



# Al Wusta biggest fish producer in 2022

The governorate produced 250,000 tonnes of fish amounting to 36 percent (that is OMR100 million) of the total output in Oman



*Times News Service*

**DUQM:** Al Wusta Governorate secured the first place in fish production in the Sultanate of Oman, according to the statistics of 2022. It produced 250,000 tonnes of fish amounting to 36 percent (that is OMR100 million) of the total output in Oman.

Dr. Ali bin Abdullah Al Alawi, Director General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Wusta Governorate, reaffirmed that the Government of Oman has accorded due care and attention to the fisheries sector in Al Wusta Governorate as it provides job opportunities in the field of fishing and associated works.

He said the number of fishermen registered in the Governorate mounted to over 4,800 by end of 2023 and the number of fishing boats amounted to 2,011, 530 ve-

hicles for fish transport and marketing and 149 fishing ships.

The multi-purpose fishing port at the Special Economic Zone, Duqm accommodates areas for



maintenance of commercial and coastal fishing boats, fish processing factories and facilities for sale of fish, he said.

The fishing port with the total area of 7.5 sq. kilometres and the food and fish industries complex are of the key economic facilities that attract local n international companies specialised in fishing and allied industries, he added.

The area of food and fish industries is one of the promising

investment areas at the Special Economic Zone, Duqm and is located close to the multi-purpose fishing port.

He said that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has plans supportive to the fishing sector and fishermen to be executed which include fish canning factories, fish market in the Wilayat of Mahut, a fishing port in Mahut and number of fish farming projects in the Governorate of Al Wusta.

## 80 RESCUED FROM GHALA BLAZE

The fire-fighting teams from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) extinguished a fire that broke out in a building in the Ghala Industrial area in the Muscat Governorate. Eighty persons were rescued in the incident and all are in good health, said the CDAA.



### DHOFAR GOVERNORATE

## Smugglers caught

**MUSCAT:** Two people were imprisoned for a year and fined OMR 1,000 for smuggling several wild animals in Dhofar Governorate.

The Court of Appeal in Salalah issued a ruling convicting two people from one of the neighbouring countries on charges of participating with others in smuggling several wild animals, some of which are listed in Appendix (1) of the Natural Reserves and Wildlife Conservation Law No. (6/2003). The sentence was imposed with imprisonment for one year and a fine of OMR1,000 for each of them, and the confiscation of the animals and seized items. The Environment Authority calls on everyone to preserve the natural environment's elements to avoid being held legally accountable.

### FRANCE 2024

# 5 riders from Royal Cavalry qualify for World Endurance Cup

*Times News Service*

**MUSCAT:** Five riders from the Royal Cavalry have qualified for the World Endurance Cup France 2024. They will represent the Sultanate of Oman at the upcoming World Cup.

Hussein bin Ali Al Farsi, riding the Royal Cavalry's horse 'Fانشدوه', excelled in the French 'Compiègne' race which was organised by the International Equestrian Federation for a distance of 140 km, with the participation of male and female knights from various countries of the world.

Last April, Hussein Al-Farsi, on horseback, 'Fانشدوه', passed the stages of the French 'Saumur' race, which was organised by the

International Equestrian Federation, for a distance of 160 km.

He also qualified for the World Endurance Cup, which will be held in September in France.

Those who have qualified for the World Endurance Cup in France 2024 are: Mahmoud bin Marhoon Al-Fawri, riding the horse 'Dalila', Hisham bin Saleh Al-Farsi, riding the horse 'Bakima', and the jockey Ahmed bin Salem Al-Hamdani, riding the horse 'Kasba' and the knight Saleh bin Salem Al-Balushi, riding the horse 'Stik'.

For his part, Dr. Sarhan bin Salem Al Zaidi, Director General of the Royal Cavalry, said that this qualification for the World Endurance Cup in France 2024 is an achievement for the Royal Cavalry at the international level, which

comes with the continuous support from the His Majesty the Sultan to spread the name of the Sultanate of Oman in various forums.

He added that the Royal Cavalry specialists had drawn up a plan and goals to ensure qualification and competition in the upcoming World Endurance Cup in France 2024, explaining that the work plan for qualification was launched after the Abu Dhabi 2023 Endurance World Cup, which included participation and competition with a group of riders and horses in a number of international races.

Organised by the International Equestrian Federation in various countries of the world, the riders participated in several qualifying races.



### SHURA COUNCIL

## < FROM A1 Shura to host minister of higher education, research and innovation

The ninth regular sitting of the first annual session (2023-2024) of the tenth term (2023-2027) was chaired by Sheikh Khalid bin Hilal Al-Maawali and attended by the Majlis members and the Secretary General, Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Nadabi.

The Shura is scheduled to host Dr. Rahma bint Ibrahim Al-Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in a public sitting on Monday.

She will present her ministry's statement, covering key areas such as policies on higher education, research, innovation and relevant legislation aligned with Oman Vision 2040.



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COMMENTARY

# Why don't holidays last forever?



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

The Eid holiday has passed so quickly that it has left my head reeling. Why don't holidays last forever?

I woke up in the morning yesterday and looked dreadingly outside. It was only seven in the morning but people were warming up their cars and I could see my neighbours' faces looking gloomy as they prepared to go to work.

I let out a long groan that nearly gave a heart attack to the cat who made its home in my garden. It is alright for you, my furry friend, I told the animal, you can lie all day under that tree with no worries. Some of us have email reminders coming from everywhere to go back to work.

Talking about work colleagues, they are kind of people who don't take deadlines kindly. They would write brisk messages that say, "send it asap" or "let's have it at the earliest."

We don't need to go anywhere, camping or even fly off to a foreign country to feel good. Spending short breaks at home can be a real holiday because venturing outdoors is like being at work. Anyway, short holidays are always hectic and they leave you

more tired than normal working days. At least that is true for many people.

On closer scrutiny, I find public holidays are more than a break. All you may need is to remove the mental 'working cap' you have been wearing on normal days and put on a new one. This way, you remove your old personality and transform yourself into a new person. You can feel the new lightness in yourself because mentally, you shed the weight of responsibility away.

Hopefully, when the holiday is over, you can become a new person. A better version of yourself and you may feel good about yourself. The only problem is that, when you are back to your office, you must not allow yourself to let the old stress in.

Most of you would say, 'that is better said than done.' Why? Because while holidays may give us an excuse to walk away from the old routines, they never define us or restructure who we are. So we need to prepare ourselves

mentally when we come back so not to create stress but to be in complete harmony where we left off.

I know what I am going to do in the next Eid holiday. I have got it all figured it out. I would stay at home. I would pretend I have lost my memory and I would have no recollection of anything. If my wife shows concern, I would look at her as if I had never seen her before. I would even ask loudly, "what is this woman doing in my house?"

When my editors send me reminders, I would write back, "write it yourself this time!"

This way, I can sit outside in my garden, talking to the ungrateful cat and watch the birds fight each other for food. With any luck, I would even have the courage to demolish that large nest of wasps. In other words, I would do nothing during the entire blessed break. I will also ignore the bills that accumulate on the hall's table and delay the payments.

# NCSI survey seeks response on quality of govt services



The opinion poll is carried out over the phone, targeting a random sample of customers of government entities

**MUSCAT:** The third edition of an opinion poll on beneficiaries' satisfaction with government services will be conducted by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) from Monday, 24 June.

The survey will run till 30 November 2024.

**Opinions of customers**  
The survey aims at identifying the opinions of customers with the services provided by government entities, assess the level of satisfaction with aspects related to submitting or completing the requested services, identifying the opinion of beneficiaries of electronic services and evaluating the level of satisfaction in order to improve the quality of the provided services.

The opinion poll survey is carried out over the phone, targeting a random sample of customers of government entities during the period of the last quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024 in accordance with a set of basic criteria for evaluating government services. -ONA



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# Jabal Al Akhdar farms produce 20 tonnes of roses



The remains of rose petals are used in the manufacture of soap and fertilisers, which contribute to the fertility of agricultural lands

Times News Service

**JABAL AL AKHDAR:** The quantity of Al Jabal Al Akhdar roses produced at the Business Centre and Incubators at the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate during the current agricultural season 2024 reached approximately 20 tonnes. There was an increase in production of nine tonnes over the last season in 2023, with the estimated value of OMR200,000. Issam bin Saif Al-Zakwani, a senior executive at the Business and Incubators Centre at the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, said that the rose water is used in a number of ways, including

as a flavour in food and beverages and other industries, and it has recently been introduced into cosmetics industries in the manufacturing of aromatic soaps and creams. He pointed out that the remains of rose petals are used in the manufacture of soap and fertilisers, which contribute to the fertility of agricultural lands. He stressed that the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, represented by the Business Centre and Incubators, supports the craftsmen and entrepreneurs in the state by organising training workshops for them in many fields, such as training in the manufacture of rose water and various aromatic oils such as rose oil, frankincense oil, and other oils. It is worth noting that the Business Centre and Incubators in Jabal Al Akhdar includes a number of departments, including a training hall for distilling aromatic plants and producing essential oils, a department for training entrepreneurs and craftsmen, and the Omani Crafts House to display the centre's and craftsmen's products (oils, aromatics, textiles, pottery, silver, and others). In addition, the centre includes a rose farm having more than 2,700 trees of different varieties. The centre, in cooperation with some concerned parties, has provided business opportunities that are commensurate with current trends to boost the local and foreign economy.



ROSE WATER IS USED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. IT CAN BE USED AS A FLAVOUR IN FOOD AND BEVERAGES AND OTHER INDUSTRIES. IT HAS RECENTLY BEEN INTRODUCED INTO COSMETICS INDUSTRIES SUCH AS IN THE MANUFACTURING OF AROMATIC SOAPS AND CREAMS.



MARITIME SECTOR

Oman to celebrate International Seafarers’ Day today

**MUSCAT:** The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, will celebrate World Seafarers’ Day on Monday, under the aegis of Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Zaabi, Secretary General at the Ministry of Defence.

The annual celebration of International Seafarers’ Day comes as an appreciation by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for the rich maritime history of the Sultanate of Oman and an affirmation of the glorious role of seafarers working in this sector.

It also comes from the Ministry’s belief in the important role of maritime affairs, enhancing its

economic role, and stimulating its contribution to the local product, in addition to its keenness to boost employment.

In addition to the Ministry’s speech, the ceremony includes a review of the achievements of the maritime sector in the Sultanate of Oman, holding an accompanying exhibition for the participating entities, holding dialogue and discussion sessions, reviewing specialised working papers, and honoring the sponsors and distinguished workers in the maritime sector. It is noteworthy that the International Maritime Organisation has approved the annual celebration of World Seafarers’ Day to highlight the desired role of this important sector. — **ONA**



UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Saudi Arabia participates in debate on cybersecurity

**RIYADH:** The National Cybersecurity Authority has participated in a high-level open debate on “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Addressing Evolving Threats in Cyberspace”, held recently at the United Nations Security Council.

Taking part in the debate were UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, senior officials, and UN member states’ representatives.

The Saudi delegation was headed by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Permanent Representative to the UN Dr. Abdulaziz bin Mohamed Al-Wasel. It included National Cybersecurity Authority representatives. The debate aimed to promote shared understanding of cybersecurity issues and strengthen the UN Security Council’s role in addressing cyber threats. It stressed that malicious activities in cyberspace have the potential to undermine international peace and security.

The Kingdom underscored the importance of creating a secure and reliable cyberspace that fosters growth and prosperity, stressing that improving cybersecurity is essential to safeguarding the vital interests and national security of states. — **SPA**

New project to safeguard financial needs of Qatari families launched

The programme is part of a prime Ministry of Social Development and Family’s strategy aimed at transforming Qatari society into a productive community



transforming Qatari society into a productive community, reducing irresponsible consumption, and paving the way to prepare future generations to draw on diversified income sources that keep pace with global changes while preserving the resources of families and society. Also, the project targets newly employed individuals, those planning to get married, and borrowers, empowering them with personal economic management tools.

Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali

bin Nasser Al Misnad said MSDF intends to build financial awareness based on Islamic values in spending, as well as relying on models for managing financial life that are closely intertwined with the variables of global economic movements, emphasising that the Ministry seeks to steer youth and newly formed families away from excessive consumption and unnecessary luxuries, to build an informed and sustainable society where future generations are ensured equal opportunities for prosperity and sustainability.

The project targets newly employed individuals, those planning to get married, and borrowers, empowering them with personal economic management tools

Her Excellency added that the project primarily aims to transform citizens, families, and society in general into smart consumers who are aware of their steps, to not fall prey to consumer temptations targeting affluent communities.

