

## AT LEAST 26 PEOPLE KILLED IN AN EXPLOSION IN ETHIOPIA

At least 26 people have been killed in an explosion in the Finote Selam region of Ethiopia amid heavy fighting between government forces and a local militia group, according to media report. **>A6**



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## NCSI WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON NEED TO MAXIMISE USE OF DATA

The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) on Tuesday organised a workshop on the National Data Strategy (NDS), its objectives and its significance to units of the state's administrative apparatus. **>A2**



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# 18,716

## JOBS MADE AVAILABLE FOR CITIZENS UNTIL JUNE 2023

## Ministry of Labour unveiled the outcomes of its second quarter employment plan

**MUSCAT:** The total number of jobs made available for citizens in Oman in government and private sector establishments reached 18,716 by the end of June 2023, the Ministry of Labour announced on Tuesday. "Of these, a total of 9,169 jobs were made available in the government sector, and 7,399 jobs in the private sector," the ministry said, adding that "53 percent of the

Employment and Replacement Plan set for the second quarter of 2023 was realised."

Elaborating about the job rotation (those who previously worked for the private sector) stood at 16,486, the ministry said. The ministry further pointed out that the volume of first-time employees and those who occupied jobs before stood at 35,202.



The number of on-the-job training opportunities associated with the replacement of outgoing employees and employment of fresh employees stood at 611 in the government sector, while the corre-

sponding number of opportunities in the private sector stood at 1,537.

As many as 941 enrolled in the ministry's Self-Employment Initiative, which is a training track that connects jobseekers with a

number of training programmes to qualify them to take up opportunities related to self-employment in the local and global market.

### 86,000 jobs in 2 years

In February 2023, the Minister of Labour, Dr. Mahad bin Saeed Ba'awin, said that more than 86,000 citizens were provided jobs in the public and private sectors over the last two years in the Sultanate of Oman.

In a review meeting before the Shura Council, the Minister had said, "Providing jobs is a top priority and the Ministry, in cooperation with strategic partners, created job opportunities for 86,530 male and female citizens in both public

and private sectors from January 2021 to December 2022."

He also said that the Ministry is making constant efforts in implementing strategic approaches to develop labour market policies, provide facilities and lend support for the private sector, and channel efforts towards launching many job initiatives to provide suitable job opportunities for jobseekers.

The minister also said that the ministry is working on developing several strategic programmes, that include finding a new mechanism for nationalising jobs, formulating the national employment policy, as well as a sectoral strategy for developing human resources.

— ONA/Times News Service



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### MUSCAT 36°



### TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

## OMAN 2mn mangrove seeds to be planted

**1** The Environment Authority launched a new campaign on Tuesday to plant two million mangrove seeds in the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta. **>A5**

## WORLD Trump indicted over Georgia poll meddling

**2** Former US President Donald Trump and his allies were indicted after investigation into Trump's attempts to overturn the 2020 election results in Georgia. **>A7**

## MARKET Crude oil prices hover near \$90 per barrel



**3** Oil prices roared towards the \$90 per barrel mark following consistent gains since the fourth week of July-2023, according to a new report issued by the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest. The most recent support to prices came from record demand from Asian refiners for US crude deliveries, the report added. **>B1**

### GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

## Unified job portal for GCC mooted

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** A unified employment portal for citizens of the Gulf countries will be launched that will ease the process of hiring in the region.

Jassem Mohamed Al Budaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), said, "Through the new recruitment portal, we seek to attract Gulf talent and all citizens of the GCC can register on it." He said that job vacancies will be available for the GCC citizens and the new recruitment portal has been developed to facilitate the applicant's registration in a fair and transparent manner. An applicant can register and follow up on his application, and those who meet the conditions will be selected after scheduled interviews, he added.



"We will soon announce several new jobs in the General Secretariat and appreciate the efforts made by the team concerned for developing the recruitment portal with modern technologies," he said.

The portal aims to assist companies and institutions in the Gulf countries to find suitable

human cadres while helping job seekers to find employment as per their capabilities and qualifications. Preliminary data on the recruitment portal showed that it will have a wide range of vacancies from fields like engineering, medicine, management, finance, marketing, and others.

### GROUP OF EXPATRIATES

## 77km ride to mark Indian Independence Day

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** They come from diverse backgrounds — doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, sales executives, and IT professionals — but share a common passion of cycling.

The group of Indian expatriates have been passionately following cycling as a hobby and on Tuesday marked the 77th Indian Independence Day with a 77km cycle trip.

Donning the Indian blue colours, a total of 20 cyclists took to Muscat streets early in the morning to ride the distance.

The cycling group, which also involved families, began their hobby in 2016, and today the fraternity boasts of a good number of enthusiasts. They are from young to old



in the group (25 to 65 years) and from varied professions.

Speaking to *Times of Oman*, one of the members said: "This is a fantastic support group with each one encouraging the other

to push oneself to beat their own benchmarks."

He added: "The group has been undertaking special cycle rides on the occasion of the Indian Independence Day and Oman Na-

tional Day for the past four years. We established as a group in 2016, but we started to ride on these two historic days of India and Oman over the past four years and have increased the distance every year."

This year, the Independence Day route took the riders from Ruwi to Al Mouj and back to the starting point in Ruwi.

The riders took a break at Al Mouj for tea and photographs. Few of the group members joined from Al Khuwair, Azaiba and other places until Al Mouj; taking it upon themselves to complete the stipulated 77 kms. Another rider told *Times of Oman*, "This is an initiative that we hope to continue as an annual tradition. We hope that one day, riders will be riding all the way to Sohar and back."



### 1.62 million vehicles registered in Oman

# A2



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### OMAN PARTICIPATES IN INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TECHNICAL FORUM IN RUSSIA

The Sultanate of Oman participated in the official opening of the International Military Technical Forum (Armia 2023), being held in the Russian Federation until 20 August. Oman's delegation was headed by Maj. Gen. Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman. The Omani delegation toured the branches of the forum and listened to briefings about defence and strategic industries, artificial intelligence technologies and a broad range of military equipment on show. — OMA



# More than 1.6 million vehicles registered in Oman by June 2023

Vehicles with private registration constituted 79.6 percent of the total vehicles registered in Oman, to stand at 1,294,252

**MUSCAT:** The total number of vehicles registered in the Sultanate of Oman reached 1.62 million at the end of June 2023, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Vehicles with private registration constituted 79.6 percent of the total vehicles registered in Oman, to stand at 1,294,252, while the number of vehicles with commercial registration reached 237,621.

Meanwhile, taxi vehicles reached 27,983. The number of rental vehicles reached 30,856. The number of government vehicles stood at 11,832 and motor-bikes stood at 6,758. The number of driving instruction vehicles stood at 5,564 and the number of vehicles with temporary registration (temporary inspection, export and import) stood at 8,556.

The number of tractors stood at 1,275 and vehicles with diplomatic entity registrations stood at 844. As for vehicles registered per weight, the number of vehicles weighing less than 3 tonnes stood at 1,467,675, over 10 tonnes stood at 71,931, between 3-7 tonnes stood at 47,865 and between 7-10 tonnes stood at 38,070. — OMA



COMMERCE MINISTRY



### New decision to regulate buying and selling of precious metals, stones

*Times News Service*

**MUSCAT:** The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has issued a decision to regulate monetary transactions for those engaged in buying and selling of precious metals and stones.

With the aim of regulating cash transactions and raising the quality of service to the consumers, the decision aims to expedite transactions through electronic payment as it saves time of customers and also hassles. Different technologies such as phones and smart devices can be used for transactions, which add a high degree of security, and lowers the risks of carrying money that may be subject to theft. It also be-

comes easy for merchants to keep track of accounts, audit them, and track sales, while controlling expenditures. In addition, the National Risk Assessment considered the precious metals and stones trading sector to be one of the high-risk sectors due to its intensive monetary dealings. Such a decision will reduce this risk, as well as customs evasion.

And if commercial companies violate to abide by the law, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may impose one of the administrative penalties, which is a written warning or an administrative fine not exceeding OMR500, or suspending the commercial register for a period not exceeding 3 months.



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# Patriotic fervour marks India's 77th Independence Day celebrations in Oman

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The 77th Independence Day of India was celebrated in Oman with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. The Embassy building was lit up in tricolour on the eve of Independence Day.

A flag hoisting ceremony was organised at the Embassy to celebrate Independence Day of India with the Indian community on Tuesday morning.

Ambassador Amit Narang hoisted the tricolour, which was followed by singing of National Anthem. In addition, a soulful rendition of patriotic songs by Indian School Seeb students added colour to the celebrations.

Ambassador Amit Narang read out excerpts from the President of India's address to the nation. He encouraged everyone to be a part of India's growth story and the journey towards self-reliance and propagate India's message of peace and development.

Ambassador also spoke about Mission LiFE, an initiative launched by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, noting that by making small yet impactful changes in our daily lives, each one of us can contribute to safeguarding the environment.

A special counter showcasing Indian millets commemorating 2023 as the 'International Year of Millets' was arranged at the Embassy premises on this occasion. Millets serve as a solution to vari-

ous food security challenges and promote holistic health.

The students of Indian School Al Ghubra also joined hands to celebrate this joyous occasion with a dazzling cultural event held at the Indian School Al Ghubra. The students showcased the best of Indian culture through mesmerizing cultural performances recalling India's golden past and glorious future.

This year's celebrations were made more memorable as Amit Narang, the Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman was the Chief Guest. The event was attended by Mrs. Divya Narang, Dr. Sivakumar Manickam - Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr. Vinoba M. P., Dr. Alex C Joesph - Assistant Education Advisor Board of Directors, Mr. Ahmed Rayees - President of the School Management Committee, and dignitaries from the Embassy and the Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman.

The celebrations in Oman were reflective of the greatness of India's civilization, unwavering commitment of all Indians to the nation's spirit of unity and integrity, and India's transformative journey from its birth as a nation 76 years ago to become a beacon of global growth and development. The celebrations also reflected the uniquely strong partnership between India and Oman and the abiding bonds of friendship between Indian and Omani people.





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# New drive launched to plant 2mn mangrove seedlings



The first stage of seed collection started from the Qurum Natural Reserve in the Governorate of Muscat and lasted exactly 14 days

**MUSCAT:** The Environment Authority, represented by the Directorate General for Nature Conservation, launched a new campaign to plant two million mangrove seeds in the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta.

The campaign aimed at pre-serving and protecting the eco-systems in coastal wetlands and raising their efficiency through the implementation of a number of projects to achieve the operational goals approved by the authority's plan related to the work of the national initiative to plant 10 million trees.

