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IN SEATRADE EUROPE
IN GERMANY**

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, is taking part in the Seatrade Europe, specialising in cruise and river cruise industry. **>A5**



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HM GREETES PRESIDENT OF BRAZIL

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of the Federal Republic of Brazil, on the occasion of his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness for President da Silva. His Majesty also wished the friendly people of Brazil further progress and prosperity. **— ONA**



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RIISING CRUDE PRICE

Oman oil price hits \$90.41 a barrel

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The price of Oman oil futures contract for November delivery 2023 jumped by \$1.20 to reach \$90.41 a barrel on Wednesday, the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) said.

The average price of Oman oil (September delivery 2023) has stabilised at \$80.54 per barrel, thus \$5.76 per barrel higher than August delivery 2023, the DME

statement added. The oil market has been rising since the beginning of the summer when attention turned to supply levels as crude exporters moved to restrict production to support stagnating prices, according to an analyst.

"In this regard, the announcement from Saudi Arabia and Russia to extend production cuts until the end of the year has fuelled fears of a tighter market and has propelled the market to the up-



side at a time when concerns started to shift towards demand," George Pavel, General Manager at Capex.com Middle East, told *Times of Oman*.

"In this regard, an economic boost in the region could follow a sustainable rise in oil prices in the coming months. Stronger local economies could also help support local stocks some of which have been under pressure for some time," he said. **>A2**



**Oman to take part
in World Heritage
Committee meet**

A2

OMAN PLANS TO ERADICATE ILLITERACY BY 2024



In keeping pace with the global changes, it was necessary for Oman to eradicate illiteracy through 'education and lifelong learning'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has made giant strides in eradicating illiteracy in the country.

On the International Literacy Day which falls on September 8 every year, Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, seeks to highlight the efforts made to eradicate illiteracy.

The Ministry of Education is committed to implementing provisions and recommendations of the Arab Decade for the Eradication of Illiteracy (2015/2024), which was approved by the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States so that the member states will become free of illiterates by 2024.

The Sultanate of Oman seeks



0.44%

The statistics showed the percentage of illiteracy in the 15-44 age group reached 0.44% by the end of 2023 compared to the same category in 2015

to provide necessary funding and has developed plans to eradicate illiteracy in the age group of 15-44 during this decade.'

The statistics showed the percentage of illiteracy in the aforementioned age group reached 0.44% by the end of 2023 compared to the same category in 2015. In the beginning of the Arab Decade period, this percentage was 2.2 percent. This is considered a qualitative achievement in eliminating illiteracy in the aforementioned category.

Oman has worked hard since the academic year 1973/1974 to eliminate illiteracy in all its forms - reading, writing, cultural and civil - and has committed itself to the principle of "the right to education for all" without distinction

between genders or age groups.

This year, the celebration comes under the slogan "Promoting Literacy in Light of Global Transformation: Building the Foundation for Achieving a Sustainable and Safe Life for Communities."

With increasing ambition for modernisation and keeping pace with the global changes, it was necessary for Oman to eradicate illiteracy through 'education and lifelong learning'.

Undoubtedly, this concept is compatible with the stages of development witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman in its drive to achieve Oman Vision 2040.

Based on this vision, the Ministry of Education developed strategic plans, which included special activities to improve literacy rate

in the country.

As a result of such efforts, the illiteracy rate in the Sultanate of Oman decreased to 2.60 in the age category of 15 years and above, according to data received from the National Centre for Statistics for the year 2022.

In order to eliminate illiteracy, a number of projects were implemented to strengthen partnerships between official institutions, private sector institutions, and civil society for accelerating the pace of its elimination.

Among the ongoing projects are: Training bag project, which contains basic scientific material used to train teachers to raise their professional level and develop their so that they can raise the academic level of students. **>A3**



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MUSCAT**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN 'Intra-GCC exports reach \$83.4 billion'

1 The Standing Preparatory Committee at the ministerial level of the GCC Economic and Development Affairs Authority held the 5th meeting in Salalah on Wednesday. Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy pointed out that intra-GCC exports increased by 13.4 percent reaching \$83.4 billion in 2021 compared to \$73.5 billion in 2020. **>A3**

WORLD United Nations warns of 'climate breakdown'

2 This year has seen the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer ever measured, according to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). "Our planet has just endured a season of simmering — the hottest summer on record. Climate breakdown has begun," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Wednesday. **>A7**

MARKET CMA continues with Omanisation plans



3 The Capital Market Authority (CMA) continues with the execution of its annual Tamkeen plan for 2023 by executing a programme for combating fraud in the insurance sector from September 3-7. This is for the employees of underwriting, claims and customer services in insurance firms and brokers as well as for the employees of fraud combating and legal affairs to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of fraud and its types in addition to detection tools in various types of insurance. **>B1**

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Oman Investment Authority signs pact with US-based battery maker

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Our Next Energy (ONE) signed a Strategic Collaboration Agreement (SCA) to explore potential areas of collaboration in energy storage and battery manufacturing in Oman.

This step comes in continuation of OIA's efforts to diversify its international investment portfolio and achieve optimal benefit for Oman in terms of return on investment and sustainable investments that align with Oman's commitment to Net Zero emissions by 2050.

The US-based company ONE specialises in innovative battery technology for Electric Vehicles (EVs) and energy storage and was founded in 2020.

The battery company aims to accelerate the world's progress towards Net Zero emissions by doubling the range of electric vehicles, using safer, more abundant materials, and establishing a local supply chain.

It is focused on high-density LFP (Lithium Iron Phosphate)-based batteries, which are created



from lower-cost, more abundant iron and are known for improving safety by avoiding thermal runaway. ONE's Aries LFP, Aries II, and Gemini batteries all use safe, sustainable LFP chemistry and offer driving ranges between 500km and 1,000km.

"OIA is proud to be part of this pioneering technology and vision, which aligns with its strategy to focus on sustainable energy and is compatible with national strategies and commitments such as Oman Vision 2040 and the net zero emissions goal by 2050," said Ibrahim Al-Eisri, Director of Private Equity at OIA.

"Electric vehicles are the future,

and we are making sure to be a player in the transformation to ensure the growth and sustainability of the electric vehicles' market as an environmentally responsible investor," he further added.

"Having the support from investors like Oman Investment Authority will accelerate ONE's progress towards a sustainable future and allow the organisation to scale its transportation and grid products into global markets," said Mujeeb Ijaz, CEO and Founder of ONE.

This investment comes on the heels of other investments made by OIA in the energy transition field.

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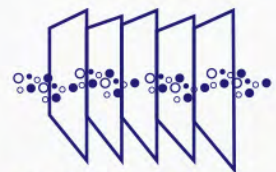
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Asr.....3:38pm

Maghrib.....6:25pm

Isha.....7:36pm

Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:35am

RIYADH

Oman to take part in World Heritage Committee meet



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will take part in the plenary meeting of the World Heritage Committee's 45th session, due to be held in Riyadh from 10 to 25 September 2023.

Oman's delegation will be led by Dr. Hamad Saif Al Hamami, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the UNESCO.

The delegation also includes experts in tangible cultural heritage, representing the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the Environment Authority and Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

Oman attends the meeting in its capacity as member of the World Heritage Committee since the 44th session, organised from China via videoconferencing in 2021 after the session was adjourned



in 2020 due to coronavirus pandemic.

Over the past four years, Oman assumed significant roles through its discussion of files submitted by member states.

The international committee accords three segments to its specialty in the global list of sites.

Accordingly, it designates a site as a 'cultural heritage site', 'natural heritage site' or 'mixed site' that combines natural features and aspects of human intervention. -ONA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Meeting of health panel rapporteurs

MUSCAT: Represented by the Community Health Initiatives Department, the Ministry of Health today held an expanded technical meeting for rapporteurs of health committees in Muscat.

The meeting discussed how to organise the work of health com-

mittees in the wilayats of Oman and come up with recommendations that contribute to addressing key challenges and highlighting major achievements over the past few years.

The meeting highlighted several topics, the most important of

which include the role of health committees in promoting health, how to manage health committees and deal with the respective recommendations. It also looked into a community competition on cutting down the volume of drugs and psychotropic substances. -ONA

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Discussion held on free trade negotiations

The meetings looked into the activities of the SMEs and Entrepreneurship Committee, the Internal Trade Committee, and the Foreign Trade Committee



merce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry.

The meetings discussed topics on the agenda of the GCC undersecretaries, including means of addressing the challenges of intra-trade among GCC countries, facilitating trade exchange and reviewing developments in commercial laws.

The meetings looked into the activities of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and En-

trepreneurship Committee, the Internal Trade Committee, and the Foreign Trade Committee. It also took note of the latest developments in negotiations on free trade agreements with countries and international blocs.

The meetings also discussed options for finding a uniform definition of the Arab Gulf national product and its standards, as well as executive regulations for the Unified Industrial Regulatory Law, among other issues. -ONA

2,799 TONNES

More than OMR7mn worth of shrimp produced in 2022

MUSCAT: The total shrimp production during 2022 stood at about 2,799 tonnes from artisanal fishing and aquaculture fishing, with a total value of more than OMR7 million.

In 2021, shrimp production through artisanal fishing reached 1,130 tonnes, with a total value of OMR3.5 million, according to

statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

At the beginning of September 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources announced the start of the shrimp fishing season. The season will continue until the end of next November 2023 for a period of 3

months.

Ibrahim Abdullah Al Qartoubi, Assistant Director General of Fisheries in Al Wusta Governorate, said that Al Wusta Governorate has the highest production of shrimp, according to 2022 statistics, with a production rate of 90 percent of the total catch.

-ONA

GARTNER

Leadership workshop focuses on accelerating digital transition

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with global consultancy company Gartner, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, organised here on Wednesday a workshop on the role of leadership and motivation on accelerating government digital transition.

The workshop studied measures to empower digital transition and provide incentives that enhance change and innovation. It also explored major global trends in advanced technologies, as well as means of monitoring areas of the techs' application in the government sector.

Dr. Ali Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, underscored the ministry's determination to bring about a qualitative shift in government action, establish a flexible administrative apparatus that keeps pace with rapid



technological developments, and upgrade the national manpower's capabilities in the government sector.

Al Shidhani added that the workshop was aimed at ways to transfer knowledge, refine skills and promote the standard of digital awareness through participation and interaction with regional and international platform.

It also studied means of improving the culture of digital in-

novation and finding solutions that improve business management and enhance institutional value and performance.