The project aims to have a societal impact on two levels, namely the behavioral impact by reinforcing individuals’ orientation towards economic management that sustains societal prosperity and optimises individual income utilisation and the cognitive impact by promoting societal awareness of financial planning mechanisms, avoiding pitfalls such as extravagance, borrowing, and irresponsible consumption.

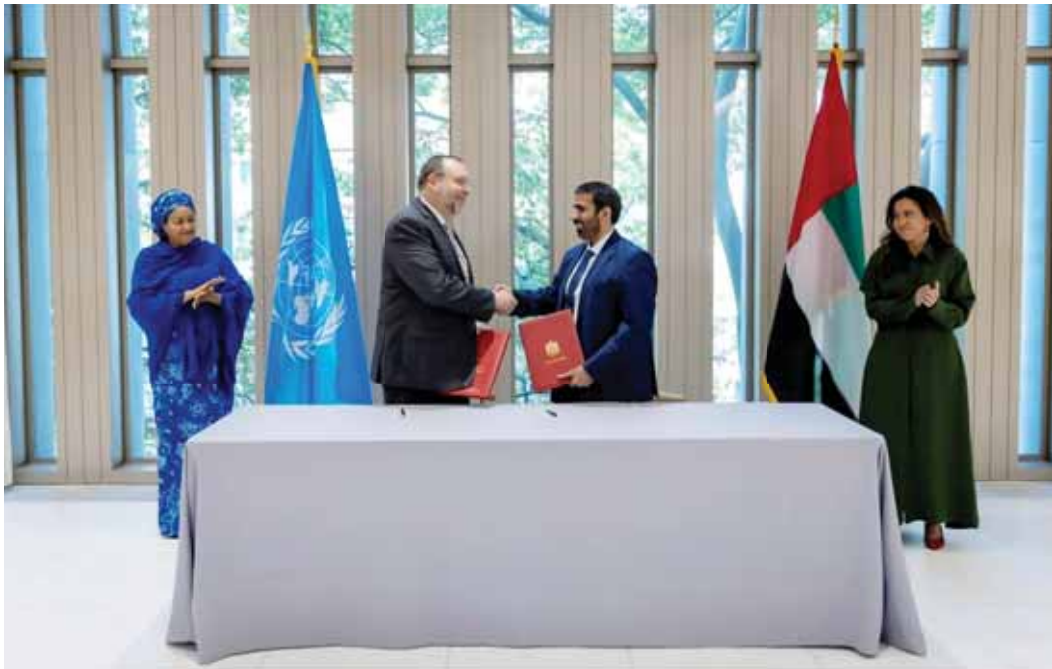
Additionally, the project intends to imbue citizens and young people with financial planning skills to serve as a roadmap in achieving financial goals and maintaining wealth by avoiding waste and extravagance, through which citizens can create a comprehensive picture of their income and paths, identify key priorities, and distinguish them from secondary luxuries.

The project primarily pursues the elimination of debtors in Qatar and enhances the financial situation of the most needy groups by empowering them with financial management tools.

It is implemented in collaboration with several state institutions supported by the Social and Sport Contribution Fund ‘DAAM’, alongside the Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani Social Welfare Foundation.

MSDF hopes that the project will pave the way for alleviating debt burdens within society, benefiting from financial life skills, and strategic planning for responsible spending. — **ONA**

UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME



UAE contributes \$25mn for humanitarian efforts in Sudan

**NEW YORK:** The United Arab Emirates has signed an agreement with the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to provide emergency food assistance to populations affected by the crisis in Sudan and South Sudan.

This includes refugees, host communities, internally displaced people, and returnees impacted by the war.

The agreement, formalised between the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and WFP, was signed on the behalf of the UAE by Sultan Al Shamsi, Assistant Minister for International Development Affairs, and on the behalf of WFP by Matthew Nims, Director of Washington Office, and in the presence of Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs, and Amina Mohammed,

Deputy Secretary-General, at a special ceremony at the UAE Mission to the UN in New York.

**Acute food insecurity**

Nearly 17.7 million people in Sudan and 7.1 million in South Sudan facing acute food insecurity as a result of war in Sudan.

To help alleviate this crisis, UAE has committed a total of US\$25 million in aid: US\$20 million for Sudan and US\$5 million for South Sudan.

**Lifesaving food operations**

Cindy McCain, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, said, “WFP welcomes all pledges towards our lifesaving food operations in Sudan. With this contribution, we will be able to assist vulnerable people who are at risk of sliding into famine.”

This contribution is part of UAE’s US\$70 million commitment announced in April at the “International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and Neighbouring Countries” to UN agencies and humanitarian organisations to alleviate the severe humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

**Widespread hunger**

Lana Zaki Nusseibeh stated, “With widespread hunger in Sudan and neighbouring countries, our partnership with WFP will assist those most vulnerable facing the devastating ramifications of this war. We cannot allow another famine to unfold in Sudan. The long-term impacts of famine, particularly on children, are incalculable. This is a call to action to halt famine in its tracks.” — **WAM**

# ANNOUNCEMENT

The Secretariat General for National Celebration announces to tender for Renewed Renaissance of Oman Festival.

| Tender no | Tender name                                     | Grade    | Last date of submission | Tender fee |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|------------|
| 2024/1    | EVENTs for Renewed Renaissance of Oman Festival | (1), (2) | 22/7/2024               | 50 (RO)    |

Those who are registered with Tender Board qualified in these fields carryout the projectly may collect the tender documents from the Office of Secretariat General for National Celebration in Madinat Aalam near Oman newspaper, during the work hours, on working days from Sunday 23 of June 2024. Tenderer should submit their documents stating Grade. Registration certificates and relevant papers permit, issued by the concerned authorities when collecting tender documents.

The tender should be submitted in red sealed wax envelope, addressed to H.M. Secretariat General for Celebration. Tenderer should enclose approved Bank Guarantee or certified cheque for value of %1 of tender sum valid for 90 days and to be addresses to Secretariat General for Celebration.

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The Secretariat is not bound to accept the lowest offer or any offer.

# ISRO achieves third consecutive success in ‘Pushpak’ safe landing

The winged vehicle, named ‘Pushpak’, was released from an Indian Air Force Chinook Helicopter at an altitude of 4.5 kilometre

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday achieved another success in the Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) landing experiment (LEX). The third and final test in the series of LEX (03) was conducted at 07:10 IST at the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) in Chitradurga, Karnataka.

Following the success of the RLV LEX-01 and LEX-02 missions, RLV LEX-03 re-demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of the RLV under more challenging release conditions (cross range of 500 m against 150 m for LEX-02) and more severe wind conditions. The winged vehicle, named ‘Pushpak’, was released from an Indian Air Force Chinook Helicopter at an altitude of 4.5 km.

From a release point 4.5 km away from the runway, Pushpak autonomously executed cross-range correction manoeuvres, approached the runway, and performed a precise horizontal landing at the runway centerline.

Due to this vehicle’s low lift-to-drag ratio aerodynamic configuration, the landing velocity exceeded 320 kmph, compared to 260 kmph for a commercial aircraft and 280 kmph for a typical fighter aircraft. After touchdown, the vehicle’s velocity was reduced to nearly 100 kmph using its brake parachute, after which the landing gear brakes were employed for deceleration and stop on the



Following the success of the RLV LEX-01 and LEX-02 missions, RLV LEX-03 re-demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of the Reusable Launch Vehicle under more challenging release conditions

runway. During this ground roll phase, Pushpak utilises its rudder and nose wheel steering system to autonomously maintain a stable and precise ground roll along the runway.

This mission simulated the approach and landing interface and high-speed landing conditions for a vehicle returning from space, reaffirming ISRO’s expertise in acquiring the most critical technologies required for the development of a RLV. Through this mission, the advanced guidance algorithm catering to longitudinal and lateral

plane error corrections, which is essential for the future Orbital Re-entry Mission, has been validated.

Notably, the RLV-LEX uses multisensor fusion, including sensors like an Inertial sensor, Radar altimeter, Flush air data system, Pseudolite system and NavIC. Notably, the RLV-LEX-03 mission reused the winged body and flight systems as such without any modification, from the LEX-02 mission, demonstrating the robustness of ISRO’s capability of design and reuse flight systems for multiple missions. The mission, led by

VSSC, was a collaborative effort involving multiple ISRO centres (SAC, ISTRAC, SDSC-SHAR), with significant support from the Indian Air Force (IAF), Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Regional Centre for Military Airworthiness (RCMA) under the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC), National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, Indian aerospace industrial partners, Indian Oil Corporation of India, and Airport Authority of India.

S Somanath, Chairman, ISRO/Secretary, Department of Space, congratulated the team for their efforts in maintaining the success streak on such complex missions. Dr S Unnikrishnan Nair, Director of VSSC, emphasised that this consistent success boosts ISRO’s confidence in the critical technologies essential for future orbital re-entry missions. — ANI

THROUGH INDIAN GRID

## Nepal to export 40MW power to Bangladesh

**NEW DELHI:** India and Bangladesh on Saturday agreed to continue to expand their power and energy collaboration and together develop intra-regional electricity trade, including of competitively-priced power generated from clean energy projects in India, Nepal and Bhutan, through the Indian electricity grid.

Significant agreements encompassing connectivity, commerce and power sector were signed during the visit of Sheikh Hasina to India.

An announcement was made about the commencement of the export of 40 MW of power from Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian grid.

Bilateral meeting

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina, who held a bilateral meeting on Saturday, articulated their shared vision for peace, prosperity and development of the two neighbours and the entire region driven by connectivity, commerce and collaboration.

As part of sub-regional connectivity initiatives, India will extend transit facilities for the movement of Bangladesh goods to Nepal and Bhutan through the railway network.

“We are committed to early operationalization of the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement to promote sub-regional connectivity. In this context, we welcome a new MOU on Railway Connectivity as well as the decision to commence goods-train service from Gede-Darshana through Chilahati-Haldibari up to Hasimara via Dalgaoon railhead (as and when operationalized) at the India-Bhutan border,” the vision document said. — ANI

FEDERAL TRANSPORT MINISTER

## Germany’s autobahn bridges falling apart

**BERLIN:** At the end of May 2024, the Moseltal bridge made for an unusual sight. Twenty-four bright red trucks had been parked close together in the middle of the wide autobahn bridge at a height of 136 metres (446 feet). The 960-tonne load was being used to test how much the 50-plus-year-old structure, now badly worn and damaged, could still withstand. In early 2023, cracks were discovered throughout the steel structure of the nearly 1-kilometre long bridge. The test results are still being evaluated.

The Moseltal bridge is not an isolated case. In Germany, as many as 5,000 of the 40,000 bridges along the country’s autobahns are in such poor condition that they urgently need repair. All bridges are inspected regularly and assigned grades based on their structural condition.

More than half of the autobahn bridges were built before 1985, including most of the major valley bridges in former West Germany. As they were designed for less traffic and lighter vehicles, the bridges are now so overloaded that many are showing signs of deterioration. On top of that, too little has been done in recent years to maintain them.

It is not possible to renovate them all at the same time. Federal Transport Minister Volker Wissing has called it a generational undertaking and wants to complete around 400 bridges per year. “We are setting new priorities in order to tackle the modernisation of bridges strategically and in the most sensible order,” he said after the first “bridge summit” in Berlin in 2022.

Strategies for bridge renovation

To do that, planning, procedures, and coordination will need to be



simplified to speed up renovation and new construction. An important question when setting priorities: How long can a dilapidated bridge still be used? Setting a speed limit and closing it to heavy vehicles could extend a bridge’s life, but even these kinds of restrictions cannot rule out a sudden collapse.

In late 2021, the Rahmede bridge in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia was found to be so badly damaged that it had to be closed due to the risk of collapse. It was finally demolished in 2023 and new construction is underway. The first section is not due to be completed until 2026 at the earliest.

This is a disaster for the region. Before the closure, around 48,000 cars and almost 16,000 trucks crossed the bridge every day. Although traffic is being diverted over a wide area, thousands of vehicles still pass through the small town of Lüdenscheid and the neighboring villages every day.

Residents complain of kilometer-long traffic jams, extreme noise, and pollution. The lack of a bridge also means that alternative routes in the region are congested.

As a result, six other bridges are no longer able to bear the load, have been closed as a result or are only open for limited use.

Economic impact of infrastructure problems

The regional economy has felt the impact. Companies are harder to reach, commutes are longer, and businesses are suffering — including retailers and restaurants along busy downtown routes, where too much traffic has driven away customers.

In 2022, the German Economic Institute (IW) presented an “economic damage assessment,” which found that companies in the region around Lüdenscheid will see a 2% reduction in their workforce. And the economy will shrink by €300 million (\$326 million) a year.

“The negative effects of the bridge closure will add up to at least €1.8 billion over the next five years,” the study said. “Every year that the bridge is completed earlier, hundreds of millions of euros could be saved.”

