

P13

SALALAH PORT UNVEILS MAJOR EXPANSION TO BOOST CONTAINER HANDLING CAPACITY



P12

BELLINGHAM, KANE RESCUE ENGLAND FROM SHOCK EURO 2024 EXIT TO SLOVAKIA



P20

RECREATIONAL SPOTS AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AT SUR CREEKS



ROYAL DECREES

HM issues two Royal Decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Sunday issued two Royal decrees reading as follows: Royal decree No 32/2024 on the transfer of an employee to the Foreign Ministry.

Article (1) transfers Saleh bin Yahya bin Masoud al Maskari from the Ministry of Defence to the Foreign Ministry, along with his existing financial allocations and job entitlements.

Article (2) says that this Royal decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 33/2024 on the amendment of some provisions of Royal Decree No 117/2010 on establishing courts of appeal.

Article (1) cancels the court of appeal in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi, stated in article (1) of the aforementioned Royal Decree No 117/2010.

Article (2) says that this Royal decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — [ONA](#)



PLASTIC BAGS BANNED AT PHARMACIES, HOSPITALS

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA) on Sunday said use of plastic bags in health establishments will be banned from today (July 1).

During the first phase of the campaign, EA will ban the use of plastic bags in pharmacies, hospitals and clinics.

Failing to adhere to the rule may attract a fine of RO 50 to RO 1000 and will be doubled in case of repetition.

HM sends greetings to Canada, Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Governor-General Mary Simon of Canada on her country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to Governor-General Simon, wishing her good health and happiness.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik also sent a cable of greetings to President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the

Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Kagame and the people of his country.

Also, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Evariste Ndayishimiye of the Republic of Burundi on his country's National

Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Ndayishimiye and the people of his country.

Moreover, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a cable of greetings to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of the Federal

Republic of Somalia on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to President Hassan, wishing him good health and happiness. His Majesty also wished the people of Somalia further progress and prosperity. — [ONA](#)



A Palestinian woman bakes unleavened bread in a makeshift oven while sitting on the rubble of buildings destroyed in the Israeli bombardment, as some residents return to the city of Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip. – [AFP](#)

Israeli tanks advance into areas in Gaza

CAIRO/GAZA: Israeli forces advanced further on Sunday into the Shejaia neighbourhood of northern Gaza and also pushed deeper into western and central Rafah in the south, killing at least six Palestinians and destroying several homes, residents said.

Israeli tanks, which moved back into Shejaia four days ago, fired shells towards several houses, leaving families trapped inside and unable to leave, the residents said.

Speaking at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeated his position that there was no substitute for achieving victory in the war against Hamas.

“Our forces are operating in Rafah, Shejaia, everywhere in the Gaza Strip. Dozens of terrorists are being eliminated every day. This is a difficult fight that is being waged above ground, sometimes in hand-to-hand combat, and below ground as well,” Netanyahu said.

“We are committed to fighting until we achieve all of our objectives: Eliminating Hamas, returning all of our hostages, ensuring that Gaza never again constitutes a threat to Israel and returning our residents securely to their homes in the south and the north,” he added.

The Israeli military said forces operating in Shejaia had over the past day killed several Palestinian gunmen. — [Reuters](#)

Private establishments to offer vehicle technical inspection: ROP

AHMED AL KAABI
Muscat, June 30

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has introduced a new initiative permitting private establishments to offer vehicle technical inspection services.

This decision, announced by Lt Gen Hasan bin Mohsin al Shraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, aims to regulate the service provision.

According to the directive, the authorised private establishments must be fully owned by Omanis and meet specified approvals and requirements from the competent authority. These facilities must also be located in designated areas.

The initiative outlines specific qualifications for technical inspectors: they must be Omani citizens holding a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from a recognised higher education institution, be physically fit and have completed a technical inspection course.

The objective of this initiative is to engage private establishments in delivering these services across various wilayats of the Sultanate of Oman. The initiative will help generate employment



The initiative will help generate employment opportunities for Omanis

opportunities for Omani youth and enhance its dissemination nationwide. The service will be available at different times and locations according to the decision.

An application for a licence is submitted using a form prepared for this purpose, accompanied by the required data and documents. The Directorate must decide on the application within thirty days from the date of its submission.

The licence shall be valid for a period of five years, renewable for similar periods, provided that a renewal application is submitted at least thirty days before the expiration of the licence with the same conditions and procedures prescribed for granting the licence.

ROP official said that this decision is expected to contribute to improving vehicle inspection services, allowing vehicle owners in all parts of the Sultanate of Oman to obtain the service faster and easier. The decision also enhances the role of the private sector in providing quality and advanced services that contribute to raising the level of satisfaction of citizens and residents with the services provided to them.



JAALAN BANI BU ALI: The coastal areas in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate witness active tourism activities with the start of the summer tourism season and the arrival of visitors from Oman and other countries. – [DETAILS ON P2](#)

National Military Discipline Programme begins in Dhofar

SALALAH: Activities of a national Military Discipline Programme (MDP) kicked off in Dhofar Governorate on Sunday. Supervised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the MDP is being implemented through cooperation with military and security departments and government institutions.

At the outset of the ceremony, the participants were briefed about events and activities of the MDP, which runs until July 24. The participants will attend hands-on applications on the MDP's goals at infantry units and other military services.

The first week of the programme includes lectures on military discipline, communication skills, first aid, teamwork, leadership styles, means of dealing with drugs and psychotropic substances, nutrition and its effects on physical fitness.

Two workshops will be organised during the week: The first one seeks to inculcate values of citizenship and belonging and the second deals with artificial intelligence (AI) and entrepreneurship. — [ONA](#)



MOH: 1796897/2024

07-09
July

Visiting Burjeel Hospital, Al Khuwair

Injured on the field?

We'll help you come back stronger, faster, and more resilient.

Dr. Jacob Varghese

Sr. Consultant - Sports & Joint Surgery

برجيل
burjeel
hospital

a burjeel holdings company

24399777

92167571

omanburjeel

www.burjeelhospitaloman.com

MoI bags 10 awards at Arab Radio, TV Festival

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the 24th Arab Radio and Television Festival which concluded in Tunisia on Saturday.

The Ministry of Information, represented by the Sultanate of Oman Radio and the Sultanate of Oman Television, in addition to the private media institution Al Wisal, bagged 10 awards.

This year's Arab festival saw an unprecedented number of entries with 143 works by 28 Arab organisations, including 20 organisations that are members of the Arab Broadcasting Union for the first time.

Oman Radio won 5 advanced positions in the festival's competitions.

Yousef bin Humaid al Yousfi, Director-General of Oman Radio, said: "These awards that the radio wins annually in various Gulf and Arab competitions reflect the continuous development it witnesses in various aspects of production quality. It also expresses the success made by the Ministry of Information in implementing



Oman bagged 10 awards at the 24th Arab Radio and Television Festival in Tunisia.

its comprehensive plans aimed to encourage creativity and innovation and develop the skills of media professionals especially the talented by constantly conducting qualification and training programmes whether in the radio or other media fields."

The radio drama Battle of Salut won the silver award in the epic

drama category competition.

Radio programme Our Health, prepared and presented by Dr Fana al Arimi and directed by Hamad al Wardi won second place in the health programmes competition.

The Sultanate of Oman Radio also won second place in the educational programmes category under the title of school dropout.

The programme is presented by Rasha al Balushi and directed by Hamad al Wardi.

The Sultanate of Oman Radio also won two awards in the programme competitions, exchange and joint production programmes. It won second place in the annual radio competition for 2024 for the Old Architecture



programme and second place in the radio and television exchange competition for the year 2023.

The Sultanate of Oman TV won 4 awards at the Arab Radio and Television Festival namely the Arab Joint Television Production Award for the documentary entitled 'Holding Breaths' produced by the Ministry of Information and

directed by Issa al Subhi.

In addition, Al Wasal Radio private institution won two awards namely the second prize in the parallel competitions category for the miscellaneous show 'Al Awal', and the second prize in the health programmes category for the programme 'Healthy Life'.

— ONA

SUMMER TOURISM SEASON BEGINS AT COASTAL AREAS

JAALAN BANI BU ALI: The coastal areas in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate witness active tourism activities with the start of the summer season and the arrival of visitors from Oman and other countries.

These coastal areas are renowned for their moderate weather and lower temperatures.

During this season, relentless efforts were exerted to enhance the natural capabilities of tourist attractions. Many projects are also



being implemented, and several events will be held.

Shaikh Mohammed bin Humaid al Ghabashi, Wali of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali said that activities of 'Al Ashkharah Summer Extravaganza' (Ajwaa

Al Ashkharah) will be held, in its 2nd edition, during the period from July 10 till July 31 (21 days) at Al Ashkharah Public Park.

Al Ghabashi added that Al Ashkharah Summer Extravaganza will include many recreational,

cultural, artistic and sports events and programmes.

He also pointed out that a Heritage Village event will be held on the sidelines of the extravaganza, as well as a corner for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that will see the participation of 40 entrepreneurs.

Moreover, it is worth noting that there are 146 hotel/resort establishments in the Governorate of Al Sharqiyah South that offer as many as 1,634 hotel rooms.

— ONA



Oman ends successful participation in Seoul International Book Fair

SEOUL: The Sultanate of Oman concluded its notable participation in the Seoul International Book Fair 2024 as a special guest commemorating the 50th anniversary of Omani-Korean diplomatic relations.

The fair was represented by key government institutions including the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, alongside various civil and private society entities.

Oman's pavilion also showcased a blend of modern and traditional Omani architectural designs.

The pavilion featured distinct sections namely the Omani Publications Corner presenting works from governmental and civil society bodies, the Arabic Calligraphy Corner with live demonstrations, the Omani Manuscript Anecdotes Corner, and the Omani Majlis Corner, offering traditional Omani hospitality with coffee, dates, and sweets, providing visitors insights into Omani customs and traditions.

Notably, the pavilion highlighted Unesco-listed intangible cultural heritage such as the art of the Burra (Omani dagger) and cultural spaces, along with 'drinking Omani coffee,' utilising VR technology and visual displays.

The exhibition garnered enthusiastic engagement from Korean visitors, fascinated by Oman's rich cultural, historical, and tourism offerings.

Abdullah bin Mohammed al Harthy, Director-General of Knowledge and Cultural Development at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, emphasised Oman's focus on cultural diversity and the aesthetic richness of Omani heritage, showcasing a curated selection of publications and cultural activities that underscored the historical ties between the two nations.

He noted, "Our participation also highlighted Omani writers and novelists through dialogue sessions, emphasising their pivotal role in Oman's cultural landscape within the broader cultural programme of the Seoul International Book Fair."

— ONA

Cultural, sporting extravaganza beckons

SALALAH: The General Directorate of Culture, Sports, and Youth in Dhofar Governorate has meticulously finalised its preparations for an extensive array of programmes slated for this year's autumn season, aimed at engaging a diverse demographic.

The directorate aspires to attract a significant influx of tourists through these events, facilitated by collaborations with various sectors within the governorate.

Elaborating on the directorate's readiness to inaugurate its programmes for the 2024 Dhofar autumn season, Moosa bin Abdullah al Qasabi, the Director-General of the General Directorate of Culture, Sports, and Youth, Governorate of Dhofar, remarked that extensive efforts have been undertaken to prepare numerous facilities intended to host this year's events.

He further disclosed that the meticulously curated event programme aspires to draw over 300,000 visitors to Dhofar, encompassing both domestic and international tourists.



In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), the Director-General emphasised that the programme's development has been underpinned by a commitment to diversity and inclusivity across cultural, sports, and youth activities.

The programme's objectives include the realisation of cultural and sports projects, the orchestration of approximately 100 events for governmental, private, and community entities, and the preparation of 28 facilities, including 20 sports facilities and halls across various wilayats, to invigorate multiple sectors within the governorate.

He also highlighted that this

year's programme features 20 cultural activities, encompassing workshops, specialised programmes, art exhibitions, Dhofar Theatre Festival, and other cultural events distributed throughout the governorate.

The programme includes cultural evenings, workshops, training courses, and several exhibitions in photography and fine arts, alongside the Dhofar Theatre Festival and a children's library.

In the sports and youth sector, the Director-General announced that this year will witness 34 sports programmes and various women's activities, including sports, competitions, and specialised

courses conducted in the directorate's facilities and sports centres across the governorate.

The sports sector will feature numerous initiatives, including 13 diverse sports events such as football championships for the public and private sectors, a youth hockey club championship, a chess championship, and a beach games championship, in addition to a sports caravan.

Eleven women's activities will be organised, featuring bowling, padel, electronic games, and chess tournaments. Additionally, 11 diverse youth activities will include various training courses, competitions, and youth innovation exhibition.

— ONA



Tasmu initiative to empower Omani women leaders



RAM and MoSD launch 'Tasmu' initiative to enhance the leadership capabilities of Omani women

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@AfrahAlbalushia

In cooperation between the Royal Academy of Management (RAM) and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), 'Tasmu' initiative was launched to enhancing the leadership capabilities of Omani women in the public and private sectors and civil society.

The launched was under the auspices of Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development. The initiative targeted 50 Omani women under a period of four months and highlighting the societal impact of women leaders and promoting the exchange of experiences.

Dr Ali bin Qasim al Lawati, President of the Royal Academy of Management (RAM), stressed that Omani women play a crucial role in advancing the Omani development agenda, as they hold many leadership positions in various sectors.

By launching the 'Tasmu' programme, the Academy reinforces its commitment to supporting and empowering Omani women leaders through active participation in national leadership programmes, with ensuring that they are well prepared to face future challenges and seize opportunities for growth and innovation.

This initiative is consistent with the strategic objectives of

The initiative is consistent with the strategic objectives of 'Oman Vision 2040', which gives priority to empowering women in all sectors

'Oman Vision 2040', which gives priority to empowering women in all sectors.

Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, said: "The initiative empowers the leadership capabilities of Omani women and aims to significantly enhance the role of Omani women in national development. It is in alignment with international standards confirms Oman's commitment to promoting gender equality and promoting equal opportunities in leadership positions."

Dr Fathiya bint Abdullah al Rashidiyah, Acting Vice-President for Programme Affairs at the Royal Academy of Management, said the programmes seek to create an encouraging and stimulating learning environment that supports innovation, critical and strategic thinking, enhances self-confidence and the ability to make the right decisions.

She added that the

participants will also be provided with the latest knowledge and experiences, and will strongly advance development efforts and consolidate Sultanate of Oman's experience globally in promoting women's participation in leadership positions.

Kawthar bint Abdullah al Mahrouqiyah,'Tasmu' initiative Director, mentioned that the initiative revolves around four main components, and each component is designed to achieve the initiative's objectives, particularly empowering women leaders skilled in decision-making, team leadership, and strategic implementation, while adhering to contemporary international leadership practices.

The 'Tasmu' initiative includes an extensive media training programme aimed at refining participants' personal presentation skills, mastering communication across various media platforms, and enhancing public speaking abilities.

It also focuses on establishing a strong digital presence and developing sustainable financial strategies to effectively manage resources, including budgeting for investment projects, engaging stakeholders, and mitigating economic and financial risks.

The graduation is scheduled to take place on October 17, coinciding with Omani Women's Day.



RARE CYCLOPIC GOAT BORN IN JAALAN CLINIC

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 30

The Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali witnessed the birth of a goat with one eye under the supervision of clinic's specialist doctor, Dr Riyadh Mahmoud Hassan.

In a rarest of cases, a cesarean was performed to extract the newborn, said the doctor.

The newborn was suffering from a congenital deformity known scientifically as 'cyclopia', as well as some deformities in the bones of the jaw and skull. This

condition occurs due to a genetic defect or the ingestion of some poisonous plants by the mother during pregnancy. The third week of pregnancy is when these plants contain the toxic substance cyclopamine, which leads to deformity.

It occurs when the two halves of the brain are not aligned normally, resulting in the formation of one central cavity with one eye, and the eyelashes and eyelids disappear. The head of the veterinary clinic, Saleh al Kasbi, said that these cases are among the rarest cases in the world.