The workshop elaborated on the theme of inspiring leadership and its role in managing the culture of change and motivation.

The workshop was attended by undersecretaries, governors, heads and members of digital transition teams from the government sector. -ONA

RISING REVENUE

Higher oil prices beneficial for Oman, other GCC countries

< FROM A1 Higher oil prices could be beneficial for Oman and other Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) that are sometimes heavily dependent on crude exports.

Lately, traders' attention has been returning to China and Europe where economic activity has been weaker than expected. China remains the largest importer of oil in the world and a softer-than-expected economic recovery could weigh on demand for oil and depress prices.

"However, the Saudi and Russian decisions could strengthen oil's uptrend for the remainder of the year in the absence of any shock in demand," George Pavel added.



According to a media report, the Kremlin said on Wednesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by phone with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman, and that both parties indicated that the latest agreements on reducing oil supplies guarantee stability in global energy markets.

On Tuesday, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Russia announced the extension of the voluntary oil supply reduction until the end of the year, despite the rise in oil prices in the markets and analysts' expectations of tight supplies in the fourth quarter.

Russia will extend its decision to reduce its oil exports by 300,000 barrels per day, while Saudi Arabia will extend its voluntary reduction in oil production by one million barrels per day. - With inputs from ONA

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Intra-GCC exports reach \$83.4bn in 2021: Al Saqri

GCC economy ministers’ meeting explores opportunities of economic integration

SALALAH: The Standing Preparatory Committee at the ministerial level of the GCC Economic and Development Affairs Authority held the 5th meeting in Salalah on Wednesday.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, and attended by Chairmen of the Standing Preparatory Committee at the ministerial level of the GCC Economic and Development Affairs Authority.

Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, delivered a welcoming speech at the meeting in which he stressed the magnitude of the efforts to develop cooperation, coordination, and integration among member states.

He pointed out that the review of the development path of the GCC countries in general underpins the

importance of the role played by the GCC Economic and Development Affairs Authority.

In recent years, the GCC economies have witnessed further improvement and recovery, and the GCC countries have been able to contain inflationary pressures that have worsened in most countries of the world during 2022 he added.

Al Saqri also also pointed out that intra-GCC exports increased by 13.4 percent reaching \$83.4 billion in 2021 compared to \$73.5 billion in 2020.

The draft agenda of the meeting

included a number of important topics, foremost of which are: the decisions issued by the GCC Supreme Council at its 43rd session held in December 2022, to achieve economic unity.

The ministers also reviewed the proposal of the Secretariat General on the governance of the joint Gulf economic and development action, in addition to the latest updates in the action plan for building the Gulf economic model and its mechanism, along with the proposed timeframe.

In addition, the meeting reviewed the outputs and recom-

mendations of the future integration prospects in the economic and development fields of the GCC countries.

The Gulf Statistics Centre also presented a detailed performance dashboard for the level of implementation in the GCC common market, and the outputs of the statistical survey to measure the implementation of the decisions of the Gulf joint action.

The Committee’s decisions and recommendations will be submitted to the Supreme Committee for Economic and Development Affairs at its next session. -ONA

ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Management plan of Musandam natural reserve reviewed

Khasab: The Environment Authority on Wednesday organised a workshop to follow up the implementation of the management plan for the National Natural Park’s reserve in Musandam Governorate.

The workshop was held under the auspices of Sayyid Ibrahim Said Al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam.

The participants discussed the outcome of field surveys, which included a marine mammal survey, a coral reef ecosystem survey and surveys related to vegetation and wild trees in the reserve.

Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, said that the workshop constituted a second review of the park’s management plan, following a decision to this effect in March 2023.

He added that various departments began implementing the programmes and projects of the plan in their respective fields of

management.

Participants in the workshop took note of the projects that will be implemented successively during upcoming years, either by the Environment Authority, other departments concerned or by the local community, which is an authentic partner in environment conservation action.

The workshop saw the participation of Musandam Governor’s Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the Musandam municipalities.

The National Natural Park reserve in the Governorate of Musandam was announced under Royal Decree No. 54/2022. The reserve embodies the governorate’s rich geographical and ecological diversity. It boasts a natural environment and elements that qualify it to attract tourists from different countries of the world. -ONA

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Spreading literacy across the country

<FROM A1 The annual training programme for teachers aims to provide them knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work in the field of literacy. The Educated Village Project, which continues to be spread throughout the various governorates, had a great impact in accelerating the pace of literacy.

So far the number of literate villages has reached 31 until the end of the academic year 2023/2024 across the Sultanate of Oman

The cooperative school project received great support from government schools in spreading literacy throughout the Sultanate of Oman by opening literacy classes and providing external assistance to them.

The literacy plan on the islands and marine villages had a big role in eradicating illiteracy among Omanis living on Al Halaniyat Islands in the Dhofar Governorate, Masirah Island in the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, the ma-

rine villages of Lima and Kamzar in Musandam Governorate.

With the Ministry of Education’s inclination to digital mode, it introduced modern technology for learning through digital applications and adult education by registering students in adult education systems on the educational portal of the Sultanate of Oman.

The registration is carried out through the educational portal, using some social networking sites, SMS messages, television, radio, and official newspapers in the Sultanate of Oman, and activating the WhatsApp service for communication between teachers and students.

It is worth noting that the total number of teachers in literacy centres and divisions in educational directorates in the governorates in the academic year 2022/2023 is 8,631 teachers, while the total number of students in literacy eradication for the past academic year 2022/2023 reached 2,623 students.

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Ministry plans to make Oman ports as attractive stopover for cruise ships

The Ministry, through its participation in Seatrade Europe, aims to enhance its promotional efforts and to meet companies operating international cruise ships

HAMBURG: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, is taking part in the Seatrade Europe, specialising in cruise and river cruise industry. The Ministry aims, through its participation in this event, to enhance its promotional efforts and to meet with companies operating international cruise ships and decision-makers.

The conference witnesses the participation of CEOs, service providers of the cruise ships and yachts sector, and representatives of governments and tourism companies.

The Ministry seeks to develop this type of global tourism in co-ordination with the government and private sectors and international companies that own and

operate cruise ships.

Attractive stopover

The Ministry also seeks to position the ports of the Sultanate of Oman as an attractive stopover for cruise ships of all sizes by harnessing all capabilities and providing the necessary facilities to attract these ships and yachts to Omani ports.

The cruise ship market represents an important pillar for the growth of tourism, which would contribute effectively to maximising its economic return and enhancing its contribution to augmenting income and diversifying its sources.

The cruise ship season in the Sultanate of Oman and the region in general is active during the winter season from October to the end of April each year.

The ports of Sultan Qaboos, Salalah, Khasab and some other ports attract major international companies operating ships and yachts.

The biennial Seatrade Europe is one of the leading international events for the cruise and river cruise industry.

Collectively cruise lines, regulators, ports, destinations, tourism, shipyards, suppliers, and service providers are charting a course towards a sustainable future.

The 2023 conference theme “Scaling Sustainably” underscores the agenda with discussions taking a deeper dive into navigating both the present and what lies ahead and focusing on the importance of continued reinvention and expansion that is both responsible and practical.

— ONA

Filmmaking camp launched in Al Batinah

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A filmmaking camp was launched as part of the activities accompanying the second Al Batinah Film Festival.

The filmmaking camp was launched on Monday, in the Wilayat of Mussanah, in cooperation with the Office of the Governor of South Al Batinah, and with the support of the Training and Development Committee, as well as the Support and Production Fund of the Omani Film Society.

The film camp aims to develop the skills of the participants in making short films, by guiding and teaching them about the secrets of this field by experienced experts, providing them with new skills, and building confidence that enable them to shine and excel in the world of filmmaking.

As many as 28 participants interested in the field of short filmmaking participated in the camp, including six participants interested in directing, eight participants interested in cinematography, five in screenwriting, three participants interested in production management in the film industry, and six participants interested in cinematic acting.

The programme began on Tuesday, with a creative thinking workshop, presented by Fatima Al Hinai, Director of Media and Marketing at Al Batinah Film Festival, and director Anwar Al Ruzaqi, Director of the Support and Production Fund at the Omani Cinema Society.

This workshop aims to empower and develop the skills of participants in brainstorming to create creative and innovative ideas for short films. The camp will continue over the course of two days, with a distinctive screenwriting workshop presented by screen-



writer Qaisar Al-Hinai, which aims to enable participants to transform a potential creative idea into a scenario ready for a short film in an effective and attractive way.

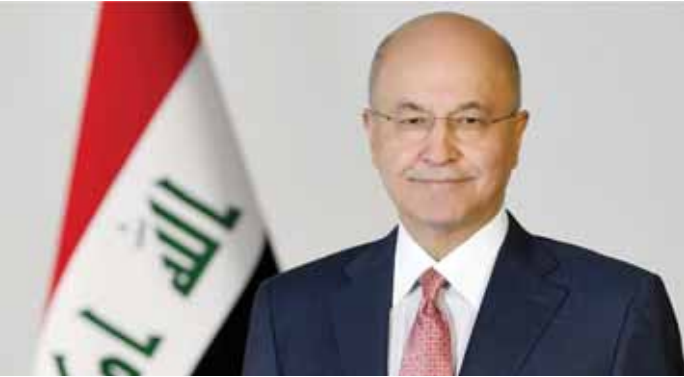
Then, a workshop on learning the arts of photography and cinematography will be presented by Bahraini director Jan Al Balushi during the period of 17-18 September, to give participants comprehensive artistic skills in the arts of photography and cinematography through practical work sessions and the production of short scenes.

The camp will then continue with a film editing workshop using the latest technologies presented by Mohammed Al-Ruqaishi during the period 20-21 September, which aims to teach participants creative and effective video editing skills using software to achieve amazing visual effects.

Regarding this, director Mohammed Al-Ajmi, founder and director of the Al Batinah Film Festival, said: “The Al Batinah Film Festival and all the festivals organised by the Omani Cinema Society represent a vital part of the cinematic scene in Oman, and one of the main goals of these festivals is to provide incubators and the appropriate environment for the discovery and development of diverse cinematic talents in all governorates.

CONFERENCE

Iraqi voices and perspectives feature prominently in Iraq War Anniversary Conference at Georgetown University in Qatar



MUSCAT: Marking the 20th anniversary of the start of the Iraq war, Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) is proud to announce the upcoming “The Invasion of Iraq: Regional Reflections” conference, which is open to the public and set to take place from September 14-16, 2023 at the Four Seasons Hotel Doha.