But speeding up construction is not so simple. Large infrastructure projects often require years

of advance planning. And in Germany, there are regulations that require precise and often lengthy inspections, especially for large projects.

Planning and public participation

In the planning approval process, the concerns of neighboring communities also have to be considered, as do environmental restrictions. The idea is that the more people are involved in the project, the more likely it is that the public will agree to the large infrastructure projects.

But this lengthens projects considerably, even by international standards. One example is the construction of the Fehmarnbelt tunnel under the Baltic Sea between Germany and Denmark. On the German side, the authorities in the state of Schleswig-Holstein received 3,100 objections and comments that filled 41 binders. In Danish public hearings, there were only 42 comments from authorities, companies, and citizens.

The German government is trying to speed things up. A law was introduced at the end of 2023 that will eliminate the need for



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IN RWANDA

## Campaigns begin ahead of presidential and legislative polls

**KIGALI:** Campaigning started on Saturday in Rwanda ahead of next month’s presidential and legislative elections.

Three presidential candidates are in the race including incumbent President Paul Kagame of the ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), Frank Habineza of the opposition Democratic Green Party of Rwanda and Philippe Mpayimana, an independent candidate.

Kagame, who has been in power since 2000, launched his campaign in Musanze district, northern Province, where he told a huge rally that the RPF politics is about ensuring the development of all Rwandans without leaving anyone behind.

“Democracy is about personal choice of what you want and freedom of choice. In (a) democracy no one chooses for you, and that should be clear...that choice depends on Rwanda’s uniqueness,” he said to applause from the crowd.

“We overcame a lot together, and so much more will be achieved,” Kagame told thousands of supporters dressed in party colors.

The RPF candidate will address rallies at 19 campaign sites during the three-week campaign trail.

RPF’s manifesto for the next five years unveiled earlier this year will be to build on what has been achieved so far toward the country’s national Vision 2050 which aims at achieving sustainable development and better quality of life for every Rwan-



dan, according to the party’s chairperson.

Kagame, 66, has accused Western countries of adopting “double standards” on democracy, following criticism about his long stay in power. He won the last election in 2017 for a seven-year term with 98.63 percent of the vote, according to official data.

Kagame is seeking reelection following a 2015 constitutional amendment that allowed him to run for three more terms. The constitutional changes allowed Kagame to run for a seven-year third term in 2017. The amended constitution, however, reduced the presidential term limits to five years from 2024.

Habineza on his part began his campaign in the Gasabo District of Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, where he addressed supporters while Mpayimana launched his campaign in eastern Rwanda’s Kirehe District.

Meanwhile, campaigns were launched in different parts of the country for more than 500 parliamentary candidates contesting for 80 seats in the lower chamber of parliament. — Xinhua

# Israeli occupation forces bomb southern Gaza and Nuseirat camp

The IOF artillery targeted the western and southern areas of Rafah city, south of the Gaza Strip, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the region, and it destroyed several homes in Brazil neighbourhood, south of Rafah

**GAZA:** The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) bombarded a house in Sabra neighbourhood in southern Gaza City on Sunday, and another in the central Gaza Strip, murdering ten Palestinians.

Palestinian news agency (Wafa) reported local sources as saying that the IOF's warplanes carried out an airstrike, which targeted a house in Sabra neighbourhood in southern Gaza City, murdering eight civilians and injuring others.

The occupation's airstrikes also struck near the power station in Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza, murdering two more civil-



ians and injuring several others, the sources added.

The IOF artillery targeted the western and southern areas of Rafah city, south of the Gaza Strip, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the region, and it destroyed several homes in Brazil neighbourhood, south of Rafah, Wafa added.

Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli occupation's extreme and unprecedented genocide on the Gaza Strip continues from all sides (air, land and sea), murdering at least 37,551 and injuring at least 85,911 others, while thousands of victims remain under the rubble.

**69% of schools housing the displaced in Gaza damaged by Israeli strikes: UNRWA**

The United Nations Relief and

Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) revealed today that 69 percent of the school buildings serving as shelters for displaced persons in Gaza have been directly damaged or hit by Israeli airstrikes.

In a brief statement posted on X, UNRWA emphasised that there is no safe place in Gaza. The agency condemned the blatant disregard for international humanitarian law and called for an immediate ceasefire.

**Female detainees face extremely difficult conditions in Israeli jails**

The Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs Commission said that female detainees in Damoun Prison face extremely difficult detention

conditions, especially after October 7, 2023.

The Commission said in a press statement on Sunday, quoting a detainee, 24, from the city of Ramallah, that the female detainees are suffering from difficult conditions, noting that she is in a room with 10 female detainees, and there are only four beds available, and that there are female detainees sleeping on the floor.

The food is also poor in quantity and quality.

Regarding the circumstances of her detention, the detainee told the Commission's lawyer that the occupation forces detained her from her home at 3:00am, tied her with chains, then took her to Ofer Prison where she stayed there until 6:00am. before she was trans-



ferred her to the Beit El area until 9:00am.

She said she was only allowed to go the bathroom once before she was taken back to Ofer Prison again for fifty minutes, during which she was subjected to interrogation by a plainclothes officer. She was then transferred to Al-Maskobiyya for 16 continuous days, after which she was transferred to Hasharon Prison.

She was tied hand and foot for seven straight hours and without food.

She added that the prison administration tried to bargain with her and offered her to study for a master's degree outside the West Bank on the condition that she would not return there again, but she refused.

**Israeli colonists storm Al-Aqsa Mosque under police protection**

On Sunday, groups of Israeli colonists, under the protection of Israeli police, broke into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied Jerusalem.

Eyewitnesses reported that dozens of colonists entered the holy site in groups, conducted provocative tours throughout the compound, and performed Talmudic rituals.

During the incursion, Israeli police imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers to the mosque. Additionally, Israeli police intensified the restrictions at the gates of the Old City, effectively turning the area into a military zone. — Wafa

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

## One person killed, 7 others injured in US

**KENTUCKY:** One person was killed and seven others were injured in a shooting outside a nightclub in Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday, according to media report.

First responders found two people injured with gunshot wounds when they reached the spot outside H2O Lounge at 12:47 am (local time), according to the Louisville Police Metro Department's statement. Later, one of the victims, a man, was pronounced dead.

The police said the second person was taken to hospital with critical, life-threatening injuries. Later, medical staff reported that

another six victims, all adults, reached area hospitals for treatment after the shooting.

According to Aaron Ellis, a public information officer with the police department, all six people were shot. The police said, "Those injuries are believed to be non-life threatening."

The police did not mention any information about the suspect and it's unclear how many people opened fire or what caused the shooting.

Police said, "The relationship of the victims, if any, is not known at this time," adding that the shooting remains under investigation. — ANI



## CHINA LAUNCHES ASTRONOMICAL SATELLITE

The People's Republic of China launched an astronomical satellite, a Long March-2C rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in the southwest Sichuan Province, the result of nearly 20 years of hard work between Chinese and French scientists, to capture gamma-ray bursts which flicker like fireworks in the farthest reaches of the universe. Four scientific instruments are installed on the satellite, two of which have been developed by China and two by France. — ONA

NEW REGULATIONS

## Can Greece's new six-day workweek be a model for others?

**ATHENS:** For most people, labour law can be boring. But when someone suggests working an extra day, people start to pay attention.

In Greece, new regulations are coming into effect on July 1 that make this possible.

After that day certain industrial and manufacturing facilities, as well as businesses providing 24/7 services, can move to a six-day workweek instead of the traditional five, says Emmanouil Savoidakis, head of the labor law practice at Politis & Partners, a law firm based in Athens that specializes in business law. Tourism and food service industries are excluded from this new arrangement.



For those impacted, it would mean a normal legal workweek of 48 hours instead of the previous 40. In theory, employees can choose to work more if companies want them to. Those who work more will also be paid more.

The Greek government says the new rules will simplify administration, reduce probation periods to six months and shine a light on overtime.

The legislation is also supposed to help fill holes in the skilled-labor market by combating undeclared work and offering incentives like free employee training to help "upskill and adapt to evolving market demands," said Savoidakis, who has over 15 years of legal experience. Importantly "the six-day workweek is not universally applicable but is restricted to certain business sectors."

**Can this be a role model for other countries?**

Greece has many challenges like low wages, high unemployment and a declining population, but it is not alone. Yet working more stands in stark contrast to most of its European neighbors.

Companies in several countries like Germany, Belgium, France, the UK, Spain and Iceland have been experimenting with different workweek models. Either squeezing the 40-hour week into four days of more intense 10-hour days. Or simply getting 100% of the work done in just 80% of the time, while still receiving a full salary.

Earlier this year in Germany, the national railway company Deutsche Bahn and the train drivers' union agreed to gradually reduce the standard workweek from 38 to 35 hours. Demands for a

shorter workweek are being made in other sectors as well.

**A Greek recovery from bad times**

Greece though is taking another path. And this isn't the first time the country has been confronted with a six-day workweek. During their debt crisis, which started in 2009 and nearly got the country kicked out of the eurozone, some lenders demanded that the Greeks work more.

The country accepted bailouts worth billions of euros that came with strict austerity measures. Yet, a sixth day of work was not introduced.

Now Greece is back on track and GDP growth is expected to be 2.2% this year and 2.3% next year, above the eurozone average, according to European Commission calcula-

tions released in mid-May. Unemployment is expected to fall from a forecast 10.3% this year to 9.7% in 2025.

Still, during the past decade many young, well-educated Greeks have left the country because they saw better opportunities abroad. The population is expected to shrink from 10.7 million in 2019 to around 10.4 million in 2029, worsening an existing shortage of skilled workers in some sectors like agriculture, tourism and construction.

At the same time, Greeks already put in some of the longest hours per year, according to the OECD. Although the OECD numbers are sometimes difficult to compare, the trend is clear. Greeks work significantly more than their counterparts in the UK, the US and Germany.

**Making the law reflect a Greek reality**

On the positive side, the minimum monthly wage for white-collar workers rose to €830 (\$887) from April 1, up from €650 in 2019. The average monthly wage is now around €1,250, and the Greek prime minister recently announced he plans to bring it up to €1,500 by 2027.

But these wage increases do not make up for previous wage reductions and persistent high inflation that have forced many citizens to work two jobs to make ends meet, says Jens Bastian from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin.

The new regulations just "retroactively adjust the legal context to the reality existing in the Greek labor market for years," he said, which simply means many people already work more than five days.

Working longer and earning more could even "land various employees in higher personal income tax and social security brackets, thus neutralizing prospective wage gains by working longer hours," Bastian told DW.

**Structural change instead of longer hours**

Moreover, the new regulations give employers a lot of sway. Can jobseekers refuse the offer and stick to their current five-day workweek?

"The negotiations between employer and employee can include the former demanding and the latter refusing to work longer," said

Bastian.

In Greece, many working time arrangements lack trade union representation, in particular at small and medium-sized companies. "Keeping your job may be the bigger incentive than refusing to work longer hours at the insistence of the employer," Bastian said.

Emmanouil Savoidakis from the Politis & Partners law firm in Athens says several corporate clients are already interested in a six-day workweek "to enhance their operational capacity and better serve their customers, particularly those in industries facing labor shortages and high seasonal demand." He could see it rolled out in businesses with fluctuating workloads like retail, manufacturing and health care.

Much of this is just a short-term fix though. A six-day workweek can't solve Greece's broader economic problems, said Bastian. Longer working hours won't make up for missing personnel in the long term and other countries should pay attention.

Greece needs to make structural changes that include "incentives such as viable career trajectories, equal opportunity and higher wages that reflect people's professional expertise," said Bastian.

"In that respect, Greece has a long and winding road to go until it catches up with most other countries in Europe. Working longer hours and Saturday is akin to taking a road in the opposite direction," he concluded. — DW

SPORTS

FORMULA ONE: SPANISH GRAND PRIX

Verstappen holds off Norris to claim win in Spain

**BARCELONA:** Red Bull's Max Verstappen prevailed in a tense, strategic battle with McLaren's Lando Norris to win the Spanish Grand Prix on Sunday.

Verstappen's seventh victory in 10 races this year hinged on a decisive opening phase of the race from the Dutchman.

Verstappen was in the lead by lap three while Norris stayed stuck behind Mercedes' George Russell for 15 laps. It left Norris too much to do and Verstappen was able to measure his pace to control the McLaren behind.

Lewis Hamilton took his first

podium finish of the year for Mercedes in third, ahead of Russell, while Charles Leclerc was fifth, leading home Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz.

The race underlined the fact that Red Bull have lost the massive advantage they held over the first five races of the season, but also that Verstappen is operating at a level of consistent excellence in the cockpit and will be tough to beat - not only for the championship, on which he has a stranglehold, but also on individual race weekends.

