saleem**.

His contributions and commitment to **Noor Gazal** were unparalleled, and his presence will be profoundly missed.

May Allah's mercy be upon him and grant his family patience and strength in this time of grief.

May his soul rest in peace.

Management and staff of Noor Gazal group of Companies,
Oman, Qatar & UAE



TOYOTA AKEED

RAFFLE* TOYOTA PRADO



SERVICE*

FROM **2 YEARS / 20,000 KMS**
(whichever is earlier)

UP TO **10 YEARS / 100,000 KMS**
(whichever is earlier)

INSURANCE* 1 YEAR

Campaign Period: 01.09.2024 – 31.10.2024.



ALL NEW
CAMRY

CLICK



*Conditions Apply



Saud Bahwan Automotive LLC
ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED C.R NO:1703412



Facebook.com/toyotaoman



@toyotaomanofficial



Youtube.com/toyotaoman



www.toyotaoman.com

Watch
Match **7** of the

Quiz League

Oman's first video quiz show!

Watch the episodes on Times of Oman
YouTube Channel  @TimesofOmanTV



Modern Generation Private School



BRITISH SCHOOL
MUSCAT

British School Muscat

Identify the famous landmark in Oman that was inaugurated in October 2011 with a performance of Italian composer Puccini's Turandot.

In what popular online word game do you have to guess the correct five-letter word in six tries? The answer, of course, was 'Wordle.'

Can you match wits with the participants?



Be sure to answer the audience question of the week



Follow  @tquizleague on Instagram



OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:05pm
Asr.....3:30pm
Maghrib.....6:09pm
Isha.....7:19pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:41am



شانجان أوتو
CHANGAN AUTO
Driving Forward With You قيادة نحو الأمام



UNI-V

1.5L Turbo Engine, 188hp, 7-Speed DCT
SUPER WARRANTY 6 YEARS / UNLIMITED MILEAGE*



EMI
OMR 128*
for 6 years

800 50800

9662 8909

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

*Terms and Conditions Apply

*Easy Monthly installment is calculated based on 20% down payment for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals from Banks only. Images shown are for illustrative purpose only. Specification may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN AUTO Showroom.

Showrooms : Qurum 94641010, Mawaleh 97888180, Sohar 95351200, Salalah 96629050, Ibri 96628930

Sales Centers : Nizwa 96628940, Barka 96629010, Sur 96628920

NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

Teachers praise HM

MUSCAT: Teachers have thanked His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for congratulating students on start of the new academic year.

They said that His Majesty's praise of the efforts made by teachers in building a generation armed with knowledge of science, and adhering to good values and principles, is a source of pride and motivation for them to develop the educational field in Oman.

The Ministry of Education explained that the cabinet's decision to allocate OMR40 million within the current five-year plan to accelerate the construction of new schools will contribute to keeping pace with the increasing student density in some governorates.

oman
OASIS

SUMMER
OFFER

OMR 50 ONLY

HOT & COLD
DISPENSER
+ 2 FULL BOTTLES
+ 30 REFILL
COUPONS



OMR 20 ONLY

WHITE TAP DISPENSER
OR
TAP DISPENSER
OR
MANUAL WATER PUMP
OR
CRADLE WITH TAP
+ 2 FULL
BOTTLES
+ 15 REFILL
COUPONS



Promotion duration: Aug 15 to Nov 14, 2024

OASIS WATER COMPANY SAOG
P.O. Box 87, Rusayl 124, Sultanate of Oman.
CR No. 124042



800 71 222
9275 5522

Winner of the Sultanate Cup Award
in 2012 & 2013
The Best Price Performance

300% rise in number of electric vehicles



There were only 550 EVs in 2023 which rose to 1,500 in 2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: There has been a 300 percent rise in the number of electric vehicles (EVs) in the Sultanate of Oman in 2024 compared to 2023.

There were only 550 EVs in 2023 which rose to 1,500 in 2024, said Eng. Khamis bin Mohammed Al Shamakhii, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Transport.

Eng. Khamis bin Mohammed Al Shamakhii said that green mobility is at the top of the sustainable development agenda in the Sultanate of Oman, explaining that the government has taken important steps over the past years towards achieving the vision of the future of green mobility for the year 2050 to reduce carbon emissions.

He pointed out that the total number of electric vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman amounted to about 550 in 2023 compared to 1,500 in 2024.

In the field of infrastructure development, he stated that the Ministry, in cooperation with the private sector, in 2023 installed more than 120 charging points for electric vehicles, and we expect by the end of this year the number of charging points is expected to reach more than 200, and more than 350 charging points by 2027 in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

He pointed out that the ministry is making efforts to convert



current port equipment to operate on electric power, as well as converting its airports to be environmentally friendly through several upcoming initiatives such as the sustainable fuel production for aircraft.

He said that the ministry is making efforts to reduce emissions in data centres and communications towers as a direct way to reduce emissions.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has implemented several local initiatives in the field of green mobility, including the initiative to implement the Dibba-Lima-Khasab road project using electrical equipment to reduce carbon emissions, which is the first of its kind in the Middle East.

It also launched the Green Corridors Project for trucks that operate on green hydrogen energy, in addition to a pilot project to activate electric bicycles in food delivery.

The forum's activities included holding workshops and dialogue sessions with the participation of representatives and experts from the Sultanate of Oman and the GCC countries to discuss ways to enhance green mobility by encouraging the use of electric and hybrid vehicles in the region, providing an integrated network of fast and slow charging stations, and reviewing the latest modern technologies for electric vehicles.

The workshops and dialogue sessions also came up with a proposal for a joint platform to determine the locations of charging devices with the aim of facilitating access to information related to their locations, the amount of available energy, and charging prices, which will help improve the driver experience, encourage the use of electric vehicles, increase network efficiency, and use joint green methods in GCC ports for shipping.

One of the most prominent outcomes of the workshops at the Second Green Mobility Forum is the development of innovative spare parts technologies, as member states will focus on supply chains for spare parts for electric and hybrid vehicles, which will help reduce the cost of vehicle maintenance, improve their efficiency, and encourage their use, in addition to enhancing cooperation and joint coordination between member states, and working to implement joint projects in the field of green mobility to increase investment efficiency and reduce costs.

The second Green Mobility Forum concluded its activities in Salalah on Friday evening, reviewing the latest innovations, trends and local initiatives in the field of green mobility.

It was organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology with the participation of specialists from the Sultanate of Oman and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

The forum discussed the latest innovations and trends in the field of green mobility over two days.

The aim was to raise awareness on reducing pollution and promoting the concepts of sustainable mobility, in addition to strengthening partnerships between various sectors in a way that contributes to developing effective strategies to achieve sustainable development goals.



OMAN FLOUR MILLS
SAOG

REF: OFM/TD-24/05

Tender for Provision of heavy equipment

Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) invites specialize vendors to participate in our tender for the "Provision of heavy equipment" as per the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-24/05
Tender subject	Provision of heavy equipment
Tender fee	RO.100/- (non-refundable)
Start date for tender collection	18.09.2024
Last date for tender collection	26.09.2024
Closing date of the tender	29.09.2024
Mode of payment of tender fee	Online
Mode of submission	E-tendering

Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.

Companies who are interested to participate they are requested to send an email to vendor@omanflourmills.com no later than 26 September 2024.



OMAN FLOUR MILLS
SAOG

REF: OFM/TD-24/06

Tender for Hiring of prime mover with qualified driver on lease basis

Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) invites specialize vendors to participate in our tender for the "Hiring of prime mover with qualified driver on lease basis" as per the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-24/06
Tender subject	Hiring of prime mover with qualified driver on lease basis
Tender fee	RO.100/- (non-refundable)
Start date for tender collection	18.09.2024
Last date for tender collection	26.09.2024
Closing date of the tender	29.09.2024
Mode of payment of tender fee	Online
Mode of submission	E-tendering

Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.

Companies who are interested to participate they are requested to send an email to vendor@omanflourmills.com no later than 26 September 2024.



THE DIFFERENCE...

Our History with you

Banking that is proudly human



60% WORK COMPLETE



Central Public Health Lab likely to be opened in 2025

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The overall completion rate of the Central Public Health Laboratory in the Wilayat of Seeb in the Governorate of Muscat has reached 60% and its soft opening is expected in the second half of 2025.

The laboratory will have the latest technologies and equipment for tests, and its construction cost is approximately OMR18.2 million built on an area of 18,155 square metres.

Dr. Hanan bint Salem Al Kindi, Director of the Public Health Laboratories Department at the Ministry of Health, told said: "The Central Public Health Laboratory aims to bring together all current public health laboratories affiliated with the Ministry's General Diwan under one roof to enhance the diagnostic capabilities of laboratories and health security.

She added that the main building of the laboratory consists of three floors, where the first floor will have administrative offices, a lecture hall that can accommodate 130 people, and a wing for receiving samples.

The building will also include two biosafety level 3 (BSL3) laboratories for dealing with high-risk microbes, in addition to level 2 laboratories in the fields of viruses, bacteria, chemistry, toxins, and newborn examinations. Access to mechanical systems

will be provided through external corridors, to ensure that the level of biological containment is not affected.

She stated that the building will include a quality and risk management department (a laboratory serving the regional quality programme), public health laboratory affairs, and a virus laboratory (the regional polio reference laboratory, the regional measles and rubella laboratory, the national influenza laboratory, and the regional SARS-CoV virus laboratory, among others).

She stated that the building will contain a reference pulmonary tuberculosis laboratory, a bacteriology, epidemiology and surveillance laboratory, a parasitology, malaria and fungi laboratory, a newborn screening laboratory, an environmental laboratory, a chemical laboratory, a toxicology and genetic sequencing laboratory, a bioinformatics department, and a WHO regional collaborating centre for emerging and emerging diseases, in addition to administrative and financial departments.

She pointed out that the initial design process was preceded by a series of meetings between the engineering team, the Ministry of Health, the technical team from public health laboratories and members of the ministerial technical committee, in cooperation with experts from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in

the United States of America. She pointed out that after the start of construction work, a team of engineers and laboratory experts visited a number of American laboratories affiliated with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and laboratories participating in the American Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) with the aim of reviewing the latest developments in laboratory construction after the Corona pandemic.

Dr. Hanan bint Salem Al Kindi, Director of the Public Health Laboratories Department at the Ministry of Health, explained that the Laboratory building was designed to ensure sustainability, general vision and advanced architectural style without compromising its security or the surrounding environment; high-quality building materials were used to ensure durability and ease of maintenance.

She stressed that the Ministry of Health is currently working on plans to train national cadres who will work on this project through continuous training and professional development by providing continuous training programs and regular updates for cadres to ensure that they keep pace with the latest developments in technology and systems used to equip national cadres with the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure the effective and safe operation of the project.

ASSIGNED BY HIS MAJESTY

Awqaf Minister to take part in International Meeting for Peace

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Dr. Mohammed bin Said Al Mamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs left on Saturday for Paris

to take part in the International Meeting for Peace which will be held on Sunday in the French capital of Paris. The meeting will continue for three days.