He added that the veterinary clinic in Jaalan is one of the largest clinics in Oman serving two largest wilayats of Al Sharqiyah South , Jaalan Bani Bu Ali and Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan.

Some villages are more than 180 km away from the clinic centre. According to the latest animal census, Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan contains approximately 154,000 animals, and Jaalan Bani Bu Ali has more than 133,000 animals. It serves a large segment of livestock breeders across the two wilayats, and large numbers of animals have been treated.

CEDAW committee reviews 2024 initiatives



The meeting was chaired by Dr Laila al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, and Chairperson of the committee

MUSCAT: The Committee tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on Sunday held its first meeting for 2024. The meeting was chaired by Dr Laila

bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, and Chairperson of the committee. Al Najjar affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman accords great care to empowering women in various fields.

Moreover, the committee

highlighted the efforts exerted regarding the fourth national report of CEDAW. It also touched on the concluding comments and recommendations, as well as the preliminary procedures that are undertaken regarding the national report. — ONA

OMAN, RUSSIAN MUSEUMS EXPLORE COOPERATION

MUSCAT: A meeting was held on Sunday between Oman Across Ages Museum and the State Hermitage Museum of the Russian Federation to explore means of enhancing areas of future cooperation.

The meeting touched on means of benefiting from expertise and capabilities and exchanging visits between the two museums.

Moreover, Al Yaqdhan bin Abdullah al Harthy, Director General of Oman Across Ages Museum, toured the facilities and halls of the State Hermitage Museum. He also viewed the museum's



valuable exhibits. The State Hermitage Museum is considered among the

biggest museums in the world and contains over 3 million masterpieces. — ONA

Al Wusta braces for 'Khareef Dhofar season

HAIMA: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, represented by the Roads Department in Al Wusta Governorate, is taking measures to upgrade its readiness to optimise benefits from Khareef Dhofar 2024 season.

Bakheet bin Salim al Awa'id, Director of the Roads Department in Al Wusta Governorate, said that his department engaged in removing sand layers from the roads leading to the Dhofar Governorate like Adam-Thamrait road, Sinaw-Duqm-Hasik road, Al Ashkharah-Mahout road and Mahout-Al Zamayim road. Al Awa'id added that the department awarded a tender for the management of road links in the Wilayat of Haima in the first quarter of 2024 to help construct the remaining parts of the Adam-Thamrait dual road, in addition to restoring networks and organising road markers to ensure the smooth flow of movement for the safety of road users. — ONA



TENDERS

The Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) invites following tenders:

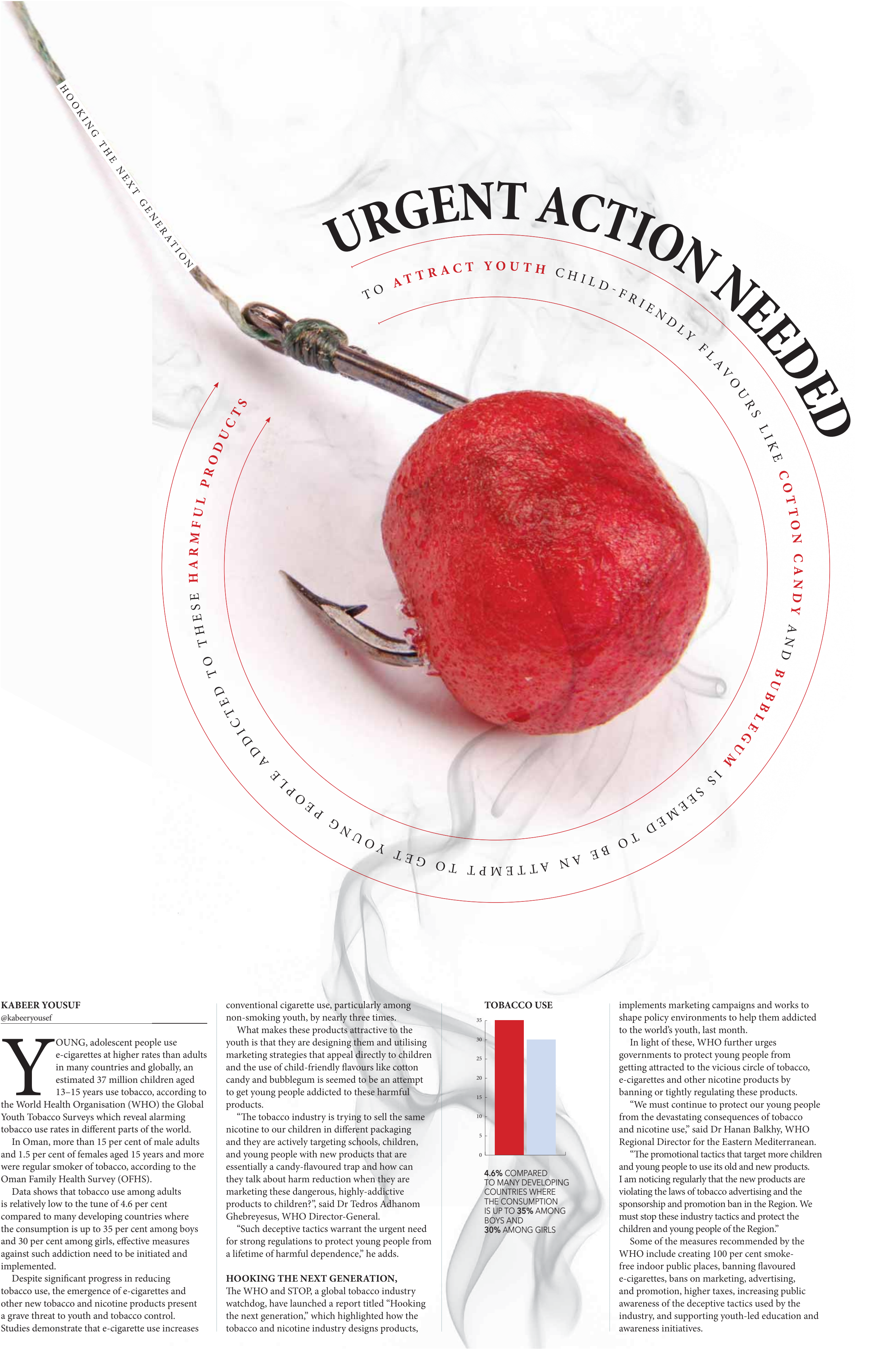
Tender Number	Tender Name	Grade	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR)
NEGC/2024/05	EPC for rehabilitation and upgrading of Halanyat power station Dhafar governorate	Specialist Companies	11-July-2024	25-July-2024	525/- (including VAT)
NEGC/2024/06	Fabrication of steel Containers for Six Units of Diesel Generator Set from closing Power Station	Specialist Companies	11-July-2024	25-July-2024	105/- (including VAT)

- Collection of Tender:** Interested and Specialized Companies and Establishments registered with Rural Areas Electricity company, Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents from Procurement & Contracts Section, Rural Areas Electricity Company at Wilayat AL SEEB, AL MABELAH, non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. The tender may be collected on any working day between 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM. (by email: (tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om)) after deposit the related tender fee amount to our Rural Area Electricity Company account No. 0423010783090017 - Bank Muscat
- Bank Guarantee:** The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C).
- Offers Submission:** Tender offers CDs should be submitted in Three separate sealed envelopes (Pre-Qualification, Technical & Financial) with red wax addressed to the Chairman of Minor Tender Committee, Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) marked with tender number and the subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelopes. The exterior of the envelopes containing the tender document must not reveal the identity of the Tenderer.
- Submission Location:** The Completed Tender should be deposited in the Tender Box at the Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 12:00 PM on the last date of submission.
- Rural Areas Electricity Co., without mentioning the reason, is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.
- Site visit:** for bidders seeking site visits, it will be scheduled once receive an official request from bidder.



Nama Electricity Generation
Al Maablah, Al Seeb
P.O Box 1166, Post Code 113, Sultanate of Oman.
Phone Number: +968 91766576





KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

YOUNG, adolescent people use e-cigarettes at higher rates than adults in many countries and globally, an estimated 37 million children aged 13–15 years use tobacco, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) the Global Youth Tobacco Surveys which reveal alarming tobacco use rates in different parts of the world.

In Oman, more than 15 per cent of male adults and 1.5 per cent of females aged 15 years and more were regular smoker of tobacco, according to the Oman Family Health Survey (OFHS).

Data shows that tobacco use among adults is relatively low to the tune of 4.6 per cent compared to many developing countries where the consumption is up to 35 per cent among boys and 30 per cent among girls, effective measures against such addiction need to be initiated and implemented.

Despite significant progress in reducing tobacco use, the emergence of e-cigarettes and other new tobacco and nicotine products present a grave threat to youth and tobacco control. Studies demonstrate that e-cigarette use increases

conventional cigarette use, particularly among non-smoking youth, by nearly three times.

What makes these products attractive to the youth is that they are designing them and utilising marketing strategies that appeal directly to children and the use of child-friendly flavours like cotton candy and bubblegum is seemed to be an attempt to get young people addicted to these harmful products.

“The tobacco industry is trying to sell the same nicotine to our children in different packaging and they are actively targeting schools, children, and young people with new products that are essentially a candy-flavoured trap and how can they talk about harm reduction when they are marketing these dangerous, highly-addictive products to children?,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

“Such deceptive tactics warrant the urgent need for strong regulations to protect young people from a lifetime of harmful dependence,” he adds.

HOOKING THE NEXT GENERATION, The WHO and STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog, have launched a report titled “Hooking the next generation,” which highlighted how the tobacco and nicotine industry designs products,

TOBACCO USE



4.6% COMPARED TO MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHERE THE CONSUMPTION IS UP TO 35% AMONG BOYS AND 30% AMONG GIRLS

implements marketing campaigns and works to shape policy environments to help them addicted to the world's youth, last month.

In light of these, WHO further urges governments to protect young people from getting attracted to the vicious circle of tobacco, e-cigarettes and other nicotine products by banning or tightly regulating these products.

“We must continue to protect our young people from the devastating consequences of tobacco and nicotine use,” said Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

“The promotional tactics that target more children and young people to use its old and new products. I am noticing regularly that the new products are violating the laws of tobacco advertising and the sponsorship and promotion ban in the Region. We must stop these industry tactics and protect the children and young people of the Region.”

Some of the measures recommended by the WHO include creating 100 per cent smoke-free indoor public places, banning flavoured e-cigarettes, bans on marketing, advertising, and promotion, higher taxes, increasing public awareness of the deceptive tactics used by the industry, and supporting youth-led education and awareness initiatives.



Oman and Somalia discuss expertise transfer



Ministers of endowments and religious affairs from Oman, Somalia discuss ties

MUSCAT: An official session of talks was held in Muscat on Sunday between the Sultanate of Oman and the Federal Republic of Somalia in the field of endowments and religious affairs. The meeting was chaired by the two countries' ministers of endowments and religious affairs. During the session, the two sides underlined the depth of historic ties and the level of integration between the two countries. They also discussed means of transferring expertise on managing endowments and religious affairs. The two sides reiterated their commitment to joint action and enhancing bilateral relations — ONA



STRATEGIC EXERCISE 'DECISION MAKING-11' BEGINS

MUSCAT: The activities of the annual strategic exercise 'Decision Making-11' began at the National Defence College (NDC) on Sunday. The exercise is carried out by the NDC 11th batch from various military, security and civil units. The exercise aims to enhance the participants' decision making on the strategic level, analysing the main strategic topics within simulated national, regional and international events. 'Decision Making-11' also targets striking a balance in utilising the country's resources to achieve national interests, establishing harmony in utilising tools of global powers and developing strategic thinking. — ONA

OCCI hosts media workshop for schools



Al Batinah North Governorate OCCI organised a workshop on media marketing strategies.

SUHAR: To enhance the partnership between schools, the local community, and institutions, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Al Batinah North Governorate organised a workshop on media marketing strategies. The workshop, titled 'Media marketing strategies to improve school projects and services,' was conducted by the Education and Innovation Committee of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Al Batinah North branch. The event aimed to equip participants with skills in media marketing for private schools, offer effective strategies to strengthen partnerships between schools and the local community, and present pioneering experiences in media marketing and partnerships. Dr Ruqaya bint Humaid al Wahaibiyah, an academic and trainer, highlighted the role of media marketing in promoting school programmes and initiatives. She emphasised the importance of attracting partnerships, enhancing communication with the local community, developing a strong school identity, managing educational crises, and promoting transparency and accountability. Dr Al Wahaibiyah also noted that YouTube reaches 90.5 per cent of Oman's population, making it an effective tool for raising awareness of school projects and services through promotional videos and marketing campaigns.

RAFO CHIEF AT FRENCH CELEBRATION

PARIS: Air Vice Marshal Khamis bin Hammad al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), and his accompanying military delegation participated in the official celebration of the 90th anniversary of the French Air Force at the Palace of Versailles. The Commander of RAFO also attended the opening ceremony of the International Aerospace and Aviation Exhibition in Paris. Major General Al Ghafri and the delegation were briefed on the key stages of the French Air Force's establishment and explored the latest technologies, innovations, and industries in space and aviation. — ONA



Cloudy skies and potential light rains ahead in Oman

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Most of the governorates of the Sultanate are to experience cloudy skies over them with chances of occasional rains while temperatures will slightly vary for better, according to the National Early Warning Center at the General Directorate of Meteorology.

While humidity will be a tad high, temperatures will remain the same except for a few hours or so, according to the National Early Warning System at the General Directorate of Meteorology.

While the capital city is to experience advective, high and medium clouds from the Arabian Sea over it, the Hajar Mountains will get convective clouds accompanied by thundershowers, and Dhofar region is experiencing the monsoon, cloudy skies, with occasional drizzles during the Khareef.

The Governorates of Al Wusta and South Al Sharqiya except Musandam, North Al Batinah, and Al Buraimi, will get advective clouds, as the majority of places across Oman are to feel the advection of clouds these days. However, there are chances

Humidity will go high during the next two days and temperatures will be less over

of light rains over south Sharqiya, and Al Wusta where the clouds would be low with chances of light rains as well.

"Humidity will go high during the next two days and temperatures will be less over these governorates for the next few days, otherwise there wouldn't be any change in temperatures for an extended period," said Nasser al Ismaili, Director of Forecasting, and National Early Warning System at the DG of Meteorology.

Speaking to Observer Al Ismaili said that what is being circulated through a section of social media regarding postponement of examinations at some schools is wrong and no exams need to be postponed.

"With reference to the Ministry's follow up to what is being circulated on social media about the weather situation in the Arabian Sea in the coming days, and based on the testimony of meteorologists at the National

Early Warning Center of the multiple risks, which confirm that most forecasts indicate that the effects are limited to the presence of cloud cover, there will not be any change in the conducting of exams at various schools," he said.

He further said that with the possibility of the presence of local formations that do not exceed light sprays (if they occur), which does not affect the conduct of the examination process for students of general education diploma certificates, or the process of grading the examinations, or the second round examinations, which does not require taking any exceptional measures towards these the condition.

The concerned Ministry is reassuring all educational bodies, students, and their parents that it is continuously following up on any new updates regarding this situation with the concerned authorities in the Sultanate of Oman.

However, by Monday and Tuesday, Oman will experience fresh winds with chances of blowing dust over the deserts and in open areas of Dhofar, Al Wusta, parts of Al Dhakhiliya, and North and South Al Sharqiyah and parts of Dhahira.

INVEST IN OMAN'S FUTURE FIXED AND ATTRACTIVE RETURN



Auction of RO 100 million (with Greenshoe option) 5 years @ 5.1% p.a.

Government Development Bonds

On behalf of the Government of Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman announces the 71st issue of Government Development Bonds to be auctioned. The 71st issue of GDBs will be issued on Tuesday, 16 July 2024, carrying a coupon rate of 5.1% per annum for a maturity period of 5 years (maturing on 16 July 2029). These Bonds will be auctioned and priced on Sunday, 14 July 2024. Investors may apply for these Bonds through licensed commercial banks by completing the application form.