McLaren have been on Red



Bull's pace since the Miami Grand Prix in early May, and Verstappen has not taken a pole position since the Chinese Grand Prix in April.

Even so, Verstappen has won three of the past five races and consolidated his championship advantage. Norris has moved ahead



of Leclerc into second place but is 69 points behind Verstappen.

Verstappen grabbed the race by the throat with a brilliant open-

ing few laps. The Dutchman made a slightly better start than Norris and was able to fend off the Red Bull. Verstappen passed Norris on the inside as Russell took advantage of their tussle to pass both to grab the lead. McLaren's Oscar Piastri finished seventh, while Red Bull's Sergio Perez passed Pierre Gasly's Alpine late on to take eighth. Esteban Ocon took the final point in 10th place. - Agencies

Afghanistan stun Australia to keep semi-final hopes alive

Gurbaz shines with bat, Naib with ball as the Asian nation records a 21-run win at St Vincent in the ICC T20 World Cup

**ST VINCENT:** Afghanistan stunned former world champions Australia to keep their T20 World Cup hopes alive with a historic 21-run win in St Vincent on Saturday.

Needing a victory to avoid elimination, Afghanistan posted 148/6 on a challenging surface on the back of a superb opening stand of 118 between Rahmanullah Gurbaz (60) and Ibrahim Zadran.

They quickly reduced Australia to 32/3 in the chase before Glenn Maxwell's 35-ball half-century recovered the situation for the 2021 champions.



But just when Australia seemed to have the advantage, Gulbadin Naib (4/20) removed Marcus Stoinis and Tim David before taking the prize wicket of Maxwell.

From there, Australia collapsed from 106-6 to 113-9 and Afghanistan sealed the win - their first over Australia in any form of cricket - in the final over.

Pat Cummins had earlier taken

his second hat-trick in as many games - the first player to achieve the feat in T20 internationals - but despite Australia's fightback with the ball, Afghanistan's total proved to be beyond them.

Rashid Khan's side are now firmly back in contention to reach the semi-finals and face Bangladesh in their last Super Eight game on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Australia take on India in St Lucia on Monday and will likely need to win to progress to the last four.

A win for Australia would have taken them and India safely through to the semis with a game to spare.

Instead, the group has been brought to life thanks to a memorable Afghanistan win.

The first moment of intrigue came at the toss when Australia opted to bowl first at a ground where chasing has historically been difficult.

However, it quickly became apparent that batting was not going to be simple on a bouncy pitch offering movement for seamers and spinners alike.

"We were outplayed tonight," Marsh said. "I don't think it was won or lost at the toss, I was more than happy to bowl first."

Afghanistan's openers battled through some tricky opening overs before accelerating towards the end of the powerplay.

Gurbaz and Zadran picked their moments to attack superbly as the innings progressed but, with boundaries not always easy to come by, it was their tireless running between the wickets that really kept the momentum going.

Afghanistan, who are coached by former England batter Jonathan Trott, faltered once the partnership was broken with Cummins nipping in to claim his own landmark late in the innings but the openers had done more than enough to give their side a chance.

They got the ideal start in the

second innings, too, as Naveen-ul-Haq bowled Travis Head with a beauty third ball and then got rid of Australia skipper Mitchell Marsh with a slower ball.

When David Warner fell in the last over of the powerplay, Afghanistan were in control but they knew better than to think the job was done against Australia, especially with Maxwell at the crease.

The all-rounder produced one of the great innings to deny them at the 50-over World Cup in India last year and, for a time, he threatened to repeat the feat.

But this time Afghanistan would not be denied. Naib dragged them over the line almost single-handedly, taking four wickets - including the big one of Maxwell, caught at backward point - and then diving to take a stunning catch to get rid of Ashton Agar.

Adam Zampa was the last man to go, holing out off Azmatullah Omarzai with four balls left in the match as Afghanistan clinched a momentous triumph.

**Brief scores:** Afghanistan 148/6 (Gurbaz 60 (49); Cummins 3-28) beat Australia 127 all out in 19.2 overs (Maxwell 59 (41); Gulbadin 4-20). - Agencies

HISTORIC WIN

Our journey starts now, says Naib

**ST VINCENT:** After sealing arguably their greatest ever cricketing win [against Australia], Afghanistan's Gulbadin Naib promises this is just the beginning.

Gulbadin Naib, who collected a history-making four wickets, confirmed that the best is yet to come for this team. Maybe at this T20 World Cup, maybe not. But make no mistake, as a cricketing force, Afghanistan isn't going anywhere.

"Our journey starts now," Naib said when collecting his player of the match award.

"(Australia) is a big team, a world champion team, so for our cricket it's a big achievement (that) we can carry to the next level. In the last 10 years, we achieved a lot of goals, so this is the big achievement in our cricket. It's a great moment, not only for me, but my nation, my people. We were waiting (to beat Australia) for a long time."

Captain Rashid Khan echoed



Naib's raw emotion. "It's a massive win for us as a team and as a nation," he said post-game.

"Super proud of the guys and how they delivered. It's just the beginning now, for us, and (it's) a big game next one (against Bangladesh) and we have all the chances to get to the semis. It's so important for us and back home. People in Afghanistan are badly missing this win and I'm sure they are proud of us," said Rashid. - Agencies

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP: SUPER EIGHT

India drub Bangladesh to close on semi-finals

**ANTIGUA:** India edged closer to the T20 World Cup semi-finals with a statement 50-run win over Bangladesh on Saturday.

Hardik Pandya's unbeaten half-century helped India post an imposing 196/5 after being put in to bat in Antigua.

Bangladesh's batting struggles continued in the chase as they stuttered to 146/8 in a curiously subdued effort, with leg-spinner Kuldeep Yadav taking 3/19.

Quick bowler Tanzim Hasan's fiery double-wicket over and captain Najmul Hossain Shanto's 40 were the Tigers' only genuine performances of intent.

The win sees India remain unbeaten in the World Cup so far, alongside South Africa and Australia.

They are well-placed for a semi-final spot and are gathering momentum as they approach the knockout stages, with this victory following the preceding convincing effort against Afghanistan.

Virat Kohli found form after just 29 runs in his previous four



innings in the tournament, adding a fluent 37, followed by cameos from Rishabh Pant and Shivam Dube to support the destructive Hardik.

After a strong fightback in the middle, Bangladesh wilted at the death with 76 runs coming from the final five overs as the bowlers lost all discipline in the face of India's aggression.

India's trophy hunt is gathering pace and the all-round team effort against Bangladesh will have

boosted their hopes further.

Kohli and Rohit provided a quickfire start, Pant maintained the acceleration and then Dube and Hardik finished the job with a brutal display to close the innings.

There were 13 sixes hit in total, with plenty of intent shown throughout the innings, with Suryakumar Yadav's six the only batting failure but the world's best T20 batter certainly has plenty of credit in the bank.

With the ball, they were clinical despite Bangladesh barely playing a shot in anger.

Ravindra Jadeja bowled three valuable overs having been scarcely used in the preceding games, Arshdeep Singh and Jasprit Bumrah provided their standard unwavering consistency at the top while it beggars belief that Kuldeep struggles to find a place in their usual starting XI.

He bowled with remarkable control and utilised his canny variations and Bangladesh's batters had no answers. Opener Tanzid Hasan and Tawhid Hridoy were lbw for 29 and four respectively, before Shakib Al Hasan was caught at mid-off.

India captain Rohit Sharma said: "I thought we played really well today, adapted to the conditions and overall, we were clever with the bat and we used the conditions really well with the ball.

**Brief scores:** India 196/5 (Hardik 50\*, Tanzim 2-32) beat Bangladesh 146/8 (Shanto 40, Kuldeep 3-19, Bumrah 2-13). - Agencies

SUPER EIGHT SPECIALIST

India's spinner Kuldeep relishes Caribbean conditions

**ANTIGUA:** After spending the group stage waiting in the wings, Kuldeep Yadav continued his run as Super Eight specialist, taking 3/19 in India's comprehensive victory over Bangladesh in Antigua on Saturday.

Kuldeep has now taken five wickets across India's two Super Eight matches, after picking up 2 for 32 against Afghanistan on Thursday in Barbados.

India held Kuldeep back for the Caribbean leg of the tournament in the belief the pitches would suit his left-arm wrist-spin more than those in the USA. And, while he admitted he was keen to play in the group stages, he knew once he returned to the islands where he

made both his white-ball debuts for India, during the 2017 West Indies tour, his experience would be called upon.

"I was helping out the teammates and carrying the drinks [in the US]. That is more like playing," joked Kuldeep. "I would have loved to bowl there. But it's more like an Australian sort of wicket. But here I made my T20 [and] ODI debut back in 2017. I knew the conditions very well, just the length and trying to vary my pace. So it's perfect for spinners to come here and bowl."

While there was a sound reason to bring Kuldeep into the side on Caribbean surfaces, having a bowler play their first competitive match so late and at such a crucial



stage of a T20 World Cup is unusual. But Kuldeep said he didn't feel any added pressure playing for the first time in the tournament at the Super Eight stage.

"It's very important to play every game, take every game as a normal

game. Now obviously we playing at Super Eight, obviously we have a lot of pressure as well. We're going to play Australia in a couple of days' time. The wickets are good for spinners, as you have seen in the last few games as well. Nothing

changes. I've got four overs to bowl and that was my plan. Just sticking with the length and varying my pace. For me it's nice."

Kuldeep bowled his four overs from the Sir Andy Roberts End, which gave assistance to left-handed batters hitting into the wind on the leg-side and help to right-handers outside their off stump. But while the stiff cross breeze posed challenges, he said it was important not to overthink its effect.

"It was difficult from this end as a spinner because my rhythm is like, not like running rhythm, it's more like a one step and then aggressive. I didn't think about the wind, just the length matters. And

obviously reading the batter what they are expecting from me, just reading one step ahead, what they are thinking. So just keeping this in mind and changing the line and length, and obviously they were targeting the windy side, and just reacting to what they are doing.

"When the other team needs 10 runs or 12 runs per over and the batter's going against you my plan is to just stick with the length, and obviously when they try to attack you, if you have a proper plan against them and you are bowling in probably the better length, you have maximum chances of getting the batter out. So that is my thinking, not thinking I have to get him out, just the length." (With inputs from ESPNcricinfo.com)

INDIA'S FUTURE UNICORNS

The total worth of India's future unicorns will stand at \$58 billion, an increase of 1.2 per cent as compared to last year. Fintech sector in India leads with the highest number of companies that can become Unicorns in future. > **B2**

MARKET  
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,657.26 points, down by 0.47 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.91 per cent at 454.42 points. Ominvest, up 2.19 per cent, was the top gainer while Takaful Oman, down 4.00 per cent, was the top loser. > **B2**

# Producer price index falls to 1.7% in Oman

The prices of the mining and quarrying group decreased by 1.4 per cent, as the prices of crude oil and natural gas products declined by 1.5 per cent, stone and sand clay by 1.4 per cent, while the prices of metal ore products increased by 16.4 per cent



Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The prices of the mining and quarrying group decreased by 1.4 per cent, as the prices of crude oil and natural gas products declined by 1.5 per cent, stone and sand clay by 1.4 per cent, while the prices of metal ore products increased by

16.4 per cent.

The prices of the manufacturing industries group dropped by 2.6 per cent, 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 went down by 4.6 per cent,

the metal products, machinery and equipment group by 0.2 per cent. As for food products, beverages and textiles, they increased by 0.1 per cent.

Meanwhile, the prices of electrical energy group and water group increased by 0.5 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively. -**ONA**

## India's electronic manufacturing may reach \$500 billion by 2030

**NEW DELHI:** India needs to take critical actions to transform its electronic sector ecosystem from an 'import dependent assembly led manufacturing' to 'component level value-added manufacturing', highlights a report by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

As per the report, in 2023, the demand for components and sub-assemblies stood at \$45.5 billion to support \$102 billion worth of electronics production. This demand is expected to scale to \$240 billion to support the \$500 billion worth electronics production by 2030.

The priority components and sub-assemblies including PCBAs (Printed Circuit Board Assembly), are projected to grow at a robust CAGR (Compounded Annual Growth Rate) of 30 per cent, reaching \$139 billion by 2030.

The report also recommended the government to take key actions including a scheme to provide fiscal support, SPECS 2.0 (Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors) to be introduced, import tariffs on components like camera modules to be rationalised, and sign FTAs with European and African countries.

The report identifies 5 priority components/sub-assemblies of batteries (lithium-ion), camera modules, mechanicals, displays, and PCBs (Printed Circuit Board) which are categorized as



high priority for India. They cumulatively accounted for 43 per cent of the components demand in 2022 and are expected to grow to \$51.6 billion by 2030.

