



HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN
RECEIVES THANKS CABLE
FROM EMIR OF QATAR >A3

HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN
RECEIVES THANKS CABLE FROM
PRESIDENT OF CHINA >A3



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NIZWA

ROP to celebrate annual day on 5 January, passing out of officer cadets

MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, will preside over a ceremony marking the annual day of the Royal Oman Police (ROP) on 5 January 2024. The ceremony will take place on the military parade grounds of the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences in the wilayat of Nizwa. It will see the passing out of batches of ROP officer recruits. — **ONA**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

First autologous kidney transplant in Oman

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Pakistan fightback

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The budget has announced the setting up of a OMR1.9bn lending portfolio from which nearly 60,000 families will benefit

Times News Service

MUSCAT: One of the most important goals of the 2024 State Budget is financial, economic and social sustainability, said Dr. Mohammed bin Humaid Al Wardi, a member of the State Council.

Elaborating further he said, "Financial sustainability will be achieved through curbing deficit and overcoming public debt, and



“APPROXIMATELY **OMR2 BILLION** WERE ALLOCATED FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR ITSELF AND THIS DOES NOT ONLY INCLUDE THE CURRENT BUDGET SPENDING IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR, BUT ALSO THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE BUDGET THROUGH THE SETTING UP 15 NEW SCHOOLS, ISSUING TENDERS FOR 20 NEW GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, IN ADDITION TO ESTABLISHING THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND APPLIED SCIENCES IN MUSANDAM GOVERNORATE

this we have achieved. Economic sustainability is being sought through working to achieve the targets fixed for the economy.”

Regarding social sustainability, he said the budget is will continue to support the social services that the government provides to the citizens.

“We noticed that approximate-ly OMR2 billion were allocated for

the education sector itself and this does not only include the current budget spending in the education sector, but also the development projects in the budget through the setting up 15 new schools, issuing tenders for 20 new government schools, in addition to establishing the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Musandam Governorate,” he added.

Dr Al Wardi further said: “Regarding the health projects, OMR1 billion has been allocated and this covers current expenses in addition to development expenses for the establishment of three government hospitals in Samail, Al-Namaa and Al-Falah, in addition to completing seven government hospitals and other health centres.” >A3

A grand unveiling of educational excellence and global collaboration with Ellesmere Muscat



MUSCAT: In a momentous ribbon-cutting ceremony, attended by the Guest of Honour, Abdulrahman Salim Al Hatmi, Group Chief Executive Officer at Asyad Group, Alruwad International School officially transformed into Ellesmere Muscat on January 3, 2024.

This unique innovative educational collaboration with the prestigious Ellesmere College, UK, reflects a commitment to delivering exceptional education for the diverse needs of both expatriate and Omani children.

Al Hatmi remarked, “I am delighted to see the inception of

Ellesmere Muscat International School. Quality education is the very first foundation of nurturing human capital which is pivotal for any industry's growth and this educational partnership signifies a global alliance dedicated to advancing educational benchmarks, shaping the next generation with a world-class education, fostering a global perspective and promising a future filled with limitless possibilities and a new generation of lifelong learners.”

Faisal Mohamed Musa Al Yousef, Chairman of Ellesmere Muscat, emphasised the impor-

ance of the education sector in the country's economic development, through which the returns are expected to be rewarding for the shareholders.

He stated, “The education sector has received a key priority in His Majesty's Oman Vision 2040.”

“In the age of the speed of transfer of knowledge, Ellesmere Muscat will engage in exchange programmes between the two schools not only among teachers, but also among students,” he said.

Al Yousef, cited Ellesmere College's global recognition in enhancing individuals' potential.

Headmaster of Ellesmere College, Brendan Wignall, expressed his delight, stating, “I am delighted that Ellesmere College is developing its first international partnership with Alruwad International School. Ellesmere Muscat will embody the history and traditions of Ellesmere UK with the dynamism and community of AIS.

The Ellesmere philosophy of 'Life Ready' will bring something new and exciting to the Muscat educational environment. Ellesmere Muscat, an IB Continuum School, will seamlessly blend traditional values with a modern,

progressive approach to education. The curriculum, aligned with the International Baccalaureate gold standard, aims to foster academic excellence, cultural understanding and personal development.

The Principal of Ellesmere Muscat, Neil Tomalin, shared the school's philosophy saying, “At Ellesmere Muscat, we believe that school life is not merely a preparation for the future; rather, it is a series of invaluable moments, each day brimming with the promise of excitement and anticipation.”

Through Ellesmere Muscat,

students will embark on a transformative educational journey, equipped with the skills needed to thrive in an ever-evolving world. The school is set to be a beacon of excellence, preparing the next generation for success on a local and global scale, making them 'Life Ready'.

For further information about Ellesmere Muscat, please contact the admission team: Telephone: +968 2455 4711 | Email: admissions@ellesmeremuscat.com | Website: www.ellesmeremuscat.com | Instagram: @ellesmeremuscat | Address: Al Salaam Street, Al Khoudh

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:16pm
Asr.....	3:18pm
Maghrib.....	5:38pm
Isha.....	6:53pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:30am

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Forum seeks to address health sector challenges

The Health Minister stressed the importance of consolidating various patterns of cooperation and health integration

SOHAR: The 4th Health Leaders Fourn, organised by the Ministry of Health, kicked off on Wednesday under the theme of “Sustainability”. The two-day forum seeks to follow up developments associated with the health system in the Sultanate of Oman, the challenges



it faces and ways to address them. In a speech at the forum, Health Minister Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti stressed the importance of consolidating various patterns of cooperation and health integration. He laid emphasis on the need to study health issues, listen to different points of view and make proposals to overcome the dif-

ficulties facing the health sector and develop its operations. **Developing a database** “The Ministry of Health is developing a database to monitor the challenges that require interventions from central authorities and other sectors,” said Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti. During the forum, visual pres-



entations were made about the initiative of the best primary health care institution, opportunities for health integration among governorates and success stories. The forum also focused on the Ministry’s strategic programmes to achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. This included a review of different projects implemented by the Ministry. -ONA

Survey of fishery resources ongoing

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources is conducting a survey project for exploring the fisheries resources in the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. The survey comes within the efforts of the ministry on utilising the fishery in a more sustainable way during the upcoming period. The project aimed to provide details on the fish biomass in Oman’s seas and to provide estimates on the masses, seasonal distribution and availability of species of fish. It also aimed to provide the environmental and physical information that could contribute to understanding the biodiversity and environmental diversity at the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. Dr. Dawood bin Sulaiman Al Yahyaei, Director General of fisheries research at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said that this national project is vital for preserving sus-



tainability of sea resources and for provision of the information required for setting the plans of optimal and sustainable utilisation and for setting up the policies necessary for preserving sea resources. He said that the project of the survey and exploration of the fisheries resources in the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman contributes to enhancement of food security and to identify the seasons for banning fishing. -WITH ONA inputs

MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Pact signed to operate Mirbat Castle, adjoining facilities



MIRBAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism yesterday signed an agreement with Mirbat-Sadah Development and Investment Company to manage and operate Mirbat Castle. The agreement also covers the rebuilding and operation of the archaeology antiques market and customs office in the Wilayat of Mirbat in the Dhofar Governorate. The agreement was inked by Eng. Ibrahim Said Al Kharousi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Herit-

age, and Braik Musallam Al Amri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mirbat-Sadah Development and Investment Company. The agreement builds on the success ventures undertaken by Ministry to initiate investment opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It also aims to utilize cultural heritage in a way that ensures its sustainability and maximises benefits. It constitutes a link in a series of actions to achieve the 10th Development Plan and its strategic programmes. The Ministry plans to offer many historic landmarks for privately-owned firms and SMEs. -ONA





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Safety guidelines for paragliders issued in Oman



SAFETY MEASURES: The Civil Aviation Authority will take legal actions in the event of any detected violations.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Civil Aviation Authority and the Omani Committee for Air Sports to regulate recreational aviation activities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has urged paragliding practitioners to adhere to safety regulations and standards and to comply with safe practices to avoid legal accountability. The CAA said in its circular

No.1/2024: “In the context of streamlining hang-gliding permitting procedures in the Sultanate of Oman, the relevant regulations have been updated, an exposition guidance has been established and ratified a cooperation agreement between the Omani Aviation Sports Commit-

tee (OASC) and the International Association of Hang-Gliding Pilots and Instructors (APPI) to share all updated educational resources, pilot licencing , and trainer preparation.” Additionally, a memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Civil Aviation Authority and the Omani Committee for Air Sports to regulate recreational aviation activities, as well as the preparation of training policy document . Therefore, the Civil Aviation Authority emphasises the importance of adhering to safety regulations and standards, and urges compliance with safe practices. The authority will take legal actions in the event of any detected violations.