Security of Capital

The Bonds are direct and unconditional obligations of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman.

Fixed Returns

Interest shall accrue from the date of issue, and will be paid semi-annually on 16 July and 16 January of every year until maturity. The first payment will be made on 16 January 2025. Interest payments will cease once the Bond matures.

Liquidity

The bond will be listed and can be traded before maturity in MSX at the prevailing market price.

Collateral Advantage

The Bonds can be used as a collateral security to obtain loans from any licensed commercial bank.

Who Can Invest?

The 71st issue of GDBs is offered to all investors' categories, residents and non-residents (irrespective of their nationalities).

How to buy the bonds?

Investors may obtain bonds through any licensed commercial bank operating in the Sultanate of Oman, upon the submission of an eligible application form. Investors must provide their MSX Investor Code in the application form.

Bank Account Details

The investor must provide the same Bank Account details registered with MCD.

MSX Investor Code

Anyone who does not have an MSX Investor Code can obtain it from Muscat Clearing and Depository Co. (MCD) through their website (www.mcd.gov.om) or via Oman Stocks app at least one day prior to submitting the application to the commercial bank.

For any enquires:

Tel: +968 24822222

E-mail: mcd.support@mcd.om

Subscription & Auction Period

71th issue

Open: Monday, 01 July 2024
Close: Thursday, 11 July 2024
Auction: Sunday, 14 July 2024

The minimum subscription amount is RO 100

To view the prospectus of 71st issue of GDBs, please visit the following websites:

Ministry of Finance | www.mof.gov.om

Central Bank of Oman | www.cbo.gov.om

Contact the Central Bank of Oman (Market Operations Department) or any commercial licensed bank for details.

Tel: +968 24777145 / 24777635 / 24777832

E-mail: mod@cbo.gov.om

P.O Box 1161, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman



SOLIDARITY IN BLOOD DONATION



People donate blood during a blood donation campaign for Palestinians in Gaza, in Amman, Jordan. — Reuters

ISRAELI TANKS STRIKE
GAZA CITY’S SHUJAIYA



Palestinians families return to their badly damaged homes in an apartment block hit during previous Israeli bombardment, in the city of Khan Younis. — AFP

GAZA: Heavy battles and bombardment hit Gaza City’s Shujaiya district for a fourth day on Sunday, months after the Israeli army declared Palestinian groups command structure dismantled in the northern area.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians have fled the devastated neighbourhood, where the army said it has fought Palestinian groups both “above and below ground” in tunnels.

The military said troops had located weapons and conducted targeted raids on trapped combat compounds” over the past 24 hours while the air force had “struck dozens” of the infrastructure sites. It also reported clashes in central Gaza and the southern Rafah area, a week after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that the “intense phase” of the war raging since October 7 was nearing an end. The United Nations humanitarian agency OCHA estimated that “60,000 to 80,000 people were displaced” from Shujaiya since new fighting broke out there on Thursday.

The United Nations humanitarian agency OCHA estimated that “60,000 to 80,000 people were displaced” from Shujaiya since new fighting broke out there on Thursday

The war started with October 7 attack on southern Israel which resulted in the deaths of 1,195 people, based on Israeli figures.

The Palestinian groups seized 251 captives, 116 of whom remain in Gaza although the army says 42 are dead.

Israel’s retaliatory offensive has killed at least 37,877 people, mostly civilians, according to data from the health ministry in Gaza.

Six more people were killed in an air strike at dawn targeting a family house in Rafah, said medics at Nasser Hospital where the bodies were taken.

Artillery shelling also struck southern areas of Rafah city, witnesses said. United Nations

and other relief agencies have voiced alarm over the dire humanitarian crisis and threat of starvation the war and Israeli siege have brought for Gaza’s 2.4 million people.

“It’s really unbearable,” said Louise Wateridge from UNRWA, the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, speaking on Friday after returning to the city of Khan Younis.

“Everything is rubble,” she said. “And yet people are living there again... There’s no water there, there’s no sanitation, there’s no food. And now, people are living back in these buildings that are empty shells.” In Israel, thousands of protesters again took to the streets of Tel Aviv on Saturday night, demanding greater efforts to return the remaining captives, and calling for early elections.

The Gaza conflict has also led to soaring tensions on Israel’s northern border with Lebanon, where the army has traded cross-border fire with the Hezbollah movement since October. — AFP

Palestinian Hamas says no progress in ceasefire talks

CAIRO: A senior official of the Palestinian group Hamas, Osama Hamdan, said there has been no progress in ceasefire talks with Israel over the Gaza war.

The group is still ready to “deal positively” with any ceasefire proposal that ends the war, Hamdan told a news conference in Beirut.

Mediators’ efforts, backed by the United States, have so far failed to conclude a ceasefire, with both sides blaming each other for the impasse. Hamas says any deal must end the war and bring full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, while Israel says it will accept only temporary pauses in fighting until Hamas is eradicated.

Hamdan also blamed the United States for applying pressure on Hamas to accept Israel’s conditions.



Hamas is ready to deal positively with any proposal that secures a permanent ceasefire, a comprehensive withdrawal from Gaza Strip and a serious swap deal

OSAMA HAMDAN

Hamas senior official

“Once again, Hamas is ready to deal positively with any proposal that secures a permanent ceasefire, a comprehensive withdrawal from Gaza Strip and a serious swap deal,” said Hamdan, referring to a potential swap of captives held in Gaza for Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

When Palestinian groups stormed into southern Israel on October 7 they killed around

1,200 people and seized more than 250 captives, according to Israeli tallies.

The Israeli offensive in retaliation has so far killed nearly 38,000 people, according to the Gaza health ministry, and has left the heavily built-up coastal

enclave in ruins. Israel has lost more than 300 soldiers in Gaza and says at least a third of the Palestinian dead are fighters.

Residents said tanks advanced deeper into several districts including the area around the local market and there was heavy fire from the air and the ground.

The armed wing of Palestinian groups reported fierce fighting, saying fighters fired anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs against the forces operating there.

The Israeli military said dozens of Palestinian gunmen were killed over the past two days in close quarters combat and airstrikes in Shejaia.

“In the area, the troops located observation posts, weapons, enemy drones and a long-range rocket launcher near the schools,” the military said in a statement.

Hamas has denied assertions that it operates in civilian areas such as schools and hospitals.

Meanwhile Israeli forces operating in several districts in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, killed several Palestinians and forced families living in the far western edge of the city along the coastal areas to head northwards, according to Palestinian medical officials and residents. — Reuters



Palestinian walks down a street past destroyed buildings as some residents return to the city of Khan Younis. — AFP



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

MONDAY | JULY 1 | 2024

7

In brief

NEW DELHI



11 DEAD IN INDIAN CAPITAL AFTER HEAVY RAIN, FLIGHTS STUTTER

The death toll from this week's sudden heavy rain has climbed to 11 in New Delhi, while flight operations stuttered in the Indian capital.

The torrential rain caused a fatal roof collapse at one of the three terminals of Delhi's main airport, disrupted flights, flooded underpasses, and led to massive traffic jams, power and water outages in parts of the city.

Nearly 60 flights were cancelled from New Delhi's main airport in the last 24 hours, according to data from flight tracking platform Flightaware.

Operations were largely normal, with flights from the affected terminal diverted to the other two. — Reuters

JOHANNESBURG



SOUTH AFRICAN PARTIES CLOSE TO REACHING DEAL ON CABINET

South African parties are close to reaching a deal on who gets which cabinet posts, the last hurdle to setting up a government after the ruling party lost its majority.

The Sunday Times and City Press both reported that President Cyril Ramaphosa's African National Congress (ANC) were broadly in agreement with the main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), after the latter backed down on a demand to take the trade and industry portfolio.

"We are cautiously optimistic that there could be an agreement before the end of the weekend," senior DA politician Helen Zille said. — Reuters

BEIJING



CHINA'S XI TO VISIT KAZAKHSTAN, TAJIKISTAN JULY 2-6

Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend a leaders' meeting and pay state visits to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan starting on Tuesday, the foreign ministry announced on Sunday.

"President Xi Jinping will attend the 24th meeting of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held in Astana" and conduct state visits to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

Xi's two state visits during the trip — scheduled from July 2 to 6 — came at the invitations of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan and President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, she added. — AFP

Russia claims two east Ukrainian villages

MOSCOW: Russia on Sunday claimed two more east Ukrainian villages as its forces have had the upper hand over Kyiv on the battlefield for months.

Moscow has claimed new villages in the east of Ukraine regularly for weeks, as outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian forces struggle to hold them back.

Russia's defence ministry said its forces had "liberated the settlement" of Novooleksandrivka as the Russian army pushes further westwards into the Donetsk region.

The village — which lies north-west of occupied Ocheretyne — is now the most western point of the region that Moscow holds.

Moscow also said its forces captured the small village of Spirne, further north in the Donetsk region near the border with the neighbouring Lugansk region.

Moscow's Ukraine offensive has dragged on for nearly two and a half years.

Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region declared a day of mourning Sunday, a day after a Russian strike on the town of Vilniansk killed seven people and wounded three dozen.

Russia struck Vilniansk, close to the regional hub of Zaporizhzhia, on Saturday.

"June 30 is a day of mourning in Zaporizhzhia region for those killed in the enemy attack on Vilniansk," local governor Ivan Fedorov said on social media.

The interior ministry said the number of wounded rose to 36.

It said the victims were three children, one woman and three men.

Footage released by emergency services showed workers clearing debris, with an almost completely destroyed low-rise building and



Firefighters work at a site of a Russian missile strike, in the town of Vilniansk, Zaporizhzhia region. — Reuters

Russia's defence ministry said its forces had "liberated the settlement" of Novooleksandrivka as the Russian army pushes further westwards into the Donetsk region

officials saying the strike had hit shops.

Ukraine said eight people had been killed in 24 hours in villages in the embattled east.

The Ukrainian army said on Saturday Russia continued to attack towards the city of Toretsk, where it launched an offensive in recent weeks, and that a battle is underway in the nearby frontline village of New York.

Meanwhile, Russian forces

destroyed three dozen Ukrainian drones in areas near the border, Moscow's Ministry of Defence said on Sunday.

"Air defence systems on duty destroyed fifteen UAVs over Kursk region, nine UAVs over Lipetsk region, four UAVs each over Voronezh and Bryansk regions and two UAVs each over Oryol and Belgorod regions," the ministry said in a Telegram post.

Voronezh Governor Aleksandr

Gusev said on Telegram that air defences had "destroyed several Ukrainian UAVs" and "there were no casualties or damage".

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a major new land offensive on Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region last month in what he said was an operation to create a "buffer zone" and push Ukrainian forces back to protect Russia's border Belgorod region from shelling. — AFP

France votes in crucial polls as far right eyes power

PARIS: French people voted on Sunday in the first round of high-stakes snap parliamentary elections which could alter France's trajectory and see the far-right party of Marine Le Pen take power in a historic first.

President Emmanuel Macron stunned the nation by calling snap polls after the far-right National Rally (RN) party's strong showing in European Parliament elections this month.

Support for the anti-immigration and eurosceptic party has surged despite Macron's pledges to prevent its ascent. The two-round vote could put the far-right in power in France for the first time since the Nazi occupation in World War II.

Polling stations opened across mainland France at 8:00 am, immediately followed by projections that usually predict the result with a degree of accuracy. Many voters said they were concerned about the future. "I don't recognise my country anymore," Roxane Lebrun, 40, said in the southwestern city of Bordeaux. "We have to keep fighting for what we believe in and what we want for France."

Macron and his wife Brigitte cast their ballots in Le Touquet in northern France. On Monday, the French president plans to convene a government meeting to decide



French President Emmanuel Macron (C) and his wife Brigitte Macron (C,R) leave the polling station in Le Touquet, northern France. — AFP

the next course of action, sources have said.

Most polls show the RN party on course to win the largest number of seats in the National Assembly, parliament's lower house — although it remains unclear if it will secure an outright majority. Final opinion polls have given the RN between 35 per cent and 37 per cent of the vote — against 27.5-29 per cent for the left-wing New Popular Front alliance, and 20-21 per cent for Macron's centrist camp.

If the RN obtains an absolute majority, party chief Jordan Bardella, Le Pen's 28-year-old protege with no governing experience, could become prime

minister in a tense "cohabitation" with Macron. Many analysts say that France is facing a hung Assembly, which could lead to deadlock and political instability.

Voters in France's overseas territories had cast ballots earlier in the weekend. Electors lined up to cast ballots in France's Pacific territory of New Caledonia, where tensions remain high following deadly riots there last month.

Former president Nicolas Sarkozy, Greens party leader Marine Tondelier and former prime minister and Macron ally Edouard Philippe were among the first high-profile politicians to vote. — AFP

Austrian party, Hungary's Orban form new EU alliance

VIENNA: Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's Fidesz and the populist Czech ANO party led by Andrej Babis are forming a new alliance in the European Parliament, they announced on Sunday. The move would reorder but possibly also split nationalist forces in the assembly, provided four more parties join. Parties from

at least a quarter of the European Union's 27 member states are needed to officially form a new political group.

While Fidesz has remained outside larger groupings since it parted ways with the mainstream centre-right European People's Party (EPP) in 2021, the FPÖ is part of the Identity and Democracy political group along with Marine Le Pen's National Rally party in France. ANO is not part of a political group.

"Today is a historic day because today we are entering

a new era of European politics," FPO leader Herbert Kickl said in a address to the media attended by Babis and Orban convened at short notice in a Vienna hotel.

"This alliance is meant as a rocket that will bring other parties on board at the European level to join forces and give Europe a better future," Kickl said of the "new patriotic alliance".

Former Czech prime minister Babis said the new group would be called Patriots for Europe.

All three men cited the fight against illegal immigration, which has long been a pressing concern for them, as well as transferring more powers from Brussels back to member states.

While the FPÖ has a clear lead in Austrian opinion polls ahead of a Sept. 29 parliamentary election, Orban faces a growing threat in Hungary from the new opposition party Tisza, which said this month it would join the EPP in the European Parliament. — Reuters



Hungary's PM Viktor Orban (L) attends a meeting with Chairman of the Freedom Party Austria (FPÖe) Herbert Kickl for a joint statement, in Wien. — AFP

How success in education needs to be re-defined



Sandhya Rao Mehta

The writer is Associate Professor, Dept of English Language and Literature Sultan Qaboos University

For students worldwide, success only means one thing: marks or grades. It is the only way to understand where a person stands vis-a-vis their class or their cohort. In life outside education, however, this definition of success has been rapidly changing and education needs to keep up with these changing trends. Traditionally, success is measured through examinations and other related methods like essays and other projects. Marks are given at the end of such summative exams. The limitations of these criteria have been discussed extensively in research over the last 25 years. That is, when marks become the sole criteria for learning, it is reductive and, in fact, even a step backward. As an article in *The Atlantic* magazine said, “Quantitative grades also diminish student interest in learning, reduce academic risk-taking, and decrease the quality of thinking”. Such studies are important because testing has broadly been associated with rote learning and memorising — hardly useful skills in a time when information is readily available at the end of one’s

palm at all times in a digital device. It is not the ‘what’ that needs to be tested anymore because this is not very useful outside of being just an academic exercise. Academic success today needs to be re-defined in a way that takes into account modern needs, applications, and abilities. This essentially means that students should be tested on the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of ideas and concepts rather than be asked about years, dates, and definitions. Such changes are important, particularly in higher grades in schools and tertiary institutions because the nature of knowledge itself is changing and people need to know what to do with the available knowledge rather than just remembering what it is. This is particularly true in today’s world of fake news and digital platforms where anybody can give information that sounds convincing in tone but could be completely wrong or deliberately misdirected. Today’s learners need to be taught how to detect, judge, and use OSINT (Open source information), including those generated by Artificial Intelligence,

EDUCATION AT EVERY LEVEL NEEDS TO KEEP UP WITH TRENDS AND ENSURE THAT STUDENTS DO NOT LOSE OUT ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS IN ANY FIELD

whether they be text or in the form of images or film. Such detection is not only done through software but a combination of contextual, logical, and comparative information that is put together to fact-check. The top skills required to be tested today are the important Cs: Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity. All of these use already existing information but test how they could be used in different ways, from creating new technologies, understanding market trends, or anticipating future action. There are many ways in which learners can be made to succeed in specific fields through alternative assessment. Such techniques involve creating out-of-class group projects, internships to understand real-world applications of learning, and even industry involvement with students through collaborative projects. Today’s world demands swift and prompt responses to changing demands. Education at every level needs to keep up with these trends and ensure that students do not lose out on opportunities for success in any field they choose.