Bader bin Saif Al Busaidi, in-charge of managing the work of the Wetlands Management De-partment at the Environment Authority, said that the cam-paign will be implemented in two phases.

The first stage of seed collec-tion started from the Qurum Nat-ural Reserve in the Governorate of Muscat and lasted exactly 14 days. The seeds were transported to the target sites through con-trolled methods and kept in air-conditioned places at a tempera-ture of 23 to 26 degrees Celsius to avoid damage.

He added that the second stage was done by planting seeds and

targeting 4 sites with a total area of about 90 hectares, which is equivalent to 900,000 square metres, indicating that the work lasted 17 days through field teams working according to a set sched-ule, as the targeted sites are sub-ject to tidal waves. So the opera-tions took place only during the reflux periods.

He pointed out that the ap-proved field technical readings and soil tests showed the ability of mangroves to adapt and grow within the targeted sites.

In Khor Al-Har in the Wilayat of Masirah in the Governorate of South Al-Sharqiyah, planta-tion was also done in Khoury Ghawi and Qaisad in the Wilay-at of Al-Jazir in the Al-Wusta Governorate.

He explained that the impor-tance and benefits of mangroves lie in mitigating the effects of cli-mate change through their high ability to absorb greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, and also contribute to improv-ing the protection of the khors from storms and floods, and to enhancing fish stocks as they are natural incubators for young ma-rine organisms.

He stated that one of the ben-efits of mangroves is also to raise the efficiency of the surrounding environmental systems as natu-ral habitats and main stations for seabirds and as environments with diversified food and rec-reation in addition to important sites for their nesting and repro-duction, and their contributions to the national economy through the implementation of some eco-tourism activities.

It is noteworthy that the En-vironment Agency continues its efforts to preserve the ecosys-tem in the coastal wetland areas, in particular the protection and preservation of the environ-ments of mangrove forests, as planting campaigns and environ-mental awareness programs are implemented among the various groups of society in the various governorates in Oman. -ONA

## Oman chairs meeting of Directors General of Civil Defence Departments

**RIYADH:** The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Au-thority for Civil Defence and Am-bulance (ACDA) presided over the 32nd meeting of directors general of civil defence depart-ments in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

Col. Abdullah Saleh Al Najashi, Director General of the ACDA, chaired the meeting, which was held at the headquarters of the Gulf Cooperation Council Sec-retariat-General in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

**Awareness corner**

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance established an awareness corner, which com-prised publications on public safety.

In the meantime, a special-ised technical team organised a preparatory meeting on training programmes, safety operations and the role of the media. - ONA



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## JAZEERA STEEL



## حديد الجزيرة

### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – 30 JUNE 2023

On behalf of the Board of Directors, enclosed herewith are the financial statements for the six months ending June 30, 2023.

Highlights of the performance for the six months can be summarized as follows:

| Particulars       | Group        |              |          | Parent       |              |          |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|--------------|--------------|----------|
|                   | Jan-Jun 2023 | Jan-Jun 2022 | Growth % | Jan-Jun 2023 | Jan-Jun 2022 | Growth % |
| Production in MT  | 219,312      | 167,747      | 17%      | 219,312      | 167,747      | 17%      |
| Sales in MT       | 227,281      | 266,381      | 10%      | 227,590      | 193,333      | 18%      |
| Sales Value in RO | 71,506,210   | 82,472,294   | (13%)    | 70,714,227   | 81,688,947   | (13%)    |
| Net Profit in RO  | 1,997,638    | 2,821,357    | (29%)    | 1,907,508    | 2,534,976    | (25%)    |

The year started on a positive note for steel prices during the Q1 2023 following the sharp decline witnessed from second quarter to year end of 2022. However, the gains of Q1 2023 were short lived and a similar pattern was seen as emerging as seen in previous year. The market witnessed a significant correction in prices in Q2 following the smart gains of Q1 2023.

The steel market is currently having to deal with lot of volatility on the political as well as economic fronts.

Beginning of the year, there was optimism following the easing of the zero Covid policy in China with the IMF attributing one-third of global growth in 2023 due to China. China's central bank reduced the one-year and five-year loan prime rates by 10 basis points in June 2023 to inject liquidity into the market; however, this was below market analysts' expectations. As a result, the outlook for China's economic recovery and the construction market remains clouded.

Most major economies continue to struggle with inflationary pressures and high interest rates with persisting uncertainty on when the interest rates will peak or begin to decline. The economic uncertainties coupled with geo political tensions in Europe and elsewhere are causing a volatile economic situation. This in turn is leading to steel volatility in steel prices and hampering the recovery of steel prices.

Despite the global challenges, the Middle East economies continue to show resilience on the back of relatively stable oil prices. One of the bright spots on project front has been Saudi Arabia where the awards related to the mega projects are gathering steam. There is also renewed activities in other GCC economies like UAE and Qatar.

I am happy to mention that Tube mill #4 upgrade to produce line pipes and MBM upgrade to produce light structural sections are progressing at an even pace and both the upgrades are expected to be completed by Q1 2024. This should help both the plants to diversify their product portfolio, which should give them better options to handle the vagaries of the market.

In parallel, work is being done in terms of preparing the operational personnel such as training certification, etc. We feel that these incremental measures will give us a wider range of options to improve our geographical footprint as well as help us address different customer segments.

The company earlier had announced the setting up a 450K MT Medium Section Mill in Kezad, Abu Dhabi. The mill being set up along with technology partner POMINI LRM, Italy will be the GCC's first medium section mill with rails production capability apart from other medium sections. The company participated in the Middle East Rail Exhibition in Abu Dhabi during May 2023 to market its new mills rail making capability. This mill in UAE will complement & supplement the operations in Oman.

Even though the company faced numerous challenges in the current climate of volatility, it remains focused and proactive to maximize opportunities. The team did a commendable job in achieving higher volumes in the first six months of 2023 compared to 2022. As a result, the company posted positive results for the reporting period even though there was margin erosion due to lower prices in 2023 compared to previous year.

Going forward, managing volatility and supply chain planning would be key as the commodity cycles becoming more frequent. The way the events unfold in the major economies of the China, USA along with the political situation in Europe will continue to affect the markets.

Nonetheless, the company continues with measures to improve overall efficiency along with innovative planning and forecasting to deal with uncertainties and minimize risks of disruptions. As a company, we are hopeful that our existing diverse product and market mix and the steps being taken to further expand our product portfolio will ensure the continued growth of the company.

The Company, as a corporate policy, continuously invests in human resources and provides training to its employees to develop their skills at various levels. Local employment is encouraged, and we have achieved 42% Omanisation in our workforce.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Company and the Board of Directors, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for the encouragement and support given by his government to the industrial development in Oman. Also, I take this opportunity to thank all our stakeholders and very importantly our employees and the management team for the support and cooperation extended, which in turn reflects the confidence placed in the Company.

**On Behalf of the Board**

**Amal Suhail Salim Bahwan**  
Chairperson of the Board of Directors  
7 August 2023

### Consolidated and separate statement of financial position as at (Expressed in Omani Rial)

|                                         | 30 Jun 2023 (Audited) | 31 Dec 2022 (Audited) | 30 Jun 2023 (Audited) | 31 Dec 2022 (Audited) |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                           |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| <b>Non-current assets</b>               |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Property, plant and equipment           | 14,234,155            | 14,372,589            | 13,701,364            | 14,333,163            |
| Right-of-use assets                     | 10,407,483            | 1,444,715             | 1,462,617             | 1,385,987             |
| Intangible assets                       | 368,790               | 413,914               | 368,790               | 413,914               |
| Investment in a subsidiary              | -                     | -                     | 283,396               | 258,244               |
| Deferred tax assets                     | 154,882               | 279,615               | 154,882               | 279,615               |
| <b>Total non-current assets</b>         | <b>25,165,310</b>     | <b>16,510,833</b>     | <b>15,971,049</b>     | <b>16,670,923</b>     |
| <b>Current assets</b>                   |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Inventories                             | 29,070,886            | 30,657,894            | 28,222,320            | 29,844,264            |
| Trade and other receivables             | 49,938,301            | 40,539,096            | 50,105,235            | 40,583,625            |
| Bank deposits                           | 587,403               | 320,631               | 587,403               | 320,631               |
| Cash and cash equivalents               | 4,829,978             | 5,570,904             | 4,395,789             | 5,201,599             |
| <b>Total current assets</b>             | <b>84,426,568</b>     | <b>77,088,525</b>     | <b>83,310,747</b>     | <b>75,950,119</b>     |
| <b>Total assets</b>                     | <b>109,591,878</b>    | <b>93,599,358</b>     | <b>99,281,796</b>     | <b>92,621,042</b>     |
| <b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>           |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| <b>Equity</b>                           |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Share capital                           | 12,489,796            | 12,489,796            | 12,489,796            | 12,489,796            |
| Share premium                           | 13,856,484            | 13,856,484            | 13,856,484            | 13,856,484            |
| Legal reserve                           | 4,166,344             | 4,166,344             | 4,163,266             | 4,163,266             |
| Retained earnings                       | 19,171,528            | 19,031,773            | 18,463,077            | 18,429,038            |
| <b>Equity attributable to owners</b>    | <b>49,684,152</b>     | <b>49,544,397</b>     | <b>48,972,623</b>     | <b>48,938,584</b>     |
| <b>Non-controlling interest</b>         | <b>129,193</b>        | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>              |
| <b>Total Equity</b>                     | <b>49,813,345</b>     | <b>49,544,397</b>     | <b>48,972,623</b>     | <b>48,938,584</b>     |
| <b>Non-current liabilities</b>          |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Employees' end of service benefits      | 2,004,033             | 1,894,253             | 1,976,818             | 1,870,205             |
| Lease liabilities - non-current portion | 10,822,126            | 1,475,833             | 1,537,020             | 1,441,970             |
| <b>Total non-current liabilities</b>    | <b>12,826,159</b>     | <b>3,370,086</b>      | <b>3,513,838</b>      | <b>3,312,175</b>      |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>              |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Trade and other payables                | 17,460,993            | 14,688,605            | 17,348,520            | 14,424,737            |
| Bank borrowings                         | 29,097,076            | 25,375,475            | 29,097,076            | 25,375,475            |
| Lease liabilities - current portion     | 183,292               | 196,603               | 151,038               | 164,349               |
| Income tax payable                      | 211,013               | 424,191               | 198,701               | 405,722               |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>        | <b>46,952,374</b>     | <b>40,684,875</b>     | <b>46,795,335</b>     | <b>40,370,283</b>     |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                | <b>59,778,533</b>     | <b>44,054,961</b>     | <b>50,309,173</b>     | <b>43,682,458</b>     |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>     | <b>109,591,878</b>    | <b>93,599,358</b>     | <b>99,281,796</b>     | <b>92,621,042</b>     |
| <b>Net assets per share</b>             | <b>0.398</b>          | <b>0.397</b>          | <b>0.392</b>          | <b>0.392</b>          |

### Consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for (Expressed in Omani Rial)

|                                                                                                | Group                                            | Parent Company                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                | Period from 1 Jan 2023 to 30 June 2023 (Audited) | Period from 1 Jan 2023 to 30 June 2023 (Audited) |
| Revenue from contract with customers                                                           | 71,506,210                                       | 82,472,294                                       |
| Cost of revenue                                                                                | (61,714,290)                                     | (70,014,405)                                     |
| <b>Gross profit</b>                                                                            | <b>9,791,920</b>                                 | <b>9,369,719</b>                                 |
| Other income                                                                                   | 200                                              | 200                                              |
| <b>Expenses</b>                                                                                | <b>9,792,120</b>                                 | <b>13,066,807</b>                                |
| Selling and distribution expenses                                                              | (4,408,374)                                      | (6,839,270)                                      |
| General and administrative expenses                                                            | (2,191,026)                                      | (2,058,815)                                      |
| Other operating expenses                                                                       | (1,245)                                          | (3,173)                                          |
| Release of / (allowance for) expected credit losses on trade receivables                       | (60,434)                                         | (229,750)                                        |
| <b>Operating profit for the period</b>                                                         | <b>3,131,041</b>                                 | <b>3,935,797</b>                                 |
| Finance expense                                                                                | (834,987)                                        | (613,155)                                        |
| Finance income                                                                                 | 49,959                                           | 67,594                                           |
| <b>Net profit before tax for the period</b>                                                    | <b>2,346,013</b>                                 | <b>3,390,236</b>                                 |
| Income tax expense                                                                             | (348,375)                                        | (568,875)                                        |
| <b>Profit for the period and total comprehensive income for the period</b>                     | <b>1,997,638</b>                                 | <b>2,821,357</b>                                 |
| <b>Net profit attributable to:</b>                                                             |                                                  |                                                  |
| Parent Company                                                                                 | 2,013,224                                        | 2,821,357                                        |
| Non-controlling interest                                                                       | (15,586)                                         | -                                                |
| <b>Basic and diluted earnings per share attributable to shareholders of the Parent Company</b> | <b>0.016</b>                                     | <b>0.023</b>                                     |

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# India becoming voice of global south: PM Modi

India's biggest capability is trust - people's trust in govt, in the country's bright future and the world's trust in India, said the PM

**NEW DELHI:** Addressing countrymen from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 77th Independence Day, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that after the COVID-19 pandemic, the world order and the definition of the geopolitical equation have changed and India has become the voice of global south.

"After the second world war, a new world order took shape but I can see now clearly that a new global order and a new geopoliti-



cal equation is moving ahead after the Covid; the definition of the geopolitical equation has changed. And my dear family members, your capability is visible in giving the world a new shape...," PM Modi said.

PM Modi stated that during the Covid crisis, India's work in the development of the world has shown the capability of the country. He further stated that during

the Covid, the supply chain was destroyed and also the developed countries were facing pressure at that time but India pursued a human-centric approach.

"Today India is becoming the voice of the global south. India's prosperity and heritage have become an opportunity for the world," he said. In his 10th consecutive Independence Day speech, the Prime Minister said, "Global

experts saying India will not stop now, all rating agencies are lauding country. Ball is in our court and we should not let go of the opportunity; no ifs and buts on anyone's mind about India's capabilities."

"In shaping a changing world, Indian people's capabilities are evident. India's biggest capability is trust - people's trust in govt, in the country's bright future and the world's trust in India," he said.

He also lauded the contribution of youth and says those from tier 2, and tier 3 cities are also making a lot of impact in various fields, including start-ups.

The Red Fort was decorated in tricolour, and a G20 sign was made on the ground with flowers.

Earlier, upon his arrival at the Red Fort, PM Modi was received by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt, Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and three service chiefs.

As soon as the national flag was hoisted by the Prime Minister, flower petals were showered at the venue by two Advanced Light Helicopters Mark-III Dhruv of the Indian Air Force. **-ANI**

77TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

## Macron, Blinken congratulate India on Independence Day

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron congratulated India on its 77th Independence Day and said New Delhi can count on Paris as a "trusted friend."

"Congratulations to the Indian people on your Independence Day! A month ago in Paris, my friend Narendra Modi and I set new Indo-French ambitions all the way to 2047, the centenary year of India's Independence. India can count on France as a trusted friend and partner, always."

He reshared his old video dated July 15, where he shared the highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2-day official visit to France.

Apart from France, the US, Sri Lanka and Nepal's Foreign Ministers also extended warm wishes to India.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Ali Sabry on Tuesday wished India Independence Day and said that he is confident that bilateral ties will be "further strengthened" between the two nations.

"Warm Greetings, Foreign Minister Dr S Jaishankar and the Government & people of India on the occasion of your Independence Day. I am confident that in the years ahead our bilateral ties will be further strengthened between our two nations India and Sri Lanka," Sabry said.

Nepal's Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud also extended wishes on the occasion.

"As India celebrates its 77th Independence Day, I would like to convey warm greetings and fe-



French President Emmanuel Macron.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

licitations to Dr S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India. Wish Happy Independence Day to the people and Government of India!" he tweeted.

The United States Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, attended the Independence Day celebration at the Red Fort here today and extended his greetings.

He also said that it is an "honour" to be present at the "iconic Red Fort."

Earlier, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken extended his wishes on India's 77th Independence Day.

"On behalf of the United States of America, we send our warmest wishes to the people of India as they commemorate 76 years of independence this August 15. On this momentous day, we re-

flect on the depth and breadth of our strategic partnership, and we celebrate the proud history of the Indian people, who are the key to the bright future we are building together," Antony Blinken said in a statement.

**United States Ambassador**  
The United States Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, attended the Independence Day celebration at the Red Fort here today and extended his greetings.

Blinken noted that the relationship between India and US has grown "deeper" and it has become "more expansive than ever."

Calling India a "fastest-growing major economy," Singapore High Commissioner Simon Wong also wished the countrymen on the 77th Independence Day. **-ANI**

BANGLADESH

## Dengue deaths

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh has reported 18 more deaths due to dengue in 24 hours, taking the death toll from the mosquito-borne disease to 416 in 2023. During the period, 2,480 more patients people were admitted to hospital with viral fever, according to the Directorate General of Health Services. Of the new patients, 919 were hospitalised in Dhaka and the rest of the patients were admitted to hospitals in other parts of the country. **-ANI**

DAGESTAN REGION

## 27 killed, over 100 injured in Russia gas station blast

**MOSCOW:** The death toll from an explosion at a filling station in Russia's Makhachkala has gone up to 27, TASS News Agency reported citing Sergey Mekilov, head of the Dagestan Region.

"As of 6:00 a.m. local time (3:00 a.m. GMT) on August 15, the tragedy killed 27 people and left 102 injured," Melikov's press service quoted him as saying.

According to the regional head, there were three children among those killed.

The explosion occurred opposite a filling station in Makhachkala on Monday night. Following this, fire erupted in the area which reached 600 square meters. The open fire was extinguished.

Earlier, while Speaking to reporters, Dagestan Head Sergey Melikov said that the explosion oc-



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HEAVY FIGHTING

## 26 people killed in Ethiopia explosion

**ADDISABABA:** At least 26 people have been killed in an explosion in the Finote Selam region of Ethiopia amid heavy fighting between government forces and a local militia group, CNN reported.

Finote Selam General Hospital CEO Manaye Tenaw said that another 50 people have been injured in the blast on Sunday, according to CNN report. He said that these victims are only those undergoing treatment at the hospital and the total number of casualties is unclear.

A further 50 people were injured in Sunday's blast, according to Manaye Tenaw, CEO of the Finote Selam General Hospital. These victims are only those treated at the hospital, and the total number of casualties is unclear.

He further said that the hospital had already treated over 160 people in the days leading up to the explosion, as fierce fighting between government forces and a local militia known as Fano started in the Amhara region earlier this month, CNN reported.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) expressed "grave concern" over heavy fighting between the two groups

which erupted on August 3. The fighting between the two groups started following months of tension and sporadic clashes.

The Ethiopian government declared a six-month state of emergency in the Amhara region on August 4 after days of clashes, CNN reported.

Differences have emerged between the government and the Fano militia in recent months after the group resisted a move by the federal government to disband regional forces. Amhara nationalists have stressed that the move will jeopardize regional security.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) stated there was "heavy fighting in and around cities and towns across the Amhara region, which involved the use of heavy artillery resulting in the deaths and injuries of civilians," CNN reported.

In a statement, EHRC said, "EHRC has also received credible reports of strikes and shelling including from Debre Birhan, Finote Selam, and Burie resulting in many civilian casualties and damage to residential areas and public spaces."

It further said that similar reports were documented in Bahir Dar and Gondar. **-ANI**



curred opposite the filling station. Melikov said that the "causes and nature" of the explosion are being determined, TASS reported.

As per the news report, two out of eight fuel tanks exploded. More than 70 people and 20 pieces of equipment were involved in containing the fire. Police and city officials were moving people away from the spot as there is a risk of a

second explosion.

According to the regional prosecutor's office, an inspection has been conducted in connection with the fire at the filling station, TASS reported. Senior Dagestani officials reached at the site of the incident while the first deputy head of the Russian Health Ministry Viktor Fisenko arrived in Dagestan. **-ANI**

SOUTH OF FRANCE

## France: Pyrenees wildfire contained

**PARIS:** A fire that ravaged a 500-hectare (1,235 acres) area in the south of France has been brought under control, announced French regional authorities on Tuesday.

More than 2,000 people were evacuated during the night from the Pyrenees-Orientales region near the Spanish border.

According to regional authorities, no residents or tourists were injured and evacuees have been able to return to their accommodation.

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said on X, formerly known as Twitter, the fire is now under control.

### Remains dangerous

Senior regional official Rodrigue Furcy told local radio that the fire had been contained but remained dangerous. He said the worst affected area was "under close surveillance and firefighters were still battling

the blaze."

Furcy said 17 firefighters had sustained light injuries and one was admitted to a hospital after a fall but there had been no deaths reported.

The fire broke out on Monday afternoon and swept through hundreds of hectares of land near the villages of Saint-Andre, Sorede and the seaside resort of Argeles.