HM the Sultan receives thanks from Qatar, China

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar in reply to His Majesty’s greetings cable on the occasion of Qatar’s National Day. In the cable, Sheikh Tamim expressed his appreciation for His Majesty’s heartfelt sentiments, wishing His Majesty the Sultan good health and wellbeing. He also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Majesty. Sheikh Tamim wished the bilateral relations further development and growth. His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Xi Jinping



of the People’s Republic of China in reply to His Majesty’s condolences cable on victims of the earthquake which struck the northwestern province of Gansu.

In the cable, President Xi Jinping expressed his thanks for His Majesty the Sultan’s heartfelt sympathies to the President and the Chinese people. -ONA

Kidney transplant successful

MUSCAT: A medical team specialised in organ transplants at the Royal Hospital succeeded in performing the first autologous kidney transplant for a patient in the Sultanate of Oman. The patient, a woman, was suffering severe bleeding after the Cesarean section for childbirth, which required a partial hysterectomy, and later, a full hysterectomy that incurred damage to the left ureter of the kidney. The patient underwent four surgical operations within days. This necessitated the removal of the damaged ureter and the placement of a catheter tube in the left kidney to drain urine.



Due to the patient’s prolonged stay at the intensive care unit, the medical staff faced the difficult challenge of having to choose between two options: either remove the kidney or try to save it. The medical team decided to do

its best to save the kidney. In a bold attempt, the team performed an autologous kidney transplant that involved the removal of the left kidney, along with a healthy part of the ureter, and replanting of the organ in the lower abdomen near the urinary bladder.

The operation, which took hours, was successful. The kidney began functioning normally after a short recovery period. The patient left the hospital within 4 days. Subsequent tests confirmed the integrity of the kidney’s function in its new location. -ONA

Loans to citizens for homes

< FROM A1 With regard to the housing sector, the Minister of Finance had stated in his budget media meeting that the Sultanate is adopting an approach to accelerate loans granted to citizens for the construction of their homes. He also hinted at setting up a lending portfolio worth OMR1.9 billion from which nearly 60,000 families will benefit. The government’s role will be to provide partial support for the lending portfolio in order to accelerate housing construction for which loans will be provided to citizens. “Logically, this will primarily contribute to the social aspect of the citizen and will also contribute to stimulating the local economy, especially the small and medium-sized companies,” Dr. Al Wardi added. “Based on the Royal directives, batches of 2014, 2016 and 2015 are to be promoted after completion of all formalities based on a project on proficiency system. This was an urgent popular demand, and this issue was addressed,” he said. “This has a key benefit of improving the purchasing power of citizens deserving these promotions. From another perspective, this will also improve productivity of employees and raise their morale to stimulate productivity. In both cases, whether by raising employee productivity or raising the purchasing power of citizens’ standard of living, this will benefit the national economy, directly or indirectly,” Dr Al Wardi

pointed out. Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Barashdi, Director General of Budget at the Ministry of Finance said in an interview: “The 2024 budget aims to achieve several economic and social goals, foremost of which is financial sustainability, achieving economic growth of no less than three percent, keeping inflation rates within three percent or less.” “In addition, the budget will continue to provide financial funds to provide services in basic sectors such as health, education, housing and others, besides operating the Oman Future Fund, as well as maintaining other services and continuing with the development projects that were approved in the last budget.” “Regarding the financial statements, the 2024 budget has been built and prepared at an average price of \$60 per barrel, with an average daily production of 1.0 million barrels per day,” Al Barashdi added. “Oil revenues (oil and gas) amounted to OMR7.5bn, representing about 68 percent of total revenues, while non-oil revenues amounted to OMR3.5 billion, representing 32 percent,” the Director General of Budget said. Dr. Saeed bin Mubarak Al Mahrami, Professor of Finance at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), said through his official account: “The Sultanate of Oman was able to reduce public debt from OMR20.8 billion to OMR15.8 billion within three years, meaning it got rid of OMR5 billion.”

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OVER 117,000 TOURISTS VISIT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN DHOFAR DURING 2023



SALALAH: The number of visitors to the Land of Frankincense sites in the Governorate of Dhofar in 2023 stood at 107,268 visitors. Meanwhile, the number of visitors to Taqah Castle and Mirbat Castle stood at 10,288.

Rowas Hafeedh Al Rowas, Assistant Director General for Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar said that visitors to Al Baleed Archeological Park and the Museum of the Frankincense Land during 2023 stood at 61,974, while the visitors of the Samahram Archaeological Site stood at 32,694. Moreover, the number

of visitors to the Wbar Archaeological Site (Shisr) reached 12,600.

Al Rowas added that the number of visitors to Taqah Castle in 2023 stood at 5,224, while the number of visitors to Mirbat Castle stood at 5,064.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, represented by the Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in the Governorate of Dhofar, develops the sites and provides them with service and aesthetic facilities to serve the goals of cultural and archaeological tourism in the governorate. **ONA**



Research partnership to develop GHG emission factors for Abu Dhabi signed

The partnership will see both entities, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and Zayed University, work to identify the emission factors needed to accurately calculate Abu Dhabi’s GHG inventory



ABU DHABI: In line with the Abu Dhabi Climate Change Strategy and as part of the Abu Dhabi Environmental Research Network (ADERN), the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and Zayed University have announced a research collaboration to develop Green House Gas (GHG) emission factors for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Announced during COP28, the partnership will see both entities work to identify the emission factors needed to accurately calculate Abu Dhabi’s GHG inventory. The research will help develop sector-specific emission factors through the collection and analysis of pri-

mary and secondary data, and help develop local emission factors for sectors where no data currently exists

The research will review existing studies conducted in the region, reports, and databases on global and regional GHG emissions to gain a comprehensive understanding of completeness and applicability of emission factors appropriate to the specifics of Abu Dhabi.

Furthermore, the researchers will collect and analyse primary data from relevant government

agencies, industries, and research institutions to estimate emission factors while collaborating with stakeholders, including government entities, private organisations, and academic institutions, to ensure the availability and accuracy of data.

As part of the final reporting phase, an emissions factor guidebook as well as a detailed report summarising the findings will be prepared, which also includes the Abu Dhabi-specific emissions.

Ahmed Baharoon, Executive Director of Environment Infor-

mation, Science and Outreach Management at EAD, said, “The Emirate of Abu Dhabi is committed to sustainable development and reducing its carbon footprint. As part of our efforts to address climate change, it is essential to understand the sources and magnitudes of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the emirate, in alignment with the Abu Dhabi Climate Change Strategy which we launched in July of 2023.

“This research project, in partnership with Zayed University, aims to enhance the quality of the

GHG inventory by developing and implementing the necessary accurate and up-to-date GHG emission factors across Abu Dhabi’s various emitting sectors.”

He added, “It is an extremely important project that will allow the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi to define forward-looking strategic policies and regulations which, in turn, will help us to reduce our GHG emissions and contribute to Abu Dhabi’s overall commitment to mitigating climate change. This 12-month research project – an Abu Dhabi Environmental Re-

search Network initiative – also enables the external research community to engage in strengthening the scientific premise upon which all our policies and regulations are based.”

Professor Yousef Nazzal, Chair of the Department of Life and Environmental Sciences at the College of Natural and Health Sciences (CNHS) at Zayed University, said, “We’re delighted to be participating in this significant project—one that underscores our dedication to Abu Dhabi’s sustainable development and the pressing need to reduce our carbon footprint. The research conducted will help us better understand the sources and scale of greenhouse gas emissions within our emirate, which is fundamental to catalysing change.

“We will work with the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi to collect data that enhances the quality of our GHG inventory by developing and implementing precise emission factors tailored to the emirate’s diverse emitting sectors.”

This research will help shape a more sustainable future and equip our policymakers with the data they need to craft strategies to counter the threat posed by GHG emissions. “I would also like to thank the Abu Dhabi Environmental Research Network (ERN). This network acts as an enabler and further underscores the effectiveness of collaboration on innovative solutions, which will be key to success in our long-term climate action goals,” he added. – **WAM**

THROUGH DIVERSE TERRAINS



Saudi Dakar Rally to start in AlUla on January 5

ALULA: The AlUla Governorate will host the fifth edition of the Saudi Dakar Rally 2024 (46th Dakar Rally) starting this Friday. The rally will run until January 19, featuring 434 vehicles across multiple race categories and covering a distance of over 7,800 km.

The 46th Dakar Rally introduces new routes that traverse diverse terrains, enabling participants to explore the landscapes and archaeological sites of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Competitors will encounter new challenges that heighten the suspense and excitement of the event.

Commenting on the event, the Minister of Sports and President of the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee (SOPC), Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, stated, “As we enter the

new year of 2024, the Kingdom continues to host major global sporting events, thanks to the unwavering support provided by our esteemed leadership, particularly HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister. The fifth edition of the Dakar Rally will be spanning for 15 days, featuring 778 individuals representing 72 countries and showcasing 434 diverse vehicles across multiple race categories.”