Convened by the dean of GU-Q, Dr. Safwan Masri, and the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) at GU-Q, the conference is the first event in the newly inaugurated Hiwaraat Conference Series, and will focus on the profound impact and enduring repercussions of the military operation that began the war in Iraq in 2003.

Headlining the conference is H.E. Dr. Barham Salih, former president of the Republic of Iraq, former prime minister of the Kurdistan region, and founder of American University in Iraq, Sulaimani.

During the three days, a lineup of high-level speakers, including diplomats, renowned global scholars and experts on the country and region, international journalists, and members of the public will engage in a comprehensive exploration of two decades of political, economic, and social upheaval in the region, and the obstacles that continue to confront future generations in Iraq. Deep discussions will touch on key issues around global diplomacy, evolving regional dynamics, transnational issues around security and good governance, and the experiences of Iraqi women.

Prominent voices will include Kurdish politician and head of

the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan bloc in the Iraqi parliament Ala Talabani, a three-time member of the Council of Representatives of Iraq, who will be speaking on a panel about Iraqi women post-invasion. Former Iraq Minister of Water Resources Hassan Al-Jannabi will be sharing his reflections on good governance and sustainable solutions.

The closing plenary on US policy towards the region will include leading thought leaders on US-Iraq relations, including Trita Parsi, co-founder and executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, and founder and former president of the National Iranian American Council, and founding director of the Track II Dialogues at the Middle East Institute, Randa Slim, who worked on Iraqi reconciliation dialogues post-9/11.

Special readings, art presentations, and film screenings will further contribute to a range of perspectives on the Iraq War's impact from those who lived through it. Live Arabic translation will be available for the panels. Registration for the conference is free and open to the public.

The Hiwaraat conference series at GU-Q was designed to offer a public platform that encourages community engagement, knowledge sharing, and innovative problem-solving.

More information and a full list of upcoming conferences in the Hiwaraat conference series are available on the official conference website at hiwaraat.qatar.georgetown.edu.

ASWAD FORT REPRESENTS RICH HERITAGE OF OMAN

SHINAS: The Aswad Fort in the Wilayat of Shinas in North Al Batinah Governorate with its archaeological identity reflects the deep –rooted history and its role in preserving the Omani heritage over the past several years.

Hassan bin Sulaiman Al Jabri, Director of the Department of Heritage and Tourism in North Al Batinah Governorate, said that Aswad Fort is an important historic structure in the Wilayat of Shinas.

The renovation work of the fort was completed in 2015, he added. He ascribed the name given to the rectangular fort to the village where it is located 22kms from the centre of the Wilayat of Shinas.

He said that, since its establishment, the fort has been used for housing and defence, which explains the presence of its two towers.

The main tower is at the western side of the fort and the other



SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT, THE ASWAD FORT HAS BEEN USED FOR HOUSING AND DEFENCE, WHICH EXPLAINS THE PRESENCE OF ITS TWO TOWERS

tower is located at its south eastern side.

The central area of the fort hosts other facilities used for housing and for the meetings of the villagers, he added.

It is worth mentioning that the fort was renovated by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism including all its components and the fort has been redesigned, besides restoration of its walls, gates, halls and internal facilities and its two towers. -ONA





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WILL ATTEND G20 SUMMIT

US President Biden tests negative for Covid

WASHINGTON, DC: United States President Joe Biden on Tuesday tested negative for COVID-19 again, the White House said. “An update on the President and the first lady Jill Biden since she tested positive for COVID-19 last night. I can tell you that the first lady is experiencing mild symptoms and will remain in Delaware for the week. President Biden

tested negative last night for COVID-19 and tested negative again today,” White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a briefing. “He (President Biden) is not experiencing any symptoms as far as the steps he has taken since the President was with the first lady yesterday. He will be masking while indoors and around people

in alignment with CDC guidelines. As has been practised in the past the President will remove his mask when sufficiently distance from others indoors and outside as well,” she said. This came a few days before Biden’s official visit to India for the G20 Summit, which is scheduled to take place on September 9 and 10. Jake Sullivan, National Security

Advisor of the United States, confirmed that Biden will visit India for the G20 summit. “On Thursday, the President will travel to New Delhi for G20 Summit in India. On Friday Biden will participate in a bilateral meeting with PM Modi. On Saturday, Biden will participate in the official sessions of the G20 Summit, 2023,” Sullivan said. — ANI

UN chief warns of ‘climate breakdown’

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said our planet has just endured a season of simmering — the hottest summer on



NEW YORK: This year has seen the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer ever measured, according to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). “Our planet has just endured a season of simmering — the hottest summer on record. Climate breakdown has begun,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Wednesday. Scientists have said the burning of coal, oil and natural gas for human activity is driving ever-higher temperatures around the globe as greenhouse gases accumulate in

the atmosphere and hold in heat. This year, El Nino, a temporary warming of parts of the Pacific Ocean that occurs naturally, has also played a role in raising the global temperature. Last month was the hottest August by far ever recorded with modern equipment, according to WMO and the European climate service Copernicus. It was also the second-hottest month measured, exceeded only by July 2023, they announced. And it is the third month in a row to set a monthly heat record, Copernicus said. August was about 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than pre-industrial averages, scientists said. That temperature rise is the threshold that the 2015 Paris climate accord agreed to target as a maximum aspirational average for the world. However, reaching 1.5 C for a brief period does not yet mean a failure to stick to that target.

The average sea surface temperatures also hit a record level in August, at 20.9 C. So far, 2023 is the second-hottest year on record, behind 2016, according to Copernicus, but could well end up being the hottest, with September so far seeing above-average temperatures in many regions. The rising global temperatures have brought heat waves, droughts, wildfires and flooding to several parts of Asia, Africa, Europe and North America over the last three months.

What else did the UN say? Guterres put the blame for climate change squarely on humans. “Scientists have long warned what our fossil fuel addiction will unleash,” he said. “Our climate is imploding faster than we can cope, with extreme weather events hitting every corner of the planet,” he added. “Surging temperatures demand a surge in action. Leaders must turn up the heat now for climate solutions,” Guterres said. A report by UN experts is due this week to evaluate the world’s progress in meeting the 1.5 C goal. The report comes ahead of a UN climate summit in Dubai starting on November 30. — DW

HUNDREDS DISPLACED

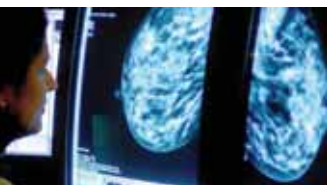
Brazil cyclone kills 21

RIO DE JANEIRO: As a cyclone has slammed southern Brazil, at least 21 people have died and hundreds more have been displaced due to floods in numerous cities, according to medi report. As the floodwaters recede, additional bodies are being discovered, according to authorities in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The hurricane that hit Brazil on Tuesday is the most recent in a run of extreme weather incidents, highlighting the dangers posed by storms that are becoming more frequent and intense as a result of climate change. A cyclone in southern Brazil in June forced thousands of residents to be displaced and killed 13 people. In the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo, severe rainfall in February caused landslides and flooding that resulted in at least 65 fatalities, as reported by Al Jazeera. — ANI

RESEARCH FINDING

Cancer cases in under-50s increase drastically: Study

EDINBURGH: The number of people aged 50 and under diagnosed with cancer has risen from 1.82 million to 3.26 million in the last three decades, a surge of 79.1%, according to a study published on Wednesday. While the international researchers behind the study said poor diet, smoking and drinking were the major cancer risk factors in this age group, they added that “the increasing trend of early-onset cancer burden is still unclear,” although some of the rise was explained by population growth. Physical inactivity and obesity could also have contributed to the trend, the study said. The researchers used data



from the 2019 Global Burden of Disease Study, analysing the rates of 29 different cancers in 204 countries. The study was led by the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and Zhejiang University School of Medicine in Hangzhou, China, with the United States and Sweden also participating. The study, published in the journal BMJ Oncology, said cancer had led to the deaths of just over a mil-

lion people under 50 in 2019, a rise of 28% from 1990, the study said. The most dangerous forms were breast, windpipe, lung, bowel and stomach cancers, according to the study, with breast cancer the most commonly diagnosed in the period under consideration, 1990 to 2019. Early onset windpipe and prostate cancers saw the fastest rise among under-50s in that period. Liver cancer cases fell by 2.9% per year. The highest rates of cancer among under-50s were in developed countries, which could be because wealthy countries have better health care systems and catch the disease earlier, the study said.

Obituary

It is with great sadness that we learnt about the sad demise of our former employee

Mr Abdul Salam Lebba Kabeer



We express our heartfelt condolences to the family of Late Mr Abdul Salam Lebba Kabeer who passed away on **4th September 2023**

May Almighty Allah grant them the strength and courage to bear this great loss. May his soul rest in peace.

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Royal Oman Police

ANNOUNCEMENT

Royal Oman Police - Directorate of Public Relations and Security Information – announces a public auction to sell used ROP vehicles at 4:00 pm on Monday 18/09/2023 at the former Transportation Department yard in Awqad area, at Dhofar Police Command.

Vehicles can be inspected during the period from 10 to 14 September 2023 during official working hours. The successful bidder must abide by the following terms and conditions:

- The buyer must pay the vehicles' value and the auctioneer fees at 3% by e-payment immediately after the auction is awarded to the buyer.
- The buyer must move the vehicle within a period of 3 days from the selling date; otherwise they shall pay a fine of RO 5/- per each day of delay.
- The buyer must pay the fees of vehicle registration in their name in the traffic system before receiving the vehicle.

SPORTS

Pakistan record facile win over Bangladesh

Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah shared seven wickets between them to stop Bangladesh at 193, which Pakistan chased down comfortably

LAHORE: Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf bowled six impactful overs full of pace, and relentless accuracy to restrict Bangladesh to 193 in 38.4 overs, following which Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Rizwan finished the chase within 40 overs as Pakistan started their Super Fours campaign in Asia Cup with an easy seven-wicket win on Wednesday.