-ONA





ANSWER & WIN

Login to the www.bollywoodquiz.nexusnovel.com and answer the questions to win IIFA Awards 2024 Tickets

SPONSORS

GOLD



SUPPORTED BY



POWERED BY







REF: OFM/TD-24/07

Tender for Merchandising Services

Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) invites specialize vendors to participate in our tender for the "Merchandising Services" as per the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-24/07
Tender subject	Merchandising Services
Tender fee	RO.25/- (nonrefundable)
Start date for tender collection	18.09.2024
Last date for tender collection	26.09.2024
Closing date of the tender	29.09.2024
Mode of payment of tender fee	Online
Mode of submission	E-tendering

Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.

Companies who are interested to participate they are requested to send an email to vendor@omanflourmills.com no later than 26 September 2024.





REF: OFM/TD-24/08

Tender for In store Branding and production

Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) invites specialize vendors to participate in our tender for the "In store Branding and production" as per the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-24/08
Tender subject	Instore Branding and production
Tender fee	RO.25/- (nonrefundable)
Start date for tender collection	18.09.2024
Last date for tender collection	26.09.2024
Closing date of the tender	29.09.2024
Mode of payment of tender fee	Online
Mode of submission	E-tendering

Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.

Companies who are interested to participate they are requested to send an email to vendor@omanflourmills.com no later than 26 September 2024.



HM the Sultan presides over Council of Ministers meeting in Salalah

The Council of Ministers took note of the progress made in the field of employment

SALALAH: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik chaired a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Maamourah Palace in Salalah on Thursday.

At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for plentiful riches which He has bestowed on Oman.

He prayed to Allah to grant bounties of good health and blessings to Oman, its noble people and its residents.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed a number of topics. Within the context of improved financial performance in the Sultanate of Oman over the past period, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his satisfaction about the decline in the volume of public debt and the ensuing positive outcomes that contribute to the consolidation of confidence in the local economy and the establishment of an attractive environment that helps activate various economic sectors.

The Council of Ministers took note of the progress made in the field of employment and affirmed that employment tops the national priorities and that initiatives recently endorsed by the Government will contribute to the generation of more jobs for Omani citizens.

To push forward these initiatives, the Council of Ministers endorsed the allocation of an additional OMR50 million to enhance the job seekers employment programme and other employment tracks in the private sector.

The Council of Ministers also endorsed the addition (to the said employment programme) of 1.2 percent of the value of purchase invoices collected from the sectors of oil and gas, government units and companies affiliated to Oman Investment Authority (OIA). The authorities concerned shall devise clear-cut procedures and terms to ensure the sustainability of opportunities that would be generated.

Within the framework of the Royal attention to social and educational aspects, His Majesty the Sultan hailed the efforts made by the departments entrusted with citizens' livelihood conditions. His Majesty gave directives to the authorities concerned to allocate OMR72 million within the State Budget to fund the "Family Income



Support Benefit Programme", as part of the Social Protection Fund's schemes that were announced recently.

His Majesty the Sultan also congratulated students on the start of the new School Year and Academic Year. He prayed to Allah the Almighty to make it a year full of diligence and hard work. His Majesty commended the efforts made by teachers and academics

as they prepare for the new year, noting that they are entrusted with grooming a generation armed with knowledge and science and inspired by noble principles and values.

Within the context of a steady rise in number of students in some governorates, the Council of Ministers approved the allocation of OMR40 million to be added to the current 5-year plan to help ac-

celerate the construction of new schools.

The Council of Ministers approved the National Programme of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Advanced Digital Technologies and the implementation of their projects and initiatives.

The step is aimed to raise the Sultanate of Oman's ranking in the Government AI Readiness Index through the adoption and localisa-

tion of related techniques and legislation, enhance the productivity of economic and developmental sectors and increase the number of nascent specialized technology companies in developing local solutions.

Pursuant to reports about a rise in number of visitors during Khareef Dhofar (monsoon season) to one million until the end of August 2024, His Majesty the Sultan laud-

ed the efforts made by the departments tasked with implementing development projects, organising activities and programmes tailored to attract tourists to Dhofar Governorate -- which helped make the 2024 Khareef Dhofar season a success.

His Majesty the Sultan underscored the significance of studying tourist aspirations and developing the services rendered to them in a manner that sustains their numbers over the upcoming seasons.

After commending the performance of government institutions and their efforts in tackling related issues that constitute national priorities for improving public services, His Majesty the Sultan stressed the need to develop mechanisms for measuring the level of beneficiary satisfaction about government services and aspects related to the streamlining of procedures in a manner that contributes to upgrading the quality of services and improving the satisfaction of beneficiaries.

His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to the Council of Ministers and the departments concerned to launch, in each government institution, an electronic platform to be dedicated to receiving complaints and proposals of beneficiaries during 2025.

In view of the solid social harmony that has marked Omani society throughout history, and, based on the deep-rooted Omani values that reject all forms of extremism, fanaticism and partisanship, the Council of Ministers stressed the importance of fortifying the society and consolidating the role of the family in properly raising children on grounds of tolerant principles to help them avoid deviant ideas or be influenced by them.

In this context, His Majesty the Sultan praised the efforts made by personnel of military and security departments in dealing with incidents aimed to undermine security. His Majesty instructed all state institutions to remain vigilant, monitor such phenomena and address them as soon as possible.

Within his review of regional and international issues, His Majesty the Sultan touched on bilateral relations with a number of Arab and friendly countries. He reaffirmed the Sultanate of Oman's keenness and continuous efforts to cooperate with all countries in a way that benefits all.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan spoke about different aspects of concern to the nation and citizens. He gave his Royal directives to all state institutions to continue improving the missions entrusted to them and to develop appropriate conditions to upgrade performance at all levels. He wished all more success towards the realization of the good of the dear nation and its loyal people. -OMA



Musandam Winter season to showcase beauty and culture of the governorate

The event marked a milestone as the Governor of Musandam signed a series of agreements with multiple organisations and companies, to kick-start the preparation for this year's festival

Times News Service

MUSCAT ; The Governor of Musandam announced the much-anticipated third edition of Musandam Winter (Qitaf Musandam) in an exclusive high-profile event at the W Hotel in Muscat.

The upcoming Musandam Winter season officially kickstarts in November and will continue till April next year.

Celebrating the unique beauty and culture of Oman's northernmost peninsula, this edition of Musandam Winter promises to be bigger and better than ever before, showcasing Musandam's breathtaking landscape, rich heritage, and a variety of exciting activities.

The elite gathering at the W Hotel drew a distinguished audience,



with senior officials from various ministries and government organisations in attendance, including ministers, undersecretaries, and business leaders.

The event marked a significant milestone as the Governor of Musandam, in a landmark moment, signed a series of agreements with multiple organisations and companies, officially kick-starting the preparation for this year's festival. These partnerships are aimed at bolstering the region's visibility on both a national and global scale, positioning Musandam as a premier tourist destination.

One of the key highlights of the event was the signing of a raft of agreements between the Governor of Musandam with some of Oman's leading entities and companies, namely, Chamber Of Commerce & Industry Musandam Governorate, SME Authority, Oman Football Association, OQEP, Omran Group, Nama Group, Omantel, Vodafone,

Oman Development Bank, Gate 10, MAS Ventures, Hala FM, and Mubashir.

These agreements underscore the critical role that public-private partnerships play in elevating Musandam's profile as a tourist destination.

By partnering with the festival, companies have the opportunity to contribute to the promotion of Musandam's tourism potential, while also gaining visibility and access to a global audience.

The Governor emphasised the importance of marketing and promotional campaigns to showcase Musandam's unique offerings. To amplify Musandam's presence on the global stage, a variety of sponsorship options have been made available for companies interested in supporting the season.

The sponsorships for Qitaf Musandam are designed to offer businesses a high return on investment (RoI) while aligning their brands

with Musandam's growing appeal.

The sponsorship tiers namely, Partner, Champion, Patron, and Ally—provide companies with the flexibility to choose a level of involvement that best suits their goals.

Each sponsorship tier offers unique benefits, ranging from brand visibility in global media outlets to exclusive privileges during the festival. Musandam's officials are confident that with the right partnerships, the festival can become a key driver of economic growth in the region.

With growing international interest in Oman as a travel destination, Musandam Winter has the potential to become one of the most significant tourism events in the region. The festival's global reach is expected to be even stronger this year, with media coverage and promotional campaigns planned to showcase Musandam's beauty and attractions to a worldwide audience.



As the season approaches, there is growing excitement about the possibilities it brings—not just for Musandam, but for the companies and organisations involved.

By working together, public and private entities can ensure that Musandam Winter continues to grow in prominence, ultimately positioning Musandam as a must-visit destination for tourists seeking both adventure and tranquility in one of the most stunning natural settings in the world.

The third edition of Musandam Winter is set to elevate the region to new heights, and the partnerships formed will play a crucial role in driving this success.

With an array of sponsorship opportunities available, companies have a unique chance to be part of Musandam's transformation into a leading global tourist destination.

As the festival draws near, the spotlight is firmly on Musandam,

and the potential for growth is immense.

Musandam's stunning geography offers endless opportunities for adventure and relaxation. Its jagged fjords and towering mountains provide a thrilling backdrop for activities such as hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, and kayaking.

Visitors can also explore the region's rich marine life through snorkeling and scuba diving in the crystal-clear waters of the Sea of Oman. But Musandam is more than just a playground for adventure enthusiasts. The region is steeped in history and culture, with ancient forts, traditional villages, and bustling souks offering a glimpse into Oman's past.

The festival will feature numerous cultural activities, including traditional Omani performances, handicraft exhibitions, and local cuisine, giving visitors a chance to experience the region's vibrant heritage.

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

Oman plans 'transformation map' for its energy sector

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Energy and Minerals has announced a comprehensive strategy aimed at transforming the energy sector in the Sultanate of Oman. This initiative, developed in collaboration with both government and private entities, aligns with the goals outlined in "Oman Vision 2040" and aims for zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The strategy focuses on several key areas, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, the hydrogen economy, and carbon capture, transport, and storage. It is built on five fundamental principles: ensuring secure energy supplies, facilitating an organized transition to decarbonization, enhancing local capabilities for energy transformation, promoting a low-carbon economy, and maintaining Oman's competitive edge in the global energy market.

Maryam bint Mohammed Al Hashimi, Director of Electricity and Energy Efficiency Policies and Strategies at the Ministry, emphasized that the plan is designed to meet the energy needs essential for economic growth. This aligns with Oman's commitment to economic diversification, reducing carbon footprints, creating new job opportunities, and developing national skills.

The Ministry aims to boost the share of renewable energy to 30% by 2030, 70% by 2040, and ultimately 100% by 2050. Additionally, energy efficiency is targeted to improve to 6 megajoules per US dollar of GDP by 2050.