The rally route comprises 12 stages and one preliminary stage. Throughout the competition, drivers will be tested to their limits, both physically and mentally, as they navigate the challenging terrain of the Kingdom’s desert. The race pushes participants to endure the most demanding

experiences in the world of motorsports, showcasing their resilience and determination.

This year, drivers commence their journey with a preliminary stage at the starting camp in AlUla. They will then embark on a thrilling adventure that traverses various cities of the Kingdom. The route includes Al-Hanakiyah, Al-Dawadmi, Al-Salamiya, Al-Hofuf, Shubaytah, Riyadh, Hail, and Yanbu.

As one of the longest-standing races in motorsports, the Dakar Rally has earned its reputation for its scale and magnitude of events.

The race is organised by the Amaury Sport Organisation (ASO) in partnership with the Saudi Motorsport Company with close coordination from relevant local authorities. – **SPA**

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(PRE/23/267)	Design and Construction of Storm Water Drainage Channels in Al Mawaleh	23/01/2024	14/02/2024
(PRE/23/290)	Supply of Mosquito Traps	23/01/2024	14/02/2024
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Iran says at least 73 killed in ‘terror’ blasts

The explosions, which took place in quick succession, reportedly detonated near the Saheb al-Zaman Mosque in Kerman

KERMAN PROVINCE: At least 73 people have died after explosions were heard near the grave of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani on Wednesday, the anniversary of his killing, Iran’s state television has reported, updating an earlier death toll of at least 20. More than 150 were also reportedly injured. The explosions, which took place in quick succession, reportedly detonated near the Saheb al-Zaman Mosque in Kerman in southern Iran, where Soleimani is buried. The SNN news agency reported that ambulances headed toward



the cemetery, where hundreds had gathered to mark the anniversary of Soleimani’s death in a US drone strike at Baghdad Airport in 2020. As commander of the Quds Force, Soleimani was the head of foreign operations of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards and seen as an icon by supporters of Iran’s theocracy. At his funeral in 2020, at least 56 people died in a stampede that also injured hundreds.

Rahman Jalali, the deputy governor of Kerman province, told state TV that the blasts were “a terrorist attack.”

Powerful figure Soleimani became a target for the US in 2003 after he was found to be helping to arm militants in Iraq with penetrating roadside bombs that killed and maimed US troops — assistance that raised his popu-

larity and profile in Iran. He later became a renowned battlefield commander who also wielded considerable political power. His death in a drone attack launched by the Trump administration came amid escalating incidents in the wake of Washington’s 2018 withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran.

— DW

INDIA’S KUNO NATIONAL PARK

Namibian Cheetah gives birth to 3 cubs

SHEOPUR: Kuno National Park (KNP) welcomed new members to its wildlife sanctuary after Namibian Cheetah Aasha gave birth to three cubs at the Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh. “Purrs in the wild! Thrilled to share that Kuno National Park has welcomed three new members. The cubs have been born to Namibian Cheetah Aasha. This

is a roaring success for Project Cheetah, envisioned by PM Narendra Modi ji to restore ecological balance,” posted Environment and Forest Minister Bhupender Yadav on X.

Project Cheetah The Minister also congratulated the experts involved in Project Cheetah and said, “My big congrats to all experts involved in the

project, the Kuno wildlife officials, and wildlife enthusiasts across India.” Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav also sent out a congratulatory message on the birth of the cubs. Speaking to ANI on Wednesday, Yadav said, “Three new cubs have been born in Kuno National Park under the Cheetah project started under the leadership of PM Modi

and the Madhya Pradesh government. I want to congratulate all the officials of Madhya Pradesh.” Earlier last month, female cheetah named Veera was released in the wild at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh’s Sheopur district. The cheetah was released in the Nayagaon forest range, which falls under the Pipalbaori tourist zone, said an official statement. — ANI

JAPAN



Death toll climbs to 64 as rescuers race to survivors

TOKYO: At least 64 people were killed in the massive earthquake of 7.5 magnitude that struck the Noto Peninsula and surrounding areas in central Japan on Monday, Kyodo News reported. The rubble and severed roads still prevent search and rescue operations in the quake-hit regions. The earthquake has caused structural damage and fires in the city of Wajima in Ishikawa Prefecture. However, the full extent of the disaster caused by the powerful earthquake remains unknown. The Japan Meteorological Agency warned of potential mudslides as intermittent rain is expected through Thursday in the disaster-stricken regions of the prefecture, where some villages continue to remain cut off, Kyodo News reported. Japan’s Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) were set to deploy helicopters to provide supplies to cut-off regions, with local authorities urging the central government to send SDF personnel for a disaster relief mission. While addressing a press conference on Wednesday, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that the government had decided to increase the number of SDF personnel working in disaster-hit He made the press conference



a day after the Japan Airlines Co. plane and a Japan Coast Guard aircraft carrying relief material collided at Tokyo’s Haneda airport, sparking concerns that the accident could hinder the delivery of supplies to the Noto Peninsula and its surrounding areas. Kishida said, “Overall, we believe that there is no impact from the accident. Transportation of relief supplies to the areas has been progressing steadily,” Kyodo News reported. Meanwhile, municipal authorities said they had received information regarding several cases of people being buried alive or trapped under collapsed homes in the earthquake-hit regions where strong earthquakes have

occurred. On January 1, the earthquake was centred around 30 kilometres east-northeast of Wajima with a provisional depth of 16 km and registered the highest level of 7 on Japan’s seismic intensity scale, according to the agency. A level-7 quake is described as making it impossible for people to stand. The northern area of the remote Noto Peninsula has had restricted access for more than 24 hours after the earthquake. However, the Meteorological Agency of Japan on Tuesday cancelled all tsunami advisories along areas of Japan’s western coast, according to Kyodo News report. Following a disaster emergency meeting on Tuesday, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida informed the media that the location was no longer accessible due to a wrecked road, CNN reported. He stated that after flying over the peninsula, which is renowned for its agricultural and maritime beauties, officials in helicopters saw big fires, landslides, and damaged roads. According to CNN report, Kishida had said, “To secure the route there, we are to mobilize all the means of transport, not only on the ground but also by aerial and marine transport. We have been making an effort to transfer goods, supplies and personnel there since last night.” — ANI



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Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali
EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
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HAMAS AUTHORITIES



Palestinian death toll reaches 22,313

GAZA: The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has killed at least 22,313 Palestinians, with some 57,296 more injured, health authorities in Gaza said on Wednesday. In the past 24 hours alone, some 128 people were killed and 261 more were injured, the authorities added. International humanitarian agencies consider the numbers provided by the Health Ministry to be broadly reliable, although the ministry does not provide separate tolls for civilians and combatants. Israel has disputed Palestinian casualty figures, saying it has killed 8,000. **Regional escalation** The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has said it is

“deeply concerned” about the potential for escalation in the region following a strike in Beirut that killed senior Hamas official Saleh Arouri. **Devastating consequences** UNIFIL spokesperson Kandice Ardiel said an escalation could have devastating consequences for people on both sides of the Blue Line, which divides Lebanon from Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The UNIFIL mission has been monitoring the border area there since 1978. “We continue to implore all parties to cease their fire, and any interlocutors with influence to urge restraint,” Ardiel said in comments carried by the Reuters news agency. — DW

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SPORTS

Rizwan and Jamal lead Pakistan’s fightback after collapse on Day 1

Jamal’s 82 off 97 balls and his last wicket stand of 86 runs with Mir Hamza pushed visitors to 1st innings score of 313

SYDNEY: After Mohammad Rizwan’s blistering knock, No. 9 batter Aamir Jamal repulsed Australia with aggressive play, helping Pakistan script a comeback from a top-order collapse to post a fighting 313 on the board on the opening day of the third Test here at Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

At the time of stumps, Australia’s score read 6/0 - trail by 307 runs- with David Warner (6) and Usman Khawaja (0) unbeaten at the crease.

After captain Pat Cummins collected his third straight five-wicket haul, Jamal’s 82 off 97 balls and his last wicket stand of 86 runs with Mir Hamza pushed Pakistan to an unexpected first innings of 313.

Australia openers Warner and Khawaja were then given one over before the umpire called for stumps. Warner received a stand-



o and trailed Pakistan by 307 runs.

Pakistan went into the third session of the day with Agha Salman (36*) and Sajid Khan (7*) unbeaten at the crease.

Cummins threatened to slash through the tailenders as he took another 5-wicket haul. Australia skipper kept using the short ball tactic, and both Sajid Khan and Hasan Ali left cheaply. Salman too fell victim to a similar short ball from Mitchell Starc, but not before achieving his half-century.