These components have either nominal production in India or are heavily import-dependent. India can hardly afford to sustain this trend of importing the priority components. Similarly, PCBA is a high potential category for India since most of the demand is met by imports. This segment is expected to grow by 30 per cent, leading to a demand creation of around \$87.46 billion by 2030.

However, manufacturing-related cost disabilities vis-a-vis other competing economies like China, Vietnam, and Mexico (10-20 per cent), lack of big domestic manufacturing corporations, lack of domestic design ecosystem for Indian companies, and lack of raw materials ecosystem add to the challenges that disable the domestic manufacturing of components and sub-assemblies in India. -**ANI**

J P MORGAN



## Global economy resilient with strong growth trends

**NEW DELHI:** The global economy is resilient with strong growth trends, low unemployment rates, and manageable inflation, highlights a report by J P Morgan, an investment banking company.

The report highlighted a significant rise in global equities, which have surged by 20 per cent over the past year. This growth is complemented by positive real yields offered by short-term government bonds.

"From a market perspective, global equities rose 20 per cent over the past year, and safe, short-term government bonds offer positive real yields," stated the report.

For the Emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), are also addressed in the report. It notes that AI is poised to have a profound impact on various sectors, though the exact trajectory of its influence remains uncertain. This cautious optimism reflects the broader market sentiment toward the transformative potential of AI.

On the subject of interest rates, the report projects that they will remain elevated for an extended period, which could significantly affect interest-rate-sensitive sectors. This sustained high-interest rate environment is a critical factor for investors to consider, as it influences borrowing costs and investment returns across various asset classes.

The report also offered strategic advice for investors facing the uncertainties of the coming year. It suggests a diversified investment approach, emphasizing sectors such as security, defence, and infrastructure to prepare for potential geopolitical conflicts. This recommendation aligns with the broader theme of resilience in the face of global instability.

Looking ahead to the upcoming US elections, the report anticipated significant global re-

percussions. The US is one of the world's strongest economies, and its political developments can ripple across global markets.

"US elections in November could have significant economic and market implications, which no one can predict with certainty. The relationship between the United States and China, the world's two largest economies and trading partners, seems to be in a state of inexorable decay," the report cautioned. This highlights the importance of monitoring US-China relations, which are increasingly strained.

The report mentioned the Inflation as a global challenge however; it is portrayed in a manageable light. Despite persistent inflationary pressures, other macroeconomic indicators across developed economies remain robust. Companies have adapted to the higher rate environment, and earnings are expected to grow, supported by balanced labour markets. This adaptability and growth potential add to the positive outlook for the second half of 2024.

The report concludes with an encouraging outlook for investors, suggesting that global equities will continue to be a primary driver of portfolio returns. Bonds, on the other hand, are expected to provide stability should global growth falter. This balanced perspective offers a reassuring backdrop for investors navigating the remainder of the year.

Overall, J.P. Morgan's mid-year report provides a comprehensive analysis of the global economy's strengths and challenges, urging investors to stay diversified and prepared for potential market disruptions. The combination of strong equities performance, positive real yields on bonds, and the strategic importance of AI and geopolitical factors presents a complex but promising investment landscape. -**ANI**

OETC

## Workshop discusses developments in cybersecurity and digital forensics

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** As part of its ongoing commitment to fortify cybersecurity measures and foster sector-wide collaboration, the Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) recently hosted the Cybersecurity Workshop 2024.

The two-day event, organised in partnership with the GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), focused on advancements in cybersecurity incidents, digital forensics, and the protection of operational technology environments within the electricity sector.

The workshop aimed to exchange expertise and discuss developments in cybersecurity incidents and digital forensics in the operational technology environment, as well as to discuss advanced technologies to improve the substations' security.

This workshop comes as part of OETC's endeavours to enhance the field of cybersecurity, in addition to its commitment to ensuring the security of the company's assets, data, and employees, sharing expertise and knowledge, and developing skills and capabilities in this area among various institutions within the sector at the national, regional, and international levels. The workshop included several topics presented by experts and specialists in the field from OETC, GCCIA, and the Oman National Computer Emergency Readiness Team. Discussions focused on



the OETC's approach to improving security measures for SCADA and control systems, cybersecurity developments targeting the infrastructure of power stations, incident response and recovery at power stations, the importance of security drills, and more.

Regarding cooperation with various related entities, Eng. Sultan Al-Rawahi, General Manager of Load Dispatch Center and Oman's representative in the Operational Committee in GCCIA pointed out OETC's ongoing and existing efforts and its commitment to continuous engagement with various institutions and sectors to enhance the knowledge, skills, and

capabilities of the company's employees in various fields.

Al-Rawahi added: "We prioritize the development of employees, improving their capabilities, and supporting them through various initiatives, activities, and projects. In this context, we enhance our communication with experts and host specialists from various fields and sectors at both local and international levels to provide a suitable platform for exchanging experiences and developing capabilities. Additionally, we aim to improve the level of performance, quality of work, and the operational technology environment in OETC specifically and in the sector generally, to meet higher levels of

aspirations and targets."

It is worth mentioning that OETC, a member of the Nama Group, is the only company responsible for the transmission and control of electricity across the Sultanate's network. The electricity is transmitted from production stations to distributed load centres in the governorates. The transmission network operates at a voltage of 132kV and above to cover most of the governorates in the Sultanate, whether in the north or the south. Furthermore, OETC manages the interconnection lines between Oman and the GCC interconnection network, which operates at a voltage of 220kV.

GREEN LOANS

## China Development Bank strengthens loan support for green and low-carbon industries

**BEIJING:** The China Development Bank, a major policy bank in the country, has strengthened financial support for the green and low-carbon industries.

The bank issued over 200 billion yuan (about \$28 billion) of green loans during the first five months of the year, and its growth rate exceeded that of all other types of loans within the bank's business.

It said the bank's cumulative issuance of carbon-reduction loans through a carbon-reduction credit facility has exceeded 110 billion yuan.

The bank said it has continued to enrich green financial products and services and actively sup-

port key sectors in energy conservation, pollution and carbon reduction, greening, and disaster prevention, among other tasks, to facilitate a comprehensive green transformation of economic and social development.

Looking ahead, the bank will enhance the quality and efficiency of green financial services and expand support for green transformation in key sectors, including energy, water resources, transportation, and urban-rural construction.

China has committed to the dual carbon goals of peaking carbon emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060. -**Xinhua**



MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Ominvest, up 2.19 per cent, was the top gainer while Takaful Oman, down 4.00 per cent, was the top loser



**MUSCAT:** The MSX index closed at 4,657.26 points, down by 0.47% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.91% at 454.42 points. Ominvest, up 2.19%, was the top gainer while Takaful Oman, down 4.00%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 716 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 1.3 million, with more than 7.24 million shares changing hands. Out of 37 traded securities, 6 advanced, 25 declined, and 6 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 517K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 330K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 187K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at

7,695.89 points, down 0.21%. Prices of Ominvest, Al Madina Takaful were up by 2.19%, 1.28% respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, Dhofar Insurance, Bank Nizwa, Al Madina Investments, Global Financial Investments were down by 4.00%, 3.81%, 1.91%, 1.75%, 1.45% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,989.33 points, down 0.66%. Prices of were up by respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Oman Cables Industry, Jazeera Steel Products, Oman Refreshment, Al Maha Ceramics were down by 1.75%, 1.70%, 1.41%, 1.24%, 0.55% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.81% before closing at 1,772.42 points. Prices of were up by respectively. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Renaissance Services, National Gas, Oman National Engineering, SMN Power Holding were down by 2.49%, 2.14%, 1.74%, 1.70%, 1.56% respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT  
STOCK  
EXCHANGE

INDICES

| Index              | High     | Low      | Value    | Prev. Value | Diff   | Diff% |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Industry Index     | 6,017.04 | 5,989.33 | 5,989.33 | 6,028.88    | -39.55 | -0.66 |
| Services Index     | 1,793.63 | 1,769.01 | 1,772.42 | 1,786.81    | -14.39 | -0.81 |
| FINANCIAL TRIDX    | 8,741.92 | 8,672.60 | 8,723.98 | 8,741.92    | -17.95 | -0.21 |
| SERVICES TR IDX    | 2,080.07 | 2,051.52 | 2,055.47 | 2,072.16    | -16.69 | -0.81 |
| FIXED INCOME INDEX | 1,069.10 | 1,069.10 | 1,069.10 | 1,069.10    | 0.00   | 0.00  |
| MSX Shariah Index  | 457.70   | 454.42   | 454.42   | 458.60      | -4.18  | -0.91 |
| MSX TR INDEX       | 6,503.23 | 6,455.44 | 6,466.97 | 6,497.78    | -30.81 | -0.47 |
| FINANCIAL INDEX    | 7,711.73 | 7,650.57 | 7,695.89 | 7,711.73    | -15.83 | -0.21 |
| INDUSTRIAL TR IDX  | 6,942.24 | 6,910.27 | 6,910.27 | 6,955.90    | -45.63 | -0.66 |
| MSX 30 INDEX       | 4,683.38 | 4,648.96 | 4,657.26 | 4,679.45    | -22.19 | -0.47 |

Trading Summary

|        |           |          |           |        |     |            |                |    |   |      |    |       |   |             |    |
|--------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------|-----|------------|----------------|----|---|------|----|-------|---|-------------|----|
| Volume | 7,244,447 | Turnover | 1,296,449 | Trades | 716 | Market Cap | 24,247,989,583 | Up | 6 | Down | 25 | Equal | 6 | Sec. Traded | 37 |
|--------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------|-----|------------|----------------|----|---|------|----|-------|---|-------------|----|