Immigration at heart of UK healthcare, election

VERONIQUE DUPONT

Britain’s state-funded National Health Service is hugely reliant on migrant workers, yet politicians have vowed to slash immigration as they fight for votes before Thursday’s general election. The governing right-wing Conservatives and the main opposition centre-left Labour Party, which is tipped to win the national vote, each pledge action over the key battleground yet seek to safeguard the UK’s cherished but stretched NHS. Conservatives want to hike the minimum salary required for a UK skilled-worker visa to crack down on the country’s record migration levels, but opponents argue this will worsen recruitment. Labour wishes to recruit and train more UK staff, arguing that the NHS has been starved of cash by 14 years of Tory government and become too reliant on overseas staff. The topic also grabbed voters’ attention after Brexit champion Nigel Farage last month took the helm of hard-right minority party Reform UK, which vows to freeze immigration altogether. Yet from hospital wards and emergency departments to opticians and laboratories, foreign workers are vital to the NHS, which provides universal healthcare free at the point of delivery — but has been plagued in recent years by strikes over pay. Commentators and industry experts warn about curbing the inflow of health workers, while a London museum exhibition highlights their often-overlooked vital role. “It’s an enormous institution, something like one in 10 workers in the UK works for the NHS,” said Matthew Plowright, communications director at the Migration Museum. “From the beginning... it’s needed people from all over the world.” The museum features an exhibition entitled “Heart of the Nation”, detailing how thousands of doctors and nurses from across the world have joined the NHS since its creation in 1948. It shows how many health workers escaped the war-ravaged UK to pursue new lives in Australia, Canada and the United States, sparking a shortage of staff which prompted authorities to recruit abroad — especially from countries from the former British empire, including in the Caribbean. The NHS of today employs about 1.2 million full-time staff in England but about one fifth are non-British — with Indian, Filipino and Nigerian the most common out of more than 200 different nationalities. Staffing levels are deemed too low, however, especially for nurses. — AFP

Preserving Palestinian heritage against erasure



Ahmed Al Mukhaini

The writer is a Muscat-based policy analyst and international interlocutor

In the annals of human history, few crimes are as grievous as the deliberate erasure of a people’s existence and heritage. Today, in the occupied territories of Palestine, we are witnessing a systematic campaign aimed at extinguishing the rich tapestry of Palestinian Arab, and Muslim culture. This insidious effort to rewrite history and deny a people’s identity demands our urgent and collective response. It is a call to action for the international community, and particularly for the discerning minds and policymakers of Oman, to stand against this cultural and humanitarian atrocity. The territories of Palestine are not merely lands; they are the heart and soul of a civilisation that has flourished for millennia. From the ancient cities of Jerusalem and Hebron to the historic villages scattered across the landscape, every stone and every street tells the story of a people deeply rooted in their heritage. Yet, this heritage is under siege. The intentional destruction of historical sites, the expropriation of land, and the suppression of cultural practices all serve a singular purpose: to erase the Palestinian presence from history. This is not just an attack on physical structures. It is an assault on the very essence of Palestinian identity. The erasure extends to the distortion of educational curricula, the suppression of Arabic language and culture, and the relentless propaganda that seeks to delegitimise Palestinian claims to their own land. It is a cultural genocide, a crime against humanity that demands our unequivocal condemnation and action. A clarion call for international solidarity The international community must awaken to the gravity of this crisis. Words of sympathy are not enough; they must be transformed into concrete actions. It is time for nations to leverage their diplomatic, economic, and cultural influence to protect

Palestinian heritage and assert the inviolable rights of the Palestinian people. Diplomatic pressure: Governments around the world must exert diplomatic pressure on Israel to cease its destructive policies. This includes condemning illegal settlements, demanding the protection of cultural sites, and supporting resolutions that uphold international law and human rights Cultural preservation initiatives: International organisations, such as Unesco, must spearhead efforts to document and protect Palestinian heritage. This involves creating digital archives, funding restoration projects, and ensuring that the narrative of Palestinian history is OMAN CAN GALVANISE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, DRAWING ON ITS RESPECTED POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD AND BEYOND

preserved and promoted globally. Economic sanctions and incentives: Nations can use economic tools to influence policy. Sanctions against entities involved in the destruction of Palestinian heritage, combined with incentives for those who support cultural preservation, can create a powerful impetus for change. Educational advocacy: Universities, cultural institutions, and civil society organisations must amplify Palestinian voices and stories. By integrating Palestinian history and culture into global educational curricula, we can counteract the erasure and ensure that future generations recognise and value this rich heritage. Oman’s role: A beacon of cultural

diplomacy For Oman, a nation renowned for its commitment to peace, cultural preservation, and diplomatic finesse, the cause of Palestinian heritage offers a unique opportunity for leadership. Oman can galvanise regional and international support for Palestinian rights, drawing on its respected position in the Arab world and beyond. Diplomatic leadership: Oman can spearhead regional initiatives that call for the protection of Palestinian heritage, working through platforms like the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to build a united front. The GCC and Arab League can use economic as well as political diplomatic channels to effect a degree of coercion. Cultural exchange programmes: By establishing cultural exchange programmes that highlight Palestinian history and arts, Oman can foster greater understanding and solidarity among nations. The Unesco Chair for Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Management in the Arab Region at GUTech can serve as a pivotal institution. A call to conscience The eradication of Palestinian heritage is not just a Palestinian issue; it is a human issue. It challenges the conscience of every person who believes in justice, human rights, and the sanctity of cultural diversity. The international community must recognise that the preservation of Palestinian identity is a moral imperative, one that transcends political affiliations and national borders. To the global community and to the insightful leaders of Oman, this is a moment of reckoning. Let us rise to the occasion with the courage and conviction that history demands of us. Let us reject the erasure of Palestinian heritage and affirm the enduring presence and rights of the Palestinian people. In doing so, we honour not only their history but the very principles of humanity and justice that bind us all.

They deserve a second chance too

Having first-hand experience is very essential indeed for all graduates and undergraduates alike. Leaving their higher education institutions while armed only with theories and educational degrees is not enough to compete for a job opportunity. Certainly, what it takes is even more, and getting an internship opportunity paves the way.

It brings an insight into what the real world looks like! Obtaining a real-life experience, regardless of how big or small it is, enlightens interns’ theoretical knowledge and marks a ticket for employment.

No doubt, an internship helps build the personality of graduates, undergraduates and job-seekers too. Whether personally, professionally, or educationally, it serves to develop all aspects of a person. Hence, receiving an internship experience counts when road mapping one’s career future from the early beginning.

Those who were lucky to get an internship opportunity have a plus point on their CVs, in comparison to other counterparts. As Benjamin Franklin said, “Tell me I forget, teach me I may remember, involve me and I learn”.

The competition for getting a good job is going on all the time! Applicants, regardless of their educational qualification, shall simply be more professionally qualified than others to win the race.

Given that, going to a college or a university is essential of course, but classroom learning must be backed by gaining real-world experience. Here comes the significance of internship, which undergraduates highly look for.

Internship experience is what distinguishes the competency of graduates from one another. The internship represents a gate pass for graduates toward speedy job hunting after graduation.

Likewise, sometimes it marks a pre-graduation prerequisite for some undergraduates. It is a must-have requirement as it enriches their knowledge and hones interpersonal skills.

Case in point, undergraduates of some scientific specialisations at colleges and universities are obliged to undergo an internship experience to pass a certain course. Besides, getting training



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
aljahdhami22@gmail.com

An author, columnist, creative writer, translator and a communications professional

HAVING GOOD EXPOSURE TO A CAREER-RELEVANT INTERNSHIP WILL MAKE A BETTER IMPRESSION ON EMPLOYERS

experience marks an obligatory task to complete for technical specialties undergraduates.

As practice makes perfect, both graduates and undergraduates need training and internship opportunities, so they can integrate theoretical and practical learning.

Through internships, they can get practical experience at a workplace where knowledge and practice are converged. Further, the internship allows interns to build a presentably rich personal portfolio of educational and work experience. Having good exposure to a career-relevant internship will make a better impression on employers.

Similarly, an internship helps build a network with employers and gain new resources and business relations. During the internship period, interns could interact with many people who will be potential contacts for their network and could be referred when seeking a job afterward. It also presents a good time for interns to market themselves to employers. Many advantages could be acquired from the internship, but unfortunately, sometimes it is difficult for an interns to secure an opportunity himself.

Accordingly, higher education institutions should promote internship programmes for their undergraduates. In order to bring well-educated and trained graduates, internship opportunities shall be offered to all undergraduates.

Possibly, their educational curricula could include a number of internship prerequisites throughout their academic study. Mutual coordination and cooperation internship programmes must also be arranged between higher education institutions and different employers from both government and private sectors.

In some institutions, some dedicated employees are assigned to work on such kinds of business cooperation and understanding with relevant parties. This reflects the strong belief of a university or college on the significance of internship and training opportunities.

Based on undergraduates’ different specialties, they are offered a relevant internship opportunity.

On the other hand, all undergraduates and graduates shall take internship and training seriously for the sake of having insightful academic and practical knowledge and proficiency.

FLOOD DEVASTATION



An aerial view of flooded buildings after a flood peak on the Wuyang river at Qiandongnan in China's southwest Guizhou province. – AFP

A fumbling performance, and a panicking party

President Joe Biden hoped to build fresh momentum for his re-election bid by agreeing to debate nearly two months before he is to be formally nominated. Instead, his halting and disjointed performance on Thursday night prompted a wave of panic among Democrats and reopened discussion of whether he should be the nominee at all.

Over the course of 90 minutes, a raspy-voiced Biden struggled to deliver his lines and counter a sharp though deeply dishonest former President Donald Trump, raising doubts about the incumbent president’s ability to wage a vigorous and competitive campaign four months before the election. Rather than dispel concerns about his age, Biden, 81, made it the central issue.

Democrats who have defended the president for months against his doubters — including members of his own administration — traded frenzied phone calls and text messages within minutes of the start of the debate as it became clear that Biden was not at his sharpest. Practically in despair, some took to social media to express shock, while others privately discussed among themselves whether it was too late to persuade the president to bow out in favour of a younger candidate.

“Biden is about to face a crescendo



Peter Baker

The writer is the chief White House correspondent for The Times

THE DEBATE THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD TO STRONGLY CONSIDER WHETHER HE IS THE BEST PERSON TO BE THE NOMINEE

of calls to step aside,” said a veteran Democratic strategist who has staunchly backed Biden publicly. “Joe had a deep well of affection among Democrats. It has run dry.”

“Parties exist to win,” this Democrat continued.

“The man on the stage with Trump cannot win. The fear of Trump stifled criticism of Biden. Now that same fear is going to fuel calls for him to step down.”

Biden’s goal in accepting a general election debate earlier than ever held in presidential history was to recalibrate the contest as a choice between himself and a felon who tried to overturn an election and would in his view destroy American democracy if given the power of the presidency again. Biden left the CNN studio in Atlanta instead facing a referendum on himself and his capacity that will reverberate for days if not longer.

Trump, 78, appeared to coast through the debate with little trouble, rattling off one falsehood after another without being effectively challenged.

He appeared confident while avoiding the excessively overbearing demeanour that had damaged him during his first debate with Biden in



Democrat presidential candidate US President Joe Biden speaks during the debate in Atlanta. – Reuters

2020, seemingly content to let his opponent stew in his own difficulties.

While Trump at times rambled and offered statements that were convoluted, hard to follow and flatly untrue, he did so with energy and volume that covered up his misstatements, managing to stay on offence even on issues of vulnerability for him like the January 6, 2021, attack and abortion.

Biden appeared on defence much of the time and either did not use lines teed up for him by his campaign’s pre-debate advertising

or mumbled them in passing in such a way that they barely registered.

Speaking with reporters afterward, Biden indicated that he had been battling a cold.

“I have a sore throat,” he said. But he expressed satisfaction with his showing. “I think we did well.” Asked about Democrats’ concerns about his performance and calls for him to consider leaving the race, he said: “No. It’s hard to debate a liar.”

Biden’s advisers have long dismissed any speculation about him dropping out, rejecting it as unjustified nervousness even as he has trailed Trump in battleground states needed for victory this fall. Biden aides and allies have repeatedly challenged the polls and pointed out that predictions of Democratic defeats in recent elections have been overblown. One reason they cited for an early debate was to make clear to the public that these are the two choices, and no one else will be nominated.

“Folks, the facts are if Joe Biden was going to step aside, he would have done so a long time ago,” said Symone Sanders, a former aide to Vice-President Kamala Harris. “That’s not my opinion;

that’s literally the facts. So no, he won’t be stepping aside tomorrow morning. He’s the nominee, and a number of Dems I suspect will be out defending him over the next few days.”

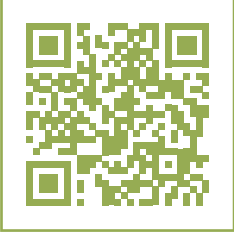
The campaign quickly dispatched Harris to speak up for the president on CNN after the debate, although even she acknowledged that “it was a slow start; that’s obvious to everyone.” Biden has shown he can handle the job because of his many accomplishments for Americans, she said, and “the Joe Biden I work with every day is someone who has performed in a way that has been about bringing people into the Oval Office.”

Gov Gavin Newsom of California, one of those mentioned along with Harris as a possible replacement for Biden, brushed off talk about switching candidates. “I would never turn my back on President Biden’s record,” he told reporters while serving as an official surrogate for the campaign in the spin room after the debate. “I would never turn my back on President Biden, and I don’t know a Democrat in my party who would do so, especially after tonight”

— The New York Times

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



Masirah club emerge Oman Squash championship



Eng Said al Asmi honours Masirah club

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 30

Masirah blanked Oman Club 3-0 in a thrilling final to emerge the title of the 2024 Oman Squash Club Championship at Squash halls in Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat on Saturday.

Iraqi player Mohammed Ferman delivered an impressive show in the opening set of the game to beat his opponent Egyptian Mazin Mohammed from Oman club by 3-0. In two following sets, Oman's top-ranking squash player Salim al Maqbali stunned his rivals Mohammed al Battashi 3-0 to make it 2-0 before Waleed al Neri from Masirah club confirmed the victory for his team by securing the third consecutive set win by 3-0.

In the third and fourth playoffs, Seeb club players outclassed Saham team by 2-1 to claim the



third place award. Seeb team were represented by Taha al Anqoodi, Ahmed al Abri and Mujtaba.

Iraq's first ranking squash player, Mohammed Ferman, and representative of Masirah team expressed delight in clinching the title in Muscat and assisting his team Masirah in this top domestic squash event. "Thanks to the tournament organisers,

Oman Racket Sports Committee (ORSC) for the great conduct of the tournament. I am very glad to attend this event in Muscat and I did not expect to win the title especially the competitions were very tough in the final stages of the tournament. Thanks to my teammates ad looking for more achievements in the coming period," he added

Eng Said bin Rashid al Asmi, CEO of Seeh Al Sarya Engineering LLC, was the chief guest for the concluding ceremony in the presence of Dr Abdulrahim bin Musallam al Droushi, Chairman of ORSC, and a number of clubs representatives and invitees. The chief guest congratulated the winners and delivered the awards and medals to the top

three club winners. Seeb players handed over the bronze medals while Oman clubs received silver medals. The champion Masirah players got the gold medals and the tournament trophy from the chief guest besides the cash award.