Thirty houses have been damaged, along with a warehouse and a campsite. Several roads were closed and the train service from Perpignan to the Spanish border was suspended for several hours.

Officials said the tourist area in the Pyrenees-Orientales region had been vulnerable due to "intense heat, dryness and strong winds."

Bordering Spain, the Pyrenees-Orientales area has been affected worse than any other French region by devastating droughts.

-DW



Sultanate of Oman  
**Ministry of Health**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

| Tender Ref                     | Description                                        | Last date for collection of tender document | Last date for submission of tenders        | Eligibility                                                            | Tender Fee (Non-Refundable) | Bidding Method                                             |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3047/2023/<br>MOH/<br>DGHSBR-2 | Renovation Works at Buraimi DGHS- Building No. (9) | 29/ August / 2023                           | Before 10 am on Monday 25/ September /2023 | Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board in The Second Grade | R.O 25 Per set              | Electronically via the Esnad system for electronic bidding |

- Tenders should be submitted on line on: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone:24402200, Email id [etenderhd@ita.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@ita.gov.om)

# Trump indicted in Georgia over 2020 poll meddling

Former US President Donald Trump has been charged in the state of Georgia with a slew of election crimes over his interference in the 2020 presidential election



**94-PAGE INDICTMENT:** The grand jury indictment against Trump is the fourth brought against the Republican politician this year. It could also lead to the first televised trial of a former president. **ONA**

**NEW YORK:** Former US President Donald Trump and several of his allies were indicted on Monday night in Georgia following a lengthy investigation into Trump's attempts to overturn the 2020 election results in the south-eastern state.

Trump and 18 others were charged with "criminal attempts to interfere in Georgia's presidential election," Fani Willis, Fulton County district attorney, told reporters late on Monday night.

The charges in the 94-page indictment arise "from a criminal conspiracy to overturn the results of the 2020 election in this state," Willis said.

The grand jury indictment against Trump is the fourth brought against the Republican politician this year. It could also lead to the first televised trial of a former president.

Trump already faces three other criminal indictments, including once by US Special Counsel Jack Smith on charges of trying to overturn his election defeat to US President Joe Biden.

Trump was charged with a total of 13 felony counts in the Georgia case, including conspiracy to commit forgery, submit false

statements and impersonate a public official.

He also faces a charge of racketeering, which is used in cases to take down organized crime groups.

The indictments also named 18 co-defendants within Trump's circle, including his former lawyer Rudy Giuliani, as well as the ex-president's former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows.

The case stems from a January 2, 2021, phone call in which Trump urged Georgia's top election official, Brad Raffensperger, to "find" enough votes to reverse his narrow loss in the state. Raffensperger declined to do so.

Biden defeated Trump in Georgia by fewer than 12,000 votes during the 2020 election.

Four days later, on January 6, 2021, and two weeks before Trump was due to leave office, his supporters stormed the US Capitol in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent lawmakers from certifying Biden's victory.

Trump is the front-runner

in the race for the Republican nomination for the 2024 presidential election. He has long dismissed the many investigations he has faced in his years in politics as a politically motivated "witch hunt."

In an e-mail seeking funds for his campaign that was sent shortly after the indictment was announced, Trump made another statement in this vein.

This was "the FOURTH ACT of Election Interference on behalf of the Democrats in an attempt to keep the White House under Crooked Joe's control and JAIL his single greatest opponent of the 2024 election," he said.

His legal team also decried the indictment as politically and/or personally motivated, calling it "unconstitutional."

It said the indictment was based on a "one-sided grand jury presentation" that "relied on witnesses who harbor their own personal and political interests — some of whom ran campaigns touting their efforts against the accused and/or profited from book deals

and employment opportunities as a result."

However, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who lost to Trump in the 2016 presidential election, told broadcaster MSNBC the indictment showed that justice in the US was working.

At the same time, she called it "a terrible moment for our country, to have a former president accused of these terribly important crimes."

Still, there's a core of Trump supporters whose minds won't be changed by anything. In fact, Trump might even be able to shrewdly use the trial to raise money for his campaign. He could then, in turn, use those funds to help cover his legal fees. One could even say that the indictment could actually help him among this group.

A lot of swing voters will be scared off by the indictment, as will Republican voters who are concerned that the proceedings could lower Trump's chances of defeating incumbent Joe Biden.

DW

WEATHER

## Tropical storm Lan brings floods, chaos to Japan

**TOKYO:** A major tropical storm hit Japan's main island of Honshu early on Tuesday, with torrential downpours and violent gusts prompting landslide warnings and causing power outages and flight cancellations.

The storm, dubbed Lan, which has been downgraded from typhoon status, made landfall at 5 a.m. (2000 GMT) in Wakayama prefecture, about 600 kilometres (375 miles) west of Tokyo, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

Lan has brought wind gusts of up to 144 kmh (90 mph) in addition to torrential rainfall and high waves, causing authorities to issue warnings in several regions.

"Please exercise extreme caution against landslides, surging water in low-lying areas, swollen and flooded rivers and violent winds," the weather agency said on the messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

A local utility reported that at least 50,000 households in seven regions had lost power as of Tuesday morning, while local commuter trains were stopped by flying debris. Nearly 900 flights were suspended as planned, as were express train services.

More than 180,000 residents, especially in Wakayama, Kyoto and the ancient capital of Nara,

were issued with non-compulsory evacuation notices.

The storm is expected to sweep over the region for all of Tuesday before moving out to the Sea of Japan.

Central Japan Railway Co. said that all of its Tokaido Shinkansen services between Nagoya and Shin-Osaka stations will be suspended on Tuesday, while trains between Tokyo and Nagoya stations will be significantly reduced.

West Japan Railway Co. said it may cancel its Sanyo Shinkansen services between Shin-Osaka and Okayama stations.

Anticipated precipitation of 400 to 600 millimetres is forecasted over the span of 24 hours in the Tokai region. Similarly, the Kinki region is likely to experience rainfall ranging from 300 to 400 mm.

As Tokyo gears up for its summer events, the influx of holiday-makers returning is underway. Some individuals have chosen to conclude their Bon holidays earlier than initially scheduled.

This summer break marks the first instance of widespread travel since COVID-19 was reclassified to a status akin to seasonal flu, prompting many to embark on vacations after an extended period of caution and restrictions. Kyodo News Agency reported. **DW**



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## TENDER NOTICE

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

| Tender no.                         | Description                                                                                                                                                                | Tender documents price (R.O) | Class       | Last date for collection of documents | Last date for Submission of documents |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 44/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-7 - Recall - 1   | Providing loading, off-loading and Sorting Labors for Fish and Cleaning Service for Whole Sale Fish Market At Barka for Two Years                                          | 25/-                         | Specialized | Sunday 20/8/2023                      | Wednesday 30/8/2023                   |
| 106/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-13 - Recall - 1 | Contractor worker's services with a monthly wage to the food security departments in the governorates for the period for 36 months                                         | 25/-                         | Specialized | Sunday 20/8/2023                      | Wednesday 30/8/2023                   |
| 309/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-24 - Recall - 1 | Rehabilitation and Maintenance of the Fish market in Samad Al-Shaan in wilayat of Al-Mudhaibi                                                                              | 25/-                         | Third       | Sunday 20/8/2023                      | Thursday 31/8/2023                    |
| 275/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-29 - Recall - 4 | Maintenance Works of Wadi Sahalawt Recharge Dam in Wilayat Salalah Governorate of Dhofar                                                                                   | 25/-                         | Third       | Saturday 26/8/2023                    | Thursday 14/9/2023                    |
| 513/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-77 - Recall - 2 | Maintenance works of Storage Dam on Wadis AlDaar and AlDwayrat, Jabal Dawi in Wilayat Rustaq Governorate of South AlBatinah                                                | 25/-                         | Third       | Saturday 26/8/2023                    | Thursday 14/9/2023                    |
| 644/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-75              | Transporting goods in one trip from the ports to the food security departments in the governorates for a period of 36 months                                               | 25/-                         | Specialized | Tuesday 29/8/2023                     | Tuesday 19/9/2023                     |
| 645/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-76              | Supply, installation and Implementation of Contact Center Solution                                                                                                         | 25/-                         | Specialized | Tuesday 29/8/2023                     | Tuesday 19/9/2023                     |
| 646/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-77              | Supply and Install of 25T/24hr compact Flake ice machine at Wholesale Fish Market                                                                                          | 25/-                         | Specialized | Tuesday 29/8/2023                     | Tuesday 19/9/2023                     |
| 647/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-78              | Design and Build Services for Detailed Design and Construction of "MARFA"- Small Scale Fish Landing Centre at Haramel in Muscat Wilayat and Governorate, Sultanate of Oman | 250/-                        | Excellent   | Tuesday 29/8/2023                     | Tuesday 19/9/2023                     |
| 655/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-80              | Supply of Pesticides for diseases Control in crops                                                                                                                         | 25/-                         | Specialized | Saturday 2/9/2023                     | Thursday 21/9/2023                    |
| 658/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-81              | Consultancy Services to review the Design and Supervise the Rehabilitation works at Raysut Fishery Harbour                                                                 | 50/-                         | First       | Sunday 3/9/2023                       | Sunday 24/9/2023                      |

- Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- Preference will be given to companies whose bid includes the largest percentage of Omanization and possible purchase of national products.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or [etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om).

**TENDERS COMMITTEE**  
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

# Spain sink Sweden to reach final

La Roja will play in their first FIFA Women's World Cup summit clash after dramatic win

**AUCKLAND:** Spain edged past Sweden 2-1 in a thrilling finish to reach their first FIFA Women's World Cup final on Tuesday.

Captain Olga Carmona scored an 89th-minute winner to spark wild scenes of jubilation among their supporters at Eden Park, Auckland, *BBC Sport* reported.

Sweden - who have now lost back-to-back World Cup semi-finals - had equalised through Rebekka Blomqvist just 93 seconds earlier and it looked like the match would be going to extra time. A game of few chances had sparked into life when substitute Salma Paralluelo, 19, gave Spain the lead with just 10 minutes remaining.

They will face England or Australia in the final in Sydney on Sunday. The semi-final between the Lionesses and the co-hosts Matildas will be played on Wednesday.

While Spain's players celebrated wildly on the pitch at full-time, Sweden's dropped to the floor as their World Cup dream came to an end.

There was little evidence of what was to come during a tight and cagey opening 80 minutes.

Spain boss Jorge Vilda opted to recall two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas, whose minutes on the pitch have been limited as she returns from a serious knee injury.

