

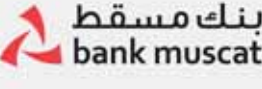


HM SENDS CONDOLENCES TO KUWAIT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq has sent a cable of condolences to Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait on the death of Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al Ahmed Al Mubarak Al Sabah. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sympathies. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty to rest the deceased soul in peace in paradise and to grant his family fortitude to bear the loss. — **ONA**

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Al Mazyouna Hospital inaugurated in Dhofar

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health yesterday celebrated the inauguration of OMR15.4 million worth Al Mazyouna Hospital in Dhofar Governorate.

The project aims to provide specialised healthcare institutions in various governorates.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the patronage of His HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, with the presence of Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, as well as the Ministry's Undersecretaries and a number of high ranking officials.

This project, which covers a built-up area of 13,649 square metres was directly supervised by the Ministry of Health.

The main building of Al Ma-



zyouna Hospital includes clinics for general medicine, internal medicine, dentistry, paediatrics, surgery, otolaryngology (ENT), and ophthalmology, in addition to a clinic for the expanded immunisation programme and gynaecology and obstetrics clinics. **>A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman's producer price index rises 3.3%

1 The producer price index in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 3.3% in the second quarter of 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, according to data issued by the NCSI. **>A2**

OMAN

Employment in road projects increases

2 The transport ministry achieved 166% of its employment targets. **>A3**

SPORTS

India beat China 1-0 in hockey final

3 India defeated China and lifted the men's Asian Champions Trophy. **>A7**

OMAN EXPANDS TRADE TIES WITH STRATEGIC OUTREACH TO UK, US



The Omani delegation showcased their investment landscape, economic policies, and the supportive environment to investors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman is intensifying its global trade ambitions as part of a concerted effort to forge stronger economic partnerships with its key partners - the United Kingdom and the United States.

Leading this strategic initiative, Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, has recently engaged in high-level talks with top officials from both na-

tions, aiming to bolster commerce, industry, and investment as part of the country's Vision 2040. The move is expected to strengthen its global trade alliances with both the key economic partners with an eye on enhancing investment, commerce, and industry.

On Tuesday, Qais Mohammed Al Yousef held high-level discussions with Douglas Alexander, UK Minister of State for Trade Policy and Economic Security, in Muscat.



Their discussions centred on boosting cooperation between the two nations, with a focus on increasing intra-trade, advancing industrial collaboration, and promoting cross-border investments.

Both officials reaffirmed their commitment to progressing negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between the UK and GCC countries, a move that could create significant opportunities for both economies.

Vision 2040

A presentation given during the meeting highlighted the depth of Oman-UK relations, placing special emphasis on technology transfer, a key focus under Oman's Vision 2040.

Oman Vision 2040, the country's blueprint for long-term development, also took centre-stage. The Omani delegation show-

cased the country's evolving investment landscape, its updated economic policies, and the supportive environment to foreign investors.

The push for stronger UK ties follows the Omani delegation's recent visit to the United States, where bilateral meetings were held with U.S. officials and representatives from major industries.

These discussions targeted collaborations in high-growth sectors, including manufacturing, energy, healthcare, and tourism, positioning Oman as a gateway for investment in the GCC region.

As Oman continues to align its economic priorities with global players, the country is poised to attract more investment and establish deeper ties with international markets, reinforcing its role as a strategic hub in the region. **-With ONA inputs**



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OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:06pm

Asr.....3:32pm

Maghrib.....6:13pm

Isha.....7:23pm

Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:39am

Commerce minister visits US to boost investment, trade relations

The visit highlighted the significance of the Oman-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which marked its 15th anniversary

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani delegation, led by H.E. Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, concluded its visit to the United States after bilateral meetings with several U.S. officials and representatives from leading American companies in sectors such as manufacturing, energy, healthcare, information technology, tourism, and financial services.

The meetings were attended by Ambassador Anas Escrohejima, U.S. Ambassador to Oman; Ambassador Dr. Mohammed bin Awad Al-Hassan, Oman's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York; and Sabira bint Ahmed Al-Houtiya, Deputy Head of the Omani Embassy in the U.S., along with officials from



the Oman-U.S. Business Council, Oman's Ministry of Commerce, and the Omani Embassy.

The visit aimed to strengthen Oman's commercial ties with the U.S., leveraging regional and international experiences to develop Oman's trade, industry, and investment frameworks.

It was also part of ongoing efforts to expand investment and trade partnerships between the two nations, while exploring opportunities aligned with Oman's Vision 2040.

Furthermore, the visit highlighted the significance of the Oman-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which marked its 15th anniversary since its implementation in 2009.

The visit began in New York, where H.E. Qais Al Yousef and his delegation met with partners in financial services, investment, and companies from target sectors. The delegation also met with Omani students studying in New York and Massachusetts.

Next, the delegation travelled to Washington, D.C., where they met with U.S. officials from the State Department, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of Commerce, and members of Congress.

Free Trade Agreement

Discussions focused on maximising the benefits of the Free Trade Agreement and enhancing various

programmes.

The delegation also visited the World Bank, where they reviewed joint projects, particularly those related to the World Bank's Business Readiness Index.

Oman is set to be evaluated under this index by 2025, with oversight from Oman's National Competitiveness Office through the national programme "Nezdeher," which focuses on private sector growth and foreign trade. Cooperation with the World Bank was also discussed, especially in appointing experts to improve Oman's business environment and boost its exports.

During the Washington visit, the Omani Embassy hosted a recep-



tion at the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre, attended by U.S. government representatives, investors, and Omani students.

Dr. Majid Al-Khalili, Director of the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre, gave a welcoming speech, highlighting Oman's ongoing efforts to strengthen international relations, including with the U.S.

The delegation also visited Arizona, where they met with the state's trade authority to explore investment opportunities and ways to promote bilateral trade and investments between Oman and Arizona.

Field visits to several companies took place, with many expressing interest in investing in Oman's

energy, hydrogen, medical, and advanced industries, as well as information technology sectors.

In addition, the delegation visited the University of Arizona, where they met with Omani students and learned about the university's role in partnering with the government and private sector for economic development projects.

The visit concluded in California, where the delegation examined the success of a leading Omani IT company that has expanded its operations across several U.S. states. The delegation discussed ways to leverage the Free Trade Agreement to attract diverse investments into Oman.

NCSI

Second Arab Tourism Statistics Forum 2024 to begin in October

MUSCAT: Represented by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the Sultanate of Oman will host the Second Arab Tourism Statistics Forum 2024, which will be held in October in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the Arab League.

The forum, which will take place in Muscat from 14 to 16 October 2024, provides an opportunity to showcase Oman's efforts to achieve its tourism goals and enhance its stature as a distinctive tourist destination in the region.

Dr. Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Barwani, CEO of the NCSI, said, "This forum coincides with the celebration of Oman's Wilayat of Sur as the Arab Tourism Capital for the year 2024. It constitutes an oppor-



tunity to consolidate cooperation among Arab countries in developing statistical indicators used in measuring and analyzing tourism performance."

Al Barwani noted that emphasis

will be laid on exchanging expertise and improving the quality of statistical data by providing accurate information that supports tourism decision-making.

He added that the forum will



also see the participation of experts and specialists from various countries of the world, in addition to representatives of regional and international organisations concerned. -ONA

3.3% IN SECOND QUARTER OF 2024

Oman's producer price index rises



MUSCAT: The producer price index in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 3.3% in the second quarter of 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, according to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The prices of mining and quarrying group rose by 5.2%, the prices of crude petroleum and natural gas products rose by 5.4% and the prices of metal ore products increased by 6.2%, while the price of stone, sand and clay fell

by 1.6%. The prices of the manufacturing industries group rose by 0.5%, and most of the prices of the subgroups decreased by varying percentages, where the most notable of them are the prices of the transportable goods group, which rose by 1.1%, the metal products, machinery and equipment group fell by 1%, and the food, beverages and textile products rose by 2.4%.

The prices of electrical energy group, and water group increased by 2.2% and 5.5%, respectively. -ONA



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Employment in road projects reaches 166%

The ministry provided 333 employment opportunities to Omanis in a number of companies operating in the road construction sector



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology said that, by the end of the third quarter of 2024, it accomplished 166 percent of its targets in employment initiatives for road projects' technical and specialised jobs.

During this period, the ministry provided 333 employment opportunities to Omanis in a number of companies operating in the road construction sector, compared to a target 200 jobs. In the Logistics Sector, the Labour Market Regulatory Committee operates in accordance with specific objectives set for the ministry by Oman Vision 2040

Implementation Follow-up Unit. It is worth noting that the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology monitors all companies to check their commitment to employment rates. The ministry takes necessary action against companies that do not adhere to the specified employment rates. -ONA

CABLE

HM greets Chile president



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Gabriel Boric of the Republic of Chile on his country's Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Gabriel Boric and the people of Chile. -ONA

OMAN AIRPORTS

Emergency drill at Muscat airport today

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Airports, in coordination with all strategic partners, will conduct an emergency exercise (partial evacuation at Muscat International Airport) on Wednesday morning, September 18, 2024. During this period, the movement of participating teams and volunteers inside the terminal and apron area will be noticed. All necessary precautions have been taken to ensure that airport operations and traffic in the surrounding areas are not affected. This exercise is part of Oman



Airports' commitment to applying the highest global standards for emergency response to assess systems and regulations in such situations.



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Omani student bags second prize in world photography competition

Marya Al Rahbi is specialised in computer sciences at the college of sciences at SQU and member of the photography group

MUSCAT: Marya bint Mohammed Al Rahbi, a student from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), has bagged the second place at the individual level in the World Photographic Cub Competition 2024 for universities and higher education establishments.

Marya Al Rahbi, specialised in computer sciences at the college of sciences at SQU and member of the photography group, participated within a team representing the university in the competition for all higher education establishments, worldwide.

Each establishment had the right to participate through a maximum number of five students and each student could participate by four photographs.

Eighty-eight international universities participated in the competition which is organised by the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP).

The judges' panel comprised personalities in the field of photographic art, members of photography associations and officials from International Federation of Photographic Art.

The award ceremony will be held in China during October 2024 within the activities of an international conference and photography exhibition.

15 photographs from the artworks of Marya Al Rahbi will be displayed at the branches of the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP), worldwide. — **ONA**



INAUGURATED

Al Mazyouna Hospital project is part of ministry's plan to develop healthcare



<FROM A1 The hospital has a capacity of 50 beds for admission distributed across various inpatient wards including male and female internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, and surgery, as well as adults and neonatal critical care units.