The three-day event featured the participation of nine clubs including: Oman, Suhar, Salalah, Masirah, Seeb, Qurayat, Baushar, Sur and Al Kamil Wal Wafi. The championship featured high technical levels and exciting matches.

The clubs were divided into two groups. The first group included Oman, Salalah, Qurayat, Sohar and Sur. While the second group included Masirah, Seeb, Baushar and Al Kamil W'al Wafi. Oman and Sohar clubs qualified from the first group while Masirah and Seeb clubs secured tickets from the second group. In the semifinals, Masirah players

defeated Sohar 3-0, and Oman players won against Seeb 2-1.

Dr Abdulrahim bin Musallam al Droushi, Chairman of ORSC, expressed his full satisfaction with the successful conclusion of the 2024 Oman Squash Club Championship. "It was a unique championship as the technical rules of the tournament allowed clubs to have a contract with one ranked international player. This step was aimed to improve the technical levels of local players and create a highly competitive environment," he added.

"Thanks to all our partners including the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and the sponsoring companies Seeh Al Sarya Engineering LLC and Renaissance Services. Special appreciation goes to the domestic clubs at this championship for their positive participation and I hope to see more clubs in future editions," he ended.

OMAN DOWNWINDER 2024 TO KICK OFF TOMORROW

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 30

The first edition of "Oman Downwinder 2024" initiative will kick off on Tuesday, starting from Al Duqm beach in the Al Wusta Governorate, passing along the Omani coasts northward, and ending at the Ras Al Jinz reserve in the Al Sharqiyah South Governorate.

The initiative will continue from July 2 to 8, with the participation of 12 professional athletes from and outside of the Sultanate of Oman. The first edition will organise by the Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), as part of its ongoing efforts to achieve tourism diversification and enhance the adventure tourism sector.



The initiative was announced at a ceremony held yesterday at the W Muscat Hotel, attended by Dr Hashil bin Obaid al Mahrouqi, CEO of (Omran Group), Dr Khamis bin Saleem al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, and several officials from various entities.

The event aims to highlight the Sultanate of Oman's tourist attractions through accompanying media coverage. Several Omani

and international athletes will participate, including Barakat al Kandi, who has 12 years of experience in paragliding, and Azan al Sanani, a passionate marine photographer and certified diving instructor from the Professional Diving Instructors Association with over 15,000 registered dives to date. Also participating are Majid al Kharousi, a Downwinder enthusiast, Robin Lenten, the



Dutch professional who won the Red Bull race in 2005, Hannah Wheatley, British Downwinder champion, Mito Montero, a surf instructor and Brazilian athlete Fernando Fernandes, an innovator in inclusive sports for people with disabilities.

The Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) is collaborating in organising the Oman Downwinder

Races with the national travel operator and the Oman Adventure Center, aiming to promote local content by involving many local institutions and small and medium-sized enterprises in organising the various accompanying stages.

Hashil al Mahrouqi Said, "The Sultanate of Oman is distinguished by its abundant and diverse natural assets, making it a leading destination for offering unique

tourism products and experiences. Organising these events reflects our belief in the pivotal role that sporting events play in promoting and highlighting tourist attractions globally, which supports the growth of the tourism sector and enhances the Sultanate of Oman's position on the international tourism map."

Marcelo Antunes Ferreira, CEO of Sea and Beach Projects, emphasised that "The Oman Downwinder represents an exceptional experience and will contribute to attracting many professional and amateur athletes, in light of the global expansion of this sport." He added, "This represents a good opportunity for the Sultanate of Oman to attract athletes and encourage the global community to visit it," he ended.



Martinez double helps Argentina see off Peru 2-0 in Copa America

MIAMI: Argentina shrugged off the injury absence of Lionel Messi to maintain their perfect start at the Copa America on Saturday with a 2-0 victory over Peru in Miami.

Lautaro Martinez scored twice at the Hard Rock Stadium to seal a win that ensured Argentina advance to the quarterfinals as Group A winners.

With Messi sidelined after complaining of a sore right hamstring, and coach Lionel Scaloni serving a one-game suspension, Argentina made nine changes to their starting XI at the Hard Rock Stadium.

But despite the makeshift-looking line-up, Argentina were always in control against a disappointing Peru side who managed just one shot on goal during a one-sided encounter.

Martinez's first goal came just after half-time. A sublime through ball from Angel Di Maria released the Inter Milan forward, who calmly lifted a deft finish over advancing Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese.

Argentina had a chance to double their lead in the 72nd minute after Jesus Castillo handled in the area to concede a penalty. But Leandro Paredes crashed his ensuing spot-kick against the woodwork to leave the score at 1-0. Martinez then grabbed a second in the 86th minute, latching on to a long pass forward before finishing past Gallese.

Replays indicated Martinez appeared to shove defender Aldo Corzo in the build-up but referee Cesar Ramos waved Peru's protest and the goal stood.

"It was tough in the first half because they were defending deep, but the first goal opened up the game," Martinez said afterwards. "There's a lot more to come from us."

Martinez has now scored in four consecutive appearances for Argentina and is relishing his hot streak. "Every time I put on this shirt, every training session, every meal, every team talk, I enjoy it," Martinez said.

Argentina will now face the runner-up from Group B in the quarterfinals in Houston next Thursday, most likely either Ecuador or Mexico.

In Saturday's other Group A game, Canada held 2015 and 2016 Copa America champions Chile to a 0-0 draw in Orlando, which was enough to see the Canadians into the last eight. — AFP

Argentina's forward Lautaro Martinez celebrates scoring first goal. — AFP

POGACAR CLAIMS TOUR LEAD WHILE VINGEGAARD SHOWS GREAT FORM



BOLOGNA, ITALY: Tadej Pogacar claimed the Tour de France overall lead with a late attack in Sunday's second stage, though the Slovenian may have been surprised by how easily defending champion Jonas Vingegaard followed him despite his recent lack of racing.

While the 2020 and 2021 Tour winner's lightning attack on the ascent of San Luca left fellow favourites Primoz Roglic and Remco Evenepoel seemingly glued to the road, Vingegaard had no trouble keeping up despite entering the race having not competed since he sustained a collapsed lung in a crash almost three months ago.

Tour debutant Kevin Vauquelin was the second French winner in the first two days after being the best of the breakaway in the ascent to San Luca (1.9km at 10.6%) as he gave his Arkea-B&B Hotels team their first win in the race.

Romain Bardet, who started the day in the leader's yellow jersey, finished 21 seconds behind Pogacar to lose the overall lead by six seconds while Evenepoel eventually managed to bridge the gap with Vingegaard and his rival.

Overall, Pogacar leads Belgian Evenepoel and Vingegaard of Denmark, who are second and third, respectively, on added places with no time difference. Roglic is now 21 seconds down on Pogacar.

Eleven riders broke away early but none of them posed a threat to Bardet's yellow jersey.

They opened a 10-minute gap and it became quickly obvious that they would battle it out for the stage win despite a late acceleration from the peloton.

In the leading group, Frenchmen Jordan Jegat and Axel Laurance attacked on the San Luca climb in a stadium-like, deafening atmosphere. It was the first of two ascents to San Luca up alongside the Portico which features 666 arches.

Vauquelin, Norwegian Jonas Brahmansen and Nelson Oliveira of Portugal broke free in the flat part leading to the bottom of San Luca.

The Frenchman then upped the pace right away and did not look back. Brahmansen took second place with another Frenchman, Quentin Pacher, finishing third.

"I've had so many tough times, in training, at the Tour de Suisse, at the French championships, and yesterday I got dropped, I was a bit at the end of my tether," Vauquelin said. "But I had a sense of revenge and I knew the wheel was going to turn. I turned quickly."

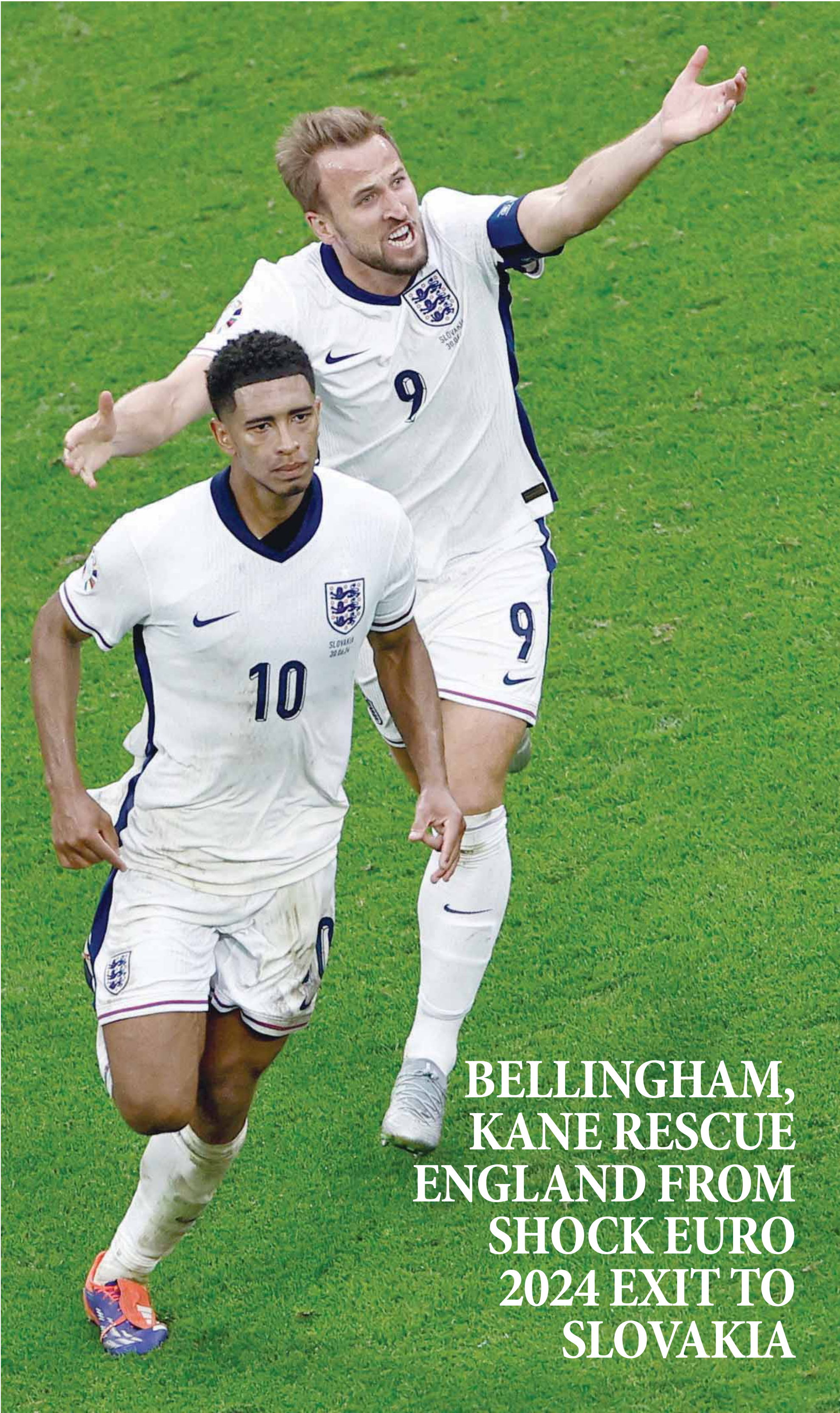
— Reuters



Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar cycles cross the finish line. — AFP



UEFA
EURO2024
GERMANY



BELLINGHAM, KANE RESCUE ENGLAND FROM SHOCK EURO 2024 EXIT TO SLOVAKIA

GELSENKIRCHEN, GERMANY:
England escaped an embarrassing last 16 exit at Euro 2024 thanks to Jude Bellingham's overhead kick before Harry Kane struck in extra-time for a 2-1 win over Slovakia on Sunday.

The Three Lions have been hyped as one of the favourites to end a 58-year wait for major tournament glory but looked set to go out with a whimper to Ivan Schranz's 25th minute goal.

However, Bellingham's moment of inspiration five minutes into six added on in stoppage time breathed new life into Gareth Southgate's reign as England boss.

Kane then headed in just a minute into extra-time to set up a quarter-final meeting with Switzerland on Saturday.

Southgate looked certain to fall on his sword after steadfastly refusing to make changes to a side that stumbled through as winners of Group C despite scoring just two goals in three games.

Kobbie Mainoo was introduced for his first competitive start in Southgate's only change and he paid the price with another lacklustre display lacking in any speed or invention for long spells.

The one saving grace of England's performances in the group stage was that a makeshift defence had held up well, conceding just once in three games.

However, they were torn to pieces early on by a Slovakia side ranked 45th in the world.

England did not heed a couple of warnings as David Hanco and Lukas Haraslin were wasteful with big chances.

Slovakia finally punished their more illustrious opponents when David Strelec was given acres of room to turn and play in Schranz, who confidently stroked past Jordan Pickford for his third goal of the tournament.

Despite his lack of experience, Mainoo was one of the few players that threatened to spark England into life as the Manchester United midfielder's effort was deflected wide.

The half-time whistle was met with a chorus of boos but Southgate still stuck to his guns and did not make a change until 25 minutes to go.

England did at least improve on a dismal first half and had the ball in the net within five minutes of the restart.

Phil Foden turned in Kieran Trippier's cross but was caught offside after a VAR review.

KANE GETS WINNER
Slovakia should have doubled their lead shortly afterwards when England gave away possession and Strelec saw Pickford well off his line but failed to hit the target from the halfway line.

Southgate's hand was finally forced on 66 minutes by an injury to Trippier.

One of the major calls the England boss will come to regret is only naming one natural left-back in his 26-man squad in Luke Shaw, who has not played a minute for club or country since February.

With Shaw not match-fit, Bukayo Saka was forced to deputise at left-back to make room for the introduction of Cole Palmer.

England's chances seemed to have gone when Kane headed wide a golden opportunity and Declan Rice smashed the post with a long-range pot shot.

Southgate was even derided by the England support for bringing on Ivan Toney deep into stoppage time with chants of "you don't know what you're doing."

However, there was an incredible twist as Bellingham acrobatically turned home Guehi's flick-on from a throw-in in the final moments of added-on time. Slovakia were suddenly rattled and Toney was to have a telling contribution. — **AFP**

England's midfielder #10 Jude Bellingham celebrates scoring his team's first goal with England's forward #09 Harry Kane. — AFP



THE DIFFERENCE..
OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU
With 120+ branches, More than 360 ATMs and CDMs we are always at your service.



2479 1111 | www.bankdhofar.com



In brief

WASHINGTON



US INFLATION COOLS IN MAY, BOOSTING HOPES OF FED RATE CUT

US monthly inflation was unchanged in May as a modest increase in the cost of services was offset by the largest drop in goods prices in six months, drawing the Federal Reserve closer to start cutting interest rates later this year.

The report from the Commerce Department also showed consumer spending rose marginally last month. Underlying prices advanced at the slowest pace in six months, raising optimism that the US central bank could engineer a much-desired “soft landing” for the economy. — Reuters

BEIJING



CHINA ISSUES RARE EARTH REGULATIONS TO PROTECT DOMESTIC SUPPLY

China has unveiled a list of rare earth regulations aimed at protecting supplies in the name of national security, laying out rules on the mining, smelting and trade in the critical materials used to make products from magnets in electric vehicles to consumer electronics.

The regulations say rare earth resources belong to the state, and that the government will oversee the development of the industry around rare earths — a group of 17 minerals of which China has in recent years become the world's dominant producer. — Reuters

RIYADH



ARAMCO SIGNS OVER \$25 BILLION OF DEALS FOR MAIN GAS NETWORK

Saudi Arabia's state oil company Aramco has signed contracts worth more than \$25 billion for the second phase of the expansion of its Jafurah gas field and the third phase of expanding its main gas network, its CEO Amin Nasser said on Sunday.

Saudi Arabia is working on developing its unconventional gas reserves, which require advanced extraction methods such as those used in the shale gas industry.