The collapse of 4 for 37 had Australia well in control until Jamal decided to twist the script once more. He tormented the home side for 22.1 overs, combining for an 86-run last-wicket stand with Mir Hamza, who played the ideal second fiddle, hitting only seven off 43 deliveries. The final wicket pair’s defiance breathed new life into the battle.

Jamal fended off the short ball threat, produced some flashy strokes, and finished with a 97-ball 82. Hamza gave him good support and the duo took their side past

300, with an 86-run partnership. Jamal eventually fell prey to Nathan Lyon for 82 runs.

Earlier, Pakistan started the second session at 75/4, with skipper Shan Masood (32*) and Mohammed Rizwan (12*) unbeaten. Mitchell Marsh struck early for the Aussies in the session, getting Masood for 35 off 70 balls, with Steve Smith taking a catch at slips. Pakistan was 96/5, in deep trouble.

Pakistan reached the 100-run mark in 30.1 overs, with a four by Rizwan against skipper Pat Cummins. Rizwan continued his counterattacking, smashing Nathan Lyon and Josh Hazlewood, bringing up his ninth Test fifty in 74 balls, with seven fours and a six.

Agha Salman kept the other end steady, though he also targeted Lyon with some aggressive shots. Rizwan and Salman reached their 50-run partnership in 61 balls. Pakistan reached the 150-run mark in 39.5 overs.

Salman and Rizwan continued their counter-attack, smashing at least a four or six per over. Rizwan missed out on a century, ending his innings at 88 in 103 balls, with 10 fours and two sixes. Cummins got his third wicket while Hazlewood took the catch. Agha and Sajid took Pakistan through the remainder of the session.

Brief Scores: Pakistan: 199/6 (Mohammed Rizwan 88, Aamer Jamal 82, Pat Cummins 5-61) vs Australia 6/0 (David Warner 6*, Usman Khawaja 0*). -ANI

SYDNEY

David Warner gets ‘Guard of Honour’ from Pakistan players



SYDNEY : Star Australia batter David Warner received ‘Guard of Honour’ from Pakistan players on Wednesday as he came out to bat on the first day of the third and final Test match of the bilateral series in Sydney.

The left-hand opener is playing his farewell test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground, which is his home turf.

The southpaw so far has scored a total of 8,695 runs at an average of 44.58 in 111 Test matches which includes 26 centuries. His highest score of an unbeaten 335 runs came against Pakistan in

2019.

In the ongoing Test series, Warner has so far scored 208 runs in the two matches at an average of 52. He is the second-highest scorer in the series after Mitchell Marsh, who has scored 290 runs at an average of 96.67 in the two matches.

Pakistan skipper Shan Masood won the toss in the Sydney Test and opted to bat first. Pakistan were all out for 313 runs in the first innings. Mohammad Rizwan was the highest scorer and his 88 runs came off 103 balls which included 10 fours and two sixes. -ANI

NEWLANDS

Markram, Bedingham power Proteas to 62/3, trail by 36 runs at Newlands

CAPE TOWN: Aiden Markram and David Bedingham took South Africa to 62/3 at Stumps on dramatic day one of the second Test match in Cape Town on Wednesday.

At the time of stumps, South Africa’s score read 62/3 - trail by 36 runs - with Markram (36) and Bedingham (7) unbeaten at the crease.

India saw a dramatic collapse from 153/4 to 153/10 within six balls during their first inning on day one of the Test match. The visitors took a lead of 98 runs. Their lead was 56 with six wickets in hand at Tea.

Kohli and Rahul looked pretty comfortable on the crease and were building a solid partnership. However, Rahul’s one loose shot opened the floodgates and lost three more wickets within the next five deliveries.

Lungi Ngidi, Kagiso Rabada, and Nandre Burger used their pace at Newlands to dominate the Indian batting lineup during the final session of day one. Apart from Marco Jansen, all the other three pacers picked up a three-wicket haul to bundle out India at 153/10.

The day one of the second Test match saw 23 wickets fall in total after South Africa won the toss and opted to bat and made the landmark for the second most wickets on Day 1 of a Test.

Skipper Dean Elgar (12 runs from 28 balls) was dismissed in



the 11th over by Mukesh Kumar. Following this the Proteas lost two quick wickets of Tony de Zorzi (1 run from 7 balls) and Tristan Stubbs (1 run from 14 balls). The hosts will depend on Markram and Bedingham on the second day of the Test match.

Till the last ball played for the day, Mukesh scalped two wickets. While Jasprit Bumrah bagged one

to lead the Test match by 36 runs.

Recapping the second session of day one, Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill took India to 111/4 and had a lead of 56 runs at the Tea on Wednesday. After scoring 55 runs in their first inning, South Africa were able to fight back in the game after Proteas pacer Nandre Burger bagged three wickets in the second session.

Yashasvi Jaiswal (0 runs from 7 balls) had a poor start to India’s first session and was dismissed by Kagiso Rabada in the 3rd over of India’s first inning. However, after the dismissal of Jaiswal, Rohit (39 runs from 50 balls) and Gill (36 runs from 55 balls) took in charge of the game. Rohit slammed 7 fours, while, the 24-year-old hit five boundaries. -ANI

INTERNATIONAL CRICKET COUNCIL

ICC Player Rankings: Virat Kohli surges into top 10 in Test rankings, Bumrah re-enters top five

DUBAI: India’s batting talisman Virat Kohli started the new year on a good note as he re-entered the top 10 in the ICC Test rankings, climbing to ninth position, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the latest ranking update on Wednesday.

“Former India captain Virat Kohli has returned to the top 10 of the ICC Men’s Test Player Rankings while South Africa opener Dean Elgar has made a huge jump after his Player of the Match effort in the first Test of the two-match ICC World Test Championship series in Centurion, which the home side won by an innings and 32 runs to take a 1-0 lead,” ICC announced in an official statement.

Kohli, a previous top-ranked batter who fell out of the top 10 in mid-2022, has moved up four



spots to ninth place with scores of 38 and 76, but is still 103 rating points behind top-ranked Kane Williamson of New Zealand (864 points).

Joe Root comes in second with 859 rating points, while Steve

Smith comes in third with 820.

Meanwhile, India skipper Rohit Sharma dropped four places to 14th position in the Test rankings. On the other side, South African veteran Dean Elgar is certain to retire as a top-20 batter after his ef-

forts in the first Test in Centurion, jumping 19 places to 17th (680) ahead of his last appearance.

Following his comeback to Test cricket, Jasprit Bumrah re-entered the bowlers rankings, finishing fifth (767), just behind compatriot Ravindra Jadeja (774). Marco Jansen’s efforts resulted in a three-place climb to 22nd (618), but a five-place jump to 8th in the all-rounder standings, with a career-best rating of 268.

The latest weekly update also considers performances in the second Test between Australia and Pakistan. Australia’s Marnus Labuschagne has risen one spot to seventh after scoring a half-century in the first innings, while Alex Carey (up four places to 41st) and Mitchel Marsh (up 16 places to 52nd) have also risen. -ANI

MIXED TEAMS

Poland enter into United Cup semis

PERTH: World No.1 Iga Swiatek on Wednesday led top seed Poland into the semifinals of the mixed teams United Cup, while Serbia crashed out with an ailed Novak Djokovic suffering his first defeat in Australia since 2018.

Swiatek swept past Zheng Qinwen 6-2, 6-3 at Perth’s RAC Arena to seal Poland’s quarterfinal victory against China. After Hubert Hurkacz beat Zhang Zhizhen in the men’s singles, Swiatek continued her ominous form ahead of the Australian Open and inflicted Zheng’s first defeat of the tournament.

Swiatek was tested early against the rapidly rising No.14 ranked Zheng, who had enjoyed eye-catching wins over Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova and Serbia’s Olga Danilovic.



But she quickly gained the ascendancy as Poland became the first team to book a spot in the semifinals. Host Australia reached the final four after brushing aside Serbia in front of a partisan crowd. No.1 Djokovic’s extraordinary 43-match winning streak in Australia ended when he was stunned by 12th-ranked Alex de Minaur 6-4, 6-4. -Xinhua

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by March 2024 reaching \$75.21, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$2.73 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$77.94. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,579.54 points, down by 0.21 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.41 per cent at 441.52 points. Dhofar Cattle Feed, up 9.80 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Ceramics, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser.

SNF announces \$250mn expansion plan in Oman

SNF expects to use these funds to further develop its production capabilities within the country, meet infrastructure needs of its key clients, expand its workforce in the region

Times News Service

MUSCAT: SNF, world's leading manufacturer of polyacrylamide, has announced \$250 million expansion plan in self-financing and partnerships in the Sultanate of Oman.