The facility also has an emergency and accident unit, a dialysis unit, a delivery room, and an operating theater.

The building includes several clinics and departments such as diagnostic services, including a radiology department that will offer both CT scans and conventional X-rays, in addition to a medical biomedical engineering workshop, a central sterilisation unit, a medical warehouse, a general store, and other supportive services.

Al Mazyouna Hospital project is part of the Ministry of Health's efforts to develop the healthcare system in the Sultanate of Oman and enhance its efficiency in line with population growth and the evolving demands for healthcare services across the country.

Dr. Ali Abdullah Al Mughbali, Director General of Health Services in Dhofar, emphasized that the hospital will provide primary and specialized healthcare services to the people living in the governorate, marking a significant shift in healthcare quality at the wilayat level. Eng. Yusuf Ya'qub Amboali, Advisor to the Minister of Health for Engineering Affairs, explained that the opening of Al Mazyouna Hospital is part of the Ministry of Health's strategy to enhance healthcare infrastructure and

provide specialized and exceptional medical services close to local communities. This initiative aims to deliver the best healthcare services according to global standards to all citizens and residents of the Sultanate of Oman.

He also presented the components of the project noting that several important aspects were considered in setting the modern specifications for the construction of Al Mazyouna Hospital, in line with advanced global standards which reflects the Ministry's awareness of the significance of providing a comprehensive and comfortable healthcare environment for all.

At the end of the ceremony, the patron of the event and attendees toured the various departments of the hospital. — **ONA**



EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN IN OMAN

Tribute paid to defenders and martyrs of Pakistan

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of Pakistan in Oman, recently organised an event to pay tribute to the defenders and martyrs of Pakistan. The gathering saw the presence of dignitaries from Oman Ministry of Defence, personnel Sultan Armed Forces of Oman, ambassadors of friendly countries, representatives from various ministries, Military/ Defence Attaches, prominent Omani citizens, and Pakistani community members. Tribute to the ghazis and martyrs was offered through the traces of the historical journey of Pakistan starting from its inception in 1947. Pakistan's continuous efforts in

promoting global peace and collaboration with other countries like the Sultanate of Oman were also asserted. The defence and security relations between Pakistan and Oman armed forces were also amply highlighted as the defence cooperation between two nations is a key factor in strengthening this bond and promoting regional peace and stability. It was also stressed to work together in economic and business connectivity. The entire programme was a memorable homage to the bravery and sacrifices of Pakistan's defenders and martyrs, underscoring the strong bonds between the Pakistani and Omani communities.



MEETING IN DOHA

Issues related to civil aviation in GCC states discussed



DOHA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) took part on Tuesday in the 20th meeting of the GCC Civil Aviation Executive Committee, held in Doha, the State of Qatar. The meeting discussed prominent issues related to civil aviation in the GCC countries. It also touched on means of enhancing integration and cooperation to achieve joint objectives. Further, the meeting discussed studying the possibility of establishing the GCC Civil Aviation Authority, among other topics of relevance. — **ONA**

Programme to access green financing in Oman signed

The 5-year programme seeks to enhance joint efforts in maintaining environment sustainability and addressing the challenges of climate change

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority on Tuesday signed a cooperation programme with Global Green Growth Institute in the field of nature-based solutions, land reclamation and access to green finance in the Sultanate of Oman. The 5-year programme seeks to enhance joint efforts in maintaining environment sustainability and addressing the challenges of climate change.

The programme was signed by Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, and Mahamadou Tounkara, Regional Director of Global Green Growth Institute for the Middle East and North Africa. The two sides will exchange information, legislation, plans, expertise and best practices in the areas of adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects, according to the stipulation



of the programme, which also promotes the use of smart climate technologies and resource efficiency. In addition, the programme targets the amelioration of liveli-

hoods and the resilience of ecosystems through nature-based solutions, as well as the generation of green jobs, entrepreneurship and backing to the Green Climate Fund.

Global Green Growth Institute is an intergovernmental international organization dedicated to sustainable economic growth in developing countries. — **ONA**

TYPHOON BEBINCA

Omanis in China safe: Embassy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of Oman in China has assured that all Omani citizens residing in Shanghai and neighbouring Chinese provinces affected by Typhoon Bebinca are safe and healthy. The embassy has urged Omani citizens to exercise caution and follow the precautionary measures taken by the local Chinese authorities. Embassy of Oman in China further added in the statement that The embassy would like to confirm that all Omani citizens residing in those areas are in good health and safety."

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Programmes and plans of UNESCO associated schools reviewed

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education and the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, is participating in the first meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Centre for UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ICUA). The event is being held from 13 to 21 of September 2024, in Hainan Province, Republic of China. The meeting was chaired by Xie Jing, Vice Governor of Hainan Province, and the administrative and organisational regulations of the centre were approved. The centre is a Category II centre affiliated with UNESCO. The members of the Board of Directors discuss several main topics.

These included international partnerships, approving the centre's annual plans and programmes for the years 2024-2025, structuring the centre, the budget for the year 2025, recommendations of government institutions, regional and international organisations with which the centre works, implementing a number of seminars, and accompanying visits to some Chinese schools affiliated with UNESCO; to view their educational programmes, in addition to visits to some heritage sites registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Oman is represented at the meeting by Yusriya Al Harthi, Director of the UNESCO Associated Schools, Youth Programs and UNESCO Clubs Department, and a member of the Centre's Board of Directors.



CFOS CELEBRATE ONAM WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM

Onam, the traditional festival of Kerala, was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Oman. The day is marked with people dressed in traditional attires paying floral tributes and having Sadya meals. — **Supplied picture**





Sultanate of Oman
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

TENDR. No.	Project Category	Location	Grade In Tender Board Registration	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
28/2024	Construction of ports, roads, bridge, rail way dams and maintenance	DESIGN AND BUILD CONTRACT OF ASPHALT ROADS AND ALLIED WORKS IN CAMEL RACE TRACK AT AL MUDHAIBI IN NORTH SHARQIYA GOVERNORATE	First Grade	18/09/2024	28/10/2024
29/2024	Construction of ports, roads, bridge, rail way dams and maintenance	DESIGN AND BUILD CONTRACT OF ASPHALT ROADS AND ALLIED WORKS IN CAMEL RACE TRACK AT BIDIYAH IN NORTH SHARQIYA GOVERNORATE	First Grade	18/09/2024	28/10/2024
30/2024	Construction & maintenance	DESIGN AND BUILD CONTRACT OF CAMEL RACE TRACK, FENCING AND GATES AT AL MUDHAIBI NORTH SHARQIYA GOVERNORATE	First Grade	18/09/2024	28/10/2024
31/2024	Construction & maintenance	DESIGN AND BUILD CONTRACT OF CAMEL RACE TRACK, FENCING AND GATES AT BIDIYAH IN NORTH SHARQIYA GOVERNORATE	First Grade	18/09/2024	28/10/2024
32/2024	Services	CONSTRUCTION OF SYNTHETIC TURF FOOTBALL PITCH AT THUMRAIT (DHAHBUN)	Second Grade	18/09/2024	28/10/2024

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

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Health conditions in Gaza ‘worsening by the day’

UNRWA teams are working to support displaced families in shelters, with the aim of preventing pests from invading the crowded spaces in which they live

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) warned on Tuesday of the spread of rodents and insects in the Gaza Strip, which poses a threat to people's health in light of the deteriorating conditions.

UNRWA said in a statement on its official website that the health conditions in Gaza are increasingly deteriorating day after day, as insects and rodents pose a health risk by spreading diseases, which threatens people's health.

It added, “UNRWA teams are working to support displaced families in shelters, with the aim of preventing these pests from invading the crowded spaces in which they live.”

Since the beginning of the Israeli aggression on Gaza, Palestinians have been facing the suffering of repeated displacement, as the Israeli army orders residents of



residential areas and neighborhoods to evacuate them in preparation for bombing, destroying and breaking into them.

2mn displaced people

Two million displaced people out of 2.3 million Palestinian people are forced to seek refuge in schools or the homes of their relatives or acquaintances, or to set up tents in the streets, schools or other places such as prisons and amusement parks, under difficult humanitarian conditions, as water and food are not available, and diseases are spreading.

OCHA says that mass evacuation orders exacerbate the dire humanitarian situation

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) confirmed on Monday night that “issuing mass

evacuation orders in the Gaza Strip without ensuring safe places for the displaced exacerbates the already dire humanitarian situation of hundreds of thousands of people.”

According to the official website of the OCHA office, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric stated in a press conference that he found more than 55 valid evacuation orders covering more than 85% of the population of the Gaza Strip to date.

Dujarric pointed out that the repeated displacements lead to the separation of families from each other, and the erosion of social protection systems, especially for women and children.

Regarding the arrival of humanitarian missions to northern Gaza, the UN spokesman stated that only 37 humanitarian missions arrived during the first two weeks of

this month out of 94 planned, and in southern Gaza only 50% of 243 coordinated humanitarian missions were facilitated.

Over 10,700 Palestinians detained in occupied West Bank since October 7

The Israeli occupation forces detained at least 30 people, including former detainees, in the occupied West Bank during the last 24 hours.

The Detainees and Ex-Detainees Commission and the Palestine Prisoners Society said in a joint statement that the detention operations took place across different governorates in the occupied West Bank, accompanied by widespread raids and abuse, assaults and threats against detainees and their families, in addition to vandalism and destruction of citizens' homes. — WAPA

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OF OMAN

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REPORT

Japanese elderly working population rises to record high

TOKYO: Japan's elderly population has reached a historic point, with a record 36.25 million citizens now aged 65 or older, according to the latest government figures.

Individuals aged 65 or older now comprise nearly one-third of the country's total population, according to media report.

Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in a report released on Sunday said that the elderly now make up an estimated 29.3 per cent of the population, a higher proportion than in any other country or region with more than 1,00,000 people.

According to the ministry's report, women comprise a significant majority of Japan's elderly population, with approximately 20.53 million females aged 65 or older, representing 32.3% of the country's total female population. In contrast, senior citizen

men number around 15.72 million, accounting for 26.1% of the male population, NHK World reported.

Japan's population is poised for a dramatic shift as the number of seniors is expected to reach 34.8 per cent of the population in 2040, once those born between 1971 to 1974 become elderly, according to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Kyodo News reported.

Notably, in the month of February, the number of babies born in Japan in the year 2023 fell to a record low from a year earlier as the country's population shrank by its largest-ever margin, government data showed, according to a report by Kyodo News.