Jafurah is the kingdom's largest unconventional non-oil associated gas field. — Reuters

Salalah Port unveils major expansion to boost container handling capacity

SALALAH: Salalah Port has successfully completed its ambitious expansion plan, increasing its container handling capacity from 5 million to 6 million TEU annually. This milestone was achieved with the arrival of four new large cranes, marking the final phase of the \$300 million expansion project.

Scott Salman, Executive Director of Operations at Salalah Port, emphasised that the new cranes will significantly reduce ship turnaround times and enhance the port's ability to handle the world's largest vessels.

By completing this expansion, Salalah Port aims to bolster global trade connectivity, improve infrastructure, and elevate maritime service efficiency through strategic partnerships.

The “Megamax” ready terminal continues to attract major maritime industry players, solidifying its status as a key hub for the largest container ships.

Salman highlighted that the initial four cranes are currently undergoing tests to ensure operational readiness and are expected to boost productivity starting in August.

Two additional cranes are being tested for readiness, while four smaller cranes have been decommissioned. By the end of the year, the total number of



Upgrades to the four berths to support the new cranes have been completed, with two additional berths under construction.

cranes at the port will increase from 21 to 27.

The new electric cranes are among the largest and most efficient globally, capable of handling ships with a depth of 26 containers.

They boast a lifting height of 58 metres above the rail and a total height of 77 meters, with a maximum lifting capacity of 105 tonnes. This makes them well-suited to serve the largest container ships in operation.

Supporting equipment for the

expansion includes 12 hybrid rubber-tired gantry cranes, two assembly cranes, six empty container handlers, and 30 terminal trucks and trailers.

Significant infrastructure upgrades have also been made to modernise the port's electrical network, including a new high-capacity power substation and enhanced high-voltage feeder lines. These upgrades will ensure the port can meet future demand as it transitions to electric-powered equipment.

Salman noted that Oman is leveraging its abundant renewable energy resources to adopt ambitious plans for hydrogen and renewable energy.

The port is investing in initiatives to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2040.

Additional enhancements at the port include yard expansions and new roadworks. Upgrades to the current four berths to support the new cranes have been completed, with two additional berths under construction. The

SALALAH PORT HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED STRONG OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND EXPANDED ITS LOGISTICAL SERVICES TO MEET THE EVOLVING NEEDS OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL MARKETS.

increased capacity will enable the port to meet the requirements of the “Gemini” alliance, set to commence operations in the first quarter of 2025.

Salalah Port has consistently demonstrated strong operational performance and expanded its logistical services to meet the evolving needs of local and global markets.

Its strategic position on international trade routes and its ability to adapt to global changes underscore its pivotal role in the container and supply chain sectors.

The port has maintained its outstanding performance record, as evidenced by its ranking as the second most efficient container port in the world for the third consecutive year, according to the Container Ports Performance Index published by the World Bank and Global Market Intelligence. **TURN TO P15**

Wheat production in Oman surges 300%

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, JUNE 30

The Sultanate of Oman has witnessed a staggering 300% surge in wheat production from 2018 to 2023, reflecting the nation's dedication to enhancing agricultural productivity and food security. The increase is attributed to strategic initiatives and collaborations spearheaded by the government and academic institutions.

According to Dr Muhammad Farooq, Associate Professor and Head of the Agricultural and Marine Sciences Department at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman has made substantial strides in boosting wheat productivity and resilience.

The introduction and development of high-yielding, stress-resistant bread wheat genotypes, coupled with an expansion of the cultivation area, have been pivotal in this progress.

Government support has also played a crucial role in overcoming challenges such as water scarcity

and labour shortages.

“Further research is imperative to tailor the wheat production system to meet Oman's unique agricultural ecosystem,” Dr Farooq emphasised in a video post.

He highlighted the necessity of close cooperation with the private sector for seed multiplication, production, and marketing.

Moreover, integrating young students into research endeavours, organising field days at farmers' fields, and conducting on-farm demonstration trials are essential strategies to bolster human resource development within the wheat production industry.

The initial objective of the study was a modest 5% increase in wheat productivity. However, the collective efforts have far exceeded expectations, underscoring the potential for sustainable agricultural development in Oman.

The outcomes include the selection of high-yielding, drought- and heat-tolerant bread wheat genotypes well adapted to



During the agricultural season of 2022/2023, Oman's wheat production surged to a total of 7,119 tonnes.

the Omani environment.

Additionally, the development of a super-absorbent biopolymer derived from dead-palm-based leaves has contributed to enhanced soil moisture retention over extended periods.

Innovations in seed priming techniques utilising novel compounds in nanocompositions have further optimised wheat performance across various moisture levels.

This progress has had a tangible impact on the food security sector, revealing high-yielding seeds resistant to drought and climate change.

These advancements confirm Oman's commitment to promoting agricultural innovation, sustainability, productivity, and resilience in agricultural development and food security.

To provide context, during the

agricultural season of 2022/2023, Oman's wheat production surged by 229% to a total of 7,119 tonnes, compared to 2,169 tonnes in the previous season of 2021/2022.

Statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources show that wheat was grown on a total area of 6,359 acres during the 2022/2023 season, marking a 160% increase over the previous year.

The number of wheat farmers also grew by 24%. Dhofar Governorate led the wheat production with 5,940 tonnes, comprising 83% of the total production volume.

It was followed by Al Dakhiliyah Governorate (801 tonnes), Al Dhahirah Governorate (249 tonnes), Al Buraimi Governorate (38 tonnes), Al Batinah North Governorate (35 tonnes), Al Sharqiyah North Governorate (33 tonnes), Al Batinah South Governorate (16 tonnes), Musandam Governorate (2.4 tonnes), Al Sharqiyah South Governorate (2.3 tonnes) and Muscat Governorate (0.7 tonnes).

Nama Water Services expands network, increases capacity of main treatment plant

MUSCAT: Nama Water Services is ramping up wastewater infrastructure across the Sultanate of Oman. This includes expanding sewer networks and upgrading treatment plant capacity. These efforts aim to boost the efficiency of the entire water and sewage system in the governorates served by Nama Water Services.

The company recently implemented sewerage projects in Wilayat of Al Seeb. The projects include expanding the main treatment plant and increasing its capacity from 62,000 to 82,000 cubic metres per day.

Additionally, new connections are being built to link 87 government, residential, and commercial buildings to the sewage system, bringing in an estimated 21,400 cubic metres daily. The project also includes treated wastewater connections for 63 facilities, providing them with a combined capacity of over 24,560 cubic metres per day.

Eng Ahmed bin Mubarak al Arami, Acting Water and Wastewater Operations and Maintenance General Manager, said: "Projects of Nama Water Services in Wilayat of Al Seeb, Governorate of Muscat, reflect the company's dedication to sustainable water and wastewater management.

The company implements best



New connections are being built to link 87 government, residential, and commercial buildings to the sewage system, bringing in an estimated 21,400 cubic metres daily.

global practices and innovative solutions to ensure residents have access to reliable sanitation services. This commitment keeps pace with the growing community's needs and aspirations."

"The projects being implemented in Al Seeb contribute to strengthening the sewerage infrastructure in the wilayat in light of the increasing population and urban growth.

These projects aim to tackle several key challenges: reducing pollution from outdated systems, preventing the spread of disease, and protecting vital groundwater sources. The plan includes establishing new sewage networks, treated water transmission lines, and expanding treatment plants. Treated wastewater will become a valuable resource, supplementing groundwater and supporting irrigation, industry, and other

sectors."

For his part, Engineer Qais bin Saleh al Farsi, Director of the Seeb Sewage Treatment Plant, explained that a multi-stage project has bolstered the wilayat's sewerage system.

New networks and sewage treatment plants now serve parts of Al Khoudh and Muscat International Airport. The Oman Botanic Garden has also been connected.

Dhofar Islamic launches Al Riadah priority banking

MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic announces the launch of Al Riadah priority banking services in compliance to Sharia principles.

Designed to provide exclusive benefits and personalised financial solutions, the account also provides a dedicated relationship manager and priority processing of transactions as well as preferential rates for both deposit and finance products.

Many innovative banking products and services and exclusive offers have also been designed to help customers to manage their daily banking requirements with comfort and ease.

Dhofar Islamic is on an expansion mode with an objective of getting closer to its customers and has doubled its network to 24 branches recently. Customers can meet their dedicated relationship managers at any of these branches.

Each valued customer account is powered by a Visa

Signature debit card with its worldwide acceptance and lifestyle privileges such as discounts on dining and shopping. Customers can also take advantage of premium airport lounge access at more than 1,000 worldwide airports.

Customers can apply for an exclusive Mastercard World card which provides complimentary travel insurance, a 24X7 concierge service and one of the best rewards programmes, where each customer can earn points on their spends as cashback rewards.

Al Riadah priority banking customers enjoy a range of financing solutions at competitive prices, such as personal finance, auto finance for a period of up to 10 years, and housing finance for a period of up to 25 years, in addition to financing all types of travel, Haj and Umrah expenses, a flexible repayment period of up to 3 years, and financing education expenses for up to 10 years can also be obtained.



Bank Muscat participates in Batha Al Oud Team lighting project's inauguration in Al Suwaiq



MUSCAT: Building on its track record of achievements and successes, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to support Omani youth and sports and community team development.

Recently, the bank participated in the celebration of the Batha Al Oud Team lighting project opening in Al Suwaiq, Al Batinah North Governorate, as part of the Green Sports programme, which aims to support local sports teams.

The celebration was held under the auspices of Shaikh Khalid bin Sultan al Derei al Jabri, member of the Majlis Ash-Shura and Representative of the Wilayat of Suhar.

The event was attended by Said bin Ahmed al Salmi, Regional Manager of Meethaq Branches, Khalid bin Khamis al Jabri, Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Batha Al Oud Team, along with other invitees and team members

During the ceremony, Said bin Ahmed al Salmi remarked: "We are delighted with the inauguration of the Batha Al Oud Team play yard lighting project, which is highly significant for the team members. The play yard is now equipped to host social, sports, and cultural

events, benefiting both youth and the community at large. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the team members for this success and wish them the very best."

Said al Salmi added: "Bank Muscat aims to support Omani national teams by establishing projects in specific areas to enhance the country's sports infrastructure and expand green spaces. It is a source of pride that the Green Sports programme has continued to thrive since its inception in 2012, as evidenced by the keen competition among local teams to participate."

On this occasion, Khalid bin Khamis al Jabri, Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Batha Al Oud Team, expressed his gratitude to Bank Muscat for this unique initiative.

He highlighted that the initiative supports youth talents and provides sports teams with well-equipped playgrounds, enabling them to develop their skills and showcase their potential.

The Green Sports programme is one of Bank Muscat's key sustainable social responsibility initiatives. It aims to promote entrepreneurship, partnership, and community empowerment by supporting talented Omani youth in sports and culture.

Tyreplus emphasises importance of vehicle safety checks for summer

MUSCAT: As temperatures soar this summer, Tyreplus, a division of MHD Acere, urges all motorists in Oman to prioritise the safety of their vehicles by conducting thorough vehicle checks. With the extreme heat placing additional stress on engine & tyres, it is crucial to ensure they are in optimal condition to prevent accidents and ensure safe driving.

Since its inception in 2002, Tyreplus has expanded to over 1,600 franchises across 26 countries. In Oman, the brand boasts 9 branches strategically located throughout the country to serve customers effectively.

These branches include four outlets in Muscat (Wadi Al Kabir, Al Khuwair, Athaiba, and Maabela), as well as locations in Barka, Suhar, Nizwa, Khat Al Batinah, and Salalah.

At Tyreplus, we are dedicated to providing a one-stop solution for car care. We understand the importance of stringent safety measures, especially during the hot summer months when the risk of vehicle-related issues increases.

Safety tips for your vehicle

To help ensure the safety of all drivers on the road this summer, Tyreplus recommends the following maintenance tips:

1. Engine oil change: Regularly changing your engine oil is vital to keep your engine running smoothly. Fresh oil reduces friction, minimises



wear, and prevents overheating, ensuring your engine performs efficiently.

2. Air filter check: A clean air filter is essential for optimal engine performance and fuel efficiency. Inspect and replace your air filter if it is dirty or clogged to maintain proper airflow to the engine.

3. Coolant level check: The summer heat can cause your engine to overheat. Checking and topping up your coolant levels will help regulate engine temperature and prevent overheating.

4. Brake fluid check: Ensure your brake fluid is at the correct level and free of contaminants. Proper brake fluid

levels are crucial for effective braking performance and overall safety.

5. Battery check: The extreme temperatures can affect your vehicle's battery life. Inspect your battery for signs of wear, corrosion, or weak charge, and replace it if necessary to avoid unexpected breakdowns.

6. Visual check of tyre condition, including spare tyre: Inspect your tyres for any signs of damage, such as cracks, bulges, or excessive wear. Ensure your spare tyre is also in good condition and properly inflated.

7. Check of brake pads and brake discs: Your brakes are the single most important safety

feature on your car. Don't put yourself or your family at risk this summer by riding around on worn down or faulty brakes.

Examine your brake pads and discs for wear and tear. Worn-out brake components can significantly reduce braking efficiency, posing a safety risk.

Tyreplus invites all motorists to visit our outlets for a thorough vehicle check.

With our comprehensive 10-point checklist, our skilled technicians are ready to assist you in maintaining the safety and performance of your vehicle.

Drive with confidence this summer, knowing that your vehicle is in top condition.



Oman, Tunisia sign air services agreement



The agreement is based on the foundations and principles of open skies and allows airlines to operate any number of direct flights.

TUNIS: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Civil Aviation Authority, signed an air services agreement with the Republic of Tunisia.

The agreement was signed by Eng Nayef bin Ali al Abri, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority, in the presence of Sarah Zaafarani al Zanzri, Minister in charge of running the Tunisian Ministry of Transport, Dr Hilal bin Abdullah al Sinani, the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman accredited to the Republic of Tunisia, and a number of officials from the Civil Aviation Authority, in the capital city of Tunis.

This pact comes as an update to the agreement signed between the governments of the two countries in 1985 regarding air services between their regions, in line with regional and international developments in the field of air transport.

The updated agreement is based on the foundations and principles of open skies between the two countries and allows airlines to operate any number of direct flights.

It also aims to organise the operational and technical aspects that serve the common interests in the field of organising air transport services between the two

sides.

The agreement included 23 articles in addition to a special annex for the schedule of air routes between the two countries.

These articles varied between economic provisions and provisions for regulatory and operational cooperation that enable designated airline companies to operate a number of passenger and air cargo flights between the airports of the two countries.

The two countries' airlines can also enter into cooperative arrangements to share common codes on flights operated by the two countries' carriers.

The Sultanate of Oman has bilateral agreements in the field of air transport with 124 countries, aiming to regulate air transport services, including the technical and operational aspects, and to consolidate relations in the field of air transport and civil aviation with other countries.

The Civil Aviation Authority is keen to enhance cooperation in the field of air transport with various countries and seek to increase the operation of airlines to and from the airports of Oman as a contribution to supporting trade and tourism exchange and developing economic and social activities.

Oman remains a significant player in the global LNG market

JOMAR MENDOZA

MUSCAT, JUNE 30

The Sultanate of Oman has quietly but firmly established itself as a reliable and significant player in the global LNG market. The latest 2024 World LNG Report from the International Gas Union, released last week, shows Oman's impressive strides and contributions to the global energy scene.

Last year, Oman exported 11.43 million tonnes (MT) of LNG, making up 3 per cent of the world's total LNG exports. This feat places Oman comfortably as the ninth-largest LNG exporter globally. Despite the market's ups and downs, Oman managed to increase its exports slightly from 2022's figure of 11.29 MT, a testament to its resilience and strategic planning.

Oman's LNG found its way to a variety of key markets, highlighting its crucial role in the global supply chain.

The biggest share went to South Korea, which received 5.08 MT, followed by Japan with 2.19 MT, and China with 1.08 MT.



Last year, Oman exported 11.43 million tonnes (MT) of LNG, making up 3 per cent of the world's total LNG exports.