With that, Pakistan got two points, and more crucially, a healthy net run rate. In the chase, Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Rizwan starred with the bat as Pakistan reached 194-run target in 39.3 overs, with the latter returning unbeaten on 63 (79). Imam, on the other hand, scored 78 (84) and stitched a decisive

74-run third-wicket stand with Rizwan. Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, however, couldn't do much with the bat as he was cleaned up for 17(22) by Taskin Ahmed. Bangladesh's innings started on a disappointing note as Naseem Shah had Mehidy Hasan Miraz chipping to square leg at start the second over. Naseem then took the

last two wickets within four balls of the 39th over. In between, it was all about Rauf making the Bangladesh batters almost look clueless. Replacing Naseem, who had hurt while fielding to start the eighth over, all it took Rauf was three balls to strike. He bowled one angling it into Naim from around the wicket, as Naim's attempted pull only resulted in a return catch off the top edge for Rauf. Rauf emerged as the standout bowler, scalping four wickets in six overs. Barring Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiquir Rahim no other Bangladesh batters could resist the fiery pace of Pakistan. The pair added 100 runs for the fifth wicket and both slammed their respective half-centuries. Shakib was dismissed for 53 (57), while Mushfiquir was caught-behind for 64 (87). **Brief scores:** Pakistan 194/3 in 39.3 overs (Imam-ul-Haq 78, Mohammad Rizwan 63*, Shoriful Islam 1-24) beat Bangladesh 193 in 38.4 overs (Mushfiquir Rahim 64, Shakib Al Hasan 53; Haris Rauf 4-19, Naseem Shah 3-34) by seven wickets. - Agencies

Oman begin Asian Cup U23 campaign in style



MUSCAT: Oman defeated Syria 2-0 in a Group A match of the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qualifiers at Zarqa City, Jordan, on Wednesday. Oman began the race to reach the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024 on a positive note and dominated the match with goals in each half. Jordan and Brunei Darussalam are the other teams in the group. Oman took the lead in the 26th minute through Nasser Al Raw-ahi and led 1-0 at the interval. Ahi Al Mashaikhi scored the second goal in the 67th minute to give the team, coached by Akram Habrishi, a comfortable win. The 11 group winners, together with the four best second-placed teams overall, will form the final cast of 16 alongside automatically-qualified hosts Qatar at the sixth edition of the competition, set to be played between April 15 to May 3, 2024.

Unaware of NRR permutations, says Trott

KANDY: Afghanistan head coach Jonathan Trott confirmed that his team was unaware of the calculations that meant they were in with a chance of qualifying for the Asia Cup Super Fours even after they had failed to reach their target of 292 in the stipulated 37.1 overs against Sri Lanka on Tuesday. At the end of the 37th over, Afghanistan were 289/8, which meant they needed three runs off one ball to win while bettering Sri Lanka's net run rate (NRR). Going for a big hit off Dhananjaya de Silva, Mujeeb Ur Rahman was caught on the long-on boundary, following which the non-striker Rashid Khan



sank to his knees, presumably in the belief - later confirmed by Trott - that Afghanistan had lost their chance, *ESPNCricinfo* reported. They were still not out of it,

though. They could've finished above Sri Lanka on net run rate if they got to 293 after 37.2 overs, 294 after 37.3, 295 after 37.5, 296 after 38 overs, or 297 after 38.1. They could have achieved these targets if their No. 11 Fazalhaq Farooqi had hit a four off the second ball of the 38th over; a six off the third, fourth or fifth ball; or taken a single to allow Rashid - who was batting on 27 off 16 balls - to try and finish the game himself. During post-match press conference, Trott said the match officials had not informed his team of the finer NRR permutations. "We were never communicated

those calculations," he said. "All we were communicated was we needed to win in 37.1 overs. We weren't told what the overs in which we could get 295 or 297. [That we could win in] 38.1 overs was never communicated to us." Coming to the match, solid top-order performances from Pathum Nissanka (41), Dimuth Karunaratne (32) and Kusal Mendis (92) helped Sri Lanka to 291/8. In the chase of 292, knocks from Gulbadin Naib (22), Rahmat Shah (45), Hashmatullah Shahidi (59) and Mohammed Nabi (65) pulled Afghanistan back into the game but fell short by two runs. - Agencies

OMAN DEFEAT PALESTINE 2-1

Oman defeated Palestine 2-1 in an international football friendly match at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Wednesday. Omar Al Malki and Mohsin Al Ghassani scored for the Red Warriors after the hosts, coached by Branko Ivankovic, conceded an early goal to the visitors.







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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by November 2023 reaching \$90.41, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$1.20 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$89.21. - OMA

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,721.68 points, down by 0.12 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.26 per cent at 467.48 points. Taageer Finance, up 2.22 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 9.80 per cent, was the top loser.

Madayn inks agreement to establish Omifco Centre for Entrepreneurship

This agreement stems from the plans of Sur Industrial City to support innovation and entrepreneurship in Oman in general and the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah in particular, by providing an incubator environment for their projects

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and the Oman-Indian Fertiliser Company (Omifco) signed an agreement to establish the Omifco Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Sur Industrial City.

This agreement stems from the plans of Sur Industrial City to support innovation and entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman in general and the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah in particular, by providing an incubator environ-

ment for their projects. The agreement aims to enhance the role of entrepreneurship and innovation and embrace emerging companies in various sectors.

The centre will work as a pioneering environment to provide packages of services to entrepreneurs, which include shared workspaces, private offices, consulting services, training programmes and seminars, and technical support, which will enhance the culture of entrepreneurship in the governorate and provide owners with ideas and projects for the labour market.

The centre is expected to become operational within 24 months.

The agreement was signed by Eng. Nasser Hamoud Al Mabsali, Director General of Sur Industrial City, and Khalid Sulaiman Al Farsi, General Manager of Supply Chain at Omifco. - OMA



IATA REPORT



Middle Eastern carriers see increase in cargo volumes

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle Eastern carriers experienced a 1.5 percent year-on-year increase in cargo volumes in July 2023, according to a new report.

"This was also an improvement to the previous month's performance (0.6 percent). The demand on Middle East-Asia routes has been trending upward in the past two months and capacity increased 17.1 percent compared to July 2022," the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in its latest data for July 2023 global air cargo markets.

The report further reveals that the Asia-Pacific airlines saw their air cargo volumes increase by 2.7 percent in July 2023 compared to the same month in 2022. This was a significant improvement in performance compared to June (-3.3 percent). Carriers in the region benefited from growth on three major trade lanes: Europe-Asia (3.2 percent year-on-year growth), Middle East-Asia (up from 1.8 percent in June to 6.6 percent in July), and Africa-Asia (returning to double-digit growth of 10.3 percent year-on-year from -4.8 percent in June).

Additionally, the within-Asia trade lane also performed considerably better in July, with an annual decline of international cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs) at 7.5 percent compared with the double-digit decreases observed since September 2022.

Available capacity in the region increased by 26 percent compared to July 2022 as more belly capacity came online from the passenger side of the business, the IATA report said.

"Compared to July 2022, demand for air cargo was basically flat. Considering we were 3.4 percent below 2022 levels in June, that's a significant improvement. And it continues a trend of strengthening demand that began in February. How this trend will evolve in the coming months will be something to watch carefully," Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

"Many fundamental drivers of

air cargo demand, such as trade volumes and export orders, remain weak or are deteriorating. And there are growing concerns over how China's economy is developing. At the same time, we are seeing shorter delivery times, which is normally a sign of increasing economic activity. Amid these mixed signals, strengthening demand gives us good reason to be cautiously optimistic," he further added.

However, the North American carriers posted the weakest performance of all regions, with a 5.2 percent decrease in cargo volumes in July 2023 compared to the same month in 2022, marking the fifth consecutive month in which the region had the weakest performance. It was, however, a slight improvement compared to June (-5.9 percent). The transatlantic route between North America and Europe saw traffic declining by 4.3 percent in July, 1.2 percentage points worse than the previous month. Capacity increased 0.5 percent compared to July 2022.

European carriers saw their air cargo volumes decline by 1.5 percent in July compared to the same month in 2022. This was, however, an improvement in performance versus June (-3.2 percent). Volumes were affected due to the aforementioned Europe-North America performance and contractions in the Middle East-Europe (-1.2 percent) and the within-Europe (-5.1 percent) markets. Capacity increased 5.3 percent in July 2023 compared to July 2022.

Latin American carriers posted a 0.4 percent increase in cargo volumes compared to July 2022. This was a drop in performance compared to the previous month (2.2 percent). Capacity in July was up 10 percent compared to the same month in 2022.

African airlines had the strongest performance in July 2023, with a 2.9 percent increase in cargo volumes compared to July 2022. Notably, Africa-Asia routes experienced significant cargo demand growth (10.3 percent). Capacity was 11 percent above July 2022 levels.

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

CMA continues training programmes to achieve qualitative Omanisation ratios

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) continues execution of the programmes of the annual plan Tamkeen for the year 2023 by executing a programme in Fraud Combating in the insurance sector from September 3-7.

This is for the employees of underwriting, claims and customer services in insurance companies and brokers as well as the employees of fraud combating and legal affairs to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of fraud and its types in addition to fraud detection tools in various types of insurance.

CMA endeavours, through such programmes, to enhance the capabilities and skills of the employees of the insurance sector to realise the Tamkeen initiative for the national cadres working in the insurance sector through qualitative and digital Omanisation policy to enhance the presence of the national cadres in the three levels of operational, medium and senior management roles.

This year's plan focuses on providing short-term and long-term specialised programmes related to insurance sciences such as accounting, management, information systems and leadership development skills including professional certification contributing to enhancing the competence of the national cards to enhance competitiveness to be able to take senior and medium administrative, technical and operational roles.

A programme in CII Certificate



was held during the first half of this year as well as an ARM certificate and completion of advanced CII Diploma in collaboration with the

Chartered Insurance Institute of London with 63 participants. Further to the continuation of execution of annual basic programmes

which enable the newcomers to the sector to attain a certificate in insurance fundamentals which included this year (properties insurance, compliance in insurance companies, money laundering, governance and management of insurance companies).

The total number of the programmes was eight with more than 221 participants.

CMA endeavours to increase the Omanisation ratio at various levels. Statistical indicators of the insurance sector up to mid-year indicate that the total Omanisation ratio in the sector was 83.4%. Omanisation in senior roles was 57.43% and in medium administrative positions 78.112% and 91.06% in operational positions.

INNOVATIVE

BankDhofar introduces Vertical Debit Card for enhanced convenience and security

MUSCAT: BankDhofar recently announced the launch of its new debit card vertical designs. The new designs are part of its customer centric strategy to enhance the banking experience for the valued customers.

The vertical debit cards reflect the way people use their cards. The cards are portrait oriented, similar to how customers use their smart phones. The card front displays only the name of the customer, along with the issuer and BankDhofar's logos and hides customer details on the back, to improve security and also to be used more intuitively for "Tap and Pay".

A color scheme was chosen to reflect the specific segment colors along with a wave pattern of silver to reflect the movement and endless possibilities.