The figure for babies was down by 5.1 per cent to 758,631, according to preliminary data released by the health ministry in February, the Japanese news agency had reported. — ANI

27 COMMISSION MEMBERS

European Commission chief unveils new team

BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented her list of 27 Commission members on Tuesday.

Speaking of the new administration's priorities, she said “last time, the topic of global warming was absolutely top.”

“The dominance of the topic is still there,” she added, noting recent floods and wildfires on the continent, “But this time, for example, the topic of security triggered by the Russian war in Ukraine, but also the topic of competitiveness has much more impact.”

Who are the new commissioners?

The list included France's Stephane Sejourne as commissioner for industrial strategy, chosen after the abrupt resignation of Thierry Breton on Monday. It also included Italy's former Minister of European Affairs Raffaele Fitto as commissioner for cohesion and re-

forms as well as the Commission's vice president, despite claims that von der Leyen was uncomfortable with his position in Italy's far-right government.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said the appointment was “an important recognition that confirms the newfound central role of our nation in the EU.”

Von der Leyen also selected Spanish former Ecology Minister Teresa Ribera as commissioner for competition, as well as giving her an executive vice president role overseeing the bloc's transition to carbon neutrality. Lithuania's Andrius Kubilius was given the newly created defense portfolio, as the Baltic countries are seen as crucial in facing potential threats from Russia.

Kaja Kallas, the former prime minister of Estonia, was given the high-profile foreign policy brief. The 47-year-old has long been a hawkish critic of Russia and a staunch supporter of Ukraine. — DW

PAGERS EXPLODED

8 killed, thousands injured in Lebanon blasts

BEIRUT: At least eight people were killed and thousands more were injured after a number of handheld pagers exploded across Lebanon on Tuesday, the country's Health Ministry said.

Lebanese Health Minister Firas Abiad said the blasts “killed eight people, including a girl.”

“About 2,750 people were injured... more than 200 of them critically,” he added.

Hezbollah, a political organisation in Lebanon, said at least two of its members were killed.

Iranian-backed Hezbollah blamed Israel for the explosions. Israel did not immediately comment on the incident.

“We hold the Israeli enemy fully responsible for this criminal aggression,” Hezbollah said.

It added that Israel “will certainly receive its just punishment for this sinful aggression.”

A Hezbollah official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told the Reuters news agency that the incident was “the biggest security breach” the group had been subjected to in nearly a year of



conflict with Israel.

Reports that Israel targeted the communications devices and was behind the detonations remain unconfirmed.

A Hezbollah official, speaking to Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media, said the explosions were the result of “a security operation that targeted the devices.”

“The enemy [Israel] stands behind this security incident,” the official said, without elaborating. He added that the new pagers that Hezbollah members were carrying had lithium batteries that apparently exploded.

According to the German DPA news agency, the Bahman hospital in Beirut received more than 100 people. Some were said to be in critical condition.

The Lebanese Health Ministry urged all hospitals across the country to be on alert.

It also advised people to stay clear of devices that might pose a threat. There have been nearly daily cross-border exchanges between Israel and Hezbollah fighters since Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7, triggering war in the Gaza Strip.

— DW

MYANMAR

Death toll from floods rises to 226 in just over a week

NAYPYITAW: The death toll from flooding in Myanmar triggered by Typhoon Yagi has spiked to 226 in just over a week, state media reported on Tuesday.

About 77 people are still missing, state media in the junta-ruled Myanmar said.

Areas including the capital, Naypyitaw, the second largest city of Mandalay and parts of Shan state were among those hit hardest by the floods.

Conditions obstructed much-needed aid deliveries

The flooding has affected approximately 631,000 people across the southeast Asian country, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) disaster response agency said. The agency added that blocked roads and damaged bridges were all severely hindering relief efforts even as food, drinking water, shelter and clothes were urgently needed.

Over 150,000 homes were flooded, Global New Light of Myanmar, the newspaper of the military government, reported.

“A total of 388 relief camps were

opened in nine regions and states, and the well-wishers donated drinking water, food and clothes,” the state newspaper said.

Myanmar's state TV said nearly 260,000 hectares (640,000 acres) of rice paddies and other crops had been destroyed in the flooding.

Roughly a third of the country's 55 million people already need humanitarian aid in the wake of the conflict triggered by a 2021 coup that saw the powerful military overthrow the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

“Affected areas include camps for displaced people, including children, who were already struggling with limited services due to ongoing conflict,” UNICEF said in a statement.

Yagi batters Southeast Asia

Typhoon Yagi is the strongest storm to strike Asia this year.

Hundreds of thousands of people across southeast Asia have been forced to flee in the past week as rains from the typhoon cause rivers and creeks to swell beyond bursting point. In Vietnam, the storm killed 292 people and 38 are missing.



Authorities said over 230,000 homes have been damaged and 280,000 hectares of crops destroyed.

In Thailand, where the northern provinces were hit hard, deaths rose to 15 on Tuesday, as per data from the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation.

Thai PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra's administration has announced a financial aid package of up to \$6,000 per household for those affected by the floods. — DW



India edge China to clinch fifth Asian Champions Trophy title



Jugraj scores to help Men in Blue lift record-extending crown in Moqi

MOQI: India edged past hosts China and registered a narrow 1-0 win to win a record-extending fifth Asian Champions Trophy title at the Moqi Hockey Training Base in China Daur Ethnic Park on Tuesday.

The Indian team fought hard in the summit clash against a spirited Chinese side who put everything on the line to make a statement.

Jugraj Singh, who entered the field as a substitute player, broke the Chinese deadlock in the final quarter to help India prove their supremacy in Asia. Although a rare field goal, Jugraj finding the back of the net came at a crucial time when the other Indian stars were finding it tough to get past China's goalkeeper Wang Weihao.

Meanwhile, China, ranked 23rd, put up an incredible fight against India, the top-ranked Asian team. The players didn't disappoint the home fans and produced solid defensive efforts to keep India at bay for the first three quarters. China showed immense promise and dominated the possession, but failed to get past the Indian defensive line.

China looked a bit shaky in the initial minutes of the match, but India couldn't take advantage of it. The home crowd also put some pressure on Harmanpreet Singh and Co. as the fans came in big numbers to support the hosts. However, as the clock ticked, China started to look more comfortable with the ball, even though they lacked the intensity off the ball and allowed the Indian players to breach their



defence and take shots at the goal-keeper. Sumit took the first clear aim on target in the sixth minute but was denied a goal by Weihao.

India's first penalty corner came in the 10th minute of the match, but Harmanpreet Singh failed to breach the Chinese defence. As the

ball hit the defender's foot, India and Harmanpreet were awarded another PC, only this time for the ball to fly wide of the post. The Indian team got another chance to open the scoring in the 14th minute, but Weihao made another sensational save, leaving Sukhjeet

Pakistan beat Korea to win bronze

MOQI: Pakistan ended their campaign with a 5-2 win against South Korea, securing them the bronze medal.

Goals by Sufyan Khan (38', 49'), Hannan Shahid (39', 54') and Rooman (45') helped Pakistan win while Jungjun Lee (16'), Jihun Yang (40') scored for South Korea. South Korea drew the first blood in the 16th minute when Jungjun Lee made a spectacular tackle to drive past Pakistan's Hannan Shahid and make space in the top of the circle. He simply lofted the ball into the net, past Pakistan's goalie Ishtiaq Abdullah Khan.

However, Pakistan came back from the 10-minute half-time break with determination and grit to bounce back. Sufyan Khan struck a splendid penalty corner in the 38th minute to



equalise. Hannan Shahid set up a stupendous field goal in the following minute past Korean goalie Jaehan Kim.

Though Korea equalised in the 40th minute through Jihun Yang's penalty corner, it didn't deter Pakistan's spirit. They scored a field goal in the 45th minute through Rooman to

regain the lead. A brilliantly earned penalty corner in the 49th minute was perfectly executed by Pakistan's ace dragflicker Sufyan.

In the 54th minute, Hannan converted a field goal to take Pakistan's lead to a formidable 5-2, and they held on to a well-earned victory. - Agencies

stunned. The Chinese goalkeeper stood tall as a rock-solid wall for his side to deny India a goal in the first quarter.

India continued to play with a high-line press in the second quarter and took control of the possession to frustrate the Chinese players. Jarmanpreet Singh did make a couple of in-behind runs to exploit the defensive line, but China remained compact and didn't give much space. Skipper Harmanpreet, who scored a brace against South Korea in the semi-final, missed opportunities to score from penalty corners in the first half.

He was very close to putting India ahead in the final minutes of the second half but the closest he came was hitting the goalpost.

Meanwhile, Manpreet drib-

bled past the Chinese defenders in the 13th minute and then was put down on the ground by Weihao. The Indian team was awarded a penalty stroke, but China straight-away went for a referral, and the video umpire overturned the decision to free-kick.

China spent so much time in their own half, defending, which hampered their attacking moves. When they managed to get the ball, very few players arrived in the Indian box to make the crucial runs.

However, they did start the second half aggressively and put the Indian defensive line under some pressure, but the visitors held their fort.

India head coach Peter Fulton was animated watching his players commit back-to-back errors,

and their poor judgement allowed China to break free on numerous occasions in the third quarter.

The Indian players relentlessly tried to break the Chinese deadlock, and they finally did it with 9.34 minutes left on the clock, courtesy of Jugraj Singh. The super-sub made a massive impact and scored a crucial goal when it mattered the most.

It was skipper Harmanpreet who set-up the lone goal as Chinese defensive line broke at last after constant pressure from Indian forwards to concede in the final quarter. China did try hard in the final minutes to get the equaliser, but the Indian defenders stood firm as the Men in Blue became the Asian Champions Trophy winner for the fifth time. - Agencies

THOMAS BACH SUCCESSOR

Coe among 7 candidates in fray for IOC presidency

LONDON: World Athletics president Sebastian Coe has been named as one of seven confirmed candidates to succeed Thomas Bach as International Olympic Committee (IOC) president.

Bach announced at the Paris Olympics last month that he intends to stand down after the end of his second term next year.

Britain's two-time Olympic 1500m champion Coe faces competition from Spaniard Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr, France's David Lappartient, Zimbabwean Kirsty Coventry, Japan's Morinari Watanabe, Swede Johan Eliasch and Prince Feisal al Hussein of Jordan.

Coventry, a seven-time Olympic swimming medallist, is bidding to become the first woman and African to head the IOC.

German lawyer Bach has been in charge since 2013.