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 23

| ISIN            | SECURITY NAME                          | VOLUME    | TURNOVER  | TRADES | OPEN PRICE | HIGH  | LOW   | CLOSE PR. | PREV. CLOSE | DIFF (RD) | DIFF % | LAST PB | LAST BID | LAST OFFER | PBV VALUE | MARKET CAP    |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|------------|-------|-------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------|---------|----------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| REGULAR MARKET  |                                        |           |           |        |            |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |          |            |           |               |
| OM0000001533    | OMINVEST                               | 350       | 131       | 1      | 0.373      | 0.373 | 0.373 | 0.373     | 0.365       | 0.008     | 2.192  | 0.373   | 0.000    | 0.382      | 0.100     | 249,300,304   |
| OM0000004788    | MADINA TAKAFUL                         | 96,791    | 7,646     | 7      | 0.079      | 0.079 | 0.079 | 0.079     | 0.078       | 0.001     | 1.282  | 0.079   | 0.078    | 0.079      | 0.100     | 13,825,000    |
| OM0000004925    | ALBATINAH POWER                        | 186,500   | 13,236    | 10     | 0.071      | 0.072 | 0.070 | 0.072     | 0.072       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.072   | 0.070    | 0.072      | 0.100     | 48,591,895    |
| OM0000007811    | MUSANDAM POWER                         | 37,000    | 9,250     | 2      | 0.250      | 0.250 | 0.250 | 0.250     | 0.250       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.250   | 0.250    | 0.250      | 0.100     | 17,597,500    |
| OM0000003026    | OMAN TELECOM                           | 42,824    | 43,435    | 51     | 1.016      | 1.016 | 1.010 | 1.014     | 1.016       | -0.002    | -0.197 | 1.014   | 1.014    | 1.045      | 0.100     | 760,500,000   |
| OM0000002796    | BANK MUSCAT                            | 1,577,327 | 395,704   | 78     | 0.250      | 0.251 | 0.250 | 0.250     | 0.251       | -0.001    | -0.398 | 0.250   | 0.250    | 0.260      | 0.100     | 1,876,599,286 |
| OM0000003968    | OOREDOO                                | 44,902    | 13,070    | 55     | 0.292      | 0.293 | 0.290 | 0.290     | 0.292       | -0.002    | -0.685 | 0.290   | 0.290    | 0.298      | 0.100     | 188,773,827   |
| OM0000009072    | OQ GAS NETWORKS                        | 837,723   | 116,604   | 133    | 0.142      | 0.142 | 0.141 | 0.141     | 0.142       | -0.001    | -0.704 | 0.141   | 0.141    | 0.142      | 0.100     | 610,617,973   |
| OM0000003398    | SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK               | 1,813,275 | 246,635   | 19     | 0.137      | 0.137 | 0.136 | 0.136     | 0.137       | -0.001    | -0.730 | 0.136   | 0.135    | 0.136      | 0.100     | 758,505,493   |
| OM0000001483    | NATIONAL BANK OMAN                     | 14,742    | 3,752     | 44     | 0.250      | 0.256 | 0.250 | 0.255     | 0.257       | -0.002    | -0.778 | 0.255   | 0.255    | 0.268      | 0.100     | 414,616,321   |
| OM0000004735    | SEBICORP SALALAH                       | 236,000   | 22,741    | 12     | 0.096      | 0.101 | 0.096 | 0.096     | 0.097       | -0.001    | -1.031 | 0.096   | 0.095    | 0.098      | 0.100     | 91,636,307    |
| OM0000004933    | AL SUWADI POWER                        | 305,848   | 22,635    | 12     | 0.075      | 0.075 | 0.074 | 0.074     | 0.075       | -0.001    | -1.333 | 0.074   | 0.073    | 0.080      | 0.100     | 52,866,069    |
| OM0000008934    | ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES                  | 336,505   | 100,402   | 66     | 0.300      | 0.300 | 0.296 | 0.296     | 0.300       | -0.004    | -1.333 | 0.296   | 0.296    | 0.307      | 0.100     | 227,979,200   |
| OM0000002176    | JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS                 | 3,000     | 840       | 1      | 0.280      | 0.280 | 0.280 | 0.280     | 0.284       | -0.004    | -1.408 | 0.280   | 0.280    | 0.310      | 0.100     | 34,971,429    |
| OM0000003125    | GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO         | 10,000    | 690       | 1      | 0.068      | 0.068 | 0.068 | 0.068     | 0.069       | -0.001    | -1.449 | 0.068   | 0.066    | 0.070      | 0.100     | 13,600,000    |
| OM0000001152    | OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT | 50,000    | 5,840     | 3      | 0.118      | 0.118 | 0.116 | 0.116     | 0.118       | -0.002    | -1.695 | 0.116   | 0.118    | 0.119      | 0.100     | 17,400,000    |
| OM0000003224    | RENAISSANCE SERVICES                   | 18,097    | 6,651     | 48     | 0.370      | 0.370 | 0.365 | 0.366     | 0.374       | -0.008    | -2.139 | 0.366   | 0.366    | 0.384      | 0.100     | 86,528,060    |
| Total           | 17                                     | 5,610,884 | 1,011,251 | 543    |            |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |          |            |           |               |
| Parallel Market |                                        |           |           |        |            |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |          |            |           |               |
| OM0000007910    | AMAN REAL ESTATE                       | 6,850     | 623       | 5      | 0.091      | 0.091 | 0.091 | 0.091     | 0.090       | 0.001     | 1.111  | 0.091   | 0.090    | 0.091      | 0.100     | 18,200,000    |
| OM0000001772    | ALANWAR INVESTMENT                     | 153,654   | 13,522    | 14     | 0.088      | 0.088 | 0.088 | 0.088     | 0.088       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.088   | 0.087    | 0.090      | 0.100     | 18,128,000    |
| OM0000005260    | OMAN ARAB BANK                         | 13,500    | 2,014     | 3      | 0.149      | 0.150 | 0.149 | 0.150     | 0.150       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.150   | 0.150    | 0.150      | 0.100     | 250,411,500   |
| OM0000005963    | PHOENIX POWER                          | 83,950    | 4,820     | 6      | 0.058      | 0.059 | 0.057 | 0.059     | 0.059       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.059   | 0.054    | 0.058      | 0.100     | 86,293,486    |
| OM0000002267    | GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS                 | 154       | 34        | 1      | 0.221      | 0.221 | 0.221 | 0.221     | 0.222       | -0.001    | -0.450 | 0.221   | 0.215    | 0.225      | 0.100     | 10,114,241    |
| OM0000005005    | ALMAHA CERAMICS                        | 4,650     | 846       | 1      | 0.182      | 0.182 | 0.182 | 0.182     | 0.183       | -0.001    | -0.546 | 0.182   | 0.182    | 0.189      | 0.100     | 10,010,000    |
| OM0000001426    | OMAN REFRESHMENT                       | 3,500     | 4,200     | 2      | 1.200      | 1.200 | 1.200 | 1.200     | 1.215       | -0.015    | -1.235 | 1.200   | 1.200    | 1.215      | 0.100     | 60,000,000    |
| OM0000004248    | SMN POWER HOLDING                      | 50,000    | 15,800    | 8      | 0.316      | 0.316 | 0.316 | 0.316     | 0.321       | -0.005    | -1.558 | 0.316   | 0.316    | 0.320      | 0.100     | 63,084,850    |
| OM0000001707    | OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY                   | 10,042    | 28,419    | 7      | 2.830      | 2.830 | 2.830 | 2.830     | 2.879       | -0.049    | -1.702 | 2.830   | 2.830    | 2.830      | 0.100     | 253,851,000   |
| OM0000001160    | NATIONAL GAS                           | 650,000   | 75,150    | 34     | 0.117      | 0.118 | 0.113 | 0.113     | 0.115       | -0.002    | -1.739 | 0.113   | 0.105    | 0.116      | 0.100     | 9,605,000     |
| OM0000001962    | AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING           | 30,071    | 1,684     | 4      | 0.056      | 0.056 | 0.056 | 0.056     | 0.057       | -0.001    | -1.754 | 0.056   | 0.056    | 0.057      | 0.100     | 4,760,000     |
| OM0000003821    | GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING       | 320,530   | 54,694    | 10     | 0.168      | 0.171 | 0.168 | 0.168     | 0.171       | -0.003    | -1.754 | 0.168   | 0.168    | 0.171      | 0.100     | 34,101,723    |
| OM0000004420    | BANK NIZWA                             | 77,727    | 7,999     | 43     | 0.101      | 0.103 | 0.101 | 0.103     | 0.105       | -0.002    | -1.905 | 0.103   | 0.103    | 0.105      | 0.100     | 230,406,162   |
| OM0000002226    | ALJAZEERA SERVICES                     | 65,000    | 15,300    | 6      | 0.240      | 0.240 | 0.235 | 0.235     | 0.241       | -0.006    | -2.490 | 0.235   | 0.226    | 0.235      | 0.100     | 14,383,004    |
| OM0000001095    | DHOFAIR INSURANCE                      | 50,000    | 10,100    | 1      | 0.202      | 0.202 | 0.202 | 0.202     | 0.210       | -0.008    | -3.810 | 0.202   | 0.202    | 0.210      | 0.100     | 22,776,021    |
| OM0000004776    | TAKAFUL OMAN                           | 31,000    | 1,502     | 2      | 0.049      | 0.049 | 0.048 | 0.048     | 0.050       | -0.002    | -4.000 | 0.048   | 0.047    | 0.000      | 0.100     | 12,000,000    |
| Total           | 16                                     | 1,550,628 | 236,706   | 147    |            |       |       |           |             |           |        |         |          |            |           |               |

REPORT

India's Fintech sector to dominate future Unicorns at \$58bn

**NEW DELHI:** India is home to 30 future Unicorns in the Fintech sector, with consumer lending emerging as the dominant subcategory, constituting more than half of the FinTech future Unicorns, ASK Private Wealth Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2024 observed.

The total worth of India's future unicorns will stand at \$58 billion, an increase of 1.2 per cent as com-

pared to last year. Fintech sector leads with the highest number of companies that can become Unicorns in future.

**Fintech start-ups**

The Fintech start-ups featured in this year's report have collectively raised an investment of \$5.7 billion. FinTech holds a strong position, commanding a substan-

tial share of the overall value of future Unicorns, with a total of \$11.4 billion or 20 per cent of the total value.

Money View stands out as the most valuable Fintech Gazelle, while JusPay takes the lead as the most valuable FinTech Cheetah.

The report defines Unicorn startup which is in existence after 2000 with a valuation of \$1 bil-

lion. Gazelles category startups are those that are likely to go Unicorn in the next three years while Cheetahs category startups could go Unicorn in the next five years.

SaaS stood as the second-largest sector, showcasing a count of 20 future Unicorns.

The SaaS startups collectively raised a substantial investment of \$2.1 billion. **ANI**

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ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE

What's holding back the green power grid in European Union?

**BRUSSELS:** It's not yet clear how the results of the European Parliament elections will influence the policies of the next European Commission. Among other important issues, this uncertainty is hanging over the bloc's plans for going climate neutral by 2050.

But one thing is certain: electricity from renewable sources will be a vital element in reaching Europe's climate goals.

Some regions on the continent are especially suited for specific types of green energy production. But for the entire continent to benefit from this power, energy companies would need to build up an electricity grid across Europe incorporating these new technologies.

"European electricity infrastructure is already well-developed," said Kadri Simson, an Estonian lawmaker who has been the EU's energy commissioner since 2019, speaking with DW in May. "We expect to electrify different sectors, which means that our electricity consumption will double. And that, of course, means we have to strengthen our electricity grid, too. We have to upgrade our electricity grid to allow more renewables to be installed," she said, adding that Europe was only halfway there at present.



**Wind in winter, solar in summer**

European countries have different strengths when it comes to green power production. In the blustery north and on the North and Baltic seas, wind energy generates a lot of power. The sunnier south, meanwhile, is ideal for solar energy.

"Photovoltaic energy and wind energy complement each other well," said Harald Bradke, the head of the Competence Center Energy Technology and Energy Systems at the Fraunhofer Institute in Karlsruhe, Germany. "Wind energy produces a lot of electricity in the winter months, and photovoltaics predominantly in the summer."

The best methods to store electricity also differ according to

geographical location. Pumped hydroelectric energy storage facilities, which function like huge batteries, are one good option. If more electricity is available than is being consumed at any one time, it's used to pump water into a reservoir or up a mountain. When electricity is needed, the water is released again to drive the turbines that produce it.

"This type of storage exists above all in Scandinavia and Alpine countries, such as Austria, Italy and Switzerland," said Bradke. "It can be used when demand for electricity exceeds what we can produce at that moment."

**More power lines are needed**

Increased interconnectivity would make the supply of green electricity more efficient across the EU.

"Electricity would be cheaper because it would be obtained from the place where it can be produced at the lowest price," said Bradke. What's more, he added, it wouldn't be necessary as often to "turn on expensive backup power stations that operate only a few hundred hours a year."

Backup power plants, such as those driven by natural gas, are currently used to cover demand at peak times. But if Europe had a common electricity grid, this demand could be met by diverting electricity across the continent from places where it's particularly cheap at the time to others where it is needed.

However, before that can occur, additional power lines must be built — not least in places like Germany. A lot of electricity is

produced by wind energy in the country's north, but this is mostly needed further south in the industrial heartland. Even though this imbalance has been recognized for years, the construction of the necessary power lines to bring the electricity to clients down south has been very slow.

"We are seven years behind on expanding our grid," said Bradke. "We should have already had an additional 6,000 kilometers a long time ago."

**What's holding back grid expansion?**

Money isn't the only problem in Germany. Many people don't want to live near transmission towers, fearing the effect the power lines will have on their property value or their health. This has led some people to take legal action to prevent the construction of new projects.

But putting power lines underground isn't a solution, either: it's much more expensive, and as warm electrical cables can dry out the soil, they can also be detrimental for agriculture. Bradke said that means farmers are limited by what they can plant near buried electrical cables, if anything, and need compensation.

These problems in just a single country give an indication of the scale of the challenge of a Europe-wide grid. "If the idea is to build a transmission line through Germany to allow electricity to flow from France to Poland, acceptance by the local population is likely to be lower than if we are talking about providing German electricity for Germany," said Bradke. **— nw**



LIFESTYLE

Going electric comes with a lot of questions about cost and efficiency. But how do electric cars stack up against combustion cars regarding their environmental impact?

On the road to a carbon-free future, millions of drivers worldwide are switching to electric cars. Transportation is responsible for approximately a quarter of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, and about half of these emissions come from passenger cars. One way to curb this pollution without giving up driving altogether is to go electric, an idea that's being touted by some climate advocates as key to combating climate change. But they don't all agree this is the way forward, pointing out that electric vehicles (EVs) also harm the environment. Since both have an environmental footprint, is it really better to switch to an EV or hold onto a car that still works? Here's a point-by-point look at how e-cars compare to their conventional counterparts in terms of the environment.

**How does the carbon footprint of a combustion car compare to an EV?** Combustion cars and EVs differ significantly in their carbon footprints. Over its lifetime, the combustion car emits 48 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2), which is 40% more than an EV. Those figures come from a comprehensive review by the Transportation Energy Institute in 2021 and assume a car has a lifespan of 320,000 kilometers (around 200,000 miles). However, EVs actually have a bigger CO2 footprint during the sourcing and production stages. That same review found an EV emitted 11 tons during this first stage, more than double the carbon emitted in making a car with a combustion engine.