Some key features of the debit card:

Enhanced security: The card incorporates advanced security features such as EMV chip technology which ensures secure transactions



making it convenient for both retail and online purchases.

Contactless payment: With the inclusion of NFC technology, cardholders can simply tap their card on a compatible payment terminal to complete the transaction quickly and securely.

Global acceptance: The vertical debit card is accepted across the world allowing customers to make purchases and withdraw cash from ATM's across the world.

Instant issuance: The vertical debit cards are issued instantly at any of the expanding branch networks allowing customers immediate access to their accounts.

"We wanted to create debit cards that our customers would be proud to use," said Bilal Al Raiisi, AGM Cards & Bancassurance at BankDhofar. "The new vertical designs are similar to how people use their smart phones and underscores our commitment to provide conveni-

ence, security and modernity."

BankDhofar continuously strive to anticipate the needs of its customers and deliver financial solutions that cater to their evolving needs. BankDhofar remains committed to elevating the customer's banking experience, ensuring it aligns with the modern world while delivering on the promise of security and reliability.

BankDhofar is a leading financial services provider that offers a wide range of products and services, including current accounts, savings accounts, credit cards, loans, and investments. The bank is committed to providing its customers with the best possible experience, and the new debit card designs are just one example of that commitment.

BankDhofar national wide network currently consists of almost 100 branches including Maisarah and two corporate branches. The network also includes more than 300 (ATMs - CDMs - FFM - MFKs) for BankDhofar and Maisarah.

MARKET



MSX index ends lower

Taageer Finance, up 2.22 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 9.80 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,721.68 points, down by 0.12 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.26 per cent at 467.48 points. Taageer Finance, up 2.22 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 9.80 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 412 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.36 million, with more than 8.09 million shares changing hands. Out of 34 traded securities, 5 advanced, 15 declined, and 14 remained unchanged.

At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR283,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR144,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR139,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at

7,710.00 points, down 0.62 per cent. Prices of Taageer Finance, Al Anwar Investment, Al Madina Takaful, Bank Muscat were up by 2.22 per cent, 1.28 per cent, 1.18 per cent, 0.36 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, Al Madina Investments, Sohar International Bank, National Bank Oman were up by 6.00 per cent, 2.44 per cent, 0.95 per cent, 0.34 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,787.20 points, down 0.53 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, Voltamp Energy, Al Maha Ceramics were up by 8.33 per cent, 3.28 per cent, 1.75 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.29 per cent before closing at 1,631.50 points. Prices of Oman Telecom were up by 0.40 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, SMN Power Holding, Sembcorp Salalah, Renaissance Services, Ooredoo were up by 2.22 per cent, 1.47 per cent, 1.05 per cent, 0.98 per cent, 0.26 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

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EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,733.60	4,719.77	4,721.68	4,727.22	-5.55	-0.12
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,758.00	7,692.61	7,710.00	7,758.00	-48.00	-0.62
Industry Index	5,818.30	5,779.08	5,787.20	5,818.30	-31.10	-0.53
Services Index	1,642.93	1,631.50	1,631.50	1,636.24	-4.74	-0.29
MSX Shariah Index	468.57	467.48	467.48	468.70	-1.23	-0.26
MSX TR INDEX	6,232.35	6,214.14	6,216.66	6,223.96	-7.30	-0.12
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,465.40	8,394.05	8,413.02	8,465.40	-52.38	-0.62
SERVICES TR IDX	1,814.53	1,801.91	1,801.91	1,807.14	-5.23	-0.29
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,215.39	6,173.49	6,182.17	6,215.39	-33.22	-0.53

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,097,887	2,355,947	412	23,723,870,729	5	15	14	34

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BR	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	28,850	2,453	6	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.001	1.176	0.085	0.085	0.086	0.100	15,050,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	578,233	581,103	45	1.002	1.006	1.002	1.005	1.001	0.004	0.400	1.005	1.004	1.005	0.100	753,750,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	3,297,605	929,566	107	0.282	0.284	0.281	0.282	0.281	0.001	0.356	0.282	0.282	0.282	0.100	2,116,803,971
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	10,500	2,100	5	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.197	0.200	0.100	44,000,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	17,930	1,040	4	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.055	0.060	0.100	20,655,383
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	305,000	117,120	29	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.385	-0.001	-0.260	0.384	0.381	0.384	0.100	249,962,584
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	401,906	119,610	18	0.298	0.298	0.297	0.297	0.298	-0.001	-0.336	0.297	0.297	0.298	0.100	482,906,067
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	335,598	35,035	13	0.105	0.105	0.104	0.104	0.105	-0.001	-0.952	0.104	0.104	0.105	0.100	568,660,404
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	226,000	92,186	15	0.410	0.410	0.406	0.406	0.410	-0.004	-0.976	0.406	0.408	0.406	0.100	95,982,460
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	139,300	9,560	13	0.069	0.069	0.067	0.067	0.068	-0.001	-1.471	0.067	0.066	0.068	0.100	13,375,585
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	2,342	656	2	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.285	-0.005	-1.754	0.280	0.280	0.285	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	27,900	6,138	6	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.225	-0.005	-2.222	0.220	0.210	0.220	0.100	13,464,940
Total	12	5,371,164	1,896,567	263												
Parallel Market																
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	4,398	405	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.090	0.002	2.222	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.100	24,272,623
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	211,973	16,727	14	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.001	1.282	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.100	16,274,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	25,332	4,392	2	0.172	0.175	0.172	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.100	411,190,057
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	921	822	1	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.000	0.000	0.892	0.892	0.000	0.100	84,740,000
OM0000003321	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	616,086	98,043	17	0.157	0.161	0.157	0.161	0.161	0.000	0.000	0.161	0.157	0.161	0.100	32,680,818
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,037,285	101,654	49	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	5,675	715	2	0.125	0.134	0.125	0.134	0.134	0.000	0.000	0.134	0.125	0.134	0.100	13,105,489
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	32,495	747	4	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.000	0.000	0.023	0.022	0.024	0.100	15,522,411
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	165,234	3,966	5	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.000	0.000	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.100	17,145,752
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	80,031	4,883	7	0.061	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.100	90,681,291
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	48,900	4,890	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.095	0.100	0.100	20,000,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	25,655	3,284	2	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.121	0.128	0.100	9,666,816
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	17,305	5,079	13	0.293	0.295	0.292	0.293	0.293	0.000	0.000	0.295	0.290	0.295	0.100	225,668,600
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	41,000	3,962	6	0.095	0.100	0.094	0.094	0.095	-0.001	-1.053	0.094	0.094	0.098	0.100	89,729,763
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	5,900	490	1	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.085	-0.002	-2.353	0.083	0.083	0.085	0.100	39,108,470
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	518	21	1	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.041	-0.001	-2.438	0.040	0.040	0.045	0.100	3,400,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	100	12	1	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.122	-0.004	-3.279	0.118	0.114	0.118	0.100	9,605,525
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	3,445	486	3	0.139	0.141	0.139	0.141	0.150	-0.009	-6.000	0.141	0.141	0.144	0.100	235,386,810
OM0000001301	DHOFAF FOODS AND INVESTMENT	109,400	5,959	7	0.055	0.060	0.054	0.055	0.060	-0.005	-8.333	0.055	0.055	0.059	0.100	10,872,231
OM0000007407	DHOFAF GENERATING	55,000	2,530	5	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.051	-0.005	-9.804	0.046	0.000	0.046	0.100	10,223,040
Total	20	2,486,653	259,065	143												

APPOINTMENT

New India Assurance welcomes new chief operating officer

Times News Service

MUSCAT: New India Assurance Company Oman has announced a significant transition in the company. Gaurav Sharma has taken charge of chief operating officer (COO) from the incumbent V. V. Raghavan who has completed his tenure of 4 years. The company has expressed its sincere gratitude for the invaluable leadership of V.V. Raghavan during the last four years. He has attained various milestones during his service in the Sultanate of Oman.

Gaurav Sharma brings with him a wealth of experience, and his knowledge and fresh perspective will undoubtedly contribute to the continued growth and success of New India Assurance in Oman.

Sharma is a distinguished Fellow of the Insurance Institute of India. He has worked in major metro cities in various capacities with exposure to retail clients



as Branch in charge in Delhi and large/mega clients during his tenure at Mumbai.

His journey is a testament to dedication and expertise.

V.V. Raghavan thanked and conveyed his sincere gratitude for all the support he had got from

various stakeholders, and regulator 'The Capital Market Authority, Sultanate of Oman'. He also expressed his gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the people of Oman for their warmth, generosity and genuine spirit.

OIL PRICES

Oil gains on supply woes after Opec+ output cuts

NEW DELHI: Oil prices ticked up in early Asian trade on Wednesday after rising over 1 per cent in the previous session, as markets worried about a supply shortage after Saudi Arabia and Russia extended their voluntary supply cuts to the end of the year.

Brent crude futures rose by 14 cents to \$90.18 a barrel at 02:15 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures gained 12 cents at \$86.81 a barrel.

Investors had expected Saudi Arabia and Russia to extend voluntary cuts into October, but the three-month extension was unexpected.

"These bullish moves significantly tighten the global oil market and can only result in one thing: higher oil prices worldwide," Jorge Leon, senior vice president at consultancy Rystad Energy, said in a note. -BNA

REPORT

International cooperation crucial for promoting global development

BEIJING: Strengthening international cooperation and global governance are extremely important measures for bringing global development back on track as the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change, said a research report.

The global development report 2023, which was released by the Center for International Knowledge on Development on Tuesday, comprehensively analysed and evaluated the current situation and major trends of global development, and proposed measures to tackle challenges.

The report is aimed at offering suggestions on bringing global development back on track, uniting efforts to bridge the global development deficit, and accelerating the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Underlining the backlash against economic globalisation and increased uncertainty and instability of global development, the report called for efforts to promote common and sustainable development of all countries on the basis of win-win cooperation and building a global

The report comprehensively analysed and evaluated the current situation and major trends of global development, and proposed measures to tackle challenges

community of development.

Work should be done under the principles of giving priority to development, putting people first, upholding universal benefit and inclusiveness, following innovation-driven and action-oriented approaches, living in harmony with nature, and adhering to genuine multilateralism, said the report. -Xinhua

UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE

India to provide hands-on UPI experience to visiting delegates at G20 Summit

NEW DELHI: Taking India's G20 Presidency as an opportunity to showcase the country's digital public goods to the world and its 'Digital India' initiative, the central government has decided to provide hands-on experiences to around 1,000 visiting foreign delegates with UPI wallets technology, besides explaining them about ease of making payments through the indigenous solution.