The new IOC president will be elected at a session in ancient Olympia from March 18-21, 2025 and will take over in June of that year. Candidates will make presentations to the full IOC membership at a private meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, in January.



All IOC presidents have been men, with eight of the nine from Europe and one from the United States.

Coe said Olympic sport was "fundamental to my DNA" on social media. "The Covid years saw many people struggle through inactivity and many sports organisations suffer through lack of funds. We need to invest more in both

over the next decade," he added.

"A laser-like focus on sport must be the priority for the IOC. I believe I can help achieve this and more."

Under current IOC rules Coe would not be able to serve the full eight-year first term of office as he reaches the IOC age limit of 70 in 2026, but he abolished similar restrictions on becoming president of World Athletics.

The candidates:

Prince Feisal al Hussein, aged 63, Jordan - A former wrestler and rally driver, he is president of the Jordan Olympic Committee and founded Generations for Peace, which promotes unity in high-conflict areas.

Lord Sebastian Coe, 67, Great Britain - Renowned middle-

distance runner who became a Conservative MP and later chaired the organising committee of London 2012 Olympics and headed British Olympic Association.

Kirsty Coventry, 41, Zimbabwe - Africa's most decorated Olympian who competed at five Games, she is minister of sport in her homeland. She was an athlete representative

on the IOC and founded her own swimming academy.

Johan Eliasch, 62, Sweden - President of International Ski and Snowboard Federation and chairman of sports goods company Head. Was an advisor on deforestation and green energy to Gordon Brown's UK government.

David Lappartient, 51, France - President of cycling's governing body Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) and president of the French Olympic Committee. He is chair of the IOC's esports group.

Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr, 64, Spain - One of four current IOC vice presidents. Headed coordination commission for Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. His late father was in charge of the IOC for 21 years until 2001.

Morinari Watanabe, 65, Japan - President of International Gymnastics Federation since 2017. He was on the executive board of the organising committee for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. - Agencies

INAUGURATION TODAY LULU HYPERMARKET

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by November 2024 reaching \$73.28, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 84 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$72.44. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,713.40 points, down by 0.37% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.27% at 431.58 points. Oman REIT Fund, up 1.54%, was the top gainer while Dhofar Cattle Feed, down 10.00%, was the top loser.

Conference explores Oman's efforts in energy transformation

IEEE PowerTalks showcases Oman's efforts in energy transformation, reduction of carbon emissions, and energy security



MUSCAT: Activities of the third edition of the premier conference on power and energy 'IEEE PowerTalks' kicked off yesterday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event, held from September 17-19, is themed 'Implementing

Oman's Energy Transformation Plans'. This edition brings together local and international experts to reflect upon Oman's ambitious energy transition goals. IEEE PowerTalks 2024 is a collaborative effort between the Insti-

tute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Nama Group and Raya Services, with support from The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) and Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).

Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Head of the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, presided over the opening ceremony of the conference. The conference emerged at a critically important moment as

Oman prepares for its energy transition, aims to reduce carbon emissions, and seeks to secure sustainable energy supplies in alignment with the nation's economic diversification goals and its aspiration to become a regional and global leader, as per the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. "IEEE PowerTalks 2024 highlights the significant strides Oman is making in energy efficiency and sustainability," said Eng. Abdullah Al Wahaibi, Chair of the IEEE Power & Energy Society in Oman. "The conference will not only showcase our commitment toward a carbon-neutral future but also position Oman in the front row of the global energy transition. We will discuss and explore crucial topics such as energy sector policies, transmission network development, distribution systems, energy efficiency, asset management, renewable energy systems, and en-

ergy storage technologies." The three-day conference showcases Oman's efforts in energy transformation, reduction of carbon emissions, and energy security. The programme includes working papers, visual presentations, specialised discussion sessions, and workshops that explore the challenges and future developments in Oman's Power and Energy sector. IEEE PowerTalks 2024 hosts workshops on Carbon Neutral Energy Future, Technologies for Future Grid Stability, Renewable Energy and Storage Technology, Hybrid Gas Turbines and Smart Grid Technologies. The event also features an exhibition area where latest technologies and solutions in the Power and Energy sector are showcased along with an open platform for researchers and students to present their work. -OMA

CFO AWARDS



CFO Forum highlights innovation, regulatory compliance and sustainable growth

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of Nasser bin Khamis Al Jashmi, Chairman of the Tax Authority, the CFO Forum in Oman commenced, focusing on empowering CFOs to drive innovation and addressing the challenges that unlock opportunities for sustainable growth in today's rapidly evolving business environment. Over 200 delegates including senior officials and the leading CFOs, CEOs, finance heads and industry professionals from sectors such as the oil and gas, banking, finance, investments, consulting, insurance, manufacturing, communications, logis-

tics, and the top government officials, participated in the forum. In addition to the enriching sessions, the BT Oman CFO Awards celebrated the exceptional contributions of CFOs and finance teams who have demonstrated remarkable performance and innovation in their organisations. Said Bin Ahmed Al Shanfari, Director of the Second General Directorate of Taxes at the Tax Authority, participated in the second session entitled "Strategic Responses and Compliance: Dealing with the Evolving Tax Landscape and Emerging Trends". It reviewed regulatory compliance challenges in today's ever-changing tax environment.

PREMIER LIFESTYLE DESTINATION

Al Mouj Muscat launches Golf Link Residences: Where luxury meets nature

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat, Oman's premier lifestyle destination has set a new standard in golf course living by introducing the Golf Link Residences, a collection of elegant apartments and residences nestled on the lush fairways of Al Mouj Golf. The highly anticipated neighborhood is set to become one of the most desirable residential options as it redefines luxury living with breathtaking views, premium amenities, and unmatched benefits. Featuring only 28 luxurious four-bedroom residences and a range of one to three-bedroom apartments, the exclusive neighborhood seamlessly integrates 'the luxury of nature' into every detail of its design to catch the eye of today's discerning homebuyers and investors. The bespoke residences are designed for medium to large families, and are spread over two floors with living, entertainment, and workspaces. Catering for smaller families and individuals and astute investors, the apartments offer spacious and adaptable spaces, ensuring ample convenience and comfort for residents. The Residences' exceptional list of amenities include a fitness center, an infinity pool overlooking the Al Mouj Golf, a state-of-the-art golf simulator room and a mini-golf course, as well as indoor and outdoor kids play areas. Other exclusive benefits include a free



Social Golf Club membership to Al Mouj Golf Club. Nasser Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: "The Golf Link Residences epitomize the perfect blend of resort living within vibrant natural surroundings, well-connected community. This latest offering is unparalleled in the market, catering to buyers looking to live or invest in a property that combines elegance and convenience. The unique location of these properties provides easy access to a variety of culinary, entertainment and relaxation options. Our commitment to delivering exceptional living experiences remains steadfast, and we look forward to welcoming new residents to our ever-growing community." Al Mouj Muscat's Golf Links seamlessly integrates with nature and offerings residents easy access to top hotels such as The St Regis

Al Mouj Muscat Resort offering a variety of culinary experiences as well as the upcoming 5-Star Okura Resort Muscat. The community is designed with fitness connected pathways for walking, running, biking, and buggy rides, along with on-call transport to retail areas, the marina, hotels, and golf precincts. In addition to its attractive payment plan for Omanis and non-Omanis, Al Mouj Muscat offers 100% foreign ownership, enabling individuals and families to enjoy their lifestyle in Oman. **Life Inspired** Al Mouj Muscat is a destination without an equal. It has redefined urban living in the region with an impressive portfolio of oceanfront residential properties, luxury and authentic hospitality, elegant Business Parks, award-winning architecture and well-designed landscapes.

Oman's first, elegant apartments and residences within Al Mouj Golf with stunning views offer high-quality amenities and exclusive benefits

A warm and diverse community at the heart of Oman's capital, Al Mouj Muscat created a sense of belonging for over 8,000 residents from 85 nationalities who now call it home. With a vibrant dining and retail district, residents and visitors alike are able to enjoy a wide range of culinary experiences in a lively oceanfront setting. Al Mouj Muscat provides an exclusive lifestyle that urges families and individuals to live life to the fullest, do better, see more and live richer. For work or leisure, residents and visitors can stay, dine or relax at seven luxury hotels, including Kempinski and The St. Regis, experience boating in Oman's largest Marina, or awaken their sense of play at an 18-hole championship golf course that's listed in the world's top 100. At Al Mouj Muscat, every moment spent, every opportunity explored, is life Inspired.

E-COMMERCE

Asyad Express expands global reach through strategic partnerships

MUSCAT: Asyad Express, part of Asyad Group, has forged a series of strategic partnerships with prominent global e-commerce and retail companies. These collaborations connect Asyad Express's robust regional network with established global players, fostering seamless delivery solutions for businesses of all sizes. Providing local, regional, and global express delivery service and e-commerce solutions, Asyad Express plays a strategic role in delivering on the company's mission to reshape the regional e-commerce landscape. Partnering with renowned brands such as Amazon, ASOS, Shein, iHerb, Evri, Landmark Group, and Mumzworld, Asyad Express leverages its extensive logistics capabilities to streamline online purchasing processes, ensuring faster and more reliable delivery services throughout the region. These alliances are tailored to enhance the efficiency of online retail operations and elevate customer service standards, positioning Asyad Express as a central figure in the narrative of regional



e-commerce growth. In 2023 and early 2024, Asyad Express supported three major fashion brands, ASOS, Shein, and Landmark Retail with over \$12 million in logistics support and delivery services covering Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE. Joining forces with Evri, the UK's largest retail and e-commerce parcel delivery company, is a noteworthy step towards transforming e-commerce and e-fulfillment logistics across the Middle East. It offers substantial opportunities for major online companies from the UK, Europe, the US, and China, capitalizing on Asyad Ex-

press's robust logistics network and infrastructure. Leveraging its geographical location and state-of-the-art logistics infrastructure, Asyad Express is poised to attract a wide array of international online businesses, further cementing the Sultanate as a leading global logistics hub. Key initiatives like Asyad Express's collaborations are instrumental in propelling the growth of e-commerce in the MENA region, which is experiencing rapid expansion. The e-commerce market is projected to reach nearly \$57 billion by 2026, driven by increased internet penetration, digital payment platforms' popularity, and a tech-savvy demographic. These strategic partnerships not only bolster Asyad Express's competitive position but also aim to elevate Oman as a key hub for online shopping in the Middle East. Leveraging its geographical location and state-of-the-art logistics infrastructure, Asyad Express is poised to attract a wide array of international online businesses, further cementing the Sultanate as a leading global logistics hub.