And it was Putellas who brought the biggest cheer of the opening half from the sell-out 43,217 crowd when she nutmegged Manchester City's Filippa Angeldahl.

It took until the 42nd minute for the first shot on target, Sweden's Fridolina Rolfo denied her third goal of the tournament by her Barcelona team-mate Cata Coll.

Spain dominated possession but Sweden's defence, which has been solid and resolute for the past month, frustrated their opponents



for long periods, while the Swedes once again used a familiar weapon to try and find a breakthrough.

Seven of their 11 goals at this

tournament before the semi-final had come from set-pieces but Coll, who had not started a senior game for Spain prior to the World Cup,



stood up well to Sweden's inswinging corners, which had caused havoc in previous matches.

Paralluelo, who scored the win-

ner in the quarter-final against the Netherlands, kept her composure to fire Spain ahead before substitute Blomqvist poked home the

equaliser. With extra time looming, Carmona sent Spain through with a shot which went in off the bar following a corner.

## Spain recover from squad turmoil

Spain had only won one of their previous seven Women's World Cup matches before this tournament. They now head for the final after their fifth - and most dramatic - win in New Zealand.

This historic win for Spain came just 15 days after they were beaten 4-0 by Japan in a group match.

Boss Vilda said after that defeat "no-one should lose hope" and his players have responded by eliminating Switzerland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Spain had come into this tournament under a cloud after 15 players had threatened to quit the team as they were unhappy with Vilda's methods, and the coach initially exiled them from the squad.

Three of the 15 - Mariona Caldentey, Aitana Bonmati and former Manchester United defender Ona Batlle - were eventually included in his squad for the World Cup.

Spain appear to have put those differences to one side as all three players helped their country reach the final on a memorable night for La Roja.

## 'I hope Spain win'

It was the same old story for Sweden as they lost for the fourth time in five World Cup semi-finals, having knocked out 2015 and 2019 winners the United States and Japan in their past two matches.

Their players have been ruthless and efficient at this tournament but looked heartbroken after going so close to forcing extra time.

"There are so many emotions right now," said boss Peter Gerhardsson. "Everyone just feels sadness and huge disappointment."

Sweden now go to Brisbane for the third-place play-off on Saturday.

"We will be really, really ready for that game," added Gerhardsson, who said he hoped that Spain would go on to win the World Cup.

Sweden's defeat means Caroline Seger, their long-term captain, will end her international career without a World Cup winners' medal after five tournaments.

## FOUR-DAY TEST

# England to host Zimbabwe in one-off Test match in 2025

**LONDON:** England will host Zimbabwe in a one-off men's Test in May 2025, the first time the teams will have faced each other in the format for more than 20 years.

They will play a four-day Test from May 28-31 at a venue yet to be decided.

England's leading Test wicket-taker James Anderson made his debut the last time they played Zimbabwe in 2003.

It follows talks between the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) about forging closer relations between the two sides.

"Zimbabwe has a proud cricket history and has produced world-class players and coaches who have enriched the game across the world," said ECB chief executive Richard Gould.

"We are committed to developing a closer relationship with Zimbabwe Cricket and the an-

nouncement of this Test against our England men's team is a step in that ambition."

England have played three two-Test series against Zimbabwe in their history, drawing an away series 0-0 in 1996 before 1-0 and 2-0 wins in 2000 and 2003 respectively.

ZC managing director Givemore Makoni added: "The significance and magnitude of this tour cannot be overemphasised.

"The experience of playing a Test match against a top team like England is massive for the current generation of our players, coming at a time when our game as a whole is on an upward trajectory. "This will be a historic tour for everyone involved with cricket in Zimbabwe."

They have not played a bilateral series against each other in any format since 2004, with cricketing relations severed at one point due to political issues. - Agencies

## SRI LANKAN CRICKETER

# Hasaranga retires from Test cricket

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga retired from Test cricket at age 26 on Tuesday. He is understood to have made this decision in order to be more available for franchise cricket tournaments, according to an *ESPNCricinfo* report.

Hasaranga has not been a regular member of Sri Lanka's Test squad over the last two years, but has played four Tests. He had largely failed to impress with the ball in those matches, taking four wickets at an average of 100.75, though he did hit a half-century in South Africa.

In any case, Hasaranga had recently been included in some wider training groups ahead of the Test series, and then not picked for the Test squad itself. His involvement in training in Sri Lanka had prevented him from taking up franchise cricket offers. He had, for example, pulled out of Major League Cricket in the weeks before the tournament was to commence.

Although according to the Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) release, the reason Hasaranga retires from Tests is in order "to prolong his career as a limited-overs special-



ist", Hasaranga has no history with long-term injury.

Unlike with, say, Thisara Perera, who had also attempted to retire from Test cricket in his 20s, but had been told to hold off by S.C. Hasaranga's discussions with SLC are believed to have been cordial.

Essentially, the board no longer sees him as a potential Test player, and is happy for him to pursue

other opportunities so long as he remains available for Sri Lanka's white-ball games.

"We will accept his decision and are confident that Hasaranga will be a vital part of our white-ball program going forward," Ashley De Silva, CEO of SLC, said.

Overall, Hasaranga played 44 first-class games, picking up 102 wickets. He also has three

first-class centuries and 19 half-centuries.

Hasaranga has so far represented Sri Lanka in 48 ODIs and 58 T20Is and is an key member in the limited-overs setup. Hasaranga is currently captaining his Lanka Premier League side B- Love Kandy, and will be part of Sri Lanka's forthcoming Asia Cup and World Cup campaigns. - Agencies

## AUSTRALIAN SKIPPER

# Cummins targets comeback in India ODIs ahead of World Cup



**SYDNEY:** Australian skipper Pat Cummins is targeting a return in the ODIs against India in late September ahead of the World Cup as he recovers from the fractured wrist he suffered in the final Ashes Test at The Oval.

Cummins, Australia's ODI captain, picked up the injury on the opening day of the Test but the severity of it was only confirmed after the match. He has since been wearing a cast on his left wrist with a recovery time of around six weeks, *ESPNCricinfo* reported.

That would take him up to around mid-September and he will fly out to South Africa for the ODI leg of that tour with five games be-

tween September 7 and 17, but the three matches in India immediately before the World Cup appear a more realistic return date.

"It's not too bad," Cummins said. "I'll head over to South Africa at the backend of that leg, but probably more of those one-dayers ahead of the World Cup. Another few weeks and I'll be right."

"It hurt day one when I did it and it hurt a lot when I was batting but I didn't think it was too bad. With each day it got a bit sorer, so I knew it was probably bone as opposed to muscle."

Cummins was named as Aaron Finch's successor for the ODI captaincy last year but has only led

Australia in two of the team's six matches since then. He missed one game against England when Josh Hazlewood stepped in then all three in India following the death of his mother, as Steven Smith took over.

Cummins, speaking at a partnership announcement between Cricket Australia and HCLTech, endorsed Mitchell Marsh, the new T20I captain, as the logical option to lead the ODI side against South Africa in his absence although said there could well be a rotation of the role if players' workloads are managed ahead of the World Cup.

"The captaincy for the ODIs we've kind of shared around a little

bit," he said. "We'll get over there, have a look at that. The good thing is we have a few options. [Mitch] is probably the most obvious one if he's doing the T20s as well."

"Wouldn't be surprised as well with the amount of ODIs before the World Cup that some guys might miss a game. If Mitch misses one, someone else might step up."

Cummins termed Marsh "a real leader" and believes he will be an excellent fit for the T20I team. Although he is currently appointed only for the three matches in South Africa, he is now the favourite to take the role full time ahead of next year's T20 World Cup in West Indies and USA. - Agencies

**OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS**  
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by October 2023 reaching \$87.19, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 50 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$87.69. - **ONA**

MARKET  
BUSINESS & FINANCE



**MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER**  
The MSX index closed at 4,763.26 points, up by 0.02 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.02 per cent at 473.63 points. Oman Chromite, up 3.77 per cent, was the top gainer while Shell Oman Marketing, down 5.07 per cent, was the top loser.

# Oil market remains tight as prices inch towards nine months high

Voluntary cuts from Opec+ and reports of continued buying of Saudi crude by China also supported oil prices

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Oil prices roared towards the \$90 per barrel mark following consistent gains since the fourth week of July-2023, according to a new report.

“The most recent support to prices came from record demand from Asian refiners for US crude deliveries amid obstacles that included high temperatures impeding pipeline deliveries to ports in the US. Reports of continued buying of Saudi crude oil by China also supported prices,” Kamco Invest said in its Oil Market Monthly Report August 2023.

Both WTI and Brent traded in larger backwardation indicating scarce supplies in the near term. Voluntary cuts from Opec+, Saudi Arabia and Russia have supported oil prices since last month. Nevertheless, an increase in crude stocks in the US as well as a revision to Chinese economic data indicating a slower-than-expected recovery in demand in China and globally partially offset the overall rally.

Data on weekly crude oil inventories in the US showed a record draw-down during the week ended 28 July 2023 by 17 million barrels led by higher refinery runs coupled with increased crude oil exports,



especially to Asian buyers. However, the report had minimal impact on prices as it coincided with the downgrade of sovereign ratings for the US by Fitch ratings.

In addition, the cancellation of the US government’s plan to buy 6 million barrels of oil for its strategic reserves also affected prices. Meanwhile, the most recent report on crude oil inventories showed an increase of 5.9 million barrels in the US to reach 445.6 million barrels led by a slump in exports that more than offset higher refinery runs. Higher production and imports also supported the inventories.

On the demand front, China falling into deflation for the first time in two years alerted oil watchers

on the prospects of future demand emanating from the world’s second-biggest oil buyer. A recent report from China showed crude oil imports sliding to a six-month low level to the smallest volume since January-2023, according to Bloomberg.

Another report from ESAI Energy said that the impact of a recent typhoon in China has affected mobility and economic activity and as a result, 2H-2023 demand in China is not expected to beat demand during the first half of 2023. On the other hand, a rate pause in India generated hopes of higher demand in the country.

The most recent monthly oil demand data from India showed

consumption increasing by 1.9 percent year-on-year (y-o-y) to 18.1 million tonnes but a seasonal pattern during the monsoon resulted in a 6.6 percent decline as compared to the previous month.

Meanwhile, supplies tightened even further this month when Saudi Arabia announced that it would extend the ongoing additional cuts of one million barrels per day (mb/d) into September-2023 with an option to cut even deeper and prolong further if needed. This was added by Russia which announced that it would extend its export curb until next month. The cuts are expected to counter the impact of a slowdown in the US due to recessionary pressures as

well as the lacklustre data coming out of China.