With more than 1.5 million tonnes capacity of active content SNF is the foremost global supplier of integrated solutions for chemical enhanced oil recovery (EOR). SNF expects to use these funds to further develop its production capabilities within the country, meet infrastructure needs of its key clients, expand its workforce in the region and promote academic collaborations and research and development (R&D) activities



in the oil and gas sector in Oman. In 2024, SNF plans to open its Regional SNF Technical Centre in Muscat, to be known as RSTC

Oman, which will serve as SNF's R&D hub for the entire Gulf region. This facility expands the commitment of SNF in developing world-leading polymer expertise to support customers to achieve their production and sustainability objectives at every phase of oil and gas lifecycle. The new Technology Centre brings faster access to SNF global expertise, locally, allowing closer technology collaboration opportunities and more efficient regional project support.

SNF will develop the capability of the Technology Centre through sharing expertise, training students and young professionals and the hire and training of local talent. SNF takes pride in its long-term commitment to its partners in Oman, as it has demonstrated over the past 20 years through its continuous presence in the country and numerous industrial successes.

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

Strategic partnership formed for employee awareness programmes



Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a significant move towards collaborative synergy, OQ, the global integrated energy group, has formalised a co-operation agreement with the General Federation of Oman Workers. This strategic partnership encompasses the exchange of experiences, agreements for collective group work, employee secondment opportunities, implementation of awareness programmes, employee training initiatives and mutual utilisation of facilities and services.

The agreement symbolising a commitment to community partnership, was inked by Ashraf bin Hamad Al Mamari, CEO of People, Technology and Culture at OQ and Nabhan bin Ahmed Al Battashi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the General Federation of Oman Workers. Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour attended the occasion.

Ashraf bin Hamad Al Mamari expressed, "The signing of the cooperation agreement with the General Federation of Oman Workers is integral to our community partnership, aiming to build bridges of cooperation with the three tiers and provides a sup-

portive and productive work environment. The Federation plays a pivotal role in representing the workers in the private sector and in serving its members."

He further stated, "OQ will support the federation through various avenues, including experience exchange, training programmes and linking education to practical applications in line with the latest developments in laws and legislation."

He further added, "We are eagerly anticipating the comprehensive proposal from the Federation, encompassing a thorough study of projects within our areas of collaboration. Our commitment is to actively explore avenues for the successful implementation of these proposed projects."

Al Battashi stated, "This agreement symbolises the continuous partnership and cooperation between the General Federation and OQ. It reflects the shared determination of both parties to play an instrumental role in achieving Oman Vision 2040, particularly in aspects related to fostering a conducive work environment in the private sector and upskilling the national workforce to meet the demands of the future Omani economy."

CONTRACTS WORTH OMR3MN INKED TO IMPLEMENT LIVESTOCK AND AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS

The Directorate-General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Buraimi Governorate signed usufruct contracts worth OMR3 million to establish agricultural and livestock projects in cooperation with the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning. The contracts provide for the implementation of 16 projects. The signing ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Hamad Ahmed Al Busaidi, Governor of Al Buraimi. - OMA



DATA

US becomes largest liquefied natural gas exporter in 2023

HOUSTON: US liquefied natural gas exports hit monthly and annual record highs in December, tanker tracking data showed, with analysts saying it positioned the United States to become the largest exporter of LNG in 2023.

The US was the stand out in global LNG supply growth in 2023, said Alex Munton, director of global gas and LNG research at consulting firm Rapidan Energy Group of the rise to 8.6 million metric tonnes leaving US terminals in December.

Qatar was the largest LNG exporter in 2022 and Australia the second-largest that year, US government data showed.

"US record production was driven by two factors: the return of Freeport LNG to full service, which added 6 MT and the full-year output of Venture Global LNG's Calca-



sieu Pass facility that added 3 MT more than in 2022," Munton said.

Full year exports from the US rose 14.7 per cent to 88.9 million metric tonnes (MT) driven largely by the return to full production of the Freeport LNG plant that

had suffered a fire in 2022, and as others increased processing efficiency, LSEG data showed.

Shipments compare to 77.5 million metric tonnes in 2022, the data from the financial information provider showed. -BNA

VEOLIA OMAN, ESO PARTNERSHIP

Agreement renewed to support capacity building of Omanis

Times News Service

MUSCAT: To support the Namat Environmental Advocacy Competition for schools across Oman and to collaborate on Omani capacity building in relevant areas, Veolia Oman has entered a two-year sponsorship with the Environment Society of Oman.

As a leading environmental management company, Veolia Oman has been a longstanding partner of the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) in promoting environmental stewardship practices. The partnership aligns with ESO's objective to educate and raise awareness on environmental issues and enable the public to become more actively involved in the conservation of the environment.

Veolia Oman has agreed to support the capacity building of Omanis, focusing on the management of non-governmental organisations and environmental conservation. The company will also support the next two editions of the Namat Environmental Advocacy Com-



petition. Organised by ESO and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Namat aims to raise environmental awareness and provide a platform for young environmental champions to share their innovative ideas and projects.

By nurturing the next generation's passion for sustainability, it plays a significant role in shaping a greener future for Oman.

Veolia Oman has been sponsor-

ing the competition since its inception in 2019. So far, close to 500 government schools across Oman have participated in the Namat Competition.

Dr Amor Almatani, Chairman of the Board at Environment Society Oman, said, "I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation for Veolia's continued support of building the capacity of environmental advocates

and its generous sponsorship of the Namat Environmental Competition. As a leading environmental company renowned for its global commitment to sustainability, Veolia Oman has been an incredible partner in pursuing a greener and more sustainable Oman. ESO recognises that partnerships with organisations like Veolia Oman are vital for the continuity and effectiveness of its efforts in critical

areas such as environmental protection, conservation, and sustainable development."

He added, "The support from Veolia Oman further enhances our ability to deliver impactful projects and initiatives that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of Oman's natural resources. Together, we will continue to make significant strides in promoting sustainable development and creating a more resilient environment for future generations."

Veolia Oman is part of Veolia Group, the global leader in waste, water and energy efficiency sectors. Veolia is the only company that works across the whole spectrum of environmental services when it comes to managing utilities and optimising resources. They are at the forefront of technology, creating innovative solutions to develop access to resources and preserve and replenish them.

Erwan Rouxel, Chief Executive Officer at Veolia Oman, said, "It is our honour and privilege to support in building capacity of

Omanis in the environment sector and the Namat Competition for another two years. As Veolia, the benchmark company for ecological transformation, we recognise the importance of considering our daily impacts on the environment and the communities we serve."

He added, "Namat is not just about winning a monetary prize as it encourages students to develop innovative environmental solutions but also fosters a sense of responsibility and stewardship towards the environment and inspires others to do the same."

"We aim to support the Environment Society of Oman in their aim to let the success of these teams hopefully ignite a movement towards a greener and more sustainable Oman."

Meanwhile, ESO invites all schools across Oman to join it and its stakeholders for the fourth edition of the Namat Competition and it looks forward to the fantastic ideas that school teams across Oman will bring forth in the upcoming year.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Dhofar Cattle Feed, up 9.80 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Ceramics, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,579.54 points, down by 0.21 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.41 per cent at 441.52 points. Dhofar Cattle Feed, up 9.80 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Maha Ceramics, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of OQGN were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1401 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.43 million, with more than 8.31 million shares changing hands. Out of 46 traded securities, 15 advanced, 17 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR144,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR138,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR6,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,478.44 points, down 0.11 per cent. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Ominvest, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Sohar International Bank were up by 8.70 per cent, 4.44 per cent, 3.03 per cent, 1.01 per cent respectively.