9TH IFN OMAN FORUM



Oman Investment Bank participates in international Islamic finance event

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In line with its goal of becoming an international financial services hub, Oman Investment Bank recently participated in the 9th IFN Oman Forum held at the Grand Hyatt Muscat. The IFN Oman Forum is part of the global IFN series, which highlights Islamic financial markets on global, regional, and national levels. As the only international Islamic finance event of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman, the IFN Oman Forum attracted a large number of local banks and inter-

mediaries and received full regulatory support. Omar Musharraf, Head of DCM & Structured Finance at the bank, was among four panelists discussing "Building on Oman's Growing Position as a Centre for Islamic Capital Markets." As a seasoned finance professional, Musharraf provided various insights into the Sultanate's evolution and growth as a regional and global centre for Islamic capital markets. He addressed several current topics in Islamic finance, such as how a period of lower global inter-

est rates might influence Islamic capital markets, the key factors currently affecting global Islamic markets, the importance of developing a yield curve, the impact of new bond and Sukuk regulations from both issuer and investor perspectives, and how a flourishing equity and IPO market is contributing to Oman's broader divestment programme. Additionally, Musharraf and his fellow panellists discussed the challenges and opportunities facing Islamic capital markets in a rapidly evolving global financial environment.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman REIT Fund, up 1.54%, was the top gainer while Dhofar Cattle Feed, down 10.00%, was the top loser.



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,713.40 points, down by 0.37% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.27% at 431.58 points. Oman REIT Fund, up 1.54%, was the top gainer while Dhofar Cattle Feed, down 10.00%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 323 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 1.97 million, with more than 11.05 million shares changing hands. Out of 40 traded securities, 5 advanced, 20 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 162K while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 123K, followed by foreign investors for RO 39K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at

7,738.04 points, down 0.29%. Prices of Taageer Finance, Sohar International Bank were up by 0.98%, 0.73% respectively. Prices of National Bank Oman, United Finance were down by 2.83%, 1.75% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,716.59 points, down 1.74%. Prices of were up by respectively. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, Voltamp Energy, Oman Fisheries, Al Anwar Ceramics, Oman Cables Industry were down by 10.00%, 7.63%, 6.25%, 4.37%, 1.61% respectively. Services Index was down by 0.4% before closing at 1,809.64 points. Prices of Abraj Energy, Oman Telecom were up by 1.01%, 0.50% respectively. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Majan College, Sharqiyah Desalination, Sembcorp Salalah, Al Maha Marketing were down by 9.09%, 2.68%, 2.16%, 1.89%, 1.42% respectively. – United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,734.42	4,709.09	4,713.40	4,730.90	-17.49	-0.37
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,766.25	7,729.20	7,738.04	7,760.47	-22.43	-0.29
Industry Index	5,817.65	5,716.59	5,716.59	5,817.65	-101.07	-1.74
Services Index	1,820.10	1,808.52	1,809.64	1,816.96	-7.32	-0.40
MSX Shariah Index	432.74	431.58	431.58	432.74	-1.17	-0.27
MSX TR INDEX	6,580.10	6,544.90	6,550.88	6,575.20	-24.31	-0.37
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,823.26	8,781.16	8,791.21	8,816.69	-25.49	-0.29
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,712.19	6,595.58	6,595.58	6,712.19	-116.61	-1.74
SERVICES TR IDX	2,117.96	2,104.49	2,105.79	2,114.32	-8.52	-0.40
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
11,059,521	1,972,480	323	24,510,780,585	5	20	15	40

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PREV VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	207,635	62,046	20	0.298	0.299	0.298	0.299	0.296	0.003	1.014	0.299	0.288	0.299	0.100	230,289,800
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	5,428,327	751,429	35	0.139	0.139	0.138	0.139	0.138	0.001	0.725	0.139	0.130	0.147	0.100	775,237,232
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	183,080	183,453	34	1.005	1.009	0.999	1.009	1.004	0.005	0.498	1.009	1.000	1.009	0.100	756,750,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	4,000	960	1	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.000	0.000	0.240	0.240	0.000	0.100	24,000,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	9,991	719	2	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.100	6,480,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	593,153	153,315	9	0.260	0.260	0.258	0.259	0.259	0.000	0.000	0.259	0.259	0.259	0.100	1,944,156,839
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	121,408	8,984	10	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	0.075	0.100	52,866,069
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	3,300	924	1	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.281	-0.001	-0.356	0.280	0.280	0.284	0.100	182,264,384
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	12,550	3,427	3	0.274	0.274	0.273	0.273	0.274	-0.001	-0.365	0.273	0.270	0.280	0.100	34,097,143
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	71,200	27,982	12	0.393	0.393	0.393	0.393	0.395	-0.002	-0.506	0.393	0.393	0.393	0.100	92,900,130
OM0000009072	QO GAS NETWORKS	1,437,947	205,587	91	0.143	0.144	0.142	0.142	0.143	-0.001	-0.699	0.142	0.142	0.150	0.100	614,948,597
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,882	734	2	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.395	-0.005	-1.266	0.390	0.390	0.393	0.100	129,040,357
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	12,806	935	1	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.074	-0.001	-1.351	0.073	0.073	0.075	0.100	49,266,782
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	800	45	1	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.057	-0.001	-1.754	0.056	0.056	0.059	0.100	19,943,129
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALLAH	25,000	2,600	2	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.106	-0.002	-1.887	0.104	0.102	0.104	0.100	99,275,483
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,302,274	358,125	6	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.283	-0.008	-2.827	0.275	0.275	0.290	0.100	447,135,248
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	345,250	58,691	16	0.170	0.175	0.167	0.175	0.183	-0.008	-4.372	0.175	0.166	0.174	0.100	38,500,000
Total	17	9,760,603	1,819,957	246												
Parallel Market																
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	37,120	2,450	6	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.065	0.001	1.538	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.100	32,395,201
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	125,000	12,925	2	0.105	0.105	0.103	0.103	0.102	0.001	0.980	0.103	0.102	0.105	0.100	27,922,321
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	5,000	430	1	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.086	0.088	0.100	7,310,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	16,970	764	1	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.100	13,821,585
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	407,625	31,795	13	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.075	0.078	0.100	16,550,040
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	5,240	1,158	1	0.221	0.221	0.221	0.221	0.221	0.000	0.000	0.221	0.220	0.000	0.100	10,114,241
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	1,200	936	2	0.780	0.780	0.780	0.780	0.780	0.000	0.000	0.780	0.712	0.780	0.100	47,794,500
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	500,000	52,500	4	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.104	0.108	0.100	234,880,068
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	35,960	5,610	8	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.000	0.000	0.156	0.156	0.160	0.100	8,580,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	3,300	218	1	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.062	0.066	0.100	14,445,600
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	6,667	780	3	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.116	0.117	0.100	59,448,115
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	6,610	6,912	2	1.050	1.050	1.045	1.045	1.060	-0.015	-1.415	1.045	1.045	1.049	0.100	72,105,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	500	1,375	1	2.750	2.750	2.750	2.750	2.795	-0.045	-1.610	2.750	2.520	2.750	0.100	246,675,000
OM0000004699	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	17,000	2,312	1	0.138	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.139	-0.003	-2.158	0.136	0.127	0.000	0.100	13,301,094
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	12,000	1,333	7	0.111	0.112	0.109	0.109	0.112	-0.003	-2.679	0.109	0.109	0.111	0.100	9,810,000
OM0000003961	VOLTAMP ENERGY	592	218	2	0.375	0.375	0.351	0.351	0.380	-0.029	-7.632	0.351	0.351	0.418	0.100	28,572,365
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	52,000	10,199	8	0.204	0.204	0.189	0.190	0.209	-0.019	-9.091	0.190	0.190	0.200	0.100	11,628,812
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	841	53	1	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.070	-0.007	-10.000	0.063	0.063	0.069	0.100	12,453,646
Total	18	1,233,625	131,967	64												

FSA concludes ICA advanced certification programme in governance, risks and compliance

MUSCAT: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) organised a programme in advanced certificate in governance, risks and compliance in collaboration with the International Compliance Association (ICA) for the employees of the

regulated entities in the capital market and insurance sectors. The programme was held from May to September and included five workshops via ZOOM teleconferencing. The participants were tested at the end of the program to

obtain the professional certification plus one-year membership in the International Compliance Association qualifying the members to benefit from the literature, training courses and services offered by the ICA. The participants were able to

understand the regulatory environment, their objects and characteristics as well the ethics and institutional governance in addition to the main types of risks the companies are encountering and effective management.

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Madayn organises seminar to discuss AI governance in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), represented by the Knowledge Oasis Muscat in cooperation with Al Tamimi and Company, organised a seminar titled 'Digital Horizons: Exploring the Future of Data, Telecoms and Technology'. The seminar covered key aspects of Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance, associated risks and legal impacts in the Sultanate, as well as explored the role of AI-driven predictive analytics in enhancing patient outcomes in the Sultanate's healthcare system, and discussed approaches to building a successful AI strategy. Speaking at the event, Saif Al Riyami, Business Development Director at Knowledge Oasis Muscat, highlighted the seminar's significance in addressing key aspects related to artificial intelligence and exploring latest advancements in this field. Al Riyami emphasised that Knowledge Oasis Muscat is committed to collaborating with key partners to propel the technology sector forward. This involves organising such events, providing new incentives for the knowledge and technology sector, while leveraging expertise to develop innovative services and products for the evolving digital landscape. David Yates of Al Tamimi and Company, delivered a presentation underscoring AI from a legal perspective. His discussion covered how ChatGPT operates and its implications, challenges in developing generative AI systems, legal and ethical risks of generative AI, regional and global approaches to AI governance, AI governance and the growth of AI in Oman and legal considerations for AI implementation in Oman. Yates pointed out that while AI can identify patterns in data and generate human-like outputs based on human programming, it lacks true human intelligence, including emotions, insights and complex capabilities, and therefore requires human oversight for responsible use. He also dis-