**How long does it take for an electric vehicle to offset its carbon footprint?** Driving an electric car produces zero emissions, meaning it can pay off its "carbon debt." Brian Cox, an expert on sustainable mobility from the Swiss consulting company INFRAS, says that in Switzerland, an EV can offset its carbon footprint after 20 to 30,000 kilometers. "So even if you were to buy a new gasoline or diesel car and then the next day scrap it and buy an electric car, you're still better off than if you had just driven that diesel car."

In Germany or the average European country, that carbon offset comes at about 60 to 70,000 kilometers, taking six to seven years, he says. The time varies based on the electricity source, with cleaner energy grids enabling faster offsetting.

**Do electric vehicles really not produce any CO2 during the driving stage?** Yes and no. Traditional cars burn fossil fuels, which is why they have an oversized carbon footprint. Car exhaust also causes acid rain, smog and respiratory disease. EVs don't burn fossil fuels. Their operation is, in that sense, cleaner because they rely on electricity. However, the overall environmental impact depends on the power grid's carbon footprint. If the electricity comes from fossil fuels, then charging an EV causes indirect emissions.

"The power system is very complicated and interconnected, so it can be hard to nail those things down," says Jeremy Michalek, director of the Vehicle Electrification Group at Carnegie Mellon University in the US. He says energy trading between different regions and countries can also account for apparent discrepancies between carbon footprint studies for electric vehicles. "Even if the electricity in your country is made from cleaner sources, if you plug in an electric vehicle, it could induce changes in power plants in a neighboring country."



ELECTRIC VEHICLE OR DIESEL-POWERED CAR — WHICH IS BETTER?

**How much environmental damage is caused by e-car batteries?** Sourcing the materials for EV batteries poses environmental challenges. Lithium, an essential component, has been associated with water depletion and contamination in South America's "lithium triangle," where one-third of lithium was mined in 2022. Mining one ton of lithium requires about 2 million liters of water, enough for roughly 125 electric cars, says Georg Bieker, a senior researcher at the International Council on Clean Transportation. He says that despite this, gasoline production demands 10 times more water over its lifetime. Cobalt, another key resource, has been linked to habitat destruction and health hazards. In 2022, EVs made up roughly 40% of cobalt demand, and most of it came from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Cobalt miners are exposed to toxic cobalt particles, which can cause respiratory disease. They also risk exposure to radioactive uranium contained in the ore. Plus, artisanal mining has been linked to child labor and frequent tunnel collapses. **Can e-car batteries be recycled?** Yes, e-car batteries are highly recyclable, but according to Georg Bieker, large-scale recycling probably won't become widespread until today's batteries reach the end of their lives in

about 15 to 20 years. "Based on the research, we find that the current battery technology is able to run more than 1,500,000 kilometers (1,000,000 miles)," says Georg Bieker. "We expect that the battery will last much longer than the actual vehicle will be used." The market is already moving toward recycling thanks to EU laws mandating the recovery of up to 95% of materials like cobalt and copper and a clause in the US Inflation Reduction Act that incentivizes labeling recycled batteries as "American-made" in exchange for subsidies.

**Is there a scenario in which it's better to keep driving a combustion car?** Yes. One example would be if a car is seldom driven. "The extra energy that you need to build this battery isn't really paid off because you don't drive it very far," says Brian Cox from INFRAS. "The better option there would be to use public transit or car sharing. If you can rent an electric car for those few rare times when you need your car and public transit doesn't work. This is going to be far better than driving your old combustion car." —nw

# Portugal storm into last 16

Silva and Fernandes score as Ronaldo's team top Group F at Euro 2024

**DORTMUND:** Portugal booked their place in the last 16 as group winners at Euro 2024 following a routine 3-0 victory over Turkiye in Dortmund on Saturday.

Manchester City's Bernardo Silva opened the scoring midway through the first half, striking first time past goalkeeper Altay Bayindir after Nuno Mendes' cross from the left was deflected into his path.

A calamitous own goal doubled Portugal's lead when defender Samet Akaydin failed to look up before passing it back to Bayindir, who could not prevent the ball from rolling into his own net.

That dampened the exuberant Turkish support, which had begun with hundreds of fans marching to the stadium from the city centre, draped in flags.

Portugal's support was equally impressive, if fewer in number, and they celebrated as their side played with fluidity and composure.

Their team sealed the win when Cristiano Ronaldo unselfishly teed up Bruno Fernandes for a tap-in to make it 3-0 before an hour was played.

The 2016 champions will take on Group F opponents Georgia on Wednesday knowing their job is complete in the group stages, while Turkiye can still qualify when they travel to Hamburg to face the Czech Republic.

"I think we played at the same level as we did against the Czechs and that's very important. We scored first and that changed what



Turkiye could do," said Portugal boss Roberto Martinez.

"We can face the third game with many players in the dressing room deserving to be in the starting XI. We should give them a chance to prove how competitive this squad can be."

Martinez said Portugal had prepared better for this game than they had for their narrow opening victory over the Czech Republic - and it showed.

Spearheaded by the legendary Ronaldo for the second match,

Portugal had numerous chances and tested Turkey's defence throughout.

Silva was busy in attack, linking up nicely with Vitorinha and Joao Cancelo, while Mendes was a livewire on Portugal's left-hand side.

Martinez also praised Ronaldo's impact following question marks this week on whether he had a negative impact on the team cohesion.

"I saw today something that is spectacular, to have Ronaldo, who is an out-and-out goalscorer, look-

ing for the assist," added Martinez.

"It is an example that should be shown in every academy in Portugal. The team is the most important thing and probably that assist means a lot more than any other goal."

Vincenzo Montella's Turkiye side had a few chances of their own - Kerem Akturkoglu could not make clean contact a few yards out, and later forced goalkeeper Diogo Costa into a smart save at his near post.

Orkun Kokcu also tested Costa in the first half, while Yusuf Yazici drilled one straight at him in the second half.

Turkiye fans were unhappy with the officials, and their players confronted German referee Felix Zwayer, who they felt had awarded Portugal too many free-kicks.

"We had our own opportunities and were punished at the first mistake. It was a balanced game until the first goal," said Montella.

"These things happen in football. I think we played equal with one of the best teams in Europe. They were much more clinical and that made the difference." - Agencies

## Martinez 'concerned' after pitch invaders seek selfies



**DORTMUND:** Fans invading the pitch to try to take selfies with players is "a concern", said Portugal manager Roberto Martinez after his side's victory over Turkiye at Euro 2024.

Five people made it on to the pitch to try to take photos with Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo in their 3-0 win.

Security guards at Westfalenstadion had to chase after each supporter while players and fans in the stands grew increasingly frustrated.

"It is a concern. Today the intentions of the fans were good. We all love a fan who recognises the big stars and icons," said Martinez. "But you [must] understand there's a difficult moment if their intentions are wrong. We need to be careful. It shouldn't happen - there's a lot of security."

"We should give a message to the fans also because it is not the right way. It may get worse for the future. It's not good to have the players so exposed on the pitch."

The first supporter to break on to the pitch was a young boy and Ronaldo gave him a hug before smiling for a photograph.

But Ronaldo was annoyed when the third person tried it while Portugal were preparing to defend a corner in the second half and security guards had to restrain the fan by the side of the goal.

At full-time, Ronaldo pushed away a fifth supporter and was escorted off the pitch by a member of security.

However, Portugal team-mate Bernardo Silva said he was "personally not really concerned" by the pitch invasions.

"It's just a bit annoying in terms of always having to stop the game because a fan enters the pitch," said Silva.

"I think that's the price you pay for being so recognised in the world of football and having a player like [Ronaldo] with us in the team. But in terms of being in danger, no I don't feel that personally." - Agencies

### EURO 2024: GROUP F

## Georgia share the spoils with Czech Republic

**HAMBURG:** Substitute Saba Lobjanidze wasted a golden chance for Georgia with the final kick of the game as the debutants claimed a first ever point in a major tournament with a 1-1 draw against the Czech Republic on Saturday.

Georgia, the lowest-ranked side in the tournament, took the lead in first-half stoppage time when striker Georges Mikautadze slotted in from the penalty spot.

But the Czech Republic - quarter-finalists three years ago - were by far the more dangerous side throughout and finally replied when Patrik Schick turned in after substitute Ondrej Lingr hit the post. Schick then limped off with an injury as Georgia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili produced save after save to ensure a share of the spoils.

And there was still time for Lobjanidze to fire over after a three-on-one encounter in the final seconds of the match.

The result means both sides head into their final games in Group F on Wednesday with a chance to progress to the last 16.

Georgia won plenty of new fans - if no points - with their free-



flowing and fearless performance in defeat by Turkiye on their tournament debut and they so nearly snatched a famous first win in front of more feverish support.

Second-best throughout to a Czech side dominant on set-pieces, they countered from a last-minute Czech corner and found Lobjanidze free 12 yards from goal - but he could only fire over the top.

Manager Willy Sagnol, who played in a World Cup final for France and won the Champions League with Bayern Munich, said he "could not imagine" how the Atlanta United winger was feeling.

"The ones who never try will never miss, the best way to miss is to try," Sagnol said. "The players were disappointed after this massive opportunity but they got their first ever point at a major tournament."

In truth a defeat would have been harsh on the Czechs who had 27 efforts on goal, forcing Mamardashvili into a fine double save as early as the third minute.

A pitchside review gave Georgia their penalty for handball against Robin Hranac and Metz forward Mikautadze kept his cool to convert his second goal of the tournament. - Agencies

### EURO 2024: GROUPE E



## De Bruyne inspires Belgium to victory

**COLOGNE:** Kevin De Bruyne inspired Belgium to the first Euro 2024 victory they desperately required with a virtuoso display in a thrilling 2-0 victory over Romania in Cologne on Saturday.

Belgium were under pressure in Group E after losing their opening game to Slovakia, but responded with an outstanding attacking display to illustrate exactly why they are rated among the favourites in Germany.

In a magnificent, colourful atmosphere, Youri Tielemans' low drive put them ahead after 73 seconds, setting the platform for Belgium to create a host of chances. Romania managed to keep them at bay, the luckless Romelu Lukaku seeing a third goal ruled out by the Video Assistant Ref-

eree in the tournament when he was adjudged to be offside from De Bruyne's perfect pass.

Belgium and De Bruyne were not to be denied, and Manchester City's midfielder made the game safe when he poked home from close range after 79 minutes - leaving the group on a knife-edge as all four teams have three points. Tielemans settled any early nerves as Belgium set about a Romania side that always carried a hint of threat.

De Bruyne was at the heart of everything Belgium did, whether it was pulling the strings for others or having his own shots on target, relishing every moment of a match that always offered creative players the opportunity to flourish. - Agencies

### FRANCE AT EURO 2024

## Mbappe scores in practice match wearing mask



**PADERBORN:** Kylian Mbappe scored twice in a practice match in his first action since breaking his nose in France's Euro 2024 opener.

Wearing a mask, he played the entire match - consisting of two 30-minute halves - against the under-21 side of German club Paderborn on Saturday.

Mbappe, France's captain, remained on the bench for the goalless draw against the Netherlands on Friday after suffering the injury against Austria on Monday.

On Saturday, the 25-year-old played alongside his other unused team-mates in the behind-closed-doors friendly, contributing two assists in addition to his goals.

France play Poland in their final group D match in Dortmund on Tuesday. - Agencies

### POST KNEE SURGERY RECOVERY

## Seven-time champion Djokovic unsure of playing Wimbledon

**LONDON:** Novak Djokovic has decided to travel to Wimbledon and is due to arrive on Monday - but the seven-time champion does not yet know if he will be able to compete after undergoing knee surgery, *BBC Sport* reported.

Serbia's Djokovic withdrew from the French Open after his fourth-round victory over Francisco Cerundolo, in which he tore the medial meniscus in his right knee.

The 37-year-old had surgery in Paris just 17 days ago, but wants to give himself the best possible chance of playing by practising at the All England Club.

Wimbledon, which starts on 1 July, seemed a long shot at the time, and his hopes of returning to Paris to try and win a first Olympic

gold medal also appeared in the balance.

But since then Djokovic has posted two upbeat videos on Instagram.

The first showed him using an exercise bike and leg weight machine in the gym, and the second - posted on Thursday - followed him running, doing lunges and hitting a tentative serve.

"We keep building day by day," was the message to his 14.6 million followers.

Djokovic has reached the final at Wimbledon for the past five years and lost last year's showpiece to Carlos Alcaraz in a memorable five-set match on Centre Court.

He did not rule out playing at Wimbledon in a social media post



after the operation, writing: "My love for this sport is strong and the desire to compete at the highest level is what keeps me going."

"I'm going to do my best to be

healthy and fit to return to the court as soon as possible."

Three years ago, Taylor Fritz was able to reach the third round at Wimbledon after a similar op-

eration on his right knee during the French Open.