**World oil demand**  
World oil demand growth forecast for 2023 was kept unchanged from the last month at 2.4 mb/d in Opec’s latest monthly report with demand expected to reach 102.0 mb/d this year. However, there were adjustments to quarterly data for the year. According to the report, demand data for the first quarter of 2023 was revised upwards for the OECD America and OECD Europe regions.

This increase was completely offset by downward revisions to data for Europe and Other Asia for Q2-2023. For 2024, world oil demand

growth was also left unchanged at 2.2 mb/d with total demand expected to reach 104.3 mb/d.

Near-term forecasts for oil demand in the US showed a continued decline in inflation which is expected to support consumption.

The third quarter 2023 demand in the US is expected to remain strong mainly led by the increased mobility and air travel during the summer holiday season resulting in higher demand for gasoline and jet kerosene.

“However, a slide in manufacturing activity is expected to impact demand for industrial fuels, mainly diesel. The trend is expected to continue during the fourth quarter of 2023 with higher demand for transportation fuels offset by lower demand for industrial fuels,” the Kamco Invest report said. For the OECD Europe region, a similar trend is visible as weak manufacturing activity is expected to continue led by slow economic activity and supply chain bottlenecks during 2H-2023. In terms of products, demand for jet fuel and gasoline is expected to remain positive while diesel and petrochemical feedstock is expected to remain weak.

In the non-OECD region, the recent data from China painted a subdued picture for demand during the rest of the year. The CPI for July-2023 showed a y-o-y decline in China. Trade data showed a steep decline in imports last month while exporters reduced exports resulting in piling domestic inventory. Moreover, the increase in sales of EVs has pulled peak oil demand in China by two years to 2023 from 2025, according to an official from Sin-opec. Industry consultant Mysteel OilChem added that demand for diesel and gasoline is unlikely to reach pre-pandemic levels this year as EVs continue to challenge future demand.

EU REGULATION 2035

## Carmakers race to develop solid-state batteries for EVs



**BRUSSELS:** All major European car makers have embraced batteries as they scramble to meet deadlines for EU regulation 2035 of phasing out the combustion engine.

Mercedes, BMW and Volkswagen are all currently employing the use of standard Lithium batteries. But they’re also throwing significant money into research and development of the so-called solid-state battery.

With the auto industry looking to cut carbon emissions by doing away with the combustion engine, the battery has been the go-to power source to replace petrol, a fossil fuel. The development of the electric vehicle (EV) has created a demand for automobile batteries with greater driving range.

Solid-state batteries could offer this advantage over the batteries currently in use, along with higher energy density and faster charging. They could prove both lighter and safer.

**From single-use to solid-state**  
From simple, single-use cells like the AA and AAA to rechargeable battery cells like those used in EVs, battery usage has also evolved significantly since they were invented in the 1800s.

“I think the battery is the greatest innovation of the 21st century and it’s changing our world totally,” Professor Ferdinand Dudenhofer, director at the Center for Automotive Research in Duis-

burg, Germany, told DW.

There are two main kinds of batteries: primary and secondary. Primary batteries, also known as one-use batteries, cannot be recharged. They provide steady energy throughout their lifespan but cannot be reversed to produce more energy. The most popular type is the Alkaline battery, widely used in low-power standalone devices.

Secondary batteries, meanwhile, allow for chemical reactions to be reversed through voltage application, making them rechargeable. Lead acid, nickel metal hydride and lithium-ion batteries are all used in the auto industry, particularly lightweight lithium batteries. Tesla relies heavily on lithium batteries for their electric cars.

**New batteries could solve electric vehicle woes**  
Lithium batteries rely on a liquid electrolyte solution, which allows lithium ions to move as needed for the battery to function. With solid-state batteries, scientists have managed to replace this liquid electrolyte with a solid electrolyte. This makes it possible to do away with the heavy separator component needed to keep the positive electrode from coming into contact with the negative electrode.

The absence of a flammable liquid electrolyte reduces the risk of fire, making the battery safer compared to the liquid-state battery.

Tests in labs both in Japan and Europe have shown much poten-

tial in the battery, with Toyota recently announcing a breakthrough with the solid-state battery. In early July, the Japanese carmaker said it had simplified the production process for materials used to make them. Toyota, the world’s second-largest car manufacturer, has said it plans to produce cars with solid-state batteries by 2025.

Due to a higher energy density, the solid-state battery will power the car over longer distances, hence improving range, a key issue for both consumers and manufacturers when it comes to EVs.

So important is the solid-state battery technology that Volkswagen has become the biggest shareholder in QuantamScape, a solid-state battery company founded in 2010. In late July, the company’s stock soared on the news that it was working with a partner in the automotive industry on a potential launch of its first commercial product.

Mercedes Benz, for its part, plans to go all-electric by 2030. They’ve also signed partnerships with companies like Prologium, a Taiwanese developer and manufacturer of solid-state batteries.

But alongside the numerous advantages, the solid-state battery is also thought to have a shorter battery life. Cracks can form and grow in these batteries, Lorenz Olbrich, a doctoral student in Materials Science at Oxford University told DW, “hence providing a shorter lifetime for the battery.” -**aw**

ANNUALISED PACE



## Japanese economic growth surges on strong exports and tourism

**TOKYO:** Japan’s economic growth jumped at an annual pace of 6 per cent in the April-June period, marking the third straight quarter of growth as exports and inbound tourism recovered.

Real gross domestic product, which measures the sum value of a nation’s products and services, grew 1.5 per cent in the fiscal first quarter for the world’s third-largest economy, the Cabinet Office said Tuesday.

The annualised pace shows what the growth would have been if what was marked during the quarter had continued for a year. The rate outpaced what analysts had forecast at 3.1 per cent growth, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

The latest quarter showed the strongest growth since October-December 2020 when Japan’s GDP grew 1.9 per cent on-quarter and 7.9 per cent annualised rate. Exports grew 3.2 per cent in the three months through June, according to the government. Auto exports have grown lately, after a period in which they had stalled on the shortage of computer chips and other parts. Production was cramped because of social restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also contributing to quarterly growth was the return of tourism, as social restrictions eased, and borders opened to inbound travel. Tourism revenue contributes to export growth in

such GDP data.

On the negative side, private consumption stalled, declining 0.5 per cent compared to the previous quarter. Public demand, which includes government spending, rose 0.3 per cent.

Some analysts think signs of recovery will prompt Japan’s central bank to take action on a policy change and move toward higher interest rates.

The Bank of Japan has taken a super-easy monetary policy for years, at zero or below-zero interest rates, to jumpstart an economy beset by deflation, the opposite of what the world is worried about lately, or inflation.

Deflation can be lethal, signaling stagnation. Japan has a shrinking population caused by an extremely low birth rate.

But recent data show the economy may be gradually picking up and wrestling itself out of stagnation and deflation. Complicating matters is that high interest rates can make borrowing more expensive and contribute to a slowdown, just when the economy is starting to rebound.

“The data is likely to provide the Bank of Japan with more room for normalization, although the initial short-lived bounce in the Japanese yen seems to reflect some market expectations that patience from the central bank is still the likely stance,” said Yeap Jun Rong, market analyst at IG. -**BNA**

BRIEFS

### China cuts interest rates on standing lending facility



**BEIJING:** China’s central bank lowered the interest rates on its standing lending facility (SLF) on Tuesday. The overnight rate was cut by 10 basis points to 2.65 percent. The seven-day and one-month rates were each lowered by 10 basis points to 2.8 percent and 3.15 percent, respectively, according to the People’s Bank of China.

The SLF, introduced by the central bank early in 2013, serves as a channel to meet the liquidity needs of financial institutions. These institutions can take out SLF loans from the central bank, using qualified bonds and other credit assets as collateral. -**Xinhua**

### Tesla cuts prices in China for select Model Y versions



**BEIJING:** Tesla on Monday said it has cut prices in China for its Model Y long-range and performance versions starting on August 14, sending its shares lower on concern of further pressure on its profit margins. This marks the first time since January that Tesla has reduced its vehicle prices in China, although the US electric carmaker has turned to other incentives to boost sales in the face of rising competition in recent months. -**Xinhua**





LIFESTYLE

# STUDY REVEALS GENES THAT CONTROL HAIR WHORL DIRECTION

THE GENETIC BASIS AND POLYGENIC NATURE OF HAIR WHORL ORIENTATION ARE BOTH SHOWN BY THE FIRST GENE MAPPING STUDY ON HUMAN SCALP HAIR WHORLS.

An article in the Elsevier-distributed Journal of Investigative Dermatology reports the discovery of four linked genetic variants that are likely to have an impact on hair whorl orientation. A hair whorl is a group of hair that develops in a circular pattern around a point that is dictated by the direction of the hair follicles. The scalp hair whorl pattern, a clearly visible human characteristic, can be described typically using the whorl number (single or double whorl) and whorl direction. Since odd whorl patterns have been observed in persons with poor brain develop-

ment, understanding the genetic basis of whorl patterns may help in unravelling important biological processes. After the initial genome-wide association study (GWAS) on human scalp hair whorls was carried out in 2,149 Chinese adults from the National Survey of Physical Traits cohort, a replication study was carried out in 1,950 Chinese participants from the Taizhou Longitudinal Study cohort. Lead investigator Sijia Wang, PhD, Shanghai Institute of Nutrition and Health, explained, "We know very little about why we look like we do. Our group has been looking for the genes underlying

various interesting traits of physical appearance, including fingerprint patterns, eyebrow thickness, earlobe shape and hair curliness. Hair whorl is one of the traits that we were curious about. The prevailing opinion was that hair whorl direction is controlled by a single gene, exhibiting Mendelian inheritance. However, our results demonstrate that direction is influenced by the cumulative effects of multiple genes, suggesting a polygenic inheritance." Four related genetic variations are found in the research (at 7p21.3, 5q33.2, 7q33, and 14q32.13). By controlling the cell po-

larity of hair follicles, these genetic variations are expected to affect the orientation of the hair whorls. Closure and expansion of the cranial neural tube may also be affected. Professor Wang continued, "While previous work proposed the hypothesis of associations between hair whorl patterns and abnormal neurological development, no significant genetic associations were observed between hair whorl direction and behavioral, cognitive, or neurological phenotypes. Although we still know very little about why we look like we do, we are confident that curiosity will eventually drive us to the answers – ANI

SPORTS

# Varane heads winner for United against Wolves



Wolves fought hard in Gary O'Neil's first game in charge but were unlucky not to be awarded a penalty late in the Premiership match