"Foreign delegates or participants will be given Rs500-1,000 in their UPI wallets for doing UPI transactions," a government official told ANI, adding it has earmarked around Rs10 lakhs for it.

Mobile-based fast payment system

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is India's mobile-based fast payment system, which facilitates customers to make round-the-clock payments instantly, using a Virtual Payment Address (VPA) created by the customer.

UPI payment system has become hugely popular for retail digital payments in India, and its adoption is increasing at a rapid pace.

India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing ecosystems for fintech innovation and the government and the central bank have been instrumental in driving the globalisation of India's digital

payment infrastructure. A key emphasis of the Indian government has been on ensuring that the benefits of UPI are not limited to India only, but other countries, too, benefit from it. So far, Sri Lanka, France, UAE, and Singapore have partnered with India on emerging fintech and payment solutions.

Also, RBI had earlier this year extended Unified Payments Interface-based payments for in-bound travellers from G20 nations to make local payments while they are in India. This facility was made available in April. India is all set to host the G20 Summit in New Delhi on September 9-10.

World leaders will arrive in New Delhi to attend the G20 Summit. The summit will be hosted at the state-of-the-art Bharat Mandapam Convention Centre at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

Notably, India assumed the G20 presidency on December 1 last year and about 200 meetings related to G20 were organized in 60 cities across the country.

The government also launched the 'G20 India' mobile app for seamless and smooth functioning with Indian and foreign delegates. The G20 India mobile app having all member countries' language options will help delegates access UPI and navigation facilities during the summit. -ANI

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THE TANTALISING

‘TASTE OF SHANGRI-LA’

BECKONS FOOD LOVERS

The month-long culinary event is an invitation to embark on an odyssey of flavours, cultures, and memories

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Imagine freshly picked frankincense from the garden, located few hundred metres away, used to make a chilled and refreshing drink with the aroma wafting through your senses while enjoying breathtaking views sitting on the terrace of Sultanah Restaurant at the Al Husn Hotel of Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah.

The unforgettable setting at one of the most picturesque locations in the Sultanate of Oman invites guests to embark on a gastronomic journey with the ‘Taste of Shangri-La’ campaign that was launched recently.

The month-long gastronomic adventure is an extraordinary culinary celebration set to indulge discerning palates from the September 1-30. Within just a 15-minute drive from the city of Muscat, this exceptional journey promises an unparalleled experience through an array of expertly crafted set menus, curated across the hotels’ five distinct specialty restaurants.

Diners are invited to savour daily tasting menus comprising a minimum of six courses at each of the five signature dining venues, including Chow Mee, Capri Court, Bait Al Bahr, Aangan by Rohit Ghai, and Sultanah.

All this comes at an exceptional set price of just OMR 19 at each venue. The selected dining venue’s welcome beverage will be extended to all patrons, as the accomplished chefs’ guide them through a delectable culinary odyssey.

In his remarks to *Times of Oman*, Rene D. Egle, Area General Manager of Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn, Muscat, said: “We are delighted to present the Taste of Shangri-La, an event that truly encapsulates the pinnacle of culinary prowess showcased at our resorts. This annual celebration not only pays homage to the diverse tapestry of cultures but also provides our esteemed guests with an exceptional dining experience at an incredible value.”

The gastronomic journey delves into the world of fine dining and exquisite culinary experiences. One would be tantalised by the flavours, mesmerised by the artistry, and captivated by the stories behind the innovative creations from experienced and Michelin-starred chefs.

The culinary adventure promises to awaken your taste buds and ignite your passion for food as the secrets and traditions were uncovered to make each dining experience truly unforgettable.

The ‘Taste of Shangri-La’ promises to take you on a mouthwatering exploration of culture, creativity, and the sheer pleasure of a well-prepared meal.

The impact of specialty restaurants on the travel and hospitality industry goes beyond simply attracting tourists and diners. It also drives economic growth in the local communities. The five restaurants at Shangri-La support local farmers and producers, and contribute to the overall development of the culinary



ecosystem. The influence of such campaigns on the travel and hospitality industry is undeniable, making them an essential part of any gastronomic journey.

In recent years, there has been a shift towards more sustainable and locally sourced ingredients. Chefs are increasingly focusing on creating dishes that not only taste great but also have a minimal impact on the environment. This has led to the rise of farm-to-table concepts, where restaurants forge direct relationships with local farmers and producers to ensure the highest quality ingredients and at Shangri-La, it is evident.

A magnificent feast unveiled

At Bait Al Bahr, where the art of seafood comes alive, it is a journey of flavours. The menu is a reflection of the chef’s vision and serves as a guide through the culinary journey that awaits the guests.

Capri Court offers a variety for Italian enthusiasts who will find their culinary aspirations fulfilled.

At Chow Mee, Chef Ida unfolds an Asian culinary show, treating guests to Thai delights, which includes iconic dishes

like Nasi Goreng.

Sultanah offers beautiful setting and exceptional offerings, including Omani tuna crudo and braised octopus with beetroot couscous.

A Michelin-star affair

The pièce de résistance arrives with Aangan by Rohit Ghai. The internationally acclaimed chef will guide patrons through an unforgettable culinary journey. Guests are transported into a world of culinary excellence and impeccable service. The ambience, and the attention to detail, all contribute to the overall experience.

Earning a Michelin star is no small feat and Rohit Ghai has earned it with a perfect balance of creativity, technique, and consistent delivery of outstanding culinary experiences.

Chefs who receive this prestigious accolade are recognised as masters of their craft and Rohit Ghai’s dedication to quality, attention to detail, and ability to push the boundaries of gastronomy set him apart from the rest. Dining at Aangan by Rohit Ghai is a true testament to the artistry and

CHEF’S CULINARY DELIGHTS

BAIT AL BAHAR: Live tuna roll preparation, Omani seafood soup, oven-baked seabream fillet, grilled fish steak adorned with a fragrant parsley sauce and burnt Basque cheesecake.

CAPRI COURT: Grilled scallops with tomato tartar, ricotta and spinach dumplings enhanced by shaved truffle, homemade chitarra pasta accompanied by prawn tartare, cheese fondue, ‘Il Branzino’ - a seabass masterpiece, and Affogato dessert.

CHOW MEE: Thai deep-fried breaded prawn cake, Indonesian-style Wagyu baby short ribs, Thai wok-fried seafood rice noodles with peanut and mango sticky rice and vanilla ice cream.

SULTANAH: Omani lobster bisque elevated with a touch of caviar and cauliflower foam is one of its highlights. The main courses feature pan-seared seabass with fennel cream, smoked Frankincense-infused chicken, and a captivating lemon meringue with passion fruit crud and basil-infused yogurt ice cream.

AANGAN BY ROHIT GHAI: Aloo Tikki, prawn Malabar, Keema pao, pan-seared fish moile, and chicken fenugreek.



dedication that goes into creating a world-class dining experience.

Vegan delights

Embracing the growing trend of veganism, ‘Taste of Shangri-La’ extends a warm welcome to guests pursuing a plant-based lifestyle. With one of Oman’s most extensive vegan selections, the festivity offers creative and tasteful options at an inclusive price of OMR 17 per person. From truffle-scented vichyssoise soup to vegan tempura and mushroom risotto, these dishes celebrate the essence of cruelty-free dining.

Under the leadership of Executive Chef Paolo Pelosi, the culinary team has orchestrated an exquisite gastronomic voyage that reflects Shangri-La’s unwavering commitment to dining excellence. Each dish, a masterpiece, has been

meticulously crafted to transport guests on an unforgettable gastronomic expedition.

Dining at a renowned restaurant is an experience like no other. From the moment you step through the doors, you are transported into a world of culinary excellence and impeccable service. It is a sensory experience, and is more than just a meal; it’s an unforgettable experience that engages all the senses.

So get ready and embark on a gastronomic journey. Let your taste buds be tantalised, your senses captivated, and your passion for food ignited. It’s time to indulge in a world of flavours and enjoy an unforgettable gastronomic odyssey.

Guests may call for reservations: +968 2477 6565 or WhatsApp +968 7926 9247.

SPORTS

Record breaker! Djokovic books spot in 47th Grand Slam semis

Serb demolishes American Fritz to set up a last four clash against Ben Shelton as he chases his 24th major title

NEW YORK: Novak Djokovic reached a record 47th men's Grand Slam semi-final with a straight-set win over Taylor Fritz at the US Open on Tuesday.

The Serb, 36, prevailed 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 on Arthur Ashe Stadium to continue his pursuit of a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title.

Djokovic achieved his victory despite temporarily appearing to struggle with the heat and humidity in New York.

The three-time champion will face home hope Ben Shelton in the last four.

Shelton, in contrast to Djokovic, will be appearing in his first Grand Slam semi-final following his win over compatriot Frances Tiafoe.

Djokovic maintained his perfect record in US Open quarter-finals - with this his 13th win in a row at that stage - to overtake Roger Federer for most Grand Slam men's semi-final appearances.

The victory also moved him within two wins of equalling Australian Margaret Court's tally of major singles triumphs.

On achieving another record, Djokovic said: "This is the sport that has given me so much in my life. Coming from Serbia, a war-torn country when I was growing up, I faced a lot of adversity.

"I was lucky to encounter some very knowledgeable and passionate people. Without their support, and my parents, I wouldn't be here without their love and incredible sacrifice.

"That is the long answer for what goes through my head when I



hear those numbers [of records he has broken]. There's a lot of things I am very grateful for."

The temperature exceeded 30C at the US Open on Tuesday as a heatwave hit New York

Despite an admirable effort, American Fritz, 25, could not earn any reward as Djokovic delivered a devastating performance in hot temperatures at Flushing Meadows.

The warmest day of the 2023 tournament, with the temperature hitting 32C and high humidity, led to the heat rule being invoked and the roof partially closing to provide shade.

The win means Djokovic remains on course for another showdown with top seed Carlos Alcaraz in Sunday's final, just two months after the 20-year-old edged a thrilling five-set Wimbledon final against the Serb.

Spaniard Alcaraz meets Ger-

man Alexander Zverev for a place in the last four.

Shelton has reached the semi-finals in just his second US Open main draw appearance. Shelton became the youngest man to reach the US Open semi-finals in 31 years after the 20-year-old beat Tiafoe in a thrilling quarter-final.