India also received a fair share (0.88 MT), along with Thailand (0.63 MT) and Taiwan (0.41 MT).

Even smaller volumes reached places like the Philippines, France, Spain and Turkiye, showcasing the breadth of Oman's market reach.

The report also shows how efficiently Oman's liquefaction plants have been operating.

In 2023, they ran at an impressive 110 per cent utilisation rate. Oman's three main liquefaction trains — Oman LNG T1, T2 and T3 Qalhat — combine

for a capacity of 10.4 MTPA.

Using AP-C3MR liquefaction technology, these plants are known for their high reliability and performance. With T1 and T2 each boasting a capacity of 3.55 MTPA, and T3 Qalhat at 3.30 MTPA, Oman's high utilisation rates highlight its strong operational capabilities and its ability to meet global LNG demand efficiently.

The 2024 World LNG Report also paints a broader picture of the global market. Currently, 20 exporting and 51 importing

countries are connected through the LNG market. Supply limitations still loom large, influencing market growth. After two years of significant turbulence, the LNG market has found a new, albeit fragile, balance.

Global LNG receiving capacity has grown significantly, hitting 1,029.9 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by the end of February 2024, with nearly 70 MTPA added in 2023 alone, marking the highest year of new additions since 2010.

'Change the atmosphere' promotional summer tourism campaign launched

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in cooperation with the National Travel Operator and Omran Group, launched its promotional campaign for the heritage and tourism components in the Sultanate of Oman during the summer season under the slogan "Change the atmosphere."

The campaign will continue until the end of August.

The campaign aims to stimulate the local tourism movement during the summer season, introduce heritage and tourist sites, and enhance tourism movement there throughout the year, which is beneficial for tourism sector partners.

The campaign includes promoting closed places such as museums, commercial and



entertainment centres, and moderate-temperature places such as Jabal Shams, Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, and the beaches of Al Sharqiyah South Governorate and Al Wusta Governorate, in addition to marine activities and experiences that

can be practiced in moderate-temperature areas.

The campaign will also present tourism company offers for cruises, adventure tours, accommodation offers and entertainment centres and others. — **ONA**

Salalah Port unveils major expansion to boost container handling capacity

FROM PAGE 13

Since beginning commercial operations in 1998, Salalah Port has become a crucial gateway for Oman in international maritime trade and a global centre for container transshipment.

Designed for sustainability and future growth, the port benefits from its strategic location near major international shipping routes, connecting the East with the West.

This positioning has made it one of the world's top transshipment ports, offering reduced transit times and comprehensive facilities for container ships, including second and third-generation vessels.

Salalah Port is directly linked to over 50 ports worldwide and facilitates short trips and container transshipment to markets in East Africa, India, and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Direct shipping lines connect Salalah Port to major ports such as New York, Shanghai, Mombasa, Singapore, Jeddah and Karachi, with transit times ranging from 3 to 14 days. The port provides integrated logistical services in collaboration with Salalah Airport.

Handling over 2,500 ships annually, the port's services include loading and unloading, container maintenance and repair, towing, fuelling, and storage. Its advanced logistical and operational capabilities ensure it meets diverse needs efficiently. — **ONA**

Revenues from Nitaj's food sector investments climb to RO 173 million in 2023

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT, JUNE 30

Food sector investments by Oman Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj) — part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) — have grown to a total of RO 457 million as of end-2023, fuelled by sustained expansion and diversification of the group across the food value chain.

As many as 11 project companies and subsidiaries collectively make up the Nitaj group, spanning the dairy, livestock, poultry grain imports and milling, bakery and food processing, animal feed, date cultivation and processing, agritourism and veterinary medicine sectors.

Underpinning this growth is a commitment to enhancing food security, said Mohammed bin Suleiman al Harthy, Chief



Sales of dairy and milk products grew 24 per cent in 2023.

Executive Officer – Nitaj.

"Over the past year, our united

efforts have been focused on exploring diverse investment

opportunities to enhance food sustainability in Oman and the wider region.

"Nitaj ventured into sectors such as education and health, backed innovative initiatives to combat food waste, and expanded agribusinesses to enhance food security and foster sustainable practices across various industries," Al Harthy stated in the newly published 2023 Annual Report of Nitaj.

Significantly, revenues generated by the group climbed 4.5 per cent to reach RO 173.611 million at the end of 2023, up from RO 166.103 million a year earlier.

The lion's share, amounting to RO 70.150 million, came from animal feed sales.

Flour products contributed RO 42.135 million (up 7.2 per cent from 2022 figures), while sales of

milk and dairy products jumped 24 per cent to RO 36.788 million.

Bakery products earned RO 15.187 million in revenue (up 3.2 per cent from 2022). Revenues from date sales grew 384 per cent to RO 4.964 million.

Established in 2011 to support the growth of a sustainable food sector, Nitaj currently oversees 11 companies: Mazoon Dairy, Al Murooj Dairy, Al Bashayer Red Meat, Al Namaa Poultry, Nakheel Oman Development, Date Farms, Oman National Livestock (National Feed), Agritourism Development, National Veterinary Vaccines, Oman Flour Mills, Agricultural Production and Marketing (Basateen).

As many as 21 leading brands are associated with these companies, whose products are marketed across 35 countries globally.

Crypto investors eye Solana ETF amidst Bitcoin outflows and regulatory shifts



STEFANO VIRGILLI
stefano@virgilli.com

The author is a member of the International Press Association

The cryptocurrency market experienced a turbulent week, marked by a significant outflow of funds from Bitcoin ETFs and a notable dip in Bitcoin's price. Investor confidence wavered as \$174 million was withdrawn from US Bitcoin ETFs in a single day, primarily from major players like Grayscale and Fidelity.

This selloff, partly attributed to the impending release of \$9 billion in Bitcoin by the defunct exchange Mt Gox, has sparked concerns about increased market volatility.

However, this isn't the first sign of investor caution. In the past two weeks, a total of \$1.1 billion has flowed out of US Bitcoin ETFs, with global outflows reaching \$584 million.

This dip in investment activity, the lowest since January, is largely attributed to growing concerns about the Federal Reserve potentially delaying interest rate cuts, which could impact riskier assets like Bitcoin.

Despite the overall cautious sentiment, not all investors are pulling out of Bitcoin. Brazil and Switzerland have seen net inflows of \$48.5 million and \$39 million, respectively. This suggests that while some investors are wary, others see the current dip as a buying opportunity.

However, a glimmer of

optimism shines through as investors anticipate potential new opportunities in the crypto market. Digital asset investment firm 21Shares has filed for permission to launch an exchange-traded fund (ETF) tied to Solana, following a similar move by VanEck.

This marks a significant step for Solana, the fifth-largest cryptocurrency by market capitalisation, and could pave the way for increased mainstream adoption.

The recent filings for Solana ETFs have already spurred a 9.4-per cent increase in Solana's price over the last seven days, a stark contrast to the declines seen in Bitcoin and Ethereum.

This suggests that investors are potentially reallocating their funds towards promising altcoins like Solana, viewing it as a potential avenue for growth amidst the current market volatility.

While regulatory hurdles

remain, with the CBOE exchange still needing to request approval to list Solana ETFs, the momentum behind these filings signals a growing appetite for diversified crypto investment products.

This could mark a turning point for the crypto market, as investors look beyond Bitcoin and Ethereum and towards a wider range of digital assets.

Meanwhile, Bitcoin miners are experiencing a surge in value, with their market cap jumping 22 per cent in just two weeks. This boost is linked to Core Scientific's deal with CoreWeave to host GPUs for AI operations, highlighting the increasing demand for AI computing power and the versatility of Bitcoin mining infrastructure.

This unexpected turn of events showcases the potential for synergy between the crypto and AI industries, a development that could have far-reaching implications for both sectors.

In a separate development,

Turkiye is making waves in the regulatory landscape with a new law requiring all crypto businesses to obtain licences, aiming to increase transparency and protect investors.

This move could set a precedent for other countries grappling with how to regulate this emerging asset class.

On the other side of the ocean, in the US, a legal battle is brewing between the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Consensus, the company behind the popular crypto wallet MetaMask.

The SEC alleges that MetaMask's swap and staking services are operating as unregistered securities brokers, a claim Consensus disputes.

This lawsuit is the culmination of an ongoing dispute between the two parties. Consensus had preemptively sued the SEC earlier this year, seeking clarification on whether Ether is a security. While the SEC has since concluded

its investigation into Ether, the lawsuit against MetaMask continues.

Consensus maintains that the SEC does not have the authority to regulate software interfaces like MetaMask and plans to vigorously defend its position in court. The outcome of this case could have significant ramifications for the regulation of crypto-related services in the US, as well as the broader crypto market.

Overall, the cryptocurrency market is experiencing a period of fluctuation and uncertainty. While investor sentiment has been dampened by recent events, the long-term outlook for Bitcoin and other digital assets remains a subject of debate.

Market participants are closely monitoring developments, including the Mt Gox repayment, Federal Reserve decisions, and the impact of regulatory changes like those in Turkiye, to gauge the future direction of the crypto market.

The eclipse of the petrodollar

Much of the reporting earlier this month about the "non-renewal" of a decades-old "petrodollar agreement" between Saudi Arabia and the United States was riddled with inaccuracies and half-truths. Some outlets even went so far as to allege that Saudi Arabia would "stop using the US dollar for oil sales."

Still, despite these errors, and although the dollar remains dominant, the momentum for de-dollarisation is building, reflecting broad geopolitical and macroeconomic shifts.

The petrodollar system — whereby oil is priced in dollars and oil-exporting countries invest surplus revenues in dollar-denominated assets — emerged in the mid-1970s, after US president Richard Nixon ended the greenback's convertibility into gold. This helped smooth the transition to the post-Bretton Woods system of floating exchange rates.

More crucially still, it cemented the dollar's position as the world's reserve currency and delivered decades of prosperity for Americans, who benefited from being the preferred market for global corporations in a context of increasing global demand for the greenback and capital inflows into the US.

The arrangement is rooted in a secret 1974 deal between Saudi Arabia and the US: the Saudis would recycle their petrodollars in US Treasuries in exchange for an American security guarantee, thus creating a strategic alliance that has shaped global politics for decades.

By the next year, all of OPEC had agreed to price oil in dollars and invest in US government debt, allowing American banks to extend loans to countries in the Global South amid increasing financial-market deregulation.

As oil became the crucial resource for powering economic growth, industrialisation and technological advancement,



HIPPOLYTE FOFACK

The author is a Parker fellow with the SDSN at Columbia University, a research associate at the Harvard University Center for African Studies, a distinguished fellow at the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils, and a fellow at the African Academy of Sciences.

SOMETIMES FAKE NEWS REVEALS HIDDEN TRUTHS, SUCH AS WHEN IT WAS RECENTLY REPORTED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD END ITS AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES TO PRICE OIL IN DOLLARS. DESPITE THE MANY INACCURACIES IN THESE REPORTS, AND ALTHOUGH THE GREENBACK'S GLOBAL ROLE ENDURES, THE MOMENTUM FOR DE-DOLLARISATION IS BUILDING.



oil-importing countries needed dollars to pay for their energy.

At the same time, the global population boom increased demand for manufactured goods and oil, further strengthening the dollar's position.

By 2000, more than 70 per cent of all foreign-exchange reserves were held in dollars, which dominated international trade (dollar invoicing encouraged exporters to borrow dollars to hedge and importers to borrow dollars for working capital) even as the industrialised Asian economies eroded America's share of it.

Though the dollar's dominance was not without challenges — most notably the financialisation of the US economy and the precipitous decline in domestic manufacturing — the benefits that accrued to America were immense.

The influx of foreign capital into US Treasuries supported low interest rates and a robust bond market, turning Wall Street into the world's preeminent financial

centre. Today, around 70 per cent of foreign-currency debt is dollar-denominated.

Moreover, issuing the world's reserve currency meant the US did not have to worry about trade deficits, allowing its economy "to give without taking, to lend without borrowing, and to acquire without paying," as the French economist, Jacques Rueff puts it.

More recently, however, there have been moves towards de-dollarisation. Central banks more than doubled their gold purchases between 2021 and 2022, and maintained a similar level in 2023. Equally important, local-currency settlement (LCS) for bilateral trade has become more common.

In 2023, India made its first-ever rupee payment for crude oil from the United Arab Emirates, and China used the renminbi to settle around half of its cross-border trade and investment, leveraging its Cross-Border Interbank Payments System and the currency-swap agreements that the People's Bank of China

has signed with more than 40 central banks.

The shift away from petrodollars can be attributed to several factors. Before 2000, the US was the world's biggest trading partner to more than 80 per cent of the world's countries, whereas now that number has dropped to less than 30 per cent, and China has largely assumed America's previous role. The global energy landscape has also changed significantly.

The US used to rely heavily on Saudi Arabia for oil, but its shale boom in the mid-2000s put the country on the path to energy independence.

Now China is the leading importer of Saudi oil, although many countries, including Saudi Arabia itself, are embracing renewables to accelerate the green transition.

The rise of the Global South, thanks to increasing technology diffusion and globalisation of value chains, and heightened geopolitical tensions are driving the world towards a multipolar

©Project Syndicate, 2024

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
Choose from a wide range of brands & models
PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

اوربٲٲ
ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease



Auditors & Accountants

• Audit & Accounting • CFO Services • Secondment
• VAT & Tax Return Filing • VAT Refund Assistance

Contact: 92182750 • Email: contact@umpauditors.com



ALL OVER INDIA
INDONESIA ► NEPAL
AIR EXPORT (Port to Port)
SEA EXPORT (Container Booking)

SERVICES BY AIR & SEA

FOR MORE INFORMATION JUST DIAL
CUSTOMER CARE **93213207**

PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT **93213206**



Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

SIT. WANTED

LOOKING for job 2 years experienced Mechanical Engineer available in Muscat.
vineeshvijay98@gmail.com
79527123.

INDIAN male 6 years experience in accounts/automobile/admin. Seeking for suitable opening in any field, currently in Oman. Contact: 78988055/ 92850930, email: ullasmon8@gmail.com

PLANNING Engineer, PMP. Indian male 11 years experience in Construction Projects. Well versed with Primavera P6 Software, strong communication skills, Interpersonal skills, EDT Claims, Recovery schedules, project control. Having Omani Driving License. Contact: 78002582, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com

INDIAN male 14 years experience light/ heavy driver. Looking for suitable opening currently in Oman. Contact: 77050986/ 91280205, email: kokkad mou@gmail.com

B. COM. 35 years of experience in accounts, sales coordinator, admin, HR, personal assistant, document controller with Oman D/L, looking for a job. Contact: 92558734

29 YEARS old Indian female, MBA holder with 2 years experience. Seeking a suitable position. Currently in Muscat on visit visa. Contact: 78641071, shazashakeel@gmail.com

28 YEARS Experience in Oman in sales, marketing and management, Indian with DL and release. Looking for a good job change. Contact: 78501743.

A SUDANESE resident in Salalah, Bsc of administrative sciences with 21 years of experience in the fields of (sales/ management/ logistics and fleet). Contact: +968 98510880.

ACCOUNTANT & sales Executive, Indian male, 31 years, BA English, specialised in Accounting, 2 years experience in India & 6 years experience in Oman. Seeking position in Accounts/Sales fields (has Oman licence). Mob: 78805951. Gmail: akhilgopinath2017@gmail.com

Classifieds

URGENT HIRING

LEADING LAB CHEMICAL/CONSUMABLE/ EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION COMPANY IN OMAN

URGENT HIRING

TECHNICAL SUPPORT ENGINEER

- More than 2-year work experience in Oman/GCC
- Degree of bachelor of Mechanical Engineering
- Driving license in Oman preferred.

Suitable candidate can send CV to: recruitment74@gmail.com

SIT. VACANCY

MECHANICAL/ TECHNICAL
REQUIRED service technician for air compressors with D/L. Send your CV to denny@pumpsoman.com. 79119341

SIT. VACANCY

WANTED Sales & Service engineer for laboratory.
sales@alchemyarabia.com
96654041.