**LONDON:** Raphael Varane scored the winner 14 minutes from time as Manchester United gained a lucky win against Wolves in their opening game of the new Premier League season on Monday night. Erik ten Hag's side hardly created a chance of note until Bruno Fernandes found Aaron Wan-Bissaka with a superb pass inside the area. The right-back calmly lifted the bouncing ball to the edge of the six-yard box, where Varane used his height to get above Nelson Semedo and head home, *BBC Sport* reported. It was extremely harsh on Wolves, who made light of last week's change of manager to produce a superb performance in Gary O'Neil's first game in charge. O'Neil was booked for his protests in claiming for a late penalty as United clung on for a fortunate victory. United's debutant goalkeeper Andre Onana avoided punishment in added time for clattering into Sasa Kalajdzic when he came for a cross without making contact with the ball. Matheus Cunha should have given Wolves the lead before then as Pablo Sarabia's low cross found him unmarked just beyond the far post but despite steadying him-

self, the Brazilian hit the outside of the upright. Cunha fizzed a low shot wide just before the break and Pedro Neto fired straight at Onana before Varane's decisive effort while Fabio Silva had two goal-bound efforts saved as Wolves pressed for an equaliser. So equal was the contest that it is no surprise given in 11 meetings over the past four years only twice have these two sides managed to produce more than a single goal between them. United's new outfield recruit Mason Mount also failed to make an impact and in a game where so much of their offensive play was average, Fernandes' inspired pass to create the goal stood out. The Old Trafford crowd do have a new hero in Onana though. The Cameroon keeper produced a conservative performance with the ball at his feet and did not venture too far from his goal when the home side pressed forward. However, the saves he made were important and the reception the former Ajax and Inter Milan man received from the stands indicated the home fans are very much on his side. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

## Officials to miss weekend games after penalty error

**LONDON:** Three Premier League officials at the centre of a decision not to award a penalty to Wolves at Manchester United have been overlooked for this weekend's matches, *BBC Sport* reported on Tuesday. Wolves were denied a late penalty on Monday when United keeper Andre Onana crashed into Sasa Kalajdzic and failed to make contact with the ball. Wolves boss Gary O'Neil said elite referees manager Jon Moss told him he "could not believe" the error. It is also understood referees' chief Howard Webb, who is head of the Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL), also contacted Wolves officials after the match to apologise. Referee Simon Hooper, video assistant referee (VAR) Michael Salisbury and assistant VAR Richard West are regarded as "not selected" rather than "dropped" as the weekend appointments had not been made prior to Monday's game. However, the move is a direct result of the collective failure to award the injury-time penalty and is part of Webb's demand for enhanced accountability for mistakes. "Jon Moss said it was a blatant penalty and should have been given - fair play to him, he apologised," said O'Neil after the match. "I have spent a lot of time with him today to understand the



new guidelines, trying not to get myself booked in the first game, which I have failed in. "But fair play to Jon for coming out and saying it was a clear and obvious error - he couldn't believe the on-field referee didn't give it and can't believe VAR [video assistant referee] didn't intervene. "It probably made me feel worse, actually, because you know you are right. I feel worse about leaving with nothing. Live, I was told they didn't think it was a clear and obvious error." Onana disagreed with O'Neil and Moss, saying the incident was just a natural coming together of players.

Asked if it was a penalty, the Cameroon international said: "No, goalkeepers make decisions, sometimes you are right, sometimes you are not. "I made a decision and I am responsible for everything. For me it was contact between two big guys and nothing happened. But for us, the most important thing was to win and I am happy for the victory. "Of course I was confident [a penalty would not be given]." United manager Erik ten Hag said "it can always happen" when asked if he was concerned whether Hooper was going to the monitor as he moved towards the side of the pitch. - Agencies

CONTRACT RENEWAL

## Lewis to stay with Man City until 2028

**LONDON:** Versatile defender Rico Lewis has signed a new five-year contract with Manchester City. The Bury-born 18-year-old made his first-team debut last season and went on to make 16 starts, scoring once, as City won the Treble. The academy graduate had a year left on his existing deal and has committed himself to the club until 2028. "It's been an unbelievable year for me and now to sign this contract is a dream come true," he said. "As a City fan, I can remember watching us winning trophies when I was young and it's the only place I've wanted to be. "To know I'm going to be here until 2028 is fantastic and I can't wait to keep working and keep improving." Lewis also made his debut for England's Under-21s in March. His fifth first-team appearance for City came in the Champions League at home to Sevilla last November and he became the youngest player to score on their first start in the competition, breaking a record set by former Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema. "Everyone at the club has been so amazing, starting with the academy where I learnt so much and I am hugely grateful for everything they did," Lewis added. "The fans have been brilliant and I'll give everything for them and the club to try to keep us being successful." - Agencies

LA LIGA

## Barca coach Xavi lashes out at referee after opener



**MADRID:** Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez launched a blistering attack on La Liga and referee Cesar Soto Grado after his side's title defense started with a 0-0 draw away to Getafe on Sunday. Neither side was able to score in a match that lasted an incredible hour and 55 minutes, with 10 minutes of injury time added in the first half and 15 at the end of the second half to compensate for the constant stoppages provoked by Getafe's tactics. Barca's Raphinha was sent off for elbowing Getafe defender Gaston Alvarez. Xavi was also sent to the stands for his protests at Getafe's attempts to break up and stop the play with time wasting and a non-stop stream of fouls and off-the-ball incidents. Speaking to the press afterwards, Xavi pulled no punches with what he had seen. "The responsibility belongs to

the referee. The limits are set by the referee," he said in his press conference. "Raphinha was wrong, but a lot of things had happened to him before. I think and believe that is obvious," he said, saying the "product" of La Liga was "embarrassing, at least today." "It's normal that people don't want to watch football, because this wasn't a game," he fumed. The Barca coach was also furious that his team was denied what looked like a clear penalty in the 14th minute of the second half injury time. Ronald Araujo was clearly tripped in the Getafe penalty area, but after checking the VAR, Soto Grado ruled out a penalty for a supposed prior handball by Barca midfielder Gavi. "If you are going to give handball, it has to be clear and this wasn't clear. VAR is a great tool if it is used well, but today it wasn't used well," fumed Xavi. - Xinhua

BUNDESLIGA

## Bayern arrival Kane dreams of Champions League victory at Wembley

**BERLIN:** Big dreams seem synonymous with big clubs for England's captain, Harry Kane. Joining German record champion and 2020 treble winner Bayern Munich, the 30-year-old former Tottenham star discussed his desire recently. Kane has his sights set on the 2023-2024 UEFA Champions League with his new team. Having committed to a four-year contract until 2027, Kane expressed excitement about the Champions League final's location. "The prospect of winning at Wembley is overwhelmingly exciting," he said. "It's a way to go but the goals of the club and me match perfectly as we want to win

all possible titles." For Kane, the Champions League title isn't just a dream - it's a genuine target. He believes it's within Bayern Munich's grasp. The Three Lions top scorer conveyed his intent to infuse additional leadership into Bayern's lineup. He stated, "It is part of my personality to push other players to another level." Kane is keen on collaborating with Bayern icon Thomas Muller. "He already asked for a game of golf, and I guess we will get that done over the upcoming weeks," he mentioned. The transition to the Bundesliga presents Kane with a new set



of challenges. "I spend all my life in England and have to get used to many new things, not only the language," Kane said. Although deeply connected to his English roots, Kane felt the moment was ripe for a fresh start. Bayern offers the platform to per-

form at the pinnacle, and Kane is well aware of the expectations, especially in scoring. "Goal-scoring is my job and I have proven I can address expectations," the England captain stated. He acknowledges the significant investment Bayern made. "I feel the responsibility to repay the over 100 million euros paid by Bayern to Tottenham," he conveyed. Kane had in-depth conversations with Bayern manager Thomas Tuchel. "I enjoyed his energy," he shared, while Tuchel signified Bayern's intent to tailor their game to Kane's strengths. Reflecting on his transfer,

Kane shared his feelings about the recent transition. "The past days have delivered many up-and-down experiences as it was the first transfer I was involved in, but I am finally happy to be here and was amazed by the warm welcome I received from the fans," he recounted. In the coming weeks, Kane's focus will be on acclimating to his new environment, learning German, and bonding with his teammates. Bayern, led by Kane, is set to face Werder Bremen in their 2023-2024 Bundesliga opener. This follows their 3-0 defeat in the German Supercup final against RB Leipzig. - Xinhua

# IN-PICTURES



**World Nomads Fashion Festival held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**  
A man presents traditional Kyrgyz attire during the World Nomads Fashion Festival in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. A celebration event was held here to mark the 5th anniversary of the World Nomads Fashion Festival. *xinhua*



**Afghan men working at China invested project**  
Afghan employees work at the construction site of a China-funded housing complex in Kabul, Afghanistan. *xinhua*



**Budapest Zoo celebrates 157th anniversary in Hungary**  
A ring-tailed lemur tastes a piece of special cake edible for both humans and animals at Budapest Zoo in Budapest, Hungary. *xinhua*



**Flamingos seen in Agamon Hula Lake area in Israel**  
Flamingos are seen in the Agamon Hula Lake area of the Hula Valley in northern Israel, during the migration season. *xinhua*



**Bollywood actor Sunny Deol with actor Utkarsh Sharma poses for a photograph**  
Bollywood actor Sunny Deol with actor Utkarsh Sharma poses for a photograph during a press conference for celebration of success their film 'Gadar 2', in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



**Scientific expedition supports high-quality development in Xinjiang**  
Scientists conduct rapid field-testing and sampling of surface water at the headwaters of the Tarim River during the third comprehensive scientific expedition in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. *xinhua*



ROUND-UP

# OAB launches ‘Ruwad Al Arabi’ leadership development programme

The event welcomed the learners from within OAB and the bank’s strategic partners who will participate in the programme, which is designed to nurture the future leaders from within, from aspiring leaders to seasoned professionals seeking to enhance their managerial skills

**MUSCAT:** A first in the Sultanate of Oman, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) launched its new Ruwad Al Arabi for leadership development programme in association with Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning, under the auspices Dr Ali bin Qassim Al Lawati, President of the Royal Academy of Management.

The event welcomed the learners from within OAB and the bank’s strategic partners who will participate in the programme, which is designed to nurture the future leaders from within, from aspiring leaders to seasoned professionals seeking to enhance their managerial skills.