The strategy also includes ambitious goals for zero-emission vehicles, aiming for 100% sales



of such cars by 2050. Moreover, it sets targets for green hydrogen production, with plans to reach one million tons by 2030, 3.5 million tons by 2040, and 8 million tons by 2050.

Al Hashimi noted that energy transformation is a collective responsibility, presenting new opportunities for economic development in Oman, which is rich in renewable energy resources.

As part of this initiative, the Ministry plans to conduct site tours for renewable energy and clean hydrogen projects, following Royal Decree No. 10/2023, in alignment with the strategic goals of the Oman Hydrogen Company, known as "Hydrom."

FOLLOW-UP AND IMPLEMENTATION UNIT

Electronic platform designed to receive complaints, suggestions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Follow-up and Implementation Unit of Oman Vision 2040 has announced the initiation of an electronic platform designed to receive complaints and suggestions regarding government services, set to launch in 2025. This initiative aligns with the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Hilal bin Abdullah Al Hinai, Director General of the Quality and Government Excellence Department, stated that the platform aims to enhance service delivery and improve beneficiary satisfaction.

It is a critical component in achieving the vision's priorities, particularly in governing the state's administrative apparatus and resources.

The platform is designed to

support the government's digital transformation efforts, utilising advanced methodologies and tools powered by artificial intelligence. It will connect with 45 government service agencies, providing a unified framework that ensures agencies respond effectively to beneficiary needs in accordance with established controls and standards.

TRA

Telecom revenues

MUSCAT Total revenues from mobile and fixed telecommunications services in the Sultanate of Oman amounted to about OMR409.26 million by the end of the first half of this year, according to statistics issued by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA).

Revenues from mobile communications amounted to OMR249.42 million while from fixed communications services amounted to 159.84 million.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CAPITAL REDUCTION

In accordance with the provisions of Article 142 of the Commercial Companies Law.

The company ALJAZEIRA SERVICES CO.SAOG, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No. 1561359, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials 11,171,717,000 to 7,820,202,000.

Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry within 15 days from the date hereof.

MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY
Advertisement No.(27 /2024)

International Companies specialized in the field and registered with Tender Board, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
PRE/23/264 (Re-Call)	Renovation of Football Pitch at Al Seeb Municipality- ReTender	29/09/2024	06/10/2024
PRE-24-041 (Re-Call)	Consultancy Services for Development at Hail Al Ghaf - ReTender	13/10/2024	29/10/2024
PRE/24/264	Renewing IBM FILENET & CMS Licenses for Record and Document Management System	29/09/2024	06/10/2024
PRE/24/241	RFP of Support and Maintenance Services for Oracle SUN Solaris Servers	03/10/2024	10/10/2024

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
- Clarification and Support:
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
 - For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@gstb.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

Website: www.mm.gov.om



WORLD

COMMENTARY

Kazakhstan's nuclear power will be a step in the right direction



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

Kazakhstan is just a step away from reducing harmful carbon emission and achieving cleaner environment as it prepares to hold a National Referendum on the construction of the country's first nuclear power plant.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, said that the referendum, which is scheduled on October 6, is a clear concept of creating the 'Listening State' aimed at taking the approval of his compatriots. In a traditional Address to the Nation, President Tokayev explained that there is a need for nuclear power as there is a growing global energy deficit while at the same time the country is in demand for a reliable clean energy sources.

Kazakhstan has long discussed the topic, emphasising the need for new power generation capacity, and even identified a planned location for the facility in the southeastern Almaty region and mentioned several potential partners from countries such as China, Russia, South Korea and France. If the country decides to go ahead with the project, it will be well on its way to build its first nuclear power plant.

Currently, Kazakhstan's power sector is at a point where the state is looking to diversify



its energy sector and cut down on carbon emissions. Nuclear power is seen as the first step to solve existing challenges for clean energy.

Since the country has abundant oil and natural gas reserves, there is a genuine need to develop other energy sources to power its economic growth.

As long as President Tokayev is ready to reassure his people that the government is committed to developing its nuclear energy in a smooth and safe way, then it is worth a shot to go ahead with it.

Currently, nearly 80 percent of electricity in Kazakhstan is generated by burning coal, another 15 percent is produced by hydropower, and the rest comes from renewable energy sources. Adding nuclear power

to the current energy mix will certainly be a way forward for future development of the country.

On the bright side, Kazakhstan is not new to nuclear power. In August 2015, it has signed the agreement to establish the International Atomic Agency's Bank of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU). It has already been viewed as an historical step that will have a far reaching impact to strengthen Kazakhstan's strong commitment to Global Peace and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

On top of all that, Kazakhstan is the biggest producer of natural uranium with many countries around the world are queuing up on regular basis as customers.

In conclusion, the October 6 Referendum is a way forward

for Kazakhstan to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and increase the role of renewables.

Fossils and coal fuel are never reliable as they pollute the environment on regular basis and always pose as a problem to the health of citizens.

On its role as one of the world's largest sources of uranium, Kazakhstan needs to finally take a lead role in the development of nuclear power by taking the center stage in nuclear energy development.

President Tokayev is very much justified in calling for the Referendum that will finally put the country in the global energy map, not only as the top producer of uranium, but as a leading producer of clean energy in Central Asia.



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112



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

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

38 CANDIDATES COMPETING

Sri Lanka's presidential poll ends, counting starts

COLOMBO: Polling stations closed in Sri Lanka and vote counting began on Saturday in the first presidential election since the 2022 economic crisis, which led to the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

More than 17 million people were expected to vote, with results anticipated by Sunday. Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0130 GMT) and closed at 4 p.m.

Economic recovery has been the central issue of the campaign, with the government having restructured over \$17 billion (€15.2 billion) of its debt.

Sri Lanka's economy buckled in 2022 when it defaulted on its foreign debt, following a severe foreign exchange shortage.

remesinghe said at his final rally this week.

Sajith Premadasa, leader of the opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), promises to ease the burden on the poor. In the 2019 election, he finished second with 41.99% of the vote.

Anura Kumara Disasanayake, a Marxist candidate, has presented himself as an alternative to the traditional system, attracting young voters with his promise to overhaul the country's "corrupt" political landscape.

His party, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), staged two armed revolutions against the government in the 1970s and 1980s.

Economy is 'single biggest issue' for voters

Speaking from outside a polling station in Colombo, DW correspondent Shalu Yadav said the economy was the main factor driving people to vote in the wake of the economic crisis.

"The cost of living remains very high, unemployment remains very high, so people are still reeling from the economic crisis."

"This is a nation where, in the past, they have voted along the lines of religion, of race, and ethnicity but all of that is past now." — DW

Who are the main candidates competing?

Of the 38 candidates competing in the presidential election, all eyes are on just three who have a high chance of success.

Ranil Wickremesinghe, the current president and member of the United National Party (UNP), is seeking re-election after stabilizing the economy with an International Monetary Fund austerity plan, though his popularity has waned due to the high cost of living.

"We must continue with reforms to end bankruptcy," Wick-

BILATERAL MEETING



Indian PM Modi arrives in US ahead of Quad Summit

WILMINGTON: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived at Hotel du Pont in Delaware on Saturday morning ahead of Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) Leaders' Summit, which is set to take place in US President Joe Biden's hometown.

PM Modi, after arriving at the hotel, met members of the Indian diaspora gathered to welcome him there.

Prior to arriving at the hotel in Wilmington, Delaware, PM Modi landed at the Philadelphia International Airport, where he received a rousing welcome from the Indian community members. He also interacted with the diaspora members outside the airport.

After PM Modi's arrival at the airport, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal said, "PM Narendra Modi arrives in the historic city of Philadelphia. An action packed day with engagements in bilateral and Quad formats in Wilmington, Delaware lies ahead."

The diaspora members in the US said they were extremely excited to meet PM Modi. A member of the Indian diaspora outside Philadelphia International Airport following the Prime Minis-

ter's arrival said, "We live in the US as the cultural ambassadors of Modi ji...We would like to make India proud by following Modi ji's guidance."

The Indian diaspora in Delaware is buzzing with excitement as they prepare to welcome PM Modi. Chants of "Modi, Modi" filled the air as community members prepared for the PM's arrival outside hotel.

A member of the Indian diaspora, Dilip Joshi, said, "It has never happened before that leaders of four countries have come to Wilmington, Delaware. We consider ourselves lucky that our PM has come here with our President."

PM Modi's three-day US visit from September 21-23 includes, a bilateral meeting with President Biden, attending the Quad summit, a diaspora address in New York and addressing the Summit of the Future at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Ahead of leaving India, PM Modi said in his departure statement that he looked forward to joining his colleagues--US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japan Prime Minister Fumio

Kishida for the Quad Summit. The forum has emerged as a key group of like-minded countries to work for peace, progress and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

It is pertinent to note that the gathering will be the first time that Joe Biden, as President, has ever asked a foreign leader to visit Wilmington, a reflection of his closeness with each dignity: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

At the Quad Summit, the leaders will review the progress achieved by the Quad over the past year and set the agenda for the year ahead to assist the countries of the Indo-Pacific region in meeting their development goals and aspirations, the Ministry of External Affairs stated.

PM Modi will join US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to discuss security and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

The last Quad Leaders' Summit, the fifth edition, was held in Hiroshima, Japan, on May 20 last year. —ANI

كاسابيللا
casabella



Buy One Get One
Free

On Wide Range Of Products

اشتر واحد واحصل على الثاني

مجاناً

على مجموعة واسعة من المنتجات

Valid from:
Sep 12th to 31st October

يسري العرض من:
تاريخ ١٢ سبتمبر وحتى ٣١ أكتوبر

@casabella.oman @casabella.oman @casabella_oman

THE DUBLIN REGULATION



Hungary and the Netherlands want to exit EU asylum policy

BRUSSELS:: Just hours after the Dutch, the Hungarian government also announced that it intends to apply to be exempted from EU asylum procedure regulations. In Strasbourg, the Hungarian minister of European affairs, Janos Boka, declared that this so-called opt-out from the asylum laws known as the Dublin Regulation was needed.

"Hungary believes, like the Netherlands, that stricter national controls on migration are essential, to protect public services and sovereignty," said Boka.

The new Dutch coalition government, led by the far-right PVV party under Geert Wilders, is ideologically very close to Hungary's ruling party, Fidesz. Now they want to work together to pressure the European Commission and the other EU members into taking a hard line on asylum policy.

The declared aim of the Dutch minister for asylum, the PVV's Marjolein Faber, is to establish the "toughest migration policy ever" in the Netherlands. In order to do this, she wants to declare a "state of emergency" that would allow her to act without the approval of the Dutch parliament, should the need arise. For its part, the Hungarian government has been issuing and relying on emergency decrees since the start of

the COVID-19 crisis.

Hungary also currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU Council. In this role, its minister for European affairs, Boka, ought to be advocating on behalf of the EU's joint asylum policy. Reforms to this policy were finally approved in April, by the European Parliament and a majority of member-state governments.