Shelton won the eagerly anticipated encounter 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (9-7), 6-2 with the match swinging in his favour after a topsy-turvy third set that saw six breaks in eight games before Shelton won an epic tie-break.

Tiafoe was then broken in the end of a pulsating encounter that will give American fans hope Shelton can go to reach the final.

He is seeking to become the first American men's singles champion in New York for 20 years, since Andy Roddick's triumph in 2003.

"I feel like I left it all out there," said Shelton. "Sometimes you have to shut off the brain and close the eyes and just swing. It ended up working out."

- Agencies



Gauff downs Ostapenko to reach last four

NEW YORK: American teenager Coco Gauff says she is feeling "emotionally fresh" as she reached the US Open semi-finals for the first time by beating Jelena Ostapenko on Tuesday.

Gauff won 6-0m 6-2 in 67 minutes against Latvian 20th seed Ostapenko to record her best run at the tournament.

The 19-year-old will now face French Open runner-up Karolina Muchova for a place in the final.

"I think the problem in the past in Grand Slams is that I would be emotionally drained," sixth seed Gauff said.

"Now I'm physically fresh and emotionally fresh, and I think that just came from experience."

Afterwards, 26-year-old Ostapenko complained about the scheduling of the match,



which started at 12:00 local time on Tuesday.

Her victory over Swiatek was completed just before midnight on Sunday and the Latvian said she had been told to expect a late start against Gauff.

US Open organisers denied that had been the case.

Czech 10th seed Muchova continued her fine run at the

US Open as she beat Sorana Cirstea of Romania 6-0, 6-3 to reach the semi-finals for the first time.

Muchova was ranked 235th in the world when she played at Flushing Meadows last year as she made her way back from an injury lay off.

"Unbelievable. This is a really sweet victory. Incredible," Muchova said.

- Agencies

ODI WORLD CUP

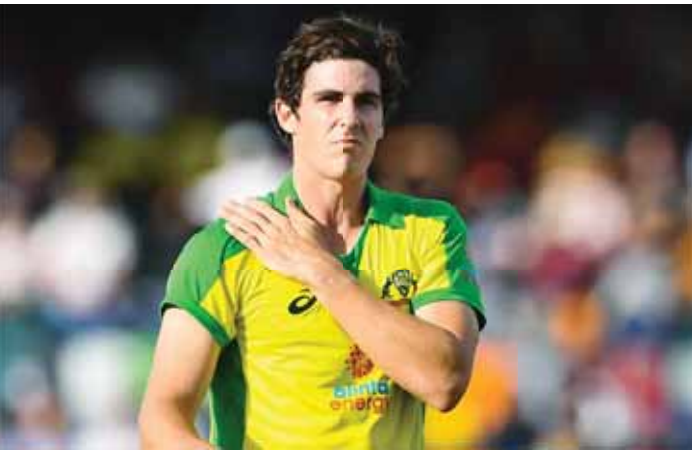
Abbott earns berth in Australia squad

SYDNEY: Australia are confident that Pat Cummins, Steven Smith, Mitchell Starc and Glenn Maxwell are on track to be fit for the ODI World Cup after they confirmed a provisional 15-player squad that did not include any surprises on Wednesday.

Sean Abbott earned a place among the pace bowlers in what was one of the few debatable positions, holding off a challenge from Nathan Ellis. Josh Inglis has been included as the back-up wicket-keeper and spare batting option. The squad can be amended until September 28 after which ICC approval is required.

From the original 18-player group selected for the South Africa and India tours earlier this month, Ellis, Aaron Hardie and Tanveer Sangha are the three to not make the final squad. Tim David, Marcus Labuschagne and Spencer Johnson are also currently with the ODI squad in South Africa.

Australia's preparations for the World Cup have become some-



what disjointed with a number of injuries around first-choice players. Cummins and Smith both picked up wrist injuries during the Ashes, which ruled them out of the ODI series in South Africa, while Starc has been sidelined by a groin problem.

Meanwhile, Maxwell, who was always going to miss the South Africa one-dayers due to the birth

of his first child, returned home early after suffering discomfort in his ankle and is likely to be carefully managed in the lead-up to the World Cup.

"All are well placed to come back online in the coming weeks and potentially for selection in the upcoming series against India," national selector George Bailey said. "There are eight one-day

matches still to play in South Africa and India before the final squad is due to be declared. They are followed by two World Cup practice games, which offers plenty of opportunity to continue the build for the tournament."

Leg-spinner Sangha has caught the eye in the past week after impressing in the T20I series against South Africa where he was called in for a last-minute debut when Adam Zampa was ill. However, the selectors have opted for two frontline spinners in the squad - Zampa and Ashton Agar - supplemented by Maxwell and Travis Head.

Australia open their World Cup campaign against India on October 8 in Chennai.

Australia squad: Pat Cummins, Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Steven Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

MATCH-FIXING CHARGES

Former Sri Lankan cricketer arrested

COLOMBO: Former Sri Lanka off-spinner Sachithra Senanayake has been arrested by Sri Lanka Police on Wednesday, on charges related to match-fixing. According to the police's media division, he is due to be produced in court in the next 24 hours, *ESPNCricinfo* reported.

Senanayake, 38, is alleged to have attempted to convince players to fix in the 2020 Lanka Premier League. Although he was not himself a player in this tournament, and is understood to have been overseas at the time, Senanayake is alleged to have contacted more than one player taking part in the LPL. This information was then allegedly conveyed to the tournament's anti-corruption officers.

Senanayake had had something of a storied career before being pulled up on his action in 2014. He'd been a key part of Sri



Lanka's triumphant 2014 T20 World Cup campaign, and had also been bought for US \$625,000 by Kolkata Knight Riders in the 2013 IPL season.

Although he made a return in 2014 with a remodeled bowling action, his career declined thereafter. He played the last of his 49 ODIs in December 2015, and the last of his 24 T20Is in 2016. He also played one Test in 2013, but didn't take any wickets.

- Agencies

MONTSE TOME NAMED SUCCESSOR

Unfair, says Spain women's football coach Vilda after sacking

MADRID: Former Spain head coach Jorge Vilda said on Wednesday that being sacked weeks after winning the Women's World Cup was "unfair". The Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) dismissed Vilda on Tuesday, with Montse Tome named his successor.

Vilda's exit came amid the fallout after the behaviour of RFEF president Luis Rubiales at the World Cup final.

"In sporting terms, I am going to accept all the criticisms, but on a personal level I think it has been unfair," Vilda, 42, told Cadena SER.

"It has been a special year. Nothing has ever been said directly but indirectly things have been said that do not suit me. Things have been said that are not true."



Spain beat England in the World Cup final on 20 August but the win was overshadowed by Rubiales kissing forward Jenni Hermoso, which she has said was not consensual.

Most of Vilda's coaching staff resigned and 81 players refused to play for Spain in the aftermath.

Rubiales has refused to resign but has been provisionally suspended by FIFA, football's world

governing body, with Pedro Rocha appointed interim president.

In a statement, the RFEF did not give a specific reason for Vilda's dismissal, saying he had been "a promoter of the values of respect and sportsmanship in football".

However, the RFEF has been exploring whether it could sack Vilda - considered a close ally of Rubiales - since last week.

The RFEF called the move "one of the first renewal measures" announced by Rocha.

Vilda, who had been in charge of the national team since 2015, survived a player revolt in September 2022, when the RFEF said 15 players had submitted identical emails saying they would not play for Vilda unless "significant" concerns over their "emotional state"

and "health" were addressed.

Vilda, who won 75 of his 108 matches in charge of Spain and has taken the side to second in the FIFA world rankings, added: "I am as well as can be after being fired after being world champion 10 days ago. I have been fired, I think, unjustly.

"It was a brief meeting with Pedro Rocha and the vice president of Equality. The explanation given is that there have been 'structural changes'.

"I have a clear conscience. I have given 100% and I don't understand it, I didn't see my termination as deserved."

Former midfielder Tome - who was part of Vilda's coaching team - is set to lead Spain into a new era after becoming the first wom-

an to hold the position.

She won four caps for her country during her playing career and her first assignment comes later this month as Spain feature in Women's Nations League qualifying fixtures against Sweden and Switzerland on 22 and 26 September.

Vilda said: "Montse Tome has well deserved this, I have congratulated her. I think she has the ability to do very well. She was chosen by me for the coaching staff.

"In addition, she has a well-rounded team, the greatest legacy I can leave is our recognisable style of play, the methodology... to be able to play this way. That's where we are at - let her take advantage of it. She is prepared and she is going to do it well."

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ROUND-UP

Bank Nizwa launches digital onboarding for Minor Account

Bank Nizwa's Minor Account is designed with the aim to ensure children enjoy financially stable futures



MUSCAT: In a move to simplify securing children's financial futures, Bank Nizwa, Oman's leading Islamic bank, has launched the digital onboarding for Minor Accounts. With this service, parents can open fully Sharia compliant Minor Accounts for their children anytime, anywhere through the Bank Nizwa mobile application.

Bank Nizwa's Minor Account is designed with the aim to ensure children enjoy financially stable futures. The bank offers parents the opportunity to open Sharia aligned accounts for their children, which will in turn instil in

them a savings mindset and teach them the importance of making prudent financial decisions.

In line with the banking world leaning towards complete digitalisation of services, Bank Nizwa brings banking solutions to customers' smartphones through its mobile application. Through the digital onboarding of Minor accounts, the Bank reaffirms its commitment to developing cutting-edge solutions that cater to the ever-changing needs of the customers. This feature will allow parents to easily open a new account for their children, set up automated deposits and savings targets, and tailor the accounts to

their children's financial goals.

Commenting on the new digital onboarding feature, Sadiq Bager Al Lawati, Head of Digital, eSales & Payment at Bank Nizwa said, "At Bank Nizwa, we believe our customers deserve unparalleled banking solutions that are simplified, accessible and hassle-free. With this in mind, we have launched the digital onboarding service for Minor Accounts. Through this move we have made securing their children's financial futures possible from the comfort of their homes, offices or on the go. It is our endeavor to ensure the future generations of Oman are well-informed in the ethical practices of Islamic

banking, and empowered with strong money management skills that will last them a lifetime."

With the digital onboarding feature for the Minor Account, customers no longer need to visit branches to open bank accounts for their children.

It can be done from anywhere at anytime and in a swift streamlined way that means customers can start saving for their children's futures instantly. Bank Nizwa has also equipped the digital onboarding service with robust security measures to keep customers' financial information safe and secure and protect their assets.