cussed the risks of using generative AI, which include misinformation and fake content, privacy concerns, ethical implications, intellectual property infringement, security risks, professional negligence, unemployment and economic disruption. He remarked, "The risks also encompass the lack of accountability, as the autonomous nature of generative AI systems can make it challenging to assign responsibility for generated content or actions. Therefore, if the technology is used maliciously or negligently, it may be difficult to identify and hold the responsible parties accountable." Commenting on the future opportunities for AI applications in Oman, Yates noted that AI is seen as a key enabler for boosting productivity across various economic sectors in Oman. Yates also highlighted the National Programme for AI and Advanced Technologies, launched by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in 2020 to oversee AI capacity-building, research, innovation, and industrialisation. The programme features four pillars: Enhancing productivity in sectors targeted for economic diversification, developing human capabilities in AI, accelerating AI adoption, and governing AI and advanced technologies with a human-centred vision. **AI strategy** Haider Al Lawati, Oman Data Park, stated that Artificial intelligence is expected to contribute

up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030, adding: "Having an AI strategy is crucial as it aligns AI initiatives with business goals, ensures efficient resource allocation, and drives innovation. A well-crafted AI strategy can lead to a competitive advantage and improved operational efficiency by providing a roadmap for addressing challenges, building necessary capabilities, and ensuring the strategic and responsible application of AI." Additionally, Moosa Al Hadhrami, Eknan Technologies, discussed data sharing precautions, data vulnerability and its impact on national security, as well as demonstrated Eknan's encryption devices designed to protect data privacy of organisations and companies. **AI in healthcare** BassilKoukash of BClear Aligner presented on 'AI-Driven Predictive Analytics for Enhancing Patient Outcomes in Oman's Healthcare System'. He highlighted how AI is transforming healthcare globally with real-world applications of predictive analytics. Koukash explained that AI could be adopted to prevent cardiovascular diseases in the Sultanate by analysing risk factors like obesity, hypertension, and family history. "AI can analyse patient data, including blood sugar levels, diet, and lifestyle, to predict complications. This allows for early intervention strategies to better manage diabetes and prevent complications like kidney failure or vision loss," Koukash said.



LIFESTYLE

Einstein had dyslexia. Hemmingway had it, too. It can affect people their whole lives. New findings may lead to a fresh approach to the learning difficulty

DYSLEXIA

GERMAN RESEARCHERS FIND CAUSE IN THE BRAIN

YOU may know the feeling: You find it difficult to place sounds and signs. When you read, the flow can feel halting and monotonous, the sounds fail to blend together. You read the letters as individual sounds, not the words and meanings they make. You might even omit letters, syllables or whole words, or swap and add them when you read and write. Or miss mistakes when you write and find it hard to write legibly.

Learning difficulties that can last a lifetime Dyslexia occurs in about 5%-10% of people worldwide, making it the most common learning disorder. The symptoms can present as early as in infancy. Boys are affected two to three times more often than girls. At school, kids with dyslexia may find it difficult to reproduce or describe the content of texts in a language class — such as a text they have just read. The difficulties can occur in any school subject, where reading and writing are required, including in mathematics, or when an exercise is presented as a text. Above all, people with reading and spelling difficulties struggle with prejudices they face because dyslexia accompanies many throughout their lives. First at school, then at work, and in everyday life. However, dyslexia says nothing about the intellect (or creative talent) of the people who have it. Famous dyslexics include Albert Einstein, Ludwig van Beethoven, Charles Darwin, Ernest Hemingway, Agatha Christie and Whoopi Goldberg... and the list goes on.

Researchers locate the cause of dyslexia The causes of dyslexia are not yet fully understood. However, researchers based in Dresden, Germany, say they have been able to show, for the first time, that dyslexia is linked to changes in the function and structure of a specific part of the human brain called the visual thalamus. The visual thalamus is a key brain region that connects the eyes with the cerebral cortex, which is important to our ability for reasoning, emotion, thought, memory, language and consciousness. Visual information from the eyes is processed in two separate parts with different tasks: One part is larger

than the other and primarily processes colors. The other, smaller part recognises movements and rapidly changing images. Structures in the visual thalamus are very difficult to examine using conventional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) because the visual thalamus lies deep in the brain and is tiny. Its smaller part, the one described above, is the size of a peppercorn.

How researchers spotted changes in the visual thalamus Thanks to a special MRI system at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, researchers were able to study the visual thalamus in unprecedented detail in living humans. The researchers found that people with dyslexia show changes in the function and structure of the movement-sensitive part of the visual thalamus. These changes are particularly evident in male dyslexics. Their study, which was published in the journal Brain, involved 25 people with dyslexia and 24 control subjects. The researchers say it's given them a better understanding of this key brain region. "[It] paves the way for further research aimed at gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the brain mechanisms underlying dyslexia," said Katharina von Kriegstein, chair of Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience at TU Dresden, and one of the study authors. Study shows potential for new dyslexia treatment The findings could lead to new treatments and therapies, said Christa Müller-Axt, a research associate at TU Dresden, who also worked on the study. "This could open up possibilities for non-invasive neurostimulation techniques as a promising therapeutic method to modulate the activity of these brain structures and thereby alleviate some dyslexia symptoms," Müller-Axt told the hosts of DW's Science Unscripted podcast. Müller-Axt said it was crucial that we now know where in the brain dyslexia develops — a "new target directly linked to reading difficulties in dyslexia. And if we target this area and modulate its activity, it could actually help these people in the future." But it will be some time before new, effective and sustainable therapeutic approaches are developed, said Müller-Axt. — DW

VISUAL INFORMATION FROM THE EYES IS PROCESSED IN TWO SEPARATE PARTS WITH DIFFERENT TASKS: ONE PART IS LARGER THAN THE OTHER AND PRIMARILY PROCESSES COLOURS. THE OTHER, SMALLER PART RECOGNISES MOVEMENTS AND RAPIDLY CHANGING IMAGES. STRUCTURES IN THE VISUAL THALAMUS ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO EXAMINE USING CONVENTIONAL MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI) BECAUSE THE VISUAL THALAMUS LIES DEEP IN THE BRAIN AND IS TINY. ITS SMALLER PART, THE ONE DESCRIBED ABOVE, IS THE SIZE OF A PEPPERCORN.

SPORTS

ICC WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

ICC enters era of equal prize money for men and women

DUBAI: The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 will be the first ICC event where women will receive the same prize money as their male counterparts, marking a significant milestone in the sport's history.

The decision was taken at the ICC Annual Conference in July 2023, when the ICC Board took the step of reaching its prize money equity target seven years ahead of its schedule of 2030, making cricket the only major team sport to have equal prize money for its men's and women's World Cup events.

The winners of the tournament, which will now be staged in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), will receive US\$2.34million, a massive, 134 per cent increase on the \$1million awarded to Australia when they clinched the title in South Africa in 2023.

The runners-up will receive US\$1.17million, an increase of 134 per cent in comparison to the US\$500,000 South Africa received for reaching the final on home soil at Newlands Cricket Ground.

The two losing semi-finalists will earn US\$675,000 (up from \$210,000 in 2023), with the overall prize pot totalling US\$7,958,080, a massive increase of 225 per cent from last year's total fund of US\$2.45million.

This move is in line with the ICC's strategy to prioritise the women's game and accelerate its growth by 2032.

Teams will now receive equal prize money for the equivalent finishing position at comparable events as well as the same amount for winning a match at those events.

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 event prize money is only higher on account of 10 additional teams participating and 32 more matches played.

Each win during the group stages will see teams take home \$31,154, while the six teams who fail to reach the semi-finals will share a pool of US\$1.35million depending on their finishing positions.

In comparison, the equivalent pool for the six teams in 2023 was US\$180,000, shared equally. Teams who finish third or fourth in their group will take US\$270,000 each while the teams who finish fifth in their group will both receive US\$135,000.

All 10 participating teams are assured of US\$112,500.

The increase in prize money for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 comes in line with the prize pot for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 also increasing to US\$3.5million in total.

The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 will open on October 3 with Bangladesh taking on Scotland at Sharjah Cricket Stadium. Ten teams will play 23 matches in Dubai and Sharjah to decide the 2024 champions. - Agencies



'You want your best players to play all games, but that's not possible'

With 10 Tests to be played in 15 weeks, India skipper Rohit Sharma says that they have 'laid out some plans' to manage the workload of fast bowlers



CHENNAI: India are coming off a break of more than a month without any cricket.

"We are starting after a long time actually", the captain Rohit Sharma said ahead of the two-match Test series against Bangladesh, starting on September 19. India are also aware of the strain that their schedule over the next few months can place on their players, particularly their fast bowlers.

India begin the first of 10 Tests in 15 weeks against Bangladesh on Thursday, and they already have plans in place to protect the likes of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj, who might be needed to take on heavy workloads when they travel to Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in November through to January.

"We have laid out some plans on how we are going to manage these bowlers," Rohit said.

"But again, it all depends on the workload that has been carried by them in these games. So yeah, we will monitor that. I think we have done that pretty well. Even when we played against England [at home, earlier this year], we managed to get Bumrah one Test match off. We managed to give Siraj one Test match off.

"So it all depends on how the body feels at that particular time, what the [strength and conditioning] is, and what the physios feel about them, when is the right time to give them a break from the game, and then take the call."

India wrap up the two-Test series against Bangladesh on October 1 and have a couple of weeks off from red-ball cricket before they face New Zealand over three games that take them into early November. Then they will leave for Australia where they will play five Tests in eight weeks.

"You want your best players to play all the games, but that's not possible because there is so much cricket that happens," Rohit said.

"It is not only Test cricket, there is T20 cricket happening [against Bangladesh and South Africa] in the middle of the Test series as well. So you [have] got to understand everything, and then see what is best for the team and then manage your bowlers around it."

There has also been an effort made to expand the fast-bowling pool, with left-armers Yash Dayal joining the team for the Bangladesh series. There are several others pushing their case to make the national team with performances in domestic cricket. Harshit Rana, Navdeep Saini, Vidwath Kaverappa, Khaleel Ahmed and Anshul Kamboj were all involved in the season-opening Duleep Trophy earlier this month, and Rohit was pleased with what he saw from those matches.

"We have got a lot of bowlers who are there for us," he said. "We saw some exciting prospects in the Duleep Trophy as well. I am not too worried about the kind of bowlers that are waiting in the wings for us."

Gambhir takes charge

Gautam Gambhir takes charge of the Test team for the first time since being appointed the new India head coach. He and his assistant Abhishek Nayar were with the limited-overs team in Sri Lanka in August, and they have been overseeing a training camp in Chennai, leading up to the Bangladesh series. "The staff is new, but I know both Gautam Gambhir and Abhishek Nayar," Rohit said.

"I have played quite a bit of cricket against [bowling coach] Morne Morkel; we've played some tough cricket against each other. I've also played, maybe a couple of games, against [assistant coach] Ryan [ten Doeschate], but the two of us haven't spoken as much before. From what I experienced with him in Sri Lanka, I think he has a sensible and [an] understanding personality, given the way he quickly started to understand things about the team.