Instead, Boka has chosen to be uncompromising in his representation of Hungarian national interests. A press release issued by the government in Budapest says Hungary feels encouraged by the Dutch move, and considers its stance to be validated by the debate in Europe as a whole.

Hungary rejects the EU asylum pact, which has now become law, and is determined not to implement it, although it is obliged to do so. The Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orban, has expressed satisfaction that, on Monday, Germany started controlling all its borders with a view to catching people who try to enter the country illegally.

Exceptions are hard to make

"The Dutch government's demand for an opt-out from European migration policy is a paper tiger," according to the German MEP Birgit Sippel of the Social Democrats. — **WAF**

Over 10,800 Palestinians detained in occupied West Bank since October 7

Prisoners institutions said in a statement that the detention operations took place across the governorates of Hebron, Jenin, Qalqilya, and Jerusalem, accompanied by widespread raids and abuse, assaults and threats against detainees and their families



PPS and the Commission affirmed that, the total number of Palestinians detained in the occupied West Bank since October 7th has risen to over 10,800. This figure includes those detained from their homes, at military checkpoints, those who surrendered under pressure, and those taken hostage

President Abbas arrives in New York for UN General Assembly's 79th session

President Mahmoud Abbas arrived in New York on Friday evening to participate in the upcoming 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

President Abbas is scheduled to deliver a speech before the UNGA representing the State of Palestine on Thursday, September 26. During his visit, he plans to meet with various world leaders to discuss the latest developments in Palestine.

The 79th session of the General Assembly commenced on September 10, under the theme "Unity in Diversity to Promote Peace, Sustainable Development, and Human Dignity for All Everywhere."

This session marks a historic moment for Palestine, as it officially gained a seat among member states during the opening session held last Tuesday, following a resolution passed in May.

At least 44 Palestinian civilians killed in Israeli airstrikes on different areas in Gaza

At least 44 civilians, including children and women, were killed and others were injured in Israeli occupation bombing that targeted several areas in the Gaza Strip since Friday morning.

The Civil Defence reported that 44 citizens were killed in Israeli airstrikes that targeted various areas of the Strip.

Two Palestinians were killed in two raids in the northern Gaza Strip governorate, one of which targeted a house belonging to the Abu Rabie family in Beit Lahia, and the second as a result of bombing a vehicle in the town of Beit Hanoun, which also resulted in the injury of several others.

In Gaza City, 18 civilians were killed in about six separate raids, the first of which targeted a house belonging to the Sheikh family in

the Daraj neighborhood, which resulted in the killing of six people, including two women.

Meanwhile, six others were killed, including three children and two women, in a bombing that targeted a house belonging to the Abu al-Hatal family in the center of the city.

One civilians was also killed as a result of the occupation bombing a group of citizens in al-Shaaf Street, and a citizen was killed in a bombing of a house belonging to the al-Zard family, and a third in a bombing in the vicinity of al-Hurriya School in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood.

In the vicinity of Al-Abbas Junction, west of Gaza City, three citizens were killed when the occupation bombed a bus carrying displaced people.

In the central governorate, 10 civilians were killed in two raids, the first targeted a chalet housing displaced people, resulting in the killing of nine civilians, including three children and fourwomen, while the second raid targeted a residential apartment west of the new market in Al-Nuseirat camp, resulting in the killing of a citizen and the injury of others. — **WAF**

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Devastating floods displace huge swathes of population

MAIDUGURI: The flooding that has swept through parts of West and Central Africa this year has claimed hundreds of lives, devastated infrastructure and agriculture and left millions displaced.

The United Nations (UN) warns that more flooding is expected in the two sub-regions in the coming months.

Over a million people in Borno state in northeastern Nigeria have been affected, Borno Governor Babagana Umara Zulum told DW.

Around 40% of the state capital, Maiduguri, was submerged when a dam burst last week. UNICEF said in a statement that the flooding in Maiduguri impacted around 200,000.

In neighbouring Cameroon, a humanitarian disaster is currently unfolding in its Far North region as floods continue to devastate the districts of Yagoua, Maga, Kai-Kai and Vele.

Local authorities, through the Local Flood Prevention Committee, have released preliminary reports confirming 11 deaths, around 200,000 people displaced, 44,700 homes destroyed, and over 103,000 hectares of farmland ruined.

"The town of Yagoua is the hardest hit," said Midjiyawa Bakary, the governor of Cameroon's Far North region. He noted that "even the Lagdo Dam hasn't started releasing water yet, which is another major concern."

Cameroon's Lagdo dam release, a concern for Nigeria

The ongoing flood crisis in Cameroon has prompted Nigeria to issue a warning about potential flooding in 11 of its states. The Nigerian hydrological agency announced on Wednesday that the gradual release of water from the Lagdo dam could exacerbate its own flooding problems. The agency assured that there was no immediate cause for alarm.

This optimism is not shared by Bakary, who said there is potential for the situation to deteriorate.

"Things will only get worse according to the weather forecast," he said. "The rains were supposed to stop by September 25, but forecasts show they will continue until early November."



Flood victims awaiting assistance

DW spoke to some of the city's displaced residents waiting for authorities to assist them.

"We are suffering. We could not eat for the past three days. We have nowhere to live as the flood washed away all our belongings," Maryamu Daniel said, her family sheltering under a tree. "Our children are crying because of hunger."

Zara Goni said a shop owner provided her family with a mat, some food and water. "Sincerely speaking, we are in serious trouble ... I have a child. I don't know what to do to help him," Goni told DW. "We lost everything."

Zulum told DW that rescue and humanitarian efforts in Maiduguri are proving difficult.

"The extend of damage extends from homes and properties that are completed washed away. Many bridges are damaged, and we have yet to assess the integrity of the bridges that link between the two major parts of the city," the Borno governor said.

But rescue efforts were underway to free people trapped by flood waters and those without shelter, he said.

"We have suspended the resumption of schools to allow us deal with this emergency period."

Chad government cites 'financial problems'

According to the government of Chad, nearly 1.5 million people have been affected by floods caused by torrential rains since July, with 145 deaths reported and around 70,000 homes destroyed.

In N'Djamena, Chad's capital, Aaron Madjadoum is among those waiting for assistance. "I don't understand why the authorities can't build roads for the population," he told DW.

The security guard said he must travel about 4 kilometers (2.4 miles) daily, wading through mud or water to reach roads.

"There are not even gutters to drain the water. Every year, it is the same suffering, but the authorities are not concerned. People must learn from our suffering to find a solution. It is pitiful," Madjadoum said.

Cousin Aime, a human rights activist, told DW that the government has simply failed to prepare for flooding. The construction of a dam in N'Djamena has stalled due to lack of funds.

"The construction of the dam, frankly, is a disgrace. It seems like the suffering of the Chadian people is a source of motivation for the authorities," Aime said.

Minister of Regional Planning, Urban Development and Housing,

Mahamat Assileck Halata, told DW the opposite was true.

"We are making due with the means at hand," Halata said. "We have financial problems that prevent us from dealing with this problem in a comprehensive manner. We are thinking of reexamining the infrastructure so that the rains do not cause flood damage for our populations, who are already suffering too much from it. We are very aware of this."

Crops and schools submerged in Niger

In Niger, over 137,000 people have lost their homes due to flooding since August. Almost 100 deaths have been recorded.

In the Basra district of Niamey, Niger's capital, Zouley Adamou told DW that her family nearly lost their lives.

All our rooms were flooded with rainwater. We lost all our belongings. The water reached our chests. The children almost drowned," Adamou said.

In another part of the Nigerien capital, Alhaji Hamidou told DW that hunger is looming for his family and many of the other flood victims: "The loss of my food supplies is very painful for me. Several bags of sorghum and rice were washed away by the waters. My family and I really need help."

Schools and other public build-



ings in Niamey that are used in emergencies were also submerged. "This is really a big problem to which we are asking for a solution," Hassan Abou Almoustapha, a student, told DW.

Further inland, thousands of crops were flooded, according to Malam Bassirou, chief of the village of Chiya in the Zinder region.

"More than a thousand fields of crops belonging to six villages are currently flooded in our area. We are pessimistic about our harvests this year," he told DW.

A state of natural disaster in Mali

The transitional government in Mali has declared a state of natural disaster to help strengthen the national food security stock and support families affected by the floods.

South-central Segou is one of the worst-hit parts of the country, Lieutenant-Colonel Nouhoun Coulibaly, the regional director of civil protection, told DW.

"There are more than 13,000 people affected by the floods that hit the city of Segou. We cannot quantify the number of wells and latrines that have been damaged by rainwater," Coulibaly said.

In the Malian capital, Bamako, driver Boubacar and his family took refuge at a camp for flood victims displaced victims last month.

"When the water submerged us, at nightfall, I put my children and grandchildren on the roof of the house. I held the feet of the smallest of them until early morning. I didn't have time to take any belongings. Suddenly, the waters took everything away, I lost everything, absolutely everything," he told DW.

In Bamako alone, more than 500

households were destroyed. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is supporting the country in the aftermath. The organization says women, either widows or women with children, are most affected.

"They earn their income from small businesses that have been destroyed and often live in mud huts that wouldn't have withstood the floods," IRC said in a statement.

And, the floods can be attributed to climate change. According to IRC, the Central Sahel region of West Africa, where temperatures are rising 50% faster than the global average.

"The situation is devastating — people in the region are already grappling with rising hunger and alarmingly high malnutrition. Climatic shocks like these floods only worsen food insecurity, malnutrition, and overall instability," Modou Diaw, the West Africa Vice President for the IRC, said in the statement.

According to a UNICEF estimate, \$6 million (€5.4 million) in flexible emergency funding is needed to reach vulnerable children and families affected by the flooding in West and Central Africa.

"Even worse river flooding is forecast for later in the year, potentially adding to the misery for children and families in the region," said UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Gilles Fagninou.

This is a sentiment shared by Bakary, who called for doubling of current efforts.

"If that's the case, we need to double our efforts to prevent the situation from deteriorating further," he said. — **WAF**

ALIZZ HOSTS ICD DELEGATION

Alizz Islamic Bank hosted a delegation from the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector who were on a visit to Oman in coordination with the Ministry of Finance's National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development 'Estidama'.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX FACES LOSSES

The Omani stock market concluded its weekly performance with a decline of 0.43 percent, marking its second consecutive week of losses, according to an industry expert.

Sezad's annual growth soars to OMR6 billion by June end

Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of Sezad, said that this increase demonstrates the significant interest from both local and international companies as the zone intensifies its efforts to attract more investments



during the first half of this year.

In a press interview, Eng. Akaak highlighted several major strategic investments in the green industries sector, with some projects entering the construction phase or nearing final design. These include the Vulcan Green Steel, the HYPOR Duqm project, the Green Hydrogen project (ACME), and the joint venture between Japan's Kobe Steel and Mitsui & Co., Ltd. to establish a direct reduced iron (DRI) plant. Eng. Akaak explained that these projects will reinforce Duqm's position as a leader in green industries and contribute to Oman's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. He also mentioned that the Sezad continues to receive investment requests from global companies, with each proposal being reviewed in coordination with relevant authorities to assess the potential added value.