Sulaiman Al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said: “Ruwad Al Arabi for Leadership Development will offer an incredible learning journey for our employees, as we develop the latest leadership skills that will help Oman Arab Bank continue to build on its great many successes of the past 50 years. We are committed to empowering our staff with the knowledge, skills and insights necessary to thrive in the dynamic world of management and leadership, equipping them with the tools required to excel, while fostering personal growth and development. Our aim is to provide a holistic understanding of man-



agement principles, enabling impactful contributions and driving meaningful change.”

Sinead Lindley, Head of Client Relations at Harvard Business



Publishing, who was present at the event added, “Participants in the programme will gain access to a wealth of knowledge curated by world-class faculty and industry

experts, drawn from Harvard Business School’s extensive research and real-world case studies.

“The use of Harvard Manage Mentor will provide the learners with over 42 topics that address today’s most pressing management matters. This is the first of its kind program in Oman and we are very pleased to be part of Oman Arab Bank’s journey.”

The programme will draw upon a comprehensive curriculum that covers a wide range of essential topics, from strategic thinking and decision-making to interpersonal skills and effective communication, featuring interactive exercises, practical simulations and thought-provoking discussions. Dedicated mentors and facilitators will be available to address

participants’ questions, provide guidance and offer personalised assistance.

The bank employees will also have the opportunity to explore various government and private organisations, gaining insights into their operations. This will not only provide an understanding of their functions but also help align the bank’s endeavors with the nation’s trajectory, especially in alignment with Oman Vision 2040. The success story sessions will offer a sneak peek into the narratives that have shaped exceptional leaders in Oman.

The launch of Ruwad Al Arabi for Leadership Development follows the announcement earlier this year of the Ruwad Al Arabi (Leaders of Tomorrow) program, providing prestigious internships with the bank for talented young Omani university and college graduates. Its assessment process is currently underway after an overwhelming response of more than 2,000 applicants. This program will provide its participants with meaningful work experience and the skills required to bolster employment prospects within, or outside, the banking sector. Its ultimate goal is to improve the employability of young Omani nationals while growing the Omani workforce, empowering future leaders and fostering economic competitiveness and growth.

STRATEGIC DECISION

## Bank Nizwa continues to invest in Omani talents



**MUSCAT:** Recognising high performance, potential, and capabilities, Bank Nizwa recently announced the promotion of three of its senior retail staff members to higher positions. This strategic decision underscores the bank’s unwavering dedication to providing career advancement opportunities and empowering local talents by enabling them to take on elevated roles and responsibilities.

Backed by years of experience and an inherent zeal to achieve the broader goals of the bank, Jassim Al-Hajri was appointed as Regional Manager for the Governorates of Muscat and South Al-Batinah, Musallam Al-Busaidi as Regional Manager for the Governorates of Al-Dakhiliyah, North Al-Sharqiyah, Al-Dhahirah and Al-Buraimi and Abdul Wahhab Al-Rawahi as Regional Manager for the Governorates of North Al-Batinah and South Al-Sharqiyah, where the regional managers will perform their duties under the supervision of the Head of Branches, Talib bin Salam Al Yarubi.

Congratulating the employees on the promotions, Khaled Al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer at Bank Nizwa stated, “A fundamental aspect of any thriving organisation is the value it accords to nurturing its employees. It is due to the efforts of the team that

we have successfully been driving innovation and customer satisfaction while achieving operational efficiency and excellence. As a people-centric bank, we are invested in our people; we foster a dynamic work culture that promotes creative thinking and encourages individuals to take on leadership roles. Moreover, as we generate opportunities for career advancement within our organisation, we contribute to the development of a skilled workforce for the nation. By empowering nationals to take on key roles, we also help in the creation of a more resilient, independent, and sustainable economy.”

**Goodwill**

He added saying, “Over the years, Bank Nizwa has established strong goodwill in the market and our customer base has consistently been witnessing a steady rise. Keeping this in mind, we also acknowledge the immense importance of retaining and nurturing skilled professionals who can address the diverse needs of our ever-growing client base.”

With more than 30 years of experience in the banking sector and the proven capacity to manage branches with a turnover of OMR100 million, the new Regional Managers are not just capable

of tackling complex scenarios but also reserve the talent to offer valuable guidance to staff members. This, in turn, plays an instrumental role in preparing the next batch of competent leaders in the bank.

Being elevated from positions within the organisation, the trio also has a better understanding of the bank’s Sharia-compliant retail products, all of which are offered to customers through the bank’s branches strategically located throughout the country. Bank Nizwa currently operates 21 retail branches and a fully functional digital branch at the Mall of Oman. The bank’s physical presence is complemented by its advancements in the digital realm. Bank Nizwa’s popular mobile app and trusted Internet banking services further attest to its keen focus on enhancing its online presence and making banking more accessible, seamless, and efficient.

While Bank Nizwa continues to expand its reach, it also ensures that its commitment to customer service remains uncompromised. With the recent promotions, Bank Nizwa reiterates its practice of strengthening the bank with impactful leaders dedicated to fortifying client relationships, delivering exceptional levels of service, and upholding the core values of the bank.

CULINARY JOURNEY



## Capri Court and Chow Mee: Signature Flavours of Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah

**MUSCAT:** Amidst the captivating embrace of the Omani coastline, Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah offers more than just picturesque vistas—it promises culinary journeys that evoke memories and create new ones. This summer, two of its distinguished dining venues, Capri Court and Chow Mee, are all set to delight guests with their signature flavours.

**Chow Mee: A Southeast Asian streetfood style journey**

Craving for the delightful textures of stir-fry udon noodles? Or the intricate flavours of a well-prepared dim-sum? Look no further than Chow Mee, open from Monday to Friday from 6.30pm. Helmed by the accomplished Chef Ida, the restaurant is a haven for those eager to experience the authentic tastes of Southeast Asia. Through his expertise, he brings forth dishes that are not just meals, but experiences that transport your palate to the bus-



ting streets and vibrant markets of Southeast Asia. With each bite, diners can expect an amalgamation of tradition and innovation and wok-fired dishes.

**Capri Court: An authentic Italian escape**

If European elegance and the serene flavours of the Mediterranean beckon, then Capri Court is your destination within Muscat. Guided by the culinary prowess of Chef Daniel Di Sacco, straight from Italy, the restaurant, open from Wednesday to Sunday from 7pm, promises an immersion into the heart of Italian cuisine. This summer, Capri Court’s menu emphasizes the freshest ingredients sourced from the Italian coast with locally sourced flavours. Chef Di Sacco’s artistry ensures that each dish is a celebration of authenticity, embodying the rich heritage and passion of Italian cooking from homemade pasta to seafood cooked the Italian way.

On top, savour a range of vegan dishes specially curated in all the restaurants, that are carefully presented with creativity and flavours that know no bound! Your experience will be a journey worth savouring. For reservations: 2477 6565 or follow @shangrilabaraljissahresort @chowmee.om @capricourt.om on Instagram.





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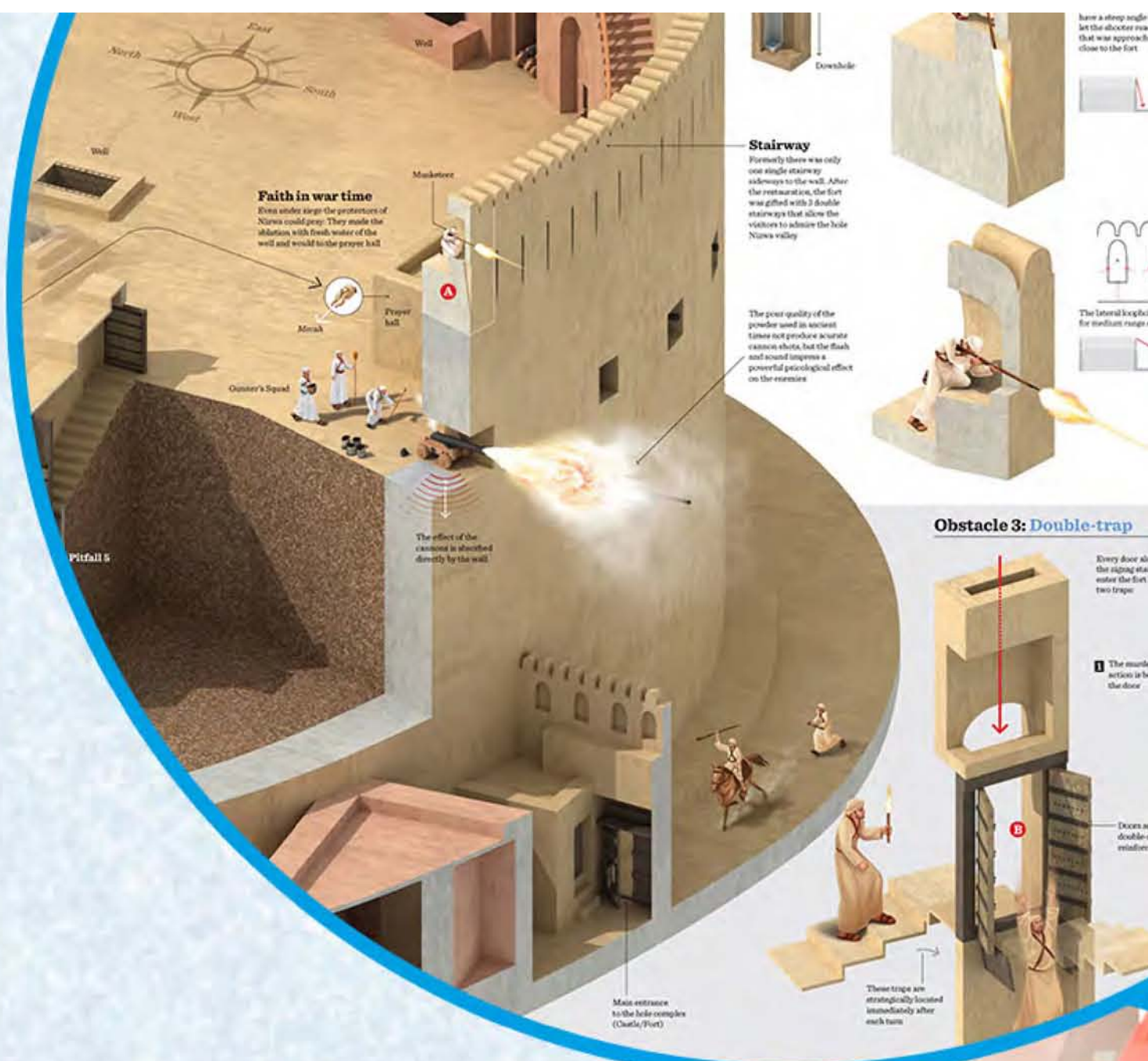


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