Prices of Dhofar Insurance, Takaful Oman, Oman Arab Bank, National Bank Oman, Al Anwar Investment were down by 9.64 per cent, 4.17 per cent, 3.85 per cent, 1.73 per cent, 1.32 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,465.36 points, down 0.14 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, Oman Fisheries, Construction Materials, Galfar Engineering were up by 9.80 per cent, 4.35 per cent, 2.13 per cent, 1.81 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Raysut Cement, Oman Chromite, Oman Flour Mills were down by 10.00 per cent, 1.60 per cent, 1.23 per cent, 0.40 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.85 per cent before closing at 1,577.77 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Shell Oman Marketing, Barka Water & Power Company, Muscat Desalination, Al Jazeera Services were up by 6.85 per cent, 2.41 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 1.28 per cent, 0.91 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, Al Batinah Power, Phoenix Power, Oman Telecom, Ooredoo were down by 5.51 per cent, 4.55 per cent, 3.57 per cent, 2.83 per cent, 1.24 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,597.17	4,543.07	4,579.54	4,589.34	-9.80	-0.21
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,490.17	7,396.81	7,478.44	7,486.97	-8.53	-0.11
Industry Index	5,481.51	5,459.20	5,465.36	5,472.79	-7.43	-0.14
Services Index	1,597.49	1,572.73	1,577.77	1,591.32	-13.55	-0.85
MSX Shariah Index	447.58	440.68	441.52	447.82	-6.30	-1.41
MSX TR INDEX	6,059.62	5,988.31	6,036.39	6,049.30	-12.91	-0.21
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,173.15	8,071.28	8,160.35	8,169.66	-9.31	-0.11
SERVICES TR IDX	1,777.19	1,749.64	1,755.26	1,770.33	-15.07	-0.85
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	5,855.62	5,831.79	5,838.37	5,846.31	-7.94	-0.14
FIXED INCOME INDEX	991.33	991.33	991.33	991.33	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,311,845	2,434,495	1,401	23,800,058,806	15	17	14	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	1,100	86	2	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.073	0.005	6.849	0.078	0.075	0.078	0.100	15,571,577
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	17,963	8,143	4	0.440	0.470	0.440	0.470	0.450	0.020	4.444	0.470	0.440	0.470	0.100	314,131,750
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	275,068	27,457	7	0.099	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.099	0.001	1.010	0.100	0.098	0.101	0.100	546,788,850
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	1,900	418	3	0.220	0.222	0.220	0.222	0.220	0.002	0.909	0.222	0.218	0.222	0.100	13,587,349
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	3,000	339	1	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.113	0.112	0.001	0.889	0.113	0.112	0.113	0.100	16,950,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	36,580	2,125	4	0.058	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.100	21,011,511
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO	8,300	581	1	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	6,300,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	27,820	1,669	4	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.065	0.100	12,000,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	3,000	255	1	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.100	14,700,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	32,132	13,071	9	0.414	0.417	0.400	0.417	0.418	-0.001	-0.239	0.416	0.416	0.417	0.100	98,582,970
OM0000002786	BANK MUSCAT	1,075,076	285,403	39	0.267	0.267	0.265	0.265	0.268	-0.003	-1.119	0.265	0.265	0.268	0.100	1,988,195,221
OM0000003969	OOREDOO	67,452	21,588	15	0.323	0.323	0.319	0.319	0.323	-0.004	-1.238	0.319	0.319	0.320	0.100	207,051,269
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	28,592	7,974	7	0.280	0.284	0.276	0.284	0.289	-0.005	-1.730	0.284	0.284	0.290	0.100	461,768,705
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	105,383	110,351	36	1.046	1.060	1.030	1.030	1.060	-0.030	-2.830	1.030	1.030	1.070	0.100	772,500,000
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	3,000	3,093	2	1.050	1.050	1.030	1.030	1.060	-0.060	-5.505	1.030	1.000	1.100	0.100	71,070,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	3,376	671	4	0.200	0.200	0.180	0.180	0.200	-0.020	-10.000	0.180	0.180	0.220	0.100	9,900,000
Total	16	1,688,742	483,224	139												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	100	6	1	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.051	0.005	9.904	0.056	0.046	0.056	0.100	11,069,908
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	160,357	7,772	13	0.050	0.050	0.045	0.050	0.046	0.004	8.696	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.100	4,250,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	122,854	10,517	7	0.084	0.090	0.084	0.090	0.084	0.006	7.143	0.090	0.082	0.092	0.100	42,406,775
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	10,000	1,700	1	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.165	0.005	3.030	0.170	0.000	0.170	0.100	52,304,649
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	5,100	4,335	2	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.830	0.020	2.410	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.100	80,750,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	100	5	1	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.001	2.174	0.047	0.042	0.047	0.100	7,520,000
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	7,000	336	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.001	2.128	0.048	0.047	0.051	0.100	3,000,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	220,300	37,231	14	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.166	0.003	1.807	0.169	0.154	0.169	0.100	34,304,709
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	34,747	2,701	7	0.077	0.079	0.077	0.079	0.078	0.001	1.282	0.079	0.078	0.079	0.100	12,288,482
OM0000001989	SALALAH MILLS	500	267	1	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.000	0.000	0.333	0.000	0.333	0.100	26,630,313
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	6,425	1,028	2	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.156	0.160	0.100	375,945,195
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	8,513	1,924	5	0.226	0.226	0.226	0.226	0.226	0.000	0.000	0.226	0.226	0.233	0.100	10,343,070
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	170,250	16,440	17	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.096	0.097	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	24,810	3,275	4	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.000	0.132	0.132	0.135	0.100	12,909,885
OM0000004893	AL SUWADI POWER	49,112	1,051	6	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.021	0.022	0.100	15,718,859
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	74,779	22,434	20	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.300	0.302	0.100	231,060,000
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	4,332,473	671,487	1,115	0.155	0.155	0.154	0.155	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.155	0.155	0.170	0.100	671,246,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	6,600	3,300	2	0.500	0.500	0.498	0.498	0.500	-0.002	-0.400	0.498	0.000	0.498	0.100	78,435,000
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	16	76	1	4.740	4.740	4.740	4.740	4.799	-0.059	-1.229	4.740	0.000	4.900	1.000	14,220,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAB INVESTMENT	63,176	4,738	3	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.076	-0.001	-1.316	0.075	0.075	0.077	0.100	15,450,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	53,000	8,538	8	0.124	0.124	0.123	0.123	0.125	-0.002	-1.600	0.123	0.123	0.124	0.100	24,600,000
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	11,009	605	5	0.055	0.055	0.054	0.054	0.056	-0.002	-3.571	0.054	0.054	0.055	0.100	78,980,479
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	2,907	363	5	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.130	-0.005	-3.846	0.125	0.125	0.135	0.100	208,676,250
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	11,460	527	1	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.048	-0.002	-4.167	0.046	0.045	0.046	0.100	11,500,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	13,991	295	4	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	0.022	-0.001	-4.545	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.100	14,172,636
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	200	45	1	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.249	-0.024	-9.639	0.225	0.225	0.000	0.100	24,562,095
Total	26	5,388,779	799,015	1,247												

100% OWNERSHIP

AD Ports Group announces Noatum's acquisition of APM Terminals Castellón in Spain for €10mn

MADRID: AD Ports Group, one of the world's premier facilitators of logistics, industry, and trade, announced that Noatum Terminals, the terminals operations business of Noatum Group, has acquired 100% ownership of APM Terminals Castellón in Spain for a total purchase consideration (Enterprise Value - EV) of EUR10 million.

The agreement, which was reached with APM Terminals, has obtained all regulatory and stakeholder approvals and the change of ownership will take place effective immediately. In parallel, a long-term agreement with the stevedoring union has been achieved which will assure stability and high productivity in the coming years.

Noatum Terminals' investment in Castellón, where it has already been managing a multipurpose terminal since 2004, is part of its strategy to consolidate its position in Spain. The acquisition follows various improvements implemented at





Plant roots create a water-repellent polymer called suberin in response to drought, which prevents water from moving up towards the leaves, where it would soon evaporate. The consequent water loss would be equivalent to leaving the tap running without suberin. Endodermal cells that line the capillaries inside the roots of some plants produce suberin.

LOS ANGELES: Plants must be adaptable in order to withstand environmental changes, and the adaptive strategies they employ must frequently be as variable as the changes in climate and conditions to which they adapt. Plant roots create a water-repellent polymer called suberin in response to drought, which prevents water from moving up towards the leaves, where it would soon evaporate. The consequent water loss would be equivalent to leaving the tap running without suberin. Endodermal cells that line the capillaries inside the roots of some plants produce suberin. Suberin is produced in epidermal cells directly below the epidermis of the root in some plants, such as tomatoes.

“This adds exodermal suberin to our toolbox of ways to help plants survive for longer and cope with drought,” said Siobhan Brady, professor in the UC Davis Department of Plant Biology and Genome Center, and senior author on the paper. “It’s almost like a jigsaw puzzle--if you can figure out which cells have modifications that protect the plant during difficult environmental conditions, you can start to ask questions like, if you build those defenses up one upon the other, does it make the plant stronger?”

In the new study, postdoctoral scholar Alex Canto-Pastor worked with Brady and an international team of collaborators to uncover the role of exodermal suberin and map the genetic pathways that regulate its production. “It’s the merging of classical and cutting-edge methodology that lets us look at both the process that’s happening in an individual cell and what you see in the whole plant,” said Brady. “So going from super small to big.”

Brady, Canto-Pastor and colleagues started by identifying all of the genes that are actively used by root exodermal cells. Then they performed gene editing to create mutant strains of tomato plants that lacked functional versions of several genes they suspected might be involved in suberin production. They discovered seven genes that were necessary for suberin deposition.

Next, the researchers tested exodermal suberin’s role in drought tolerance by exposing some of the mutant tomato plants to a ten-day drought. For these experiments, the researchers focused on two genes: SIASFT, an enzyme involved in suberin production and SIMYB92, a transcription factor that controls the expression of other genes involved in suberin production.

The experiments confirmed that both genes are necessary for suberin production and that without them, tomato plants are less able to cope with water stress. The mutant plants grew as well as normal plants when they were well-watered but became significantly more wilted after ten days with no water.