Regarding the Sezad's efforts to improve services for investors in collaboration with other govern-



ment entities, Eng. Akaak stated that the Sezad implemented the Cabinet's decision during the first half of this year to oversee and manage municipal services and public utilities in areas designated for public use within the master plan of the Sezad. This initiative aims to boost development and activate various economic sectors within the zone.

He further explained that the Sezad has completed preparations to assume responsibility for licensing and technical affairs services, with the training of em-

ployees on delivering these services. The total area of the plots designated for public use within the Sezad's master plan amounts to 33 square kilometers, distributed across nine different plots, including Saay neighbourhood. These areas are allocated for various commercial, industrial, and residential purposes, in addition to investment zones in commercial, industrial, tourism, logistics, real estate development and renewable energy sectors. The Sezad began providing the necessary services to these areas during the second

half of the year.

Eng. Akaak also expressed satisfaction with the progress of the ongoing projects within the Sezad. He emphasised that the first half of this year witnessed the official inauguration of several significant economic projects, most notably the Duqm Refinery, which was inaugurated under the auspices of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The refinery, one of the Zone's largest projects, is expected to transform Duqm into a leading energy hub in the region. With a production capacity of 230,000

barrels per day, the refinery will increase the Sultanate of Oman's refining capacity to approximately 500,000 barrels per day.

He also mentioned the official opening of the multipurpose fishing port, the largest fishing port in the Sultanate of Oman, along with the launch of the freight services and customs terminal at Port of Duqm, the government quay, and the completion of main roads 1 and 5 at the port. Additionally, the Wadi Jurf and Wadi Saay dams were completed to protect the projects in the area from flood risks.

Discussing newly operational projects in the first half of the year, Eng. Akaak noted the commencement of several new projects, including the trial operation of the International Seafood Company (Simak), a subsidiary of Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) is the largest tuna and sardine canning plant in the region, with an annual production capacity of 100 million cans of tuna. Additionally, Asyad Group has taken over the management and operation of the Asyad Terminals Duqm, equipped with the latest technology, including gantry cranes and yard cranes, to increase productivity and improve handling operations.

Eng. Akaak concluded by emphasizing that the growth witnessed in the Sezad reflects the increasing interest from both local and international investors. He also praised the support provided by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz), which plays a direct role in supervising the zone's development and attracting investments. Sezad remains committed to facilitating procedures for investors and helping them overcome any challenges they may face.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN



Broad money supply in Oman grows by 12.7%

MUSCAT: Oman's broad money supply witnessed a growth of 12.7 percent on an annual basis, reaching OMR24.1 billion by the end of June 2024.

Data issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) indicated that this increase came as a result of the increase in narrow money by 16.7 percent, and quasi-money by 11.2 percent, which consists of the total savings deposits and time deposits in Omani riyals, plus certificates of deposit issued by banks, in addition to margin accounts and all deposits in foreign currency in the banking sector.

Cash held by the public decreased by 9.2 percent at the end of last June, while demand deposits increased by 24.6 percent.

With regard to the interest rate structure of conventional

commercial banks, the weighted average interest rate on deposits in Omani riyals increased from 2.313 percent in June 2023 to 2.651 percent in June 2024. The weighted average interest rate on loans in Omani riyals increased from 5.434 percent to 5.581 percent during the same period.

The average interest rates in the overnight interbank lending market recorded an increase of 5.402 percent in June 2024 compared to 5.350 percent in June 2023.

This is due to the increase in the weighted average interest rate on repurchase operations to reach 6 percent compared to 5.750 percent during the same period last year, in line with the policies of the US Federal Reserve. -ONA

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINERALS

Energy forum reviews investment opportunities and means to enhance community partnership

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Energy and Minerals organised a forum in Dhofar Governorate to review investment opportunities, current and future projects and ways to enhance community partnership with local companies.

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

The forum discussed the latest developments in the sectors of oil, gas, renewable energy and green hydrogen. It looked into ways to optimise the use of mineral resources in the Sultanate of Oman and the challenges facing the energy and minerals sectors.

Optimal use

In a speech at the forum, Mohsin Hamad Al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, expressed the ministry's keenness to develop the energy and minerals sector in a manner that achieves optimal use of natural resources and achieves health, occupational and ecological safety.

Speaking about the Ministry's achievements in the oil and gas sectors, Al Hadhrami said that the average daily oil production stood at 1.05 million barrels, while gas production saw a 4 percent rise to 142.5 million cubic metres per day.

He added that the minerals sector experienced good growth in production and sales, notably in



Dhofar Governorate, which, he explained, produced more than 13 million tonnes of limestone. During 2024, more than 11 million tons of

gypsum were exported, he said.

The forum included three visual presentations that focused on major projects and developments in

vital sectors.

Eng. Saud Khamis Al Mahrouqi, Director General of Minerals, gave a detailed presentation on efforts made to enhance the exploitation of mineral resources in the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Mahrouqi pointed out that Dhofar Governorate boasts a wealth of limestone and gypsum and that gypsum exports alone amounted to 11 million tonnes during 2023, compared to 9 million tonnes in 2022. This, he observed, enhances the Sultanate of Oman's position as one of the most prominent global suppliers of raw materials. -ONA

64TH SESSION

Meeting explores future approaches of GCC chambers federation



SHARJAH: The Board of Directors of the Federation of GCC Chambers held the meeting of its 64th session under the chairmanship of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

The meeting was held in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The meeting discussed a spectrum of topics, namely the future approaches of the federation

and means of enhancing cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Faisal Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of OCCI chaired the meeting.

Gulf economic cooperation

Al Rowas affirmed that the Federation of GCC Chambers is undertaking an important

role in the march of the Gulf economic cooperation.

He reiterated the keenness of GCC leaders in supporting and empowering the private sector. Further, the Federation of GCC Chambers resolved 27 challenges that were presented during the consultative meetings and adopted 5 initiatives on the GCC level, Al Rowas added. -ONA

MARKET

Omani stock market faces second week of losses amid rate cuts

Throughout the week, markets across the region remained cautious until the Federal Reserve announced a rate cut of 50 basis points, a move followed by most central banks in the region

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market concluded its weekly performance with a decline of 0.43 percent, marking its second consecutive week of losses, according to an industry expert.

“Throughout the week, markets across the region remained cautious until the Federal Reserve announced a rate cut of 50 basis points, a move followed by most central banks in the region,” said Mazen Salhab, Chief Market Strategist MENA, at BDSwiss.

“The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) also reduced its repo rate for local banks by 50 basis points (BPs) to 5.50 percent. While this had a limited immediate impact on the Omani stock market compared to other regional markets, potential future implications remain,” he added.

“The resurgence of geopolitical tensions could negatively affect market sentiment, and a rebound in oil prices is seen as limited and unsustainable, which may further pressure market performance,” he



further pointed out.

The rate cut aims to maintain the fixed exchange rate system and stimulate economic growth by making borrowing cheaper, said Mazen Salhab. “This is expected to encourage investment and consumer spending, potentially boosting sectors like tourism, manufacturing, and real estate. Additionally, the rate cut supports Oman’s efforts to diversify its economy away from oil dependence by accelerating growth in the non-oil sectors,” he further added.

Sectoral performance during the week mirrored last week’s movements. The Industrial Sector was the hardest hit, with a decrease of 1.32 percent. Notable declines were seen in Al Anwar Ceramic, which dropped by 3.33 percent, Oman Chromite by 1 percent, and Galfar Engineering and Contracting by 2.29 percent.

The services sector fell by 0.29 percent. Within the telecommunications industry, Ooredoo saw a decrease of 1.41 percent, and Oman Telecom fell by 0.60 percent. Renaissance Services also experienced a slight decline of 0.25 percent.

The financial sector performed almost neutrally, with a minor decrease of 0.09 percent. The National Bank of Oman (NBO) de-

Muscat Stock Exchange ends lower in weekly trading



MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) saw a decline in its main indices during the week, as selling pressures continued after OQ Exploration and Production announced that it would offer 25 percent of its shares for public subscription. However, since it did not specify the offering date or the subscription price, indicating that it would offer the shares for subscription after obtaining the required approvals from the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

Trading statistics issued by the MSX showed that individual investors were keen to sell, with their sales accounting for 21.8 percent of the total trading value, compared to purchases at 11.7 percent, while local and Gulf investment institutions tended to buy.

The selling pressures led to a decline in the prices of 37 securities, compared to 11 securities whose prices rose and 21 securities remained unchanged at their previous levels. The main index of the stock exchange lost 20 points and closed at 4725 points.

MSX witnessed a 31 percent decline in trading value and a 40 percent decline in the number of deals executed, with the trading value falling during the week to OMR9.3 million compared to OMR15.6 million in the previ-

ous week. The number of deals executed declined from 3,169 deals to 1,606 deals.

The market capitalisation of MSX fell at the end of the week’s trading to OMR24.51 billion, recording weekly losses of OMR39.3 million.

Dhofar International Development and Investment Company topped the gainers, rising by 4.3 percent and closing at 238 baisas. Muscat City Desalination Company rose by 2.8 percent and closed at 73 baisas, while Dhofar Beverages and Foodstuff Company rose to 205 baisas, recording a 2.5 percent increase.

Dhofar Food and Investment Company stock was the top loser, declining by 10 percent and closing at 63 baisas. Shell Oman Marketing stock fell to 800 baisas, recording a decline of 9 percent, while Oman Fisheries stock recorded a decline of 6.2 percent and closed at 30 baisas.

Sohar International Bank topped the most traded companies in terms of trading value at OMR2.3 million, accounting for 24.5 percent of the total trading value. OQ Gas Networks came in second place at OMR1.8 million while Dhofar International Development and Investment came in third place with trading

valued at OMR892,000, representing 9.5 percent of the total trading value.

In corporate news, Sohar Power Company has invited its shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Assembly meeting scheduled to be held on October 3rd to study the proposal to withdraw the company’s bankruptcy petition before the Court of First Instance and authorise the Board of Directors to conclude agreements related to debt restructuring on behalf of the company, take all measures, sign all documents, deposit and register them with any competent authority, and obtain approvals on behalf of the company and shareholders whenever such measures or documents are appropriate or necessary.

Last week, Majan University College announced its preliminary financial results for the fiscal year ending on August 31, which indicated an increase in net profits from OMR500,000 to about OMR918,000.

Desert Hospitality Company also announced its financial results for the nine months ending on August 31, indicating that net profits rose to OMR1,974,000 compared to profits of OMR1,785,000 in the same period of its previous fiscal year. -ONA

EXPERTS IN

All Kinds of home automation/Integration like Audiovisual, Lighting Control System, CCTV/ Access Control along with product consultation & expert advise on the above being taken care. Also all kinds of Electrical installation & maintenance taken care with at most professionalism.