The American was taken off court in a wheelchair at Roland Garros after damaging his right meniscus when match point down in the second round against Dominik Koepfer.

But at SW19 just a month later, he was able to beat Brandon Nakashima over four sets and Steve Johnson over five, before losing to Alexander Zverev.

That had not escaped Djokovic's attention, and Fritz revealed at Queen's Club earlier this week that the 24-time Grand Slam champion had been in touch.

"I told him what it was like for me. A lot of it comes down to the inflammation and how you re-

act," he told reporters.

"When I did it, I couldn't even walk. People are different. You pretty much have your full strength immediately."

"It's more just the inflammation from the surgery. As long as you can get that down and start playing without it puffing up again, you're going to be fine to play."

Being able to win seven five-set matches in a fortnight may be beyond even Djokovic, but a rapid recovery means he will at least be in London to see whether a 19th appearance at the championships is realistic.

The tennis competition at the Paris Olympics begins on 27 July, just 13 days after Wimbledon finishes.

# IN PICTURES



**Brunei financial institutions participate in river cleanup**  
Participants of a river cleanup initiative pose for a photo at the riverside village Kampong Ayer, Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital city of Brunei. Thirteen financial institutions in Brunei Darussalam participated in a river cleanup initiative and collected 685 kg of trash, according to the Brunei Darussalam central bank. *Xinhua*



**Eld's deer seen in Savannakhet Province of Laos**  
An aerial drone picture shows Eld's deer in Savannakhet Province of Laos. *Xinhua*



**View of clouds in San Francisco**  
This picture shows a view of clouds in San Francisco, the United States. *Xinhua*



**'Road to Paris' event held at Olympic Qualifier Series Budapest in Hungary**  
Speed climbing qualifiers of Paris 2024 pose for a group photo during the 'Road to Paris' event at the Olympic Qualifier Series Budapest in Budapest, Hungary. *Xinhua*



**Highlight of 2024 Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival**  
Participants compete during the 2024 Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival in Toronto, Canada. *Xinhua*



**Highlight of Paris Fashion Week**  
A model presents a creation from Issey Miyake as part of its Menswear Spring/Summer 2025 collection during the Paris Fashion Week in Paris, France. *xinhua*



ROUND-UP

# BankDhofar empowers women with dedicated Ladies Banking

This comprehensive suite of banking products and services caters specifically to the needs of female customers, providing them with the tools and resources to manage their finances confidently and achieve their financial goals



**MUSCAT:** BankDhofar, one of the leading banks in the Sultanate of Oman, reaffirms its commitment to financial inclusion and women's empowerment with the Ladies Banking.

This comprehensive suite of banking products and services caters specifically to the needs of female customers, providing them with the tools and resources to manage their finances confidently and achieve their financial goals.

Ladies Banking by BankDho-

far offers a convenient and secure banking experience. Women can enjoy easy and secure banking as they can manage finances from anywhere, anytime through ATMs, internet banking, and the user-friendly mobile app designed to help women save more and spend on favourable terms. The Ladies banking offers a stylish debit card with unique benefits. The customers will also gain access to exclusive offers on credit cards, including rewards, discounts at partner merchants, and exciting privileges that enhance their lifestyle.

Customers can open the ladies account via our "Intilaqa" App or can visit one of the bank's more than 120 branches conveniently located throughout the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. In addition to the Ladies account, BankDhofar offers various savings accounts such as; Children, Youth, Minor, High Yield and Recurring Deposit savings accounts.

BankDhofar recognizes the significant role women play in Oman's economy and society. Ladies Banking reflects the bank's dedication to supporting women on their finan-

cial journeys by providing them with the resources and guidance they need to achieve financial independence and success.

BankDhofar has recently expanded its branches network in different locations in all governorates of Oman to reach a wider range of customers and provide them with the banking services they need. The number of branches reached more than 120, and the number of devices (ATM, cash deposit, multi-use devices and multi-service interactive devices) increased to reach more than 350 devices.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



## ahlibank team visits Social Welfare Home

**MUSCAT:** As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, ahlibank represented by the "ahlicares" team has conducted a visit to the Social Welfare Home for the elderly, participating in a day of community service and engagement with the senior residents of the home, with the aim of providing an avenue for meaningful participation and making a positive difference in the lives of the residents.

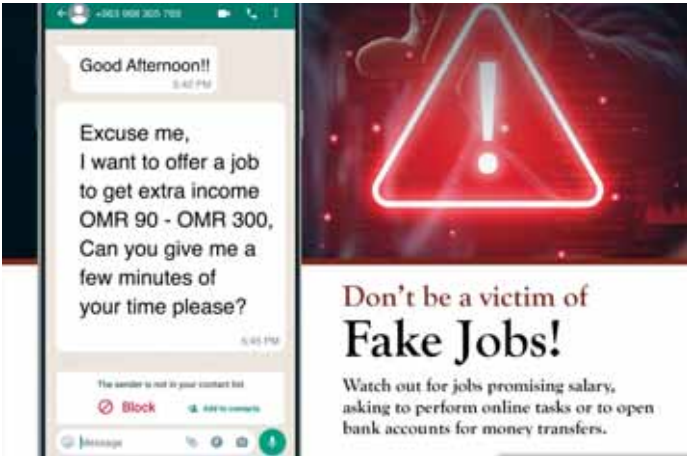
During their visit, the ahlicares team delivered essential care items to the elderly, supplying basic necessities and medical equipment which would enhance the home's services and the quality of life of its residents. Additionally, the team engaged in a dedicated socialization day, where they interacted with the elderly through various activities, games, storytelling sessions, and lunch with the aim of spreading joy and happiness among them.

Jumana Al Hashmi, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications at ahlibank, stated,

"At ahlibank, we are committed to making a positive difference in the communities we serve, including the elderly. As part of our social responsibility initiatives and in alignment with Oman Vision 2040, we aim to offer moral support to society, promote humanitarian values, and provide top-notch banking services. This visit provided us with the chance to engage with the elderly residents of the home, enhancing their quality of life while spreading joy and happiness. Through such endeavours, we inspire our employees to pursue meaningful goals, encouraging volunteerism and contributing to the creation of a more inclusive society."

The bank's visit reflects its endeavours towards instilling the values of participation and giving among members of society. This outreach effort enabled the bank to connect with diverse segments of the community, further strengthening its role as a key partner in driving economic and social progress in the country.

AWARENESS AGAINST FAKE JOBS OPPORTUNITIES



## ROP, Bank Muscat continue anti-fraud awareness initiative

**MUSCAT:** Royal Oman Police (ROP) and Bank Muscat have announced recently the continuation of the annual anti-fraud awareness initiative aimed to raising awareness against various fraud methods in order to reduce the financial and psychological consequences that they cause.

This year, the initiative sheds light on serious topics including raising awareness against fake jobs opportunities, safeguarding the financial well-being are of extreme importance. In an age where job seekers actively explore job opportunities online, fraudulent job offers are on the rise.

To avoid falling victim to fraudulent activities, there are a number of precautions steps that need to be taken: avoid responding to messages from suspicious or unknown senders; avoid transferring funds to unknown per-

sonnel or accounts; be wary of job offers that require upfront fees or personal information; be careful of urgent requests, intimidations and threats; and most importantly, block and report the sender on WhatsApp if found suspicious.

The awareness initiative will continue throughout the year using various media channels including Oman TV, radio, print, online media, and social media; aiming to help the public recognise fraud and avoid falling prey to it.

It is essential to never share personal details with anyone, including those claiming to be employees or officials in certain institutions as this is a vital first step to defend oneself against criminal activities.

The public can easily contact the Royal Oman Police hotline at 80077444 to report fraud or for any fraud-related queries.

NEW 2.0L TURBO ENGINE

## All-new Jeep Wrangler 2024 in Oman: A new era of power and performance

**MUSCAT:** MHD Automobiles announced the exceptional reception of the newly launched 2024 Jeep® Wrangler, which has been making a significant impact and impressing all who experience it.

Recently introduced in Oman, the 2024 Jeep Wrangler upholds the esteemed legacy of the Jeep brand, renowned for producing the most off-road-capable and recognised SUVs in the world.

This latest model seamlessly combines unparalleled off-road capability, authentic Jeep design, open-air freedom, advanced powertrain technology, superior on- and off-road dynamics, and an array of innovative safety and technology features.

The 2024 Jeep Wrangler debuts the highly anticipated new 2.0L Turbo engine, available on the Sport and Sahara trims, which ensures greater torque, enhanced efficiency, and accelerated performance. This engine sets a new benchmark in powertrain technology for the Wrangler lineup, reaffirming Jeep's commitment to delivering cutting-edge advancements and unmatched performance to its customers.

Test drivers of the 2.0L Turbo engine variant in Oman have been astounded by the torque and power delivered by this innovative powertrain. The new 2.0-liter turbocharged inline four-cylinder engine commands an impressive 270 horsepower and 400 Nm of torque, offering enhanced efficiency and accelerated performance. This engine, combined with a standard eight-speed automatic transmission, establishes a new benchmark



structural improvements for enhanced side-impact performance.

The 2024 Wrangler enhances its legendary capability with new features, including the all-new next-generation Dana 44 HD full-float rear axle on Rubicon models. This axle design, typically found on heavy-duty commercial trucks, ensures exceptional strength and robustness by transferring the vehicle's weight to the axle tube rather than the axle shaft itself, offers a towing capacity up to 2267kg. This upgrade, combined with Wrangler Rubicon's existing off-road features like the Rock-Trac part-time transfer case and Tru-Lok front and rear-axle lockers, sets a new standard for off-road performance. The new 2024 Wrangler raises the bar with its robust body-on-frame design and finely engineered five-link suspension system, delivering unrivaled capability and refined on-road dynamics.

The new Wrangler offers a range of trims and engine options to suit various adventure needs. For the 2-door variants, customers can choose between the 2.0L Sport and the 3.6L Rubicon. The 4-door variants include the 2.0L Sport, 2.0L Sahara City, 3.6L Rubicon, and 6.4L Rubicon 392. Additionally, the Wrangler is available in several striking exterior colors, such as Anvil, Earl, Firecracker Red, Granite Crystal, Silver Zynith, High Velocity, Hydro Blue, Bright White, and Black.

MHD Automobiles invites all adventure enthusiasts to experience the unparalleled performance and capability of the all-new Jeep Wrangler 2024.

in powertrain technology for the Wrangler lineup.

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles, expressed his enthusiasm for the new model, stating, "The 2024 Jeep Wrangler not only enhances the iconic Wrangler legacy but also introduces unmatched capability, state-of-the-art technology, and advanced safety features to our valued customers in Oman. This latest evolution stays true to the Wrangler DNA, providing enthusiasts with the freedom to conquer any terrain and embark on extraordinary journeys. It's not just an SUV; it's a symbol of limitless possibilities and unrivaled off-road prowess."

The 2024 Wrangler features a new iconic seven-slot grille. Its exterior includes a windshield-inte-

grated trail-ready stealth antenna, all-new wheel designs, and multiple open-air freedom options, while the refined interior boasts more technology and amenities, including water-fording-tested power seats, an all-new instrument panel featuring the Uconnect 5 system with a state-of-the-art 12.3" touchscreen radio, and standard wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Safety remains a top priority, with over 85 available advanced safety and security features. Standard for 2024 are first- and second-row side curtain airbags, automatic emergency braking, forward collision warning, adaptive cruise control, and a ParkSense front and rear park-assist system. The 2024 model year also brings





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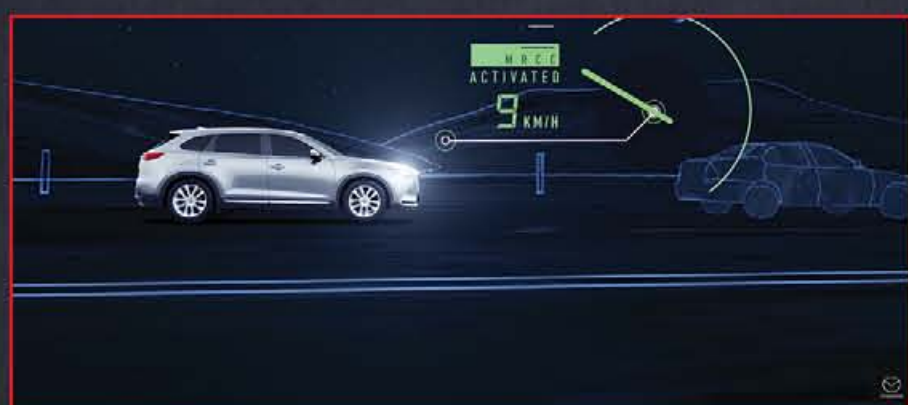
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