As Oman's pioneering Islamic bank, Bank Nizwa has been at the forefront of developing innovative banking solutions to allow customers the freedom to plan and make financial decisions and investments efficiently. With the introduction of new digital features, Bank Nizwa cements its position as the most-trusted and preferred Islamic bank in the country. To experience the ease and convenience of opening a Minor Account, download the Bank Nizwa Mobile Application, available across all smartphones.

GLOBAL FINTECH AWARDS



Adeeb Ahamed wins Leading Fintech Personality of the Year Award at GFF Mumbai

MUMBAI: It was an evening to remember at the prestigious Global Fintech Awards (GFA) 2023, held annually as part of the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2023 in Mumbai, India.

This year, the coveted global award for 'Leading Fintech Personality of the Year' from the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) region was awarded to Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of the Abu Dhabi based Lulu Financial Holdings.

A visionary entrepreneur in the financial services world, Adeeb has been instrumental in revolutionizing cross-border payments between the GCC and India. His company operates a network of 300+ customer engagement centres and digital payment solutions in 10 countries across the Middle East, Asia Pacific and GCC regions.

Accepting the award, Adeeb Ahamed, said, "I am deeply honoured to receive this year's 'Leading Fintech Personality of the Year Award - GCC'. The GCC payments landscape is among the fastest evolving globally, and this award is a testament to the collective efforts of the Lulu Financial Holdings team to revolutionize cross-border payments. I am also immensely grateful for the regulatory support that has accelerated our progress in the region and beyond. This award isn't just my win; it reflects the tireless efforts of those working towards a shared vision: of enhancing lives through an inclusive financial system."

Recognising outstanding accomplishments of individuals and entities in the fintech ecosystem around the globe, GFA award are given in three categories, divided into 15 subcategories.

INNOVATIVE YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS



National Finance & Injaz Oman celebrate winners of 'The Company' competition

MUSCAT: National Finance, the leading finance company in the country, joined Injaz Oman to unveil the winners of 'The Company' competition, at an elaborate ceremony held at OCEC.

An initiative by Injaz, 'The Company' programme and competition gave student participants the opportunity to learn entrepreneurial skills and honoured the most innovative young entrepreneurs. This competition not only highlights the talent and potential of the Omani youth, but also underscores National Finance's commitment to fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Under the umbrella of its 'Imtidad' social responsibility wing, National Finance partnered with Injaz Oman as the main sponsor for the University Category of the Competition. This partnership exemplifies National Finance's unwavering dedication to providing the youth with avenues and opportunities to turn business aspirations into well-rounded ventures.

Commenting on the occasion, Tariq Sulaiman Al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer, National Finance, said, "We are extremely proud of the Omani youth who have demonstrated flair, intel-

ligence, business acumen and tenacity during the course of 'The Company' programme and competition. Through this experience, the participants have learned the value of hard work, perseverance, problem-solving and team work. At National Finance, we believe our youth should be encouraged to act on their entrepreneurial instincts in order for them to build home-grown brands that will succeed in the market.

"To this end, we go above and beyond to establish collaborations and partnerships with organisations like Injaz to empower our youth with the skills, tools and education to bring their dreams for the future to life."

'The Company' competition saw the enthusiastic participation from students of different age groups across The Sultanate of Oman. As part of the competition, they were challenged with ideating, refining, and presenting their own business concepts. These challenges gave them the opportunity to understand the importance of strategic business planning, market dynamics and inventive thinking in the success of a business.

BENEFITS

Bank Muscat continues its zero annual fee waiver offer for Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cards

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat's Al Jawhar Privilege Banking is an ideal choice for customers and opens a world of opportunities and unrivalled benefits, making it one of the most popular Premier Banking options in Oman.

Recently, the bank launched a special offer for customers, whereby those who apply for the Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Card will get a waiver of annual fees for the first year for primary and supplementary cards. The offer continues until September 30.

Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cards offer an array of benefits including: 1% cashback on all local and international spends and access to 25 premium lounges around the world in addition to lounges at Muscat and Salalah



airports. Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cardholders can also enjoy the "best in class" complimentary travel insurance, which includes travel accident insurance as well as insurance for lost baggage and money, cancellation, travel delay, delayed baggage, personal liability,

legal expenses and loss of passport and access to free medical and legal referral services worldwide. Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit cardholders can also enjoy numerous discounts across a variety of categories including Dining, Lifestyle, Health & Beauty through

"xperience with Entertainer" app.

Al Jawhar Privilege Banking provides customers with an exceptional banking experience and opens a world of opportunities for them. Customers are also eligible for a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO 800. Al Jawhar customers can access services through a number of e-channels including Internet and Mobile banking, ATMs / CDMs and the contact center 24/7 for their various banking needs.

Al Jawhar Privilege Banking customers can apply for the Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Card through Bank Muscat mBanking & Internet Banking with a few simple steps and have the card delivered to their doorstep through complimentary courier service.

RECOGNITION

Sohar International clinches 'Best Digital Bank Oman 2023' accolade

MUSCAT: Setting new standards for excellence in the digital banking sphere, Sohar International announced its latest achievement as it receives the prestigious 'Best Digital Bank Oman 2023' award from the UAE based Global Business Review Magazine Awards.

This esteemed recognition comes following an evaluation process that scrutinised various facets of the bank's digital touchpoints including its pioneering digital leadership, technological innovations, product diversity, and digital offerings.

The 'Best Digital Bank Oman 2023' award underscores the bank's unwavering commitment to innovation and customer-centric solutions as well as to technological advancements that have



paved the way for a range of innovative digital offerings, providing customers with convenient and secure banking experiences. From user-friendly mobile apps cater-

ing to the retail clients to advanced unified digital banking platforms for wholesale banking clients, the bank has consistently raised the bar in delivering financial services in the digital age.

In a statement expressing his delight at this remarkable accomplishment, Sajeel Bashiruddin, Chief Digital Officer at Sohar International, remarked, "We are thrilled and honored to be recognized as the 'Best Digital Bank Oman 2023' by Global Business Review Magazine Awards. This award is a testament to our dedication to creating a seamless and cutting-edge digital banking experience for our valued customers. It reflects our ongoing efforts to push the boundaries of digital banking through continuous innovation

building on our principles of providing more vision, more value and more velocity in everything we do."

The 'Best Digital Bank Oman 2023' accolade reaffirms Sohar International's position as a trailblazer in the banking industry and highlights its role as a catalyst for Oman's digital transformation journey. The bank remains focused on its mission to enhance the digital banking landscape in Oman, bringing the best of financial technology to its retail and corporate customers.

The awards, presented by the esteemed publication, Global Business Magazine, headquartered in the UAE are highly regarded for their recognition of visionaries, pioneers, and industry disruptors from across the globe.



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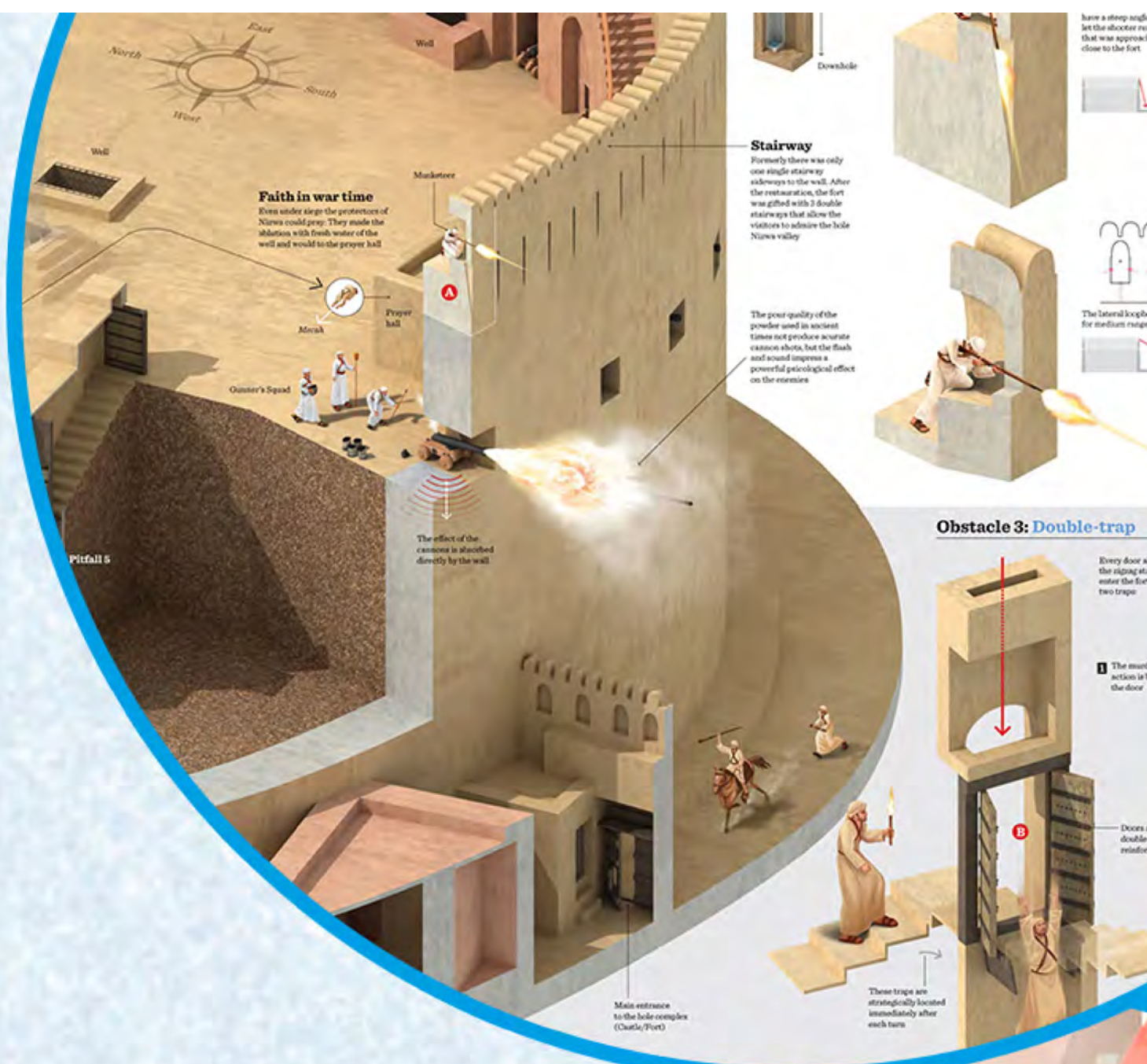


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