Contact:
93387263,
92839679



البعـد الرابع الجـديـد شـ.مـم
THE NEW 4th DIMENSION LLC
Email: newfourthdimension@gmail.com

ALIZZ ISLAMIC BANK HOSTS ICD DELEGATION TO DISCUSS ISLAMIC BANKING GROWTH



MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank recently hosted a delegation from The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) who were on a visit to Oman in coordination with the Ministry of Finance’s National Program for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development ‘Etidama’.

Ali Al Mani, Chief Executive Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank welcomed the delegation lead by Bahaedine Kirimly - Acting Chief Investment Officer, Business Solutions Complex, General Manager, Banking Department of ICD. During the visit growth and development of Islamic banking in Oman and in the GCC region were discussed as well as current developments.

On this occasion, Al Mani said: “We were honoured to host the delegation from ICD. It presents the bank with an opportunity to reinforce Alizz Islamic Bank’s role as a market leader in the Sultan-

ate and enhance the collaboration between us in various domains. It is our duty to raise awareness on Islamic banking products and how they work and these kinds of exchanges of experiences lead to the development of Islamic Banking locally & regionally. The Islamic banking industry growth is highlighted by the increasing demand for sharia-compliant products not only from specialists and experts but also from investors and customers globally.”

The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) is a multilateral development financial institution that supports the economic development of its member countries. Based in Jeddah, ICD is a part of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group and was established in November 1999. With an authorised capital of \$4 billion, ICD’s shareholders include the IsDB, 56 Islamic countries, and five public financial institutions.

LUXURY PERFUMES

Al-Haramain Perfumes opens new branch



MUSCAT: In a new step that enhances the presence of Al-Haramain Perfumes in the market, a new branch of the company was opened in Al Qurum, under the patronage of Sheikh Talib bin Ali Al-Mandhari.

The opening ceremony was attended by many prominent figures, in addition to lovers of luxury perfumes and cosmetics.

Al-Haramain Perfumes is considered one of the leading brands in the perfume industry.

It enjoys a strong reputation thanks to its variety of luxury perfumes that meet the tastes of different customers.

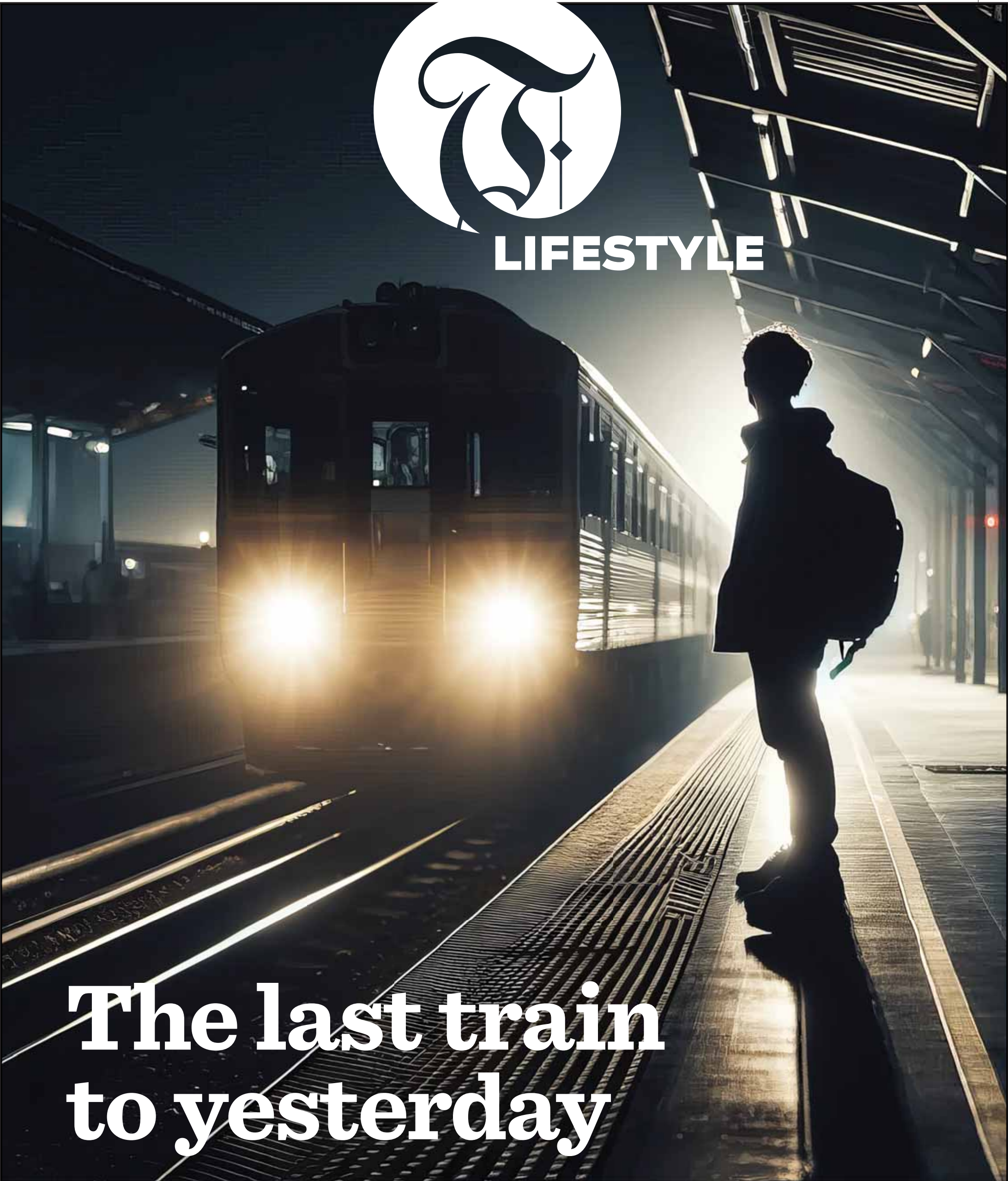
The opening ceremony included many enjoyable activities,

where visitors tried a group of new perfumes launched specifically for this branch.

In a statement, the General Manager of Al-Haramain Perfumes said: “We are excited to open this new branch, and we strive to provide a unique experi-

ence for our customers. We aim to expand our network of branches in various regions to meet the needs of consumers.”

Al-Haramain Perfumes invites all interested parties to visit the new branch and enjoy the available and exclusive offers.



T
LIFESTYLE

The last train to yesterday

Ravi was flung awake into the strange cadence of old-fashioned train wheels; their steady rhythm was so very different from the boisterous noise the city he had grown up in made. He opened his eyes, casting off confusion, to think that wooden benches, brass fittings, and flickering lamps overhead completed the picture.

It wasn't just any train; stepping into it was like walking right onto the set of an old movie. Ravi's mind became a jumble of questions, as he tried to piece together how it was that he came to be on this strange ride.

The other passengers resembled those who had just stepped from the scenes of a family drama: an old lady clutching on to a sepia-toned photograph like it was the Holy Grail; a middle-aged guy staring at a crumpled letter with a look that screamed "he still doesn't get it"; and a young woman holding onto a pair of broken glasses, which felt like an apt metaphor for her clearly blurry situation.

Ravi being the inquisitive mind committed the conversational faux pas. "Excuse me," he hollered at the old lady, "which way does this train travel?" She looked up from her trip down memory lane. "We're going back... to where our regrets lie." Ravi's eyebrows arched. "Wait, are you telling me this train is actually going backward in time?"

"Not quite," she said, her eyes returning to the photograph. "More like a stop-and-stare at your biggest regrets. Before Ravi could wrap his head around this, the train began to slow, and a voice crackled over the intercom. "Next stop... Prepare for your moment."

Ravi's heart beat faster. The elderly man across from him got up with a tired sigh, "It's my stop." And shuffled out of the train as somberly as one might before an important exam, only this wasn't an exam with right or wrong answers—just a face-off with his past.

The train again started, and Ravi's mind began to race. What regret would he face? The missed opportunities? The time he forgot his mom's birthday? Or perhaps the guilt of indulging on an entire pizza box.

Ravi reflected on this, and before him began to flash glimpses of his own life. Memories of his grandmother came pouring in. Her house had always smelled of talcum powder and fresh paratha, an aroma comforting, yet now tinged with regret. He had been so consumed by his ambitions that he hadn't visited her as much as he'd intended. She had been a rock in his life, and yet he had drifted away, absorbed in his own world.

It slowed again, and the intercom announced, "Next stop... Prepare for your moment. The girl opposite Ravi now got up, an expression of dread and resignation on her face. She got off the train, and Ravi leaned towards the window to watch her approach a humble house. A child sat crying uncontrollably on the stairs. Ravi thought perhaps that was what her regret was for. What did she leave behind?

The train stopped a little later on, and he found himself outside a familiar hospital. The smell of antiseptic wafted through the air, pulling him to a place he didn't want to go. He remembered the corridor, how it seemed to carry on forever, the last place he'd seen his grandmother.

He walked slowly into her room, just as it had been: her frail form was sitting up in bed, her face turned toward the window. But then he saw himself - a younger version, a boy no older than ten - sitting beside her, swinging his legs, chatting away with all the innocence of youth.

She turned to the boy with a gentle smile. "So many plans you have, little Ravi. Always dreaming big," she said, her voice soft, carrying the warmth of endless summer afternoons.

The boy nodded vigorously. "I'll do great things, Dadi. And I'll come see you every week, I promise!"

She smiled, a shade wistfully. "Promises are good, but just do your best, that's all anyone can ask for. Life gets busy sometimes. That's okay."

Young Ravi grinned. "But I will, Dadi! And you'll tell me all your stories again. I won't miss any."

She laughed, her laughter light, as it was familiar. "Stories... Ah, they're just memories wrapped up with love. Make sure you make lots of your own, my boy."

The older Ravi, standing in the doorway, felt a pang of guilt. How many Sundays had passed by without his fulfilling that promise? He wished he could step in, say something to bridge the gap between then and now, to tell her how much he missed her, how much he wished he'd been there more.

But instead, she appeared not to have noticed him, her attention still riveted on the child. "Just remember, Ravi," she said in a firm voice, "life is not always about big plans. It's about the small things—a cup of tea shared, or a walk around the garden. Those are the moments that count."

The boy nodded, though it was clear

he didn't quite understand. "Do you think there are trains in heaven, Dadi? Fast ones, like in the movies?"

She laughed softly. "Maybe. But I'd like to think they're slower, so folks have time to talk and watch the world go by."

Standing there as a grown man, Ravi's heart felt as though it was clutched. He remembered that conversation, remembered thinking he had all the time in the world. He wanted to tell her that he finally got it, knew now what she meant.

She turned her head slightly, her eyes catching his for just a moment—a flicker of recognition—and spoke to the little boy instead. "And when you grow up, just remember, it's okay if the train doesn't go where you thought it would. Just don't forget to enjoy the ride."