“In both of those cases where you have mutations in those genes, the plants are more stressed and they’re not able to respond to drought conditions,” Brady said.

Having shown suberin’s worth in a greenhouse setting, the researchers now plan to test suberin’s drought-proofing potential in the field.

“We’ve been working on taking this finding and putting it into the field to try and make tomatoes more drought tolerant,” Brady said. **-ANI**

Wasim Akram and Waqar criticise decision to rest Shaheen Shah Afridi

Wasim said that decision “had nothing to do with the management” and was “solely [Shaheen’s] decision”

SYDNEY: Former Pakistan pace greats Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis criticised the decision to rest fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi in the third and final Test against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), with Akram warning players to decide if they want to be the greats of their sport or a millionaire by playing T20 cricket.

After Pakistan lost the series 2-0, Shaheen has been rested from the final Test at Sydney, which is also Australia opener David Warner’s farewell Test.

Wasim claimed that decision “had nothing to do with the management” and was “solely [Shaheen’s] decision”. He warned players to decide “if you want to be a great of the game or do you want to be a millionaire” while prioritising formats.

“Straight after this there are five T20s in New Zealand, and Shaheen’s the captain,” Wasim said on Fox Cricket as quoted by ESPNcricinfo.



“But T20 cricket, who cares? I understand, it is there for entertainment and it is there for financial gain for cricket boards, for players, but cricketers should know that Test cricket is the ultimate.”

“If we talk about what happened 20 years ago in this Test in Sydney,

nobody knows what happened last night in T20. That’s the difference. These guys have to understand and learn, if you want to be a great of the game or do you want to be a millionaire. You can become both but with a little more sense,” he concluded.

Waqar was also surprised with

the decision, saying that Shaheen’s absence “made him laugh” and he expected him to play because he was looking great in the second Test with his swing and pace.

“That is a real shocker for me because I was expecting him to be a part of this Test match because he looked good in the previous

match. He started feeling like the old Shaheen Afridi and started to swing the ball and the pace was getting better,” he said.

Shaheen’s workload was a concern for Pakistan after two Tests as he was leading a depleted, inexperienced pace bowling line-up without a lead spinner. He bowled

Shaheen’s workload was a concern for Pakistan after two Tests as he was leading a depleted, inexperienced pace bowling line-up without a lead spinner

almost a hundred overs, just four balls short of it. The second-most busiest bowler of the series has been Australian spinner Nathan Lyon, who has bowled almost 30 overs less than Shaheen.

Shaheen’s workload over a wide period has been concerning for Pakistan ever since he assumed more responsibility in white-ball cricket. He is the skipper of Pakistan Super League (PSL) side Lahore Qalandars and has also inked a deal of three years with the International League T20 (ILT20) last year.

Shaheen will also begin his reign as T20I captain with five-match series against New Zealand this month, just five days after the third Test. Despite spending so much time out due to injury, only eight pacers have bowled more than Shaheen since July 2022.

Naseem Shah is injured, while Haris Rauf is unavailable for Tests, and playing for Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash League (BBL). -ANI

FOOTBALL

La Liga: Valencia, Rayo kick off 2024 with wins



MADRID: Valencia got 2024 off to a perfect start with a comfortable 3-1 home win over Villarreal in their La Liga derby on Tuesday night.

Valencia enjoyed a flying start when Roman Yaremchuk fired home in the fourth minute following Jose Gaya’s cross from the left.

Pepelu doubled the lead from the penalty spot in the 25th minute after Roman Terrats’ untidy challenge on Hugo Duro.

Valencia were in control and Duro hit the post early in the second half, before Pepelu added his second from the penalty spot because of a handball in the Villarreal area.

Gerard Moreno pulled a goal back for Villarreal with 18 minutes left to play, but they never looked like they were getting back into the game.

Martin Zubimendi’s injury time goal saved a point for sixth place Real Sociedad in their Basque derby at home to Alaves after the visitors had threatened to take three vital points. Real Sociedad were down to 10 men in the 36th minute when goalkeeper Alex Remiro totally misjudged the bounce of a long ball and was forced to handle out of his area to stop Luis Rioja scoring.

Alaves rarely threatened in the second half, but took the lead in the 76th minute from the penalty spot as Rioja sent Remiro’s replacement Unai Marrero the wrong way.

Real Sociedad threw everything at their rivals in the closing minutes and Zubimendi slotted home in the 97th minute after the ball fell kindly for him in the area.

Rayo Vallecano began the New Year with a 2-0 win away to Getafe in a match that was played at Atletico Madrid’s Metropolitano Stadium because of an unserved stadium ban for Getafe dating back over a decade.

The game was a disaster for Getafe, as Juanmi Latasa was sent off for two yellow cards in the 42nd minute, before Sergio Camello put Rayo ahead in the first half injury time.

Camello doubled Rayo’s lead two minutes into the second half and Getafe were down to nine men minutes later when Mason Greenwood was sent off for apparently swearing at the referee.

Getafe defender Damien Suarez was also shown a red card for making a comment to the referee just two minutes after he was withdrawn from the game. -Xinhua

LA LIGA

Our aim is to make a good start, says Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti

NEW DELHI: Ahead of Real Madrid’s upcoming match against Mallorca in La Liga at Santiago Bernabeu, the Los Blancos head coach Carlo Ancelotti said that they aim to have a “good start” of the year.

While speaking at the pre-match press conference, Ancelotti confirmed that few players who have been injured have already started to train with the team.

“Our aim is to make a good start to this new part of the season. We’ve had some good news in training as a lot of players are coming back. Also, those who aren’t ready yet are very close to being back. Vinicius, Carvajal, Arda, and soon Camavinga will be back. We’ll try to put in a good performance tomorrow, showing commitment and intensity to start the year well,” Ancelotti said as quoted by Real Madrid’s official website.

Talking about his contract renewal with Real Madrid, the Italian coach added that he is happy to continue with the Spanish giants for the next two years. He further added that it was “simple



and both sides agreed on it.”

“I’m very happy to have renewed, it was simple and both sides agreed on it. I’m very happy to continue at Madrid for another two years. We are not planning to sign another centre-back. We’ve

got two important ones out, but we’ve got two more in Nacho and Rudiger. And then we have other options in case of emergencies such as Camavinga and Carvajal,” he added.

When asked about his links

with the Brazilian National Team, he added that it all depended on Real Madrid’s decision on contract renewal.

“Everyone knows that I was in touch with the former president of the Brazilian federation, Enaldo Rodrigues. I want to thank him for his warmth and interest in me coaching the Brazil national team. I was proud, but it was all dependent on my situation with Real Madrid and that it was all clear. Enaldo is not the president right now and everything has gone the way I wanted because I’m able to stay here. Thinking about being the Brazil coach was exciting, but I don’t know if they will want me in 2026. I don’t know if they will be happy with this decision,” he added.

The Los Blancos are in their red-hot form currently. In their previous five games, Real Madrid are unbeaten and are coming into this game after beating Alaves by 1-0.

They stand at the top of the La Liga standings with 45 points after winning 14 of their 18 league matches. -ANI

FORMER INDIAN SKIPPER

Scoring in subcontinent alone does not help, says Srikanth on Shubman Gill’s Test form

NEW DELHI: Former Indian skipper Kris Srikkanth said that Shubman Gill has to perform well in different conditions worldwide so that he can live up to his hype in international cricket.

India will take on South Africa in the second Test at Cape Town from Wednesday. India is trailing by 1-0.

Gill has failed to fire with the bat in Tests so far and his numbers are in stark contrast with his incredible ODI numbers.

“Shubman Gill has to perform well across the world. Scoring runs in the sub-continent alone does not help. He has to score runs overseas. Why are we calling Virat Kohli the King? Look at his record, even in the last year, be it Test matches, ODI or T20Is. Just look at his records. I have nothing more to say. Yes, I accept you cannot produce a Virat Kohli every time. Everybody cannot be producing Virat Kohli (Kohli-like



numbers). But you have to try and get to at least a bit of that stature,” Srikkanth said on his YouTube channel.

“I think the hype around Shubman Gill, quite a few are saying ‘he is the next this, next that’. I think we will have to wait and

see. I would not overrate him, I would not want to underestimate him,” he added.

In 19 Tests, Gill has scored 994 runs at an average of 31.06, with two centuries and four fifties in 35 innings. His best score is 128.

Last year, in six Tests, Gill

scored 258 runs in 10 innings at an average of 28.66, with one century, a knock of 128 being his sole noteworthy knock.

In India, Gill has 417 runs in 14 innings of eight Tests at an average of 32.07, with a century and two fifties.