"As for Gambhir and Nayar, like I said, I know them well. Sri Lanka were the first series [with them in charge], and now they are going to play their second series with the team. Everyone has their own style. Rahul [Dravid] bhai, Vikram Rathour, [and] Paras Mhambrey - they had a different way of running the team, [while] these guys will have a different style.

"So it's important for you to adjust. So far, there have been no problems or issues as a player. Like I said, if there is understanding between both [coaches and players], that's the most important thing. And we have a good understanding."

"Look, at the end of the day, you are playing for your country," Rohit said. "So there is no dress rehearsal kind of stuff happening here. Every game that we play is important, and every game becomes important because of what is at stake. [In the] World Test Championship, still the table is quite wide open, and you want to win every game. So it doesn't matter where we play in two months' time. We want to win here. We want to win this Test match."

That's why they arrived in Chennai a full week before the start of the game, to have the best preparation possible.

"We assembled here on the 12th, and we've had a good time spending hours on the field, [and] getting everything together. So yeah, it is tough. But see, now people are so experienced, they manage themselves pretty well. And guys who have not played a lot of Test cricket, obviously went on to play the Duleep Trophy, which was good.

"So in terms of preparation, [and] in terms of readiness, I feel we are quite ready for this game and what lies ahead of us. So it was a good little prep that we had before this Test match. It was important to utilise that time, and I thought we utilised this little camp that we had in Chennai pretty well." (With inputs from ESPNcricinfo.com)



TWO-MATCH TEST SERIES

Rahul gets skipper's backing ahead of Bangladesh series

CHENNAI: Ahead of the two-match series against Bangladesh, Rohit Sharma, India's Test skipper, has thrown his weight behind right-hand batter KL Rahul, saying it's the team's duty to bring out the best in him.

Rohit believes Rahul has the quality and talent to succeed in Test cricket, despite his inconsistent form and injury issues.

The two-match series between India and Bangladesh will kick off on September 19 in Chennai at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. The second long-format game will begin on September 27 in Kanpur.

"There are a handful of people in world cricket who had a smooth ride. Handful of cricketers had no issues all their lives; it was all good. Everyone has an up-and-down career. The best thing to do is to understand yourself, understand expectations from yourself and what you need to bring to table for the team. The kind of quality KL Rahul has, everybody knows about him. The message to him from our side was we want him to play all the games and bring the best out of him. It's our duty as well to bring the best out of him," said Rohit in the pre-match press conference.

The 37-year-old further spoke about Rahul's last innings which came against England at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad.

"It's important to give him a clear message about what he expects from you. He has done well since comeback - scoring a hundred against South Africa. He scored an 80 in the first Test against England in Hyderabad and unfortunately got injured and didn't play afterwards," the Men in Blue skipper added.

Rohit concluded by saying that he hopes Rahul continues from where he left in Hyderabad.

"It's important that we give him a clear message every time we get an opportunity to speak to him. That's what we've done. I hope he continues from where he left in Hyderabad. He's got the game to play spin, seamers so I don't see any reason why he can't flourish in Test cricket. Opportunities are there. It is important for him to understand how he wants to take his career forward," the opener concluded.

Rahul has so far played 50 Tests in his career, where he has managed to score 2863 runs at an average of 34.08 with the help of eight centuries and 14 fifties. - ANI



BOXING

I've worked hard and been through a lot of pain: Joshua

LONDON: Anthony Joshua says he has "been through a lot of pain" over the past two years as he bids to become a three-time world champion against fellow British heavyweight Daniel Dubois on Saturday.

The 34-year-old will take on IBF belt-holder Dubois, 27, in front of a post-war British record 96,000 fans at Wembley Stadium.

Joshua has rebuilt and worked his way back to mandatory challenger position having broken down in tears after losing a second consecutive fight to Oleksandr Usyk in August 2022. "I've worked hard and been through a lot of pain, and I've worked hard to get better," he told *BBC Sport*.

"Hopefully those experiences won't happen again because as you saw that night, I don't like losing."

The 2012 Olympic gold medalist is on a four-fight winning streak and brutally knocked out Francis Ngannou in his last outing.

"I think I'm gifted with an ability to fight and compete," Joshua said. "In boxing you're able to read certain tendencies, you're able to read your opponent, so I can always have an eye for that.

"But there's a supreme level that you can take it to. And it's happened over the past eight or 10 months. I've really honed in on those skills."

Joshua and Dubois posed for a face-to-face at Monday's media day in London's stylish Old Billingsgate venue, with Tower Bridge providing an iconic backdrop, to kick off fight week. The more experienced Joshua - who will headline a UK stadium fight for the sixth time - relaxed into his press commitments throughout the day.

After a menacing stare-down, Joshua headed towards a crowd and posed for photos, even agreeing to a request for a hug from a fan.

Meanwhile, a pensive Dubois appeared a little eager to get the media formalities out of the way. It was their first meeting since a news conference in June, when a behind-closed-doors face-off earlier in the day resulted in Joshua threatening to throw a chair at Dubois.

"I was just basically saying 'stay in your lane'. I don't expect respect from him but I'm ready to earn my respect from him," Joshua reflected on the confrontation.

Joshua has the opportunity to join heavyweight legends Muhammad Ali, Lennox Lewis, Evander Holyfield and Vitali Klitschko in becoming a three-time world champion. - Agencies



Meethaq Neswa offers exclusive benefits and features for women

Neswa savings account from Meethaq has been specifically designed for women, ensuring greater ease of access to various financial services and offering unique benefits tailored for everyday needs and personalised services

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat is dedicated to providing products and services that cater to the diverse needs and aspirations of its customers, including women. In this regard, the Neswa savings account from Meethaq has been specifically designed for women, ensuring greater ease of access to various financial services and offering unique benefits tailored for everyday needs and personalised services. Neswa account holders can enjoy a wide range of features, including a Visa Debit Card with advanced security features for day-to-day payments, an ATM withdrawal limit of RO 800, access to the largest network of ATMs and CDMs across Oman, complimentary Takaful life cover up to RO 10,000, coverage up to RO 1,000 for loss of wallet or handbag resulting in misuse of cards, and coverage up to RO 100 for loss of ID cards

and keys. Account holders can also receive attractive indicative profit rates on their average monthly balance and are eligible for up to 50% discount on the first year's rental charge for safe deposit lockers. All Omani and resident women above the age of 18 are eligible to open a Neswa Savings Account with a minimum balance amount of RO 300 or a minimum salary transfer of RO 500. Sami Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager - Meethaq Personal Banking, said: "The Neswa Savings account has been designed in line with Meethaq Islamic Banking's commitment to provide services and offerings suitable for various segments of society to cater to their specific needs, as well as providing a seamless experience for their day-to-day transactions. We are pleased to see the positive response on the Neswa savings account and we

will continue to develop Meethaq's various products, introducing new features in line with the global trends in the sector." As the pioneer of Islamic banking in the Sultanate, Meethaq has adopted industry best practices in Islamic banking and finance to provide a robust model that benefits its customers. It remains dedicated to its customer-centric vision, understanding evolving needs, and aligning services with global trends to achieve both present and future goals. Every Meethaq product undergoes Shari'a compliance certification by the Shari'a Supervisory Board and adheres to the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman. Meethaq's alignment with AAOIFI standards (Accounting & Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions) further distinguishes its products, ensuring a world-class Islamic banking experience.



PREMIUM COFFEE



Kaldi 850 opens new outlet in Seeb

MUSCAT: Kaldi 850, one of Oman's leading premium coffee brands, announced the opening of its 20th store, located at the Aqua-Tots Swimming Center in Seeb. This exciting milestone marks the company's continued growth and commitment to bringing high-quality coffee experiences to customers across the Sultanate. The new store is particularly special, as it is Kaldi 850's first drive-thru location in the Muscat region. This innovative concept reflects the company's dedication to enhancing customer convenience by offering a quick, seamless way to enjoy their favorite coffee on the go. The drive-thru service is set to cater to the growing demand for speedy service without compromising on quality. "We are incredibly proud to open our 20th store and our very first drive-thru in Muscat," said Paul Biswajit, General Manager of Kaldi 850. "As we continue to expand, our goal remains to offer premium coffee and exceptional service to our customers, and this new location at Aqua-Tots

is another step toward achieving that vision. Located within the popular Aqua-Tots Swimming Center in Seeb, the new Kaldi 850 store offers a full range of the brand's signature drinks, including espresso-based beverages, specialty brews, and a selection of fresh, locally sourced snacks. Whether customers are stopping by for a coffee break after a swim or grabbing a drink on their way to work, the new location is designed to provide a welcoming and efficient experience. Kaldi 850 is known for its dedication to using 100% Arabica beans, ethically sourced from some of the world's best coffee-growing regions. The brand takes pride in its commitment to sustainability, with eco-friendly packaging and a focus on supporting local communities. To celebrate the grand opening, Kaldi 850 will be offering special promotions and giveaways at the Seeb location during its first week of operations. Customers are encouraged to visit and enjoy exclusive offers while exploring the new drive-thru service.

NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN

NBO's 24/7 self-service kiosks enhance banking convenience



MUSCAT: In its ongoing commitment to digital innovation, National Bank of Oman (NBO) announces its advanced multifunctional self-service kiosks at 11 major locations across Oman. The self-service kiosks enhance financial accessibility and deliver innovative solutions that push the boundaries of traditional banking services. NBO reaffirms its position in the banking industry by constantly enhancing customer touchpoints.

Dr Ali Al Shekaili, Assistant General Manager and Head of Digital & E-Channels at NBO, said: "Our self-service kiosks represent a leap towards the future of banking, where convenience and accessibility are at the forefront. This initiative is part of our commitment to enhancing customer experience and providing continuous service, anytime and anywhere. These kiosks offer a variety of services, enabling customers to open accounts, apply for new debit and

prepaid cards, renew or replace existing cards, and top-up prepaid cards—all without needing to visit a traditional branch. Moreover, these kiosks are designed to meet the highest security standards ensuring that your banking experience is not only convenient but also safe and secure." These new kiosks are installed at key strategic locations, including the Azaiba Head Office, Central Business District (CBD), Bausher, Quriyat, Oman Automobile Association (OAA), Al Khoudh, Barka, Sohar, Ibra, Bahla and New Salalah. These locations were chosen to provide maximum coverage and accessibility for NBO customers. NBO has ambitious plans to expand these kiosks across Oman, ensuring that all regions have access to this innovative banking solution.