The boy laughed, squeezing her hand. "I will, Dadi. I promise!"

Her smile relented. "Good. That's all I ask."

The whistle of the train blew, soft but insistent, and Ravi felt himself pulled back, the memory dissipating like morning mist. The anvil on his chest was lighter, just a little bit. He knew he'd never alter what had gone before, though perhaps he could bear it with a little more grace.

He stepped back onto the train, feeling her presence with him—a silent reminder that the journey was his to make. And as the train moved on, he found himself looking out the window, watching the world with new eyes, listening to the soft echo of her voice in his heart.

He turned away from the now-vacant tracks, smiled thoughtfully, and said to himself, "Time to move on and hop onto the metro. That was the last train to yesterday."



Ishika Balaji is a biotechnology enthusiast, and she has a love for telling stories. An engineer in biological sciences, she loves knitting the relation of life and science together to turn mere facts into emotions with words. An avid researcher, Ishika splits her time between reading about scientific discoveries and volunteering in the community. Her writing is a projection of what humanity questions: every decision, every regret, and every moment has something to tell. "The Last Train to Yesterday" personifies a sneak peek into her world of words where she looks for meaning in journeys that life makes both scientifically and emotionally.

SPORTS



All Blacks survive late scare to beat Wallabies in thriller

The visitors defeated their Trans-Tasman rivals 31-28 to retain the Bledisloe Cup

SYDNEY: New Zealand survived a late rally to beat Australia 31-28 in the Rugby Championship in Sydney and retain the Bledisloe Cup on Saturday.

The All Blacks opened up a 14-point lead at the break but were restricted to just one penalty in the second half and lost two players to the sin-bin.

Late tries from Hunter Paisami and Tom Wright moved Australia to within a score of a remarkable victory, but New Zealand held on.

It is New Zealand's eighth successive win over their trans-Tasman rivals and means they retain the Bledisloe Cup for the 22nd year in a row.

"It's a bit of a relief, to be honest," said New Zealand captain Scott Barrett.

"In the last 15 [minutes], we found ourselves in a bit of a hole, but we hung on with a bit of scrambled defence.

"It's the nature of the Aussies, they certainly don't lie down."

The win moves Scott Robertson's side above Argentina into second place, though they cannot overhaul the Springboks in top spot.

World champions South Africa



can secure a first Rugby Championship title since 2019 with a victory in Santiago against Argentina on Saturday night.

Australia have taken just five points from their five games and are on course to finish bottom for

bounce back from successive defeats by South Africa that ended their hopes of winning the Rugby Championship title.

They raced into a 21-0 lead thanks to tries from Will Jordan, Rieko Ioane and Caleb Clarke, before Fraser McReight dived over from Nic White's offload to reduce the deficit.

Ardie Savea's score and Damian McKenzie's conversion moved the All Blacks 28-7 ahead, but Matt Faessler's try right on the hooter kept Australia in the match.

McKenzie's penalty extended the lead shortly after the restart, before the All Blacks had a length-of-the-field try called back for a knock-on.

Australia then began to work their way back into the game and Paisami went over in the 65th minute.

Anton Lienert-Brown was sent to the sin-bin for an infringement

in the lead-up to Paisami's try and Clarke followed six minutes later to leave New Zealand with 13 men.

Australia had a try of their own ruled out for a knock-on before Wright's late score a minute from time set up a grandstand finish.

"We're obviously gutted to not get the result," said Australia captain Harry Wilson.

"Giving a 21-0 head start to the All Blacks was always going to make it tough for us, but I am super proud of the effort and the way we fought back.

"We just didn't want to give up and played for each other."

Wallabies prop James Slipper was a second-half substitute to win his 140th cap, breaking the record held by former captain George Gregan.

The two sides face each other next weekend in the second Bledisloe Cup game in Wellington on New Zealand's north island. - Agencies

THREE-MATCH BILATERAL SERIES



Afghanistan seal historic ODI series win against SA

SHARJAH: Afghanistan made history by claiming their first-ever series win against a top-five ICC-ranked ODI team, dominating South Africa with a 177-run victory in the second match on Friday.

Playing in their first-ever bilateral ODI series against South Africa, Afghanistan took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series in Sharjah, UAE.

This triumph also marked Afghanistan's largest margin of victory in ODI cricket, eclipsing their 154-run win over Zimbabwe

at the same venue in 2018.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Rashid Khan played pivotal roles in Afghanistan's commanding win. Gurbaz recorded his seventh ODI century, the most by any Afghanistan batter in the format.

He received strong support from Rahmat Shah (50) and Azmatullah Omarzai (86*), with the latter also recording the fastest half-century by an Afghanistan player in ODIs off 32 balls.

Afghanistan posted a competitive total of 311/4 in their 50 overs, marking the 10th time

they've crossed the 300-run mark in ODIs and their sixth-highest score in the format.

With the ball, Rashid Khan, celebrating his 26th birthday, dismantled South Africa's batting lineup, claiming a brilliant five-wicket haul. Left-arm spinner Nangeyalia Kharote, in only his third ODI, took four wickets, contributing to South Africa's dramatic collapse from 73/0 to being bowled out for just 134.

Afghanistan, eyeing a historic whitewash, will face South Africa in the final ODI on Sunday. - Agencies

FIRST TEST: SRI LANKA VS NEW ZEALAND

Mathews, Dhananjaya help extend Sri Lanka's lead

GALLE: Fifties from Dimuth Karunaratne and Dinesh Chandimal were followed by steady knocks from Angelo Mathews and Dhananjaya de Silva and Sri Lanka stretched their lead to 202 by the close of play on day three in Galle on Friday.

The latter pair had put together an unbeaten fifth wicket stand of 59 when an extended final session came to a close, as Sri Lanka inched forward their hard-fought advantage - the foundations of which had been sown earlier.

Prabath Jayasuriya, ragged on day two, was on the money on the third morning adding three scalps to his overnight tally to end with innings figures of 4 for 136, while Ramesh Mendis grabbed two himself to finish on 3 for 101.

This was then followed by a a 147-run stand between Karunaratne and Chandimal, which had it been allowed to continue longer would have certainly taken the game away from New Zealand. It was brought to an end, partly by the visitors' persistence



with their plans and the wearing pitch. With Ajaz Patel consistently seeking to exploit the growing patch of rough outside the left-hander's off stump - so much so that even against the right-handers a leg stump strategy was employed - he finally got one to spit and sneak under Karunaratne's sweep, to crash into the stumps.

That gave New Zealand the opening they were looking for as Will O'Rourke was swiftly brought back to attack the new batter. He would soon dismiss the other set batter in Chandimal.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 237/4 (Dhananjaya 34*, Mathews 34*; O'Rourke 3-37) & 305 lead New Zealand 340 (Latham 70, Mitchell 57; Jayasuriya 4-136) by 202 runs. - Agencies

THREE-MATCH TEST SERIES

England's second Test in Pakistan moved to Multan

LONDON: The venue for England's second Test in Pakistan has been switched less than two weeks before the series will begin. The second Test was due to be played in Karachi but has now been shifted to Multan, also the venue for the first Test. The third Test in Rawalpindi is unchanged.

The original schedule was announced in July, yet for a number of weeks there has been speculation over a change because of renovation work at the National Stadium in Karachi.

There were suggestions that some or all of the series could be moved out of Pakistan to another country. The United Arab Emirates was mentioned as a possible



destination. Ultimately there is just one change, with back-to-back Tests now in Multan. The first begins on October 7 and the second on October 15. The final Test commences on October 24.

England played at both Multan and Rawalpindi on their last Test tour of Pakistan in 2022, when they became the first visiting team to record a 3-0 win in the country. - Agencies

AGAINST SAINT-ETIENNE

Nice make Ligue 1 history with 8-0 triumph

NICE: Nice made Ligue 1 history as they scored six first-half goals on their way to 8-0 trouncing Saint-Etienne in their French Ligue 1 game on Friday. They marked their 120th anniversary by thrashing the visitors in style, becoming the first team to score six first-half goals in the French top flight in the 21st century.

Lead after four minutes

Dylan Batubinsika turned Jonathan Clauss' cross into his own net to give them the lead after four minutes, then Tanguy Ndombele made it 2-0.

Nice were relentless in their pursuit for further goals and Saint-Etienne cracked 17 minutes later, when Mohamed-Ali Cho scored the third. Two minutes later Yousoufa Moukoko netted the fourth.

Evann Guessand and Moukoko dealt further blows to make it 6-0 by the time Saint-Etienne had the



much-needed respite of the half-time whistle. The second half was more muted in comparison, but Nice still managed to extend their

lead. Sofiane Diop netted in the 75th minute before Pablo Rosario converted an 86th-minute penalty to round off a stunning display.

"We were overrun, 6-0 at half-time, it's just dreadful," said Saint-Etienne defender Dennis Appiah.

Defender Leo Petrot added: "We are ashamed, there are no words to describe this."

Nice are sixth in Ligue 1 with seven points from five games. Saint-Etienne, who won the play-off to earn promotion to France's top flight at the end of last term, are two points and two places off the bottom of the table.

Saint Etienne had conceded seven goals in three defeats since coming up into Ligue 1 via the play-offs, but beat Lille 1-0 last weekend. - Agencies

ROUND-UP



Nesto Hypermarket inaugurates Bilad Mall in Mabelah, Oman

Bilad Mall spans an impressive 215,000 square feet and is designed to provide a world-class shopping experience with its opulent interiors and modern store layout

MUSCAT: Nesto Hypermarket, one of the fastest-growing retail chains in the GCC, announced the grand opening of its 17th outlet in Oman and 129th globally, with the launch of Bilad Mall on Salam Street, Mabelah. The inauguration ceremony took place on September 18, 2024, with the chief guest, His Highness Al Sayyed Faher Fatik Al Said, leading the ribbon-cutting event. Bilad Mall spans an impressive 215,000 square feet and is designed to provide a world-class shopping experience with its opulent interiors and modern store layout. The outlet features 40 checkout coun-

ters, over 750 parking slots, and a wide range of facilities, making it a premier destination for families and shoppers in the region. The mall also includes the exclusive Nesto Home section, offering a variety of home essentials, along with multiple dining options, including both vegetarian and non-vegetarian restaurants. A kids' play center, branded as Fun today, adds an entertainment element for families with young children. **Significant** Speaking at the event, Haris Palolathil, Regional Director, Nesto Hypermarket, said, "We are

thrilled to bring Bilad Mall to the heart of Mabelah. This is a significant milestone in Nesto's journey, and we are committed to delivering unmatched retail experiences with top-quality products and services for the local community." Bilad Mall is not just a shopping center; it's a mini-mall that provides a one-stop solution for all family needs, hosting a variety of tenants offering diverse retail services. Looking ahead, Nesto is planning to open five more projects within the next two years, contributing to a total of seven projects currently in the pipeline for Oman.