Gill has done well in Australia, scoring 259 runs in three matches and six innings at an average of 51.80, with two fifties. But his numbers in England and South Africa are not good. Gill has scored just 88 runs in six innings of three Tests in England, with the best score of 28. While in South Africa, he scored just 28 runs, including 26 in the second innings of his debut Test in this part of the world. Gill has also played two Tests in the West Indies, scoring just 45 runs in three innings at an average of 22.50 and best score of 29*. Gill has scored a century in Bangladesh but has just 157 runs in four innings in Bangladesh. -ANI



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ROUND-UP

Mall of Muscat hosts memorable musical evening with Haitham Rafi

This event, a highlight of the mall’s magical winter weekend, was a resounding success, captivating a massive audience with Rafi’s dynamic performance

MUSCAT: Mall of Muscat, a leading leisure and entertainment destination, extends an invitation to visitors to immerse themselves in the wonders of the winter season, offering experiences that go far beyond the traditional shopping journey. As part of this enchanting winter allure, the mall recently hosted a memorable musical evening, featuring the renowned Omani singer

Haitham Rafi. This event, a highlight of the mall’s magical winter weekend, was a resounding success, captivating a massive audience with Rafi’s dynamic performance. Haitham Rafi, a prominent figure in the Omani music industry and a celebrated winner of a popular Indian reality show, showcased his extraordinary talent at the

Mall of Muscat. His performance included a mix of iconic Arabic and Hindi songs, demonstrating his versatility and appeal across diverse musical genres. The audience was captivated by Rafi’s infectious energy and impressive vocal range. The singer performed his iconic numbers while also interacting with the crowd, inviting them to join in the singing, creating a uniquely interactive and memorable experience. The Mall of Muscat spokesperson commented on the event, “We are thrilled to have hosted Haitham Rafi, a singer who embodies the spirit of Omani talent and cultural diversity. His concert was a celebration of music that brought together people of all ages and backgrounds. We are proud to be a destination that offers such enriching experiences to our visitors.” The concert was a highlight of the Mall’s winter weekend events, which also featured fun activities for children and an exciting parrot show, catering to a wide range of interests and age groups. Haitham Rafi expressed his gratitude, saying, “I was very happy to participate in the concert at the Mall of Muscat. A big thank you to everyone who attended the concert for their encouragement and support. It is always a pleasure to perform in front of such an appreciative audience.” The musical feast was a testament to the Mall of Muscat’s commitment to providing high-quality entertainment and cultural events to its visitors. The success of the evening was echoed in the attendees’ and visitors’ praise for the Mall’s efforts in organising such a remarkable musical event.



EXTENSIVE COLLECTION



Malabar Gold & Diamonds continues its expansion drive in India; opens its 7th showroom in Pune

DUBAI: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 335 showrooms across 12 countries, has launched its new showroom in Pune, Maharashtra at Wakad. Located at the Phoenix Mall of The Millennium in Wakad, the expansive showroom has further strengthened Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ retail footprint in Pune by taking the store tally to seven. The showroom was inaugurated by Ashwini Jagtap, MLA from Chinchwad constituency, in the presence of Fanzeem Ahmed, the Regional Head (West Zone) of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other dignitaries, customers and well-wishers. Spread over 2000 sq ft, the Wakad store offers an extensive array of bridal, traditional, contemporary, and lightweight jewellery in gold, diamonds, precious gemstones, and platinum. It also showcases jewellery from Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ popular sub-brands, including MINE Diamond jewellery, Era uncut diamond jewellery, Divine Indian heritage jewellery, Ethnix handcrafted antique jewellery collections, and Precia precious gemstone jewellery and collections like Zoul lifestyle jewellery and Viraz Polki jewellery, to name a few. Apart from unparalleled design variety, the store also offers its customers a world-class

shopping experience. Commenting on the launch of the Wakad store, M.P. Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group, said, “We are excited to launch our new store at Wakad. The store further strengthens our association with Pune. I would like to thank the people of Maharashtra for making Malabar Gold & Diamonds a household name and the most sought-after jeweller. The new store underlines our continued focus on serving jewellery buyers in Maharashtra with unmatched transparency in quality and pricing. We welcome all to visit our new store at Wakad for an extraordinary jewellery-buying experience.” Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned globally for offering an unparalleled jewellery buying experience with convenience, and customer-friendly policies along with the ‘Malabar Promise’ of incomparable quality and service assurance. Malabar Promise includes a transparent price tag indicating stone weight, net weight and stone charge of the jewellery, assured lifetime maintenance from any of the showrooms across 12 countries, guaranteed buyback, IGI and GIA-certified diamonds ensuring 28-point quality check of global standards, 100% value on gold exchange, 100% value on diamond exchange, 100% 916 hallmarked jewellery, responsible sourcing, fair price policy and fair labour practices.

SPECIAL EVENT

Bank Muscat celebrates Sayyarati’s most valued partners in Muscat

MUSCAT: Aiming to enhance relationship with its individual and corporate partners, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, organised a special event celebrating its partnership with auto dealers and car showrooms in Muscat, in the presence of Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi, Chief Banking Officer and Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager - Personal Banking, and a number of management members from Bank Muscat and representatives of these institutions. During the event, Saleh Mohammed Al Maaini, Deputy General Manager - Capital Regions, Bank Muscat, said: “We are delighted with this successful cooperation to provide the best services to our customers. We achieved positive results during the past period and we look forward to continue the same by developing the services provided to individual and corporate partners, and improve the products quality to achieve financial inclusion catering various needs of customers.” Saleh Al Maaini expressed his pride of the successes achieved by the bank in automobile sector and the positive feedback from customers on its banking services and facilities. He added: “Sayyarati is one of the successful products



which have contributed to making customers’ dreams come true due to the exclusive offers and benefits. I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the bank’s partners whether companies, agencies and car showrooms for their hard work and fruitful cooperation and for their contribution to the development of the automotive sector in general.” Addressing the gathering, Radhiya Hassan Al Lawati, Head of Sales, Bank Muscat, said: “We are pleased to meet again in this event which is a significant channel to enhance cooperation between us. Our gathering here in Muscat comes after an array of similar successful events in other governorates which saw great attendance by vehicle agencies and showrooms’ representatives.” She added: “The automotive sector is one of the important sectors that are witnessing an active commercial movement. Statistics issued by the National Center for Statistics and information (NCSI) indicate that the number of vehicles registered in the Sultanate amounted to more than 1 million and 600,000 cars, until December 2023. This figure proves the increasing demand on cars among citizens and residents on an annual basis. From our part, we have been working to strengthen our partnership and provide the best banking facilities and the necessary financing at reduced rates for cars purchase. We have all succeeded in achieving this goal through special offers provided by

Bank Muscat periodically.” Throughout its long journey in the banking sector, Bank Muscat has been keen to establish close relationships with auto dealers and companies in various governorates of the Sultanate in order to meet customer requirements while working to develop its banking services and facilities. Therefore, the Bank launched the “Sayyarati” financing product in 2003 to contribute to providing the best services to customers and helping them to acquire their dream car. Customers can benefit from the multiple banking services and quick and flexible procedures to complete transactions from various branches of the bank or from one of the dedicated car centres in Al Wattayah and Salalah.

PROMOTION

Own Toyota Crown with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Toyota enthusiasts looking to own a Crown can now benefit with Service 3 Years/30,000km (whichever is earlier). (Terms & Conditions apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.) The Crown has been a successful model in the Toyota line-up since it was first introduced in the 1950s. When the first generation was launched, the Crown came to symbolise “innovation” and “pushing the limit” within Toyota. Since then, it has gained recognition in Japan as Toyota’s premium sedan. The Toyota Crown is built around the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA-K) platform. It is available with a choice of two engine options. The first hybrid electric powertrain consists of a front electric motor and Toyota’s first-ever 2.4-litre inline four-



cylinder turbo engine with All Wheel Drive, paired with direct shift six-speed automatic transmission with a combined power of 340 HP and 40.7 Kg.m. torque. The second hybrid electric powertrain consists of two electric motors and a 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine, generating a total power of 222 HP. The hybrid-electric system, paired with an Electric Continuously Variable Transmission (e-CVT), achieves the lowest fuel efficiency, with a consumption rate of 21.6 km/l. Enhancing the driving feel in the Crown are several driving modes, including NORMAL, ECO, SPORT, SPORT+ which allows drivers to adjust system settings individually to their exact driving habits. The Crown’s interior is thoughtfully designed to amplify experiences. The Crown’s cabin is accentuated by a range of advanced features. These include a 12.3-inch touchscreen multimedia system with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™ compatibility, a 12.3-inch TFT colour meter that allows users to choose from 12 patterns to suit their tastes, a colour head-up display (HUD), a dual-zone automatic air conditioning system with rear AC vents, a 11-speaker JBL surround sound system, a panoramic roof, multi-adjustable power and ventilated front seats, and 60/40 split and reclining rear seats. For added convenience, the Crown is equipped with a hands-free, electrically powered trunk that can be activated using a foot-operated system when the user’s hands or arms are full.



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