Looking for a candidate having minimum 5 years of Oman experience in accounts and administration. Knowledge of Oracle/ Tally accounting & inventory package is must preferable experienced in Trading of Building Materials, Tools etc e-mail CV to jobvacancymoman2023@gmail.com

BACHELOR degree in mechanical or electrical engineering ASNT level 2 (NDT), ASNT level 3 (NDT) additional advantage. LEEA foundation, LEEA lifting accessories diploma (LAC). Contact: pipe2566@yahoo.com

SALES Executive required for building materials, hardware items and similar items. Driving licence necessary. E: sangita@dhiyahilal.com. M: 93559800

FOR RENT

16,000 (8,000 + 8,000)M2, open yard with compound wall 24 hours CCtv surveillance & other amenities for rent in Jifnain close to Muscat-Nizwa Highway. Contact: 99853040

400M RENTAL space Ghubra 18 Nov Street second line suitable for all commercial use. Tel: 92408308

WAREHOUSE / workshop 2,600 sqm for rent in Misfa near Oman Cement Factory including accommodation contact: GSM 98286899, email: sales@jetsoman.com

3BKH- Ghubra 18 Nov Street. Tel: 92408308

IN Ruwi, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, hall, kitchen, with car parking. RO 150 monthly only. Tel: 94402003.

SIT. WANTED

Accountant with overs 6 years of experience Detail-Oriented Financial Professional: Expert in Accounting, Audit Prep, and Expense Management

Contact: +968 78320801

Ready to join immediately



To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp
<your name> to
96473232



Candidates with at least 5–10 years of experience are urgently needed for the following positions in a multinational company in Oman

- Electrical Engineer** (O & M experience)
- DCS Engineer** (Honeywell DCS experience)
- Planning Engineer**
- Quantity Surveyor**
- Draftsman**

Interested candidates can send CVs to recruitment2024n@gmail.com



Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocoraches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

**Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309**

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

SIT. VACANCY

****HIRING: Cake & Pastry Chef****

We're looking for a talented chef skilled in cakes, pastries and a variety of sandwiches. Join our dynamic team today!

Apply now by emailing your CV:ALSTROMERIA6660@GMAIL.COM



SIT. WANTED

A well-established company requires engineers with at least three years of work experience:

- 1- Sales/ services Engineers Environment monitoring instruments.
- 2- Laboratory sales/ services technicians.
- 3- Chemical Engineer.
- 4- Mechanical Engineer.
- 5- Electrical Engineer.
- 6- Marine sales engineer.
- 7- Instrument sales engineer.
- 8- Legal administrator.
- 9- Human Resource Administrator.

Preference will be given to Omani applicants.
CV requested to be sent to cvrequest64@gmail.com

To advertise in Information Ministry channels



To contact

71455532- 71455531- 71455530
adv@omaninfo.om
[izdihar_info](https://www.instagram.com/izdihar_info) [izdihar.info](https://www.facebook.com/izdihar.info)





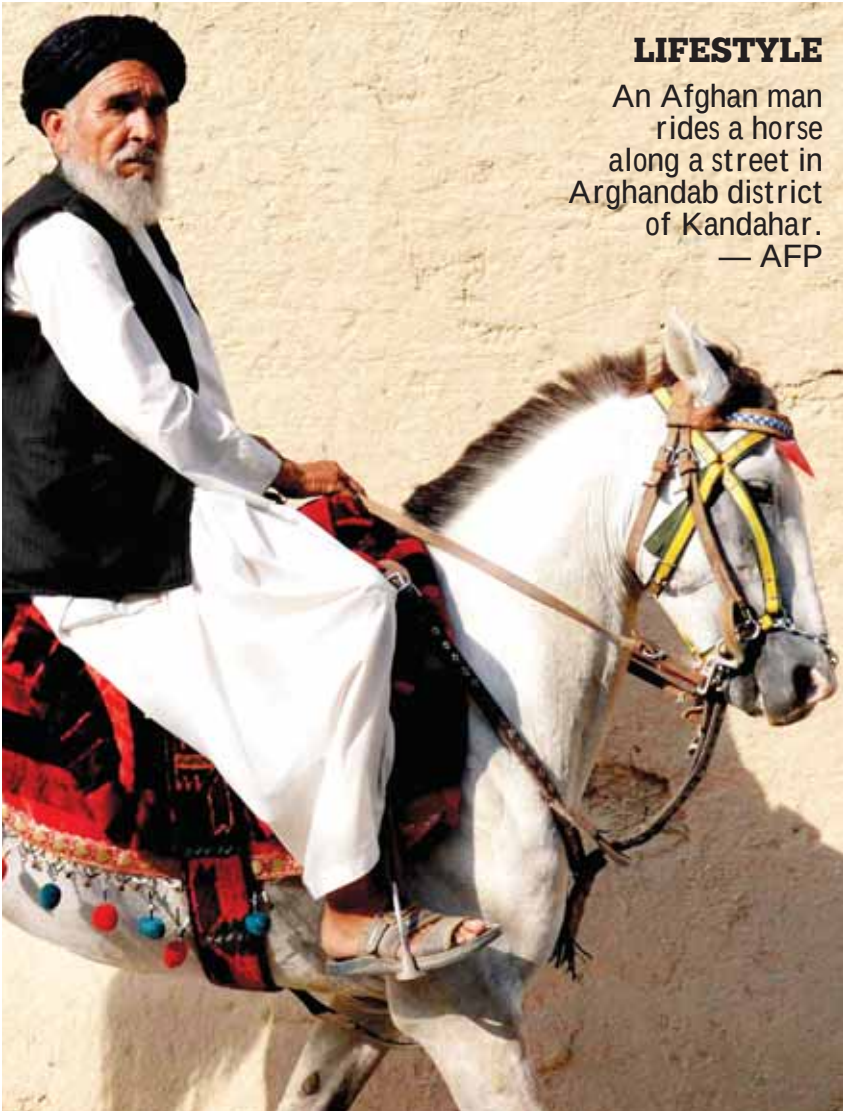

FASHION

A model presents a creation by Robert Wun show as part of the Paris Fashion Week in Paris. — AFP



FOOD

A vendor waits for customers at a wholesale vegetable market in Dhaka. — AFP



LIFESTYLE

An Afghan man rides a horse along a street in Arghandab district of Kandahar. — AFP



ART

Pedestrians take photos near a wall mural in Puducherry. — AFP



ACTOR

Chinese actor Guang Huo poses upon arrival ahead of the Chanel's show as part of the Paris Fashion Week at Palais Garnier (Opera national de Paris) opera house in Paris. — AFP

art & life

MONDAY | JULY 1, 2024 | DHUL HIJJAH 24, 1445 AH

OMAN OBSERVER f x @ y t v www.omanobserver.om features@omanobserver.om



Recreational spots and tourist attractions at Sur creeks

Kilometre walking and cycling tracks, an open theatre, car parks for celebrations, umbrellas, a children's playground, seating areas, among other facilities... **P20**

Divers turn conservationists as corals bleach worldwide

A DIVER GLIDES over an expanse of bone-white coral branches, recording the fish that dart between the ghostly arms extending from the sea floor off the Thai island of Koh Tao. Nannalin Pornprasertsom is one of a growing number of scuba divers learning conservation and citizen science techniques as coral reefs experience a fourth global bleaching event.

After a two-week course in Koh Tao, the 14-year-old can identify coral types, carry out reef restoration, and help scientific research on coral health by recording the colour and tone of outcroppings at dive sites.

"It's just something that I can do that will have a good consequence for the environment," Nannalin, who has been diving since she was 12, said after a series of dives. "I want to help the reef." And she is not alone.

The Professional Association of Diving Instructors — better known as PADI, one of the world's leading dive training organisations — says conservation certifications jumped over six per cent globally from 2021-2023.

This year, it is launching a major shark

and ray census, harnessing its network of divers to collect data that will shape protection policies.

On Koh Tao, Black Turtle Dive offers courses on everything from how to properly "dive against debris" — collecting marine plastic or stranded fishing nets — to coral restoration techniques.

"There's an increased awareness," said Steve Minks, a certified conservation instructor at Black Turtle. "There's a lot of bleaching going on and there's a lot of concern about the marine environment."

Coral polyps are animals that depend on algae to provide most of their food. These algae also generally give the reef its colour.

But when the sea is too warm, the polyps expel the algae. The reef turns white and the coral begins to starve.

Coral bleaching has been recorded in more than 60 countries since early 2023, threatening reefs that are key to ocean biodiversity and support fishing and tourism globally.

The death spiral is everywhere in the waters of the Gulf of Thailand around Koh Tao.

Worst affected are branching species that grow quickly, but are also less resilient. If water temperatures come down, they will have a chance at recovery. But for now, their spectral stems are even visible from the surface, glimmering through the aquamarine water.

"I was not ready for that much bleaching, it's quite an impact," admits instructor Sandra Rubio.



The 28-year-old says bleaching and other marine degradation are driving divers to take her conservation courses.

"People want to start learning because they see these kinds of changes," she said. "And even if they don't really understand why, they know it's not good." She walks students through how to identify species, including soft coral. Wave at it, she explains, mimicking wiggling a hand in the water, and wait to see if it "waves back". — **AFP**





find us on



Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

OMANDAILYOBSERVER
MONDAY | JULY 1 | 2024

19

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



explore_salalah

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman



travelwithpassport

Muscat, Oman



michaelclicks

Daniel Deuschle - Wild Is Life



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.



MUSCAT TODDLER BREAKS WORLD RECORD FOR FASTEST RECITATION OF COUNTING

STAFF REPORTER

The world record for the 'Fastest Recitation of Counting from 1 to 10' has been achieved by an expatriate toddler from Muscat.

On April 6, 2024, Vianna Kanojia, who is one year, 8 months and 15 days old, recited the numbers from 1 to 10 in just 6 seconds, breaking the previous record of 8 seconds. This remarkable feat has been recognised by the International Book of Records, a global platform that showcases unique talents and inspires people worldwide to achieve extraordinary feats. The International Book of Records collates and publishes notable records of all types, celebrating first and best achievements.

Vianna's parents, Payal and Sanjit Kanojia, discovered this platform through social media, where they saw many people showcasing their talents in various fields. This inspired them to explore Vianna's abilities further. Vianna's remarkable talent for learning new things quickly has left them speechless.

"Since childhood, she loved listening to rhymes and music and would often croon along. She also started repeating alphabets and numbers when she was just 15 months old. Every day, she would sing rhymes, alphabets and numbers, and one day, we were amazed to hear her count from 1 to 6 without any help when she was 19 months old," they shared.

With minimal effort, Vianna learned to count from 1 to 10 by the time she was 20 months old. Her parents are incredibly proud of their little champion, who continues to amaze them every single day. Confident in Vianna's abilities, they encouraged her to participate in the record attempt.

"We are certain that Vianna will excel in whatever she chooses to pursue, and we are here to support her every step of the way. We would like to thank the International Book of Records for recognising our child's talent," says Sanjit Kanojia, her father who works for Sun Shine International SPC.



MUSIC

Black British music in spotlight at new exhibition

WHAT DO A bottle signed by Stormzy, Beethoven's tuning fork and a giant peacock Carnival costume have in common? They're all currently on display in a first-of-its-kind exhibition at the British Library.

"Beyond the Bassline: 500 Years of Black British Music" is the first major exhibition to document the rich history of music by the UK's African and Caribbean heritage communities.

Featuring immersive soundscapes and original commissioned artworks, "Beyond the Bassline", which runs until August 24, is not a typical library exhibit. Made up of five sections, it

begins with "Ocean", which explores the black British music's fraught colonial past, and ends with "Cyberspace", which examines the modern-day impacts of technology and the rising mainstream popularity of black British artists.

Along with historical artefacts — such as the tuning fork gifted to black violinist George Bridgetower and the peacock costume by Leeds Carnival designer Hughbon Condor — each section is accompanied by soundscapes, moving images and artistic collaborations with community organisations from across the UK.

"I like to see it as a journey...



through time and space," Aleema Gray, lead curator of the exhibition, said.

The primary target audience is "young people, music fans and people of African and Caribbean heritage community", who have

historically not always felt welcome within institutions such as the British Library, she added.

"Part of the initiative was really trying to break down those barriers," she explained, pointing out the use of "we" and "our" in the text

labels, intended to make it "feel like we're speaking to" visitors as they wander the exhibit.

Gray was recruited specifically for the project, which was first proposed by Grammy-winning musician and academic Mykaell Riley as a partnership between London's University of Westminster and the library.

With over six million recordings in its archives, the library has one of the largest sound collections in the world, making it a fitting venue for an exhibition that focuses as much on sound as on visuals.

Comprising 300 artefacts, "Beyond the Bassline" took over a year to put together, in what Gray described as a "marathon" effort with the aim of taking visitors on a journey through nearly six centuries of music history.

- Community and legacy -

Music as a vehicle for community is an underlying theme throughout the exhibition, said Gray, who wanted to highlight regional narratives and acknowledge London's dominance on the black music scene.

Contributions include a dance video shot on the Welsh coastline

by Cardiff group Jukebox Collective, and a lofty, church-like installation celebrating the influence of faith and religion on black British music.

The final installation is a stunning immersive short film, Iwoyi, created by Tayo Rapoport and Rohan Ayinde in collaboration with south London group Touching Bass.

Gray has been overwhelmed by public reception to the exhibition, especially from musicians and young people.

"I've seen so many musicians come here and say 'we've never been acknowledged (before),' she said.

Seeing how honoured many have felt to have their stories inside a place like the British Library has been "one of the biggest achievements" of the exhibition.

Gray is already focused on efforts to cement the exhibition's community legacy, which include a book and events involving further collaborations with local artists.

"The exhibition is not just about the past and the present, it's about the future," she said. — AFP



Recreational spots and tourist attractions at Sur creeks

The natural creeks of the Wilayat of Sur in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate alongside their ecosystems are major tourist attractions. The creeks of Ras Al Jinz, Al Hajar, Khor Jarama, Shiya, Al Bathaa, Al Rasagah, Qalhat and Tiwi are coastal lakes or coastal tidal lakes that are in for tourism development to be transformed into distinctive natural, recreational and environmental tourist attractions as the governorate is marking the Wilayat of Sur as the Capital of Arab Tourism this year.

Dr Yahya bin Badr al Maawali Governor of Al Sharqiyah South, said that the Wilayat of Sur boasts a lot of natural and tourist components apart from the natural creeks. The tourism and recreational development plans seek to establish beautiful seafronts as well as enhancing coastal activities, trekking, camping and eco-tourism, which contribute to economic growth.

He added: "The first phase of the Khor Al Batah development project has been approved. It involves cleaning and deepening the creek, developing the surrounding tourist and investment areas, establishing investment sites on banks as well as the construction of hotels, chalets and tourist facilities. The second phase will include the establishment of basic services. He noted that the project will open up broad horizons for investment

Khor Al Batah is one of the largest natural creeks in the Wilayat of Sur with a total area of about 5 square kilometres. It is a commercial port where commercial ships and fishing boats of various types dock. It extends for a distance of 4 kilometres from Ras Al Mil with its famous lighthouse to the Tina area in the city centre. On its eastern bank is the village of Al Aija, and on its western bank is the main neighbourhood of the old city of Sur. The villages of Nasma and Skaikra are located to the south of the Khor Al Batah.

Speaking about Khor Jarama in the Niyabat of Ras Al Hadd, Al Maawali said: "A project is currently under development which involves the establishment of a tourist development marina and paving the road leading to it. There is also a study of the project by the consultant the budget of which has already been approved. Regarding Khor Al Hajar in Ras Al Hadd, he said that a fishing anchorage has been set up on the creek. He noted that the governorate is currently implementing a project to develop the Al Tina area in Jabal Eid funded by Oman LNG. The project includes a 1.2-kilometre walking and cycling tracks, an open theatre, car parks for celebrations, umbrellas, a children's playground, seating areas, among other facilities. — **ONA**