NBO empowers local talents across public and private sectors



MUSCAT: In its ongoing commitment to national development and the empowerment of local talent, National Bank of Oman (NBO) continues to celebrate the success of its training initiatives through the NBO Academy of Excellence (AOE). As one of the first academies established within Oman's banking sector, AOE has fostered growth and innovation across the public and private sectors. NBO's efforts align closely with Oman Vision 2040, which aims to build a diversified and sustainable economy driven by local talent, innovation, and cross-sector collaboration. The bank's initiatives include specialised training programmes designed to meet the unique needs of professionals in government and private sectors alike. These programmes focus on enhancing financial literacy, nurturing a culture of innovation, and developing essential skills that drive growth and excellence. Hassan Abdul Amir Shaban, General Manager & Chief Government Banking and Alliances Officer at NBO, commented on the initiative: "Our goal is to strengthen strategic professional relationships with our clients across various sectors, enhancing partnerships and collaboration with the National Bank of Oman. Through these efforts, we aim to exchange knowledge and expertise, contributing to the realisation of Oman Vision 2040, which focuses on developing national talent and fostering economic resilience." NBO remains committed to being a key partner in achieving national objectives, contributing to creating a knowledge-based economy powered by modern technology. The bank views the empowerment of Omani youth across sectors as central to its role in shaping the future and supporting the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040.

GROUNDBREAKING AI SYSTEM

AIx (Artificial Intelligence Expandable LLC) launches LAMx: Oman's first large action model transforming autonomous task execution



MUSCAT: AIx (Artificial Intelligence Expandable LLC), a subsidiary of Emaar Groups Oman, proudly announces the launch of LAMx (Large Action Model Expandable), the first Large Action Model in Oman. This groundbreaking AI system is set to revolutionize autonomous task execution and intelligent decision-making across various industries by moving beyond traditional data analysis into real-time, autonomous action. LAMx represents a significant leap in AI evolution, transitioning from pattern recognition to actionable intelligence. With LAMx, AI doesn't just provide recommendations or insights; it actively carries out real-world tasks based on user commands, automating complex, multi-agent operations. Imagine an AI that not only tells you what to do but does it for you—autonomously. **Key features of LAMx:** • Autonomous Task Execution: Operates seamlessly in dynamic environments, automating complex workflows without constant human oversight—ideal for industries where time and precision are critical. • Self-Learning and Error Awareness: Recognizes and self-corrects errors, continuously refining processes for increasing ac-

curacy and efficiency. • Hierarchical Task Management: Deconstructs large tasks into manageable steps, handling both strategic decisions and detailed operational tasks with precision. **Use cases across industries:** • Employment: Autonomously matches job seekers with suitable opportunities, supporting Omani- zation by prioritizing local talent. • Sales and Business Development: Identifies potential clients, optimizes sales strategies, and streamlines business development processes. • Government Services: Automates routine administrative tasks, making government interactions more accessible and efficient. • Customer Service: Offers 24/7 intelligent support through virtual assistants, improving customer satisfaction. **Leadership remarks** Mohd Saif Ali, Head of AI Research at AIx, stated, "With LAMx, we are ushering in a new era of intelligent automation in Oman. Our Large Action Model executes tasks autonomously, learning and adapting in ways previously unimaginable." Pradeep Selvan, Group General Manager of Emaar Groups Oman, added, "LAMx is a disruptive force

in the AI industry. We pushed the boundaries of what's possible, moving beyond data analysis to real-world task execution. This innovation results from our relentless pursuit of excellence and understanding market needs. LAMx is just the beginning—our group companies are working on other groundbreaking technologies that will revolutionize various sectors." Mohammed Al Junaibi, Chairman of Emaar Groups Oman, commented, "Our vision is to position Oman as a leader in AI innovation, and LAMx is a testament to that commitment. By introducing advanced technologies, we aim to drive economic growth, create high-value jobs, and enhance the quality of life for our citizens." **Experience the future with AIx LAMx** Through strategic partnerships, companies will witness LAMx's unparalleled ability to autonomously manage and optimize complex operations. AIx LAMx is not just a tool for analyzing data—it is a comprehensive system designed to act intelligently and autonomously. For more information on how AIx LAMx can transform your industry, visit www.aix.om. Let's move beyond analytics and embrace the power of action-oriented AI with AIx.

IN GHALA

Redefining wellness: Care 24 opens new rehabilitation centre



MUSCAT: Care 24, a venture by Al Hakkim International, is set to launch its latest initiative, the Care 24 Rehabilitation Center in Ghala, Sultanate of Oman. The inauguration ceremony on 24 September 2024 is bringing together dignitaries from Oman's various communities. "There is a growing need for robust rehabilitation services in Oman, and we are committed to setting the benchmark for exceptional patient care," said Dr. VMA Hakkim, Managing Director of Care 24. Under his leadership, along with Mr. Ahmad Subhani, the Director, Care 24 brings to life a new approach to wellness. The center redefines the standards of post trauma care through comprehensive treatment plans for a wide range of spinal and musculoskeletal conditions. It features some of the most advanced elec-

trotherapy and spinal decompression machines that ensure faster recoveries than conventional equipment. The occupational therapy provides effective solutions to children with disabilities and special needs, enhancing their motor and sensory integration. The highly skilled therapists of the center offer targeted treatments for Geriatric patients and stroke survivors, thoughtfully crafted to improve their quality of life. Ahmad Subhani emphasized his enthusiasm, stating, "there is no greater reward than being able to relieve people's pain." Physiotherapy plays a crucial role in preventing surgeries. According to global studies, up to 79% of patients with musculoskeletal issues can avoid surgery with timely physiotherapy intervention. Care 24 provides these vital services, reducing the need

for invasive procedures. Supported by a team of professional nurses, Care 24 offers nursing services to hotels, home stays, universities, and college campuses. Al Hakkim International, founded by Dr. VMA Hakkim, is a pioneer in medical tourism in Oman. Through strategic partnerships with leading hospitals in Thailand, India, Germany, UAE, Turkey, Iran, Switzerland, etc., Al Hakkim makes advanced healthcare accessible to Omanis travelling abroad. Its well-renowned Home Care Services also provide professional nursing care at the comfort of patients' homes, with a focus on helping elders to age gracefully. The opening of Al Hakkim's new stand-alone Rehabilitation Center further underscores its commitment to promoting pain-free living.

BANKDHOFAR PARTNERS WITH NESTO TO ENHANCE BANKING SERVICES AT NEW AL MABELAH BRANCH

BankDhofar announced its cooperation with Nesto Hypermarket in its new branch in Al Mabelah to provide various banking services including FFM and POS machines. This comes as part of the bank's continuous commitment to provide the best banking services to its valued customers.

ROUND-UP

Kia Sportage L 2025 launched in Oman: A new benchmark in the C-SUV category



SALALAH, OMAN: The much-anticipated 2025 Kia Sportage has officially landed in Oman, setting a new standard in the competitive C-SUV category. The car was unveiled in a grand event at the luxurious Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara, followed by an exhilarating test drive to the scenic Wadi Darbat, a location that perfectly complemented the car's performance and design.

A Grand Unveiling
The media event began with an address by Mohammed Jasim Al Shamsi from the Saud Bahwan Group who underlined the group's longstanding relationship with the Kia brand.

Yaser Shabsogh, Vice President of Commercial Operations, Kia Middle East and Africa, spoke about Kia's rich history, highlighting how the brand has evolved from a traditional car manufacturer to a forward-thinking provider of sustainable mobility solutions. Shabsogh underscored Kia's commitment to innovation and quality, elements that have contributed to the brand's growing success in the region.

Soohang Chang, President Kia Middle East & Africa, spoke about how the Kia Sportage has evolved over the years to become an iconic bestseller which has sold more than 7 million units.

The spotlight then shifted to Ahmed Soudodi, Vice President of Product and Marketing at Kia Middle East, who revealed the all-new Kia Sportage L. Soudodi emphasized its powerful performance, cutting-edge technology, and class-leading safety measures. He called the 2025 Sportage L "one of the most desirable cars in the C-SUV category."

Power and Performance
The new Kia Sportage L is packed with power, offering two turbo-



charged engine options: a 1.5T with 197 horsepower and a 2.0T that delivers 233 horsepower. Both engines come paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission, ensuring smooth gear shifts and optimal fuel efficiency. This combination of power and economy makes the Sportage a standout in its class, offering robust performance while keeping fuel consumption in check.

Driving Experience & Eye-catching looks
The test drive, which took place along Salalah's stunning coastline, left a lasting impression on attend-

ees. As the panoramic sunroof provided sweeping views of the lush landscape, the car handled the winding roads with ease. Its solid build and exceptional road grip made for a smooth and confident driving experience. The ventilated front seats added extra-comfort while driving in hot and humid conditions.

One of the most striking features of the Sportage L is its bold front design, characterized by a large, blacked-out grille with a star-chain pattern. The boomerang-shaped LED headlights add a touch of futuristic elegance,



further enhancing the vehicle's dynamic image. The interiors are spacious, but does not compromise on the ease of driving.

The car is equipped with the tech features that one expects, including Android Auto and Apple Car Play, Wireless Charging and micro USB charging ports.

Advanced Safety & Parking Features
Kia has packed the 2025 Sportage L with state-of-the-art safety technologies, making it not only powerful but also incredibly safe to drive.

Key features include:

- Lane Keeping Assist (LKA) and Lane Following Assist (LFA): Help drivers stay securely in their lane.
- Blind-Spot Collision-Avoidance Assist: Provides peace of mind when changing lanes by monitoring blind spots.
- Rear View Monitor (RVM) and Surround View Monitor (SVM): Offer crystal-clear visuals of the car's surroundings, making parking and maneuvering effortless.

After-Sales Support and Availability
In Oman, the 2025 Kia Sportage L is backed by the trusted sales and after-sales service of Saud Bahwan Group, ensuring that customers have a seamless experience from purchase to maintenance. The dealership is now accepting bookings for the new Sportage, and interested buyers are encouraged to contact their nearest Kia showroom for information on available colors and pricing.

The new Kia Sportage 2025 not only promises a satisfying driving experience but also offers the safety, style, and performance that drivers in Oman have been eagerly awaiting.



mai alkaline

pH 9.1 to 9.5

Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water



HYDRATE SMARTLY

✓ Ultra-hydrating

✓ Revitalizing

✓ Energizing

✓ Electrolytes

oman OASIS

800 71 222
9275 5522

© OmanOasis Official OmanOasisWater

WIN BIG WITH THE 7-SEATER CHEVROLET CAPTIVA

UP TO
OMR

15,000 TO BE WON



PRICE INCLUDES VAT +



1ST YEAR INSURANCE
& REGISTRATION +



6 YEARS WARRANTY +



3 YEARS/ 50,000 KMS SERVICE

OMR 8,888 * STARTING
PRICE



97295007



80050002



Together
let's drive™

*Terms and conditions apply.