NBO continues to redefine the traditional banking experience allowing customers to enjoy a secure platform to conduct their banking transactions at their convenience.

LITERATURE SESSION

MCBS collaborates with DarArab for Publishing and Translation

MUSCAT: The Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS), in collaboration with DarArab for Publishing and Translation, recently participated in an engaging literature session titled "The Halva-Maker in Conversation." DarArab, a UK and Oman based independent publisher dedicated to translating contemporary Arabic literature and building bridges of cultural understanding, partnered with MCBS to create a platform for discussing the significance of historical novels and their translations in the modern literary landscape. The session featured Professor Roger Allen, one of the most esteemed translators of Arabic literature into English, known for his translation of The Halva-Maker and numerous other acclaimed works. He was joined by award-winning author Dr. Reem Bassiouney, whose novel The Halva-Maker has been widely praised for its deep exploration of cultural identity, power, and resilience. The event was skillfully moderated by Arwa Al Hinai, Deputy Head of the Department of General Education



at MCBS, adding further depth and insight to the discussion. The session was enriched by the presence of the two guests, Professor Roger Allen, a leading scholar

and translator, who has played a pivotal role in bringing Arabic literature to global audiences, most notably with his translations of Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz,

and Dr. Bassiouney, an esteemed Egyptian author and sociolinguist, recognised for her ability to weave historical themes into contemporary narratives. Her literary contributions have earned her multiple awards, including the recent Sheikh Zayed Book Award.

This collaboration aimed to foster intellectual dialogue on the sig-

nificance of historical novels, such as "The Halva-Maker", in preserving cultural heritage while remaining relevant to modern readers. The event explored how these literary works serve as bridges between the past and present, offering readers a window into historical narratives. Additionally, it emphasized the critical role of literary translation in facilitating cross-cultural exchange, highlighting how translations promote mutual understanding between the East and West, breaking down barriers and encouraging deeper appreciation of diverse literary traditions. "DarArab's collaboration with MCBS creates a unique opportunity to explore the literary and cultural value of historical fiction and its place in today's world. We are proud to have participated in a highly important discussion with two prominent literary figures in the field," said Dr Moosa Al Kindi, Dean of MCBS. "This event reflects MCBS's commitment to broadening its academic scope beyond the sciences and creating a platform for cross-cultural engagement."

ROUND-UP

Alizz Islamic Bank partners to empower 10 social welfare families

The agreement was signed by Asaad Al Kharusi, Chief Operating Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank on behalf of the bank, by Mahmood Al Jadidi, Assistant Manager of the Office of Social Development in Muscat on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development and Ridha Al Lawati CEO of Cyber Knowledge Institute on behalf of the institute

MUSCAT: As part of the banks pioneering role in lending a hand to the community, Alizz Islamic Bank recently partnered with the Ministry of Social Development and Cyber Knowledge Institute to enable 10 job seekers from social welfare families to work as dental assistants. The agreement was signed by Asaad Al Kharusi, Chief Op-

erating Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank on behalf of the bank, by Mahmood Al Jadidi, Assistant Manager of the Office of Social Development in Muscat on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development and Ridha Al Lawati CEO of Cyber Knowledge Institute on behalf of the institute. This initiative comes as part of

the bank's belief that the empowerment of individuals leads to the prosperity of the societies in which we live in. The Program targeted 10 job seekers from social welfare and limited-income families through a comprehensive development program that is coupled with employment in the field of dental assistants and dressers. As part of the agreement, Alizz Islamic Bank will contribute towards training the 10 students on both financial and soft skills as value added towards their training curriculum. Speaking about the partnership Asaad Al Kharusi, Chief Operating Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank said, "We are honoured to partner with the Ministry of Social Development - Muscat and Cyber Knowledge Institute to contribute towards the sustainable development of the country by serving the community and continuously aiding its advancement and growth. Alizz Islamic Bank is committed to supporting sustainable and impactful initiatives as part of the overall Corporate Social Responsibility strategy."



LIMITED-TIME OPPORTUNITY



Own Chery with added benefits this season

MUSCAT: Chery Oman brings to you an exciting limited-time opportunity to own a Chery with added benefits this season. Secure a chance to win incredible prizes with the assured 'Scratch and Win' coupon that include LED TV, 100 litres worth of fuel cards, and cash discounts from OMR 200 to OMR 50 for Chery customers. Chery presents an impressive vehicle line that include the Chery Arizzo 6 Pro and Arrizo 8 -Sedan, Tiggo 4 Pro as a front wheeler crossover, Tiggo 7 Pro Max and Tiggo 8 Pro max in the all-wheel drive category. Now available with free service up to 50,000 km/5 years, registration fee waiver, and

1st year free insurance benefit. Take a test drive to discover which car best meets your needs, and if you're lucky, you could win one of 12 Huawei Smart Watches. Among Chery's line up in Oman, the dynamic Tiggo 8 Pro Max is equipped with the latest safety and technological features. The all-wheel drive (AWD) offers an impressive interior space featuring a Superior ADAS with 12-point coverage for the driver's assistance and 9 safety airbags. Experience smooth driving and seamless connectivity with a 12.3-inch dual-screen design with Wireless Carplay/Android Auto, Front Radar, 8-Way Electric Memory Driver Seat Adjustment, and a 2.0-liter

turbocharged engine. Invest in a Tiggo 4 Pro crossover to experience the perfect family ride. Equipped with essential modern tech and safety features, it includes a 10.25-inch central screen with Android Auto and Apple Car Play, 6 speakers, 6-way electric driver seat adjustment, electric sunroof, wireless fast charging, 4 airbags, and a 1.5-liter turbocharged engine. In the sedan category, the star Arizzo 6 Pro boasts a ravishing exterior and impressive interior layouts. It is equipped with 10.25-inch Dual Screen Design screen with Android Auto and Apple Car Play, 18-inch alloy wheels, Superior ADAS with 6-point coverage, 6 airbags, electric sunroof, 6-way electric driver seat Driver Seat Adjustment, air purifier PM 2.5, ambient lighting, wireless fast charging, ventilated front seats, 6 speakers, and a 1.5-liter turbocharged engine. Visit your nearest Chery showroom to get a closer look at the Chery automobiles for mega-wins and purchase rewards. Recently, Kantar and Google jointly released the 2023 Chinese Global Brand Builders Top 50. Chery is ranked as the best Chinese global brand builder in cars and 14th in the overall list, and its brand power has achieved strong growth. In Oman, Chery vehicles are distributed by Saud Bahwan Group.

GLOBAL PARTICIPATION

Jebel Sifah to host International Game Fishing Tournament



MUSCAT: Jebel Sifah, by Orascom Development and Omran, in collaboration with the Red Sea Anglers, announced the much-anticipated International Game Fishing Tournament (IGFA), set to take place from September 28 and 29. The renowned event will witness more than 70 elite anglers, from China, Egypt, Oman, Kuwait, Italy, South Africa, Turkey, and the UK, as they sail against the breathtaking backdrop of Jebel Sifah's azure waters, showcasing their skills in one of the most spectacular coastal settings Oman has to offer. During the 2-day thrilling sea venture, participants will compete for the title of the most skilled angler, and the tournament will be concluded with a grand weigh-in award ceremony at Jebel Sifah's picturesque Marina, a celebration set to be attended by esteemed Omani government officials, and senior representatives from the International Game Fish Association (IGFA). The event will pave the way for the World Fishing Championship finals, scheduled to take place at Costa Rica, in 2025, where the top three teams will automatically qualify for the global competition. With miles of sandy beaches bordering the Sea of Oman, Jebel Sifah is a popular getaway destination with breathtaking open spaces, a coastline, an acclaimed 9-hole golf course, incredible restaurants, shops, water sports, and year-round activities, all featuring magnificent panoramic views of the mountains and blue waters. The decision to host the IGFA Fishing Tournament in Jebel Sifah reinforces the destination's appeal to both regional and international water sports enthusiasts. Its diverse marine ecosystem, swarmed with game fish like marlin, sailfish, and tuna, makes it a premier destination for sport fishing and other marine-based year-round activities. On this occasion, Engineer Wael Al Lawati, CEO of Muriya, the developer of the award-winning communities, Jebel Sifah and Hawana Salalah, commented, "Hosting the IGFA International Fishing Competition at Jebel Sifah is an opportunity to showcase Oman's magnificence as a premier tourist destination on the global stage. This event not only celebrates the rich marine biodiversity of Jebel Sifah's waters, but demonstrates the unique appeal of our destination, combining world-class amenities with natural beauty. We are proud to play a key role in promoting Oman's appeal to an international audience and look forward to welcoming our anglers and visitors from around the globe." The CEO of Red Sea Anglers and Co-Chairman of the Development Committee in IGFA, Ahmed Mitkees, also stated: "The choice of hosting this first-of-its-kind, global event in Jebel Sifah in Oman, stems from the destination's captivating and natural beauty, nestled between the magnificent Hajar Mountains and the clear waters of the Arabian Sea, as well as its proximity to the city of Muscat."

REWARDS PROGRAMME

Exclusive 20% cashback with ahlibank credit cards at Oman Oil fuel stations & Ahlain stores



MUSCAT: Committed to delivering exceptional value to its esteemed customers, ahlibank has announced its collaboration with Oman Oil Marketing Company (Oman Oil) to offer exciting cashback rewards to its credit card holders. **Pearl points** The ongoing rewards program, active until September 21, 2024, allows credit card holders to receive 20% cashback when refueling at Oman Oil Fuel Stations and shopping at Ahlain stores. Cashback will be awarded as Pearl Points and credited within 30 days after

the promotion ends. Each customer can earn up to OMR 15 in cashback. **Value-added benefits** ahlibank is dedicated to providing value-added benefits that enrich customers' banking experiences. By offering cashback on refueling at Oman Oil Fuel Stations and shopping at Ahlain stores, the bank succeeds in enhancing customers' day-to-day lives, underscoring its commitment towards a customer-centric approach. It is through such endeavors to meet customers' demands and exceed their expecta-

tions, that ahlibank ensures customer satisfaction. Through innovative and diverse reward programs, the bank has cemented its position as the Partner in Excellence, continuing its path towards greater growth. This cashback campaign reflects ahlibank's continuous efforts to offer a comprehensive suite of products and services, tailored to meet the needs of diverse segments. The Bank offers unparalleled financial solutions encompassing, retail, commercial, and investments that align with its vision of being a vibrant and thriving center of banking.



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