LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN

HM GREETS PRESIDENT OF TUNISIA

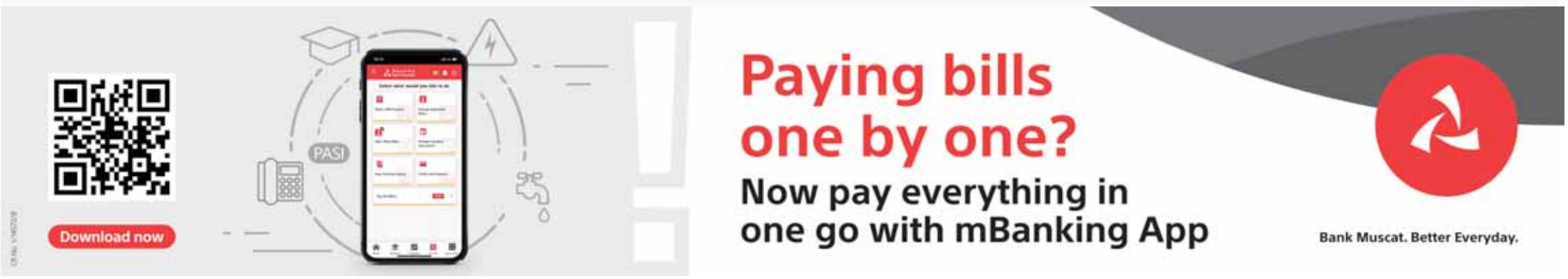
MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Kais Saied of the Tunisian Republic on his country's Republic Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health, happiness and a long life. His Majesty prayed to Allah the Almighty for the return of this and similar occasions on President Saied at a time the Tunisian people have achieved further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**

HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN SENDS CONDOLENCES TO EMIR OF QATAR

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar on the demise of Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sympathies, praying to Allah the Almighty to have mercy on the departed soul and grant the deceased's family patience to bear the loss. — **ONA**

Founded 1975 · Volume 48 No. 102 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

TIMESOFOMAN.COM · FACEBOOK.COM/TIMESOFOMAN · TWITTER.COM/TIMESOFOMAN · YOUTUBE.COM/USER/TIMESOFOMANONLINE · TIMESOFOMAN.COM/WHATSAPP · TIMESOFOMAN.COM/RSS · LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/TIMES-OF-OMAN · INSTAGRAM.COM/TIMESOFOMAN



BIG BOOST FOR OMAN'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR

New projects worth OMR122mn are coming up for setting up vital industries in Samail, Ibri, North Al Batinah, Sohar and Dhofar

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a massive boost to the manufacturing sector and to promote Oman as an ideal investment destination, several important projects have been announced across the Sultanate of Oman on Monday.

These projects are coming up in various parts of Oman, including Samail, Ibri, North Al Batinah, Sohar and Dhofar to establish vital factories.

Elaborating on the new projects, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has identified new investment opportunities worth over OMR122 million across the Sultanate.

These include among others, setting up of copper bars factories in both Samail Industrial Estate and Ibri Industrial Estate. Another opportunity exists for setting up a steel casting and steel alloys manufacturing facility in the Governorate of North Al Batinah.

Also there is an opportunity to establish a plant of semi-solid aluminium packages in Sohar Industrial City.

This project is considered as a new manufacturing facility to produce pre-made aluminium for products to be used in making food trays for the retail and restaurants.

There is also an investment opportunity to set up a steel factory in the Governorate of Dhofar for the manufacture of light steel blocks that can be used in the construction field.

The press statement from MoCIIP said that these opportunities will contribute to attract quality investments for economic diversification and development throughout the Sultanate of Oman. >A3

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Registration for 1445 AH Hajj to open soon

1 The Omani Hajj mission announced that registration of Oman's pilgrims for 1445 AH will be opened in next two months. >A3

WORLD
Summit paves way for food safety

2 The first-ever Global Food Regulators Summit 2023 in New Delhi has paved the way for a more robust food safety and regulatory ecosystem. >A6

MARKET
Oman's electricity production rises

3 The total production of electricity in Oman rose by 0.6 per cent till the end of May 2023 to reach 15,537.5 GW per hour. >B1

PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

Over 235% jump in Indian tourists arrivals to Oman

Times News Service

DELHI: The Sultanate of Oman has recorded over 200% growth in Indian tourists arrivals with 355,459 travellers visited the country in 2022, compared to 106,042 travellers in 2021, making India the second highest source market for Oman.

Around 2.9 million tourists came to Oman in 2022 as the country witnessed a massive 348 percent jump in tourists in 2022 compared to 2021.

The workshop on promoting Oman's tourism potentials in the Indian market began in New Delhi on Monday.

A series of workshops will be organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in metro cities of India till 31 July.

The number of Indian tourists visiting Oman recorded a rise of 12.2 percent in 2022 .

Asma bint Salem Al Hajri, Assistant Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Directorate General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that these workshops are a continuation of the promotional events that the ministry started in India.

This will contribute to promoting tourism and increasing the flow of more tourists.

Asma bint Salem Al Hajri indicated that the number of visitors coming to the Sultanate of Oman reached 1,548,630 from January to May 2023, an increase of 95.1 percent compared to the same period last year, and 3-5-star hotels recorded an increase in their revenues to reach OMR98,431,000, an increase of 34.7 percent compared to the same period in 2022.

The number of tourists in these hotels reached 801,014, an increase of 27.3 percent compared to the same period last year.

See also >A2

NEW COLLABORATION PACT

Oman focuses on electric vehicle infrastructure

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman government's push for cleaner energy options has put the focus on the development of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure.

On Monday, the EV infrastructure got a boost when Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO), a subsidiary of OQ Group, announced a collaboration pact with Synergy Investments LLC to establish Electric Vehicles One (EVO). EVO will be a new entity focused on developing electric vehicle infrastructure, OOMCO said in a disclosure submitted to the Muscat Stock Exchange. The formal agreement, inked on July 3, 2023, marks a significant milestone in the advancement of electric mobility.

EVO's core business activities will revolve around trading, installation, operation, and maintenance of cutting-edge electric vehicle charging stations. In addition, EVO will offer various ancillary services and products, designed to complement growing EV ecosystem. The joint venture is propelled by a shared vision to expand the EV market in Oman and drive the adoption of green energy solutions. >A5

OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:18pm
Asr	3:40pm
Maghrib	6:58pm
Isha	8:17pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:10am

بريد عُمان
OMAN POST

Documents Attestation Service in partnership with Ministry of Foreign

Enjoy fast and easy attestation process:

- 40+ types of official documents accepted: educational, commercial, and marriage certificates.
- Available at Airport Heights, Sur, Salalah, Nizwa, Al Buraimi, Suhar, Daba, and Khasab branches and via our website: **www.omanpost.om**

Workshops on promoting Oman's tourism potentials begin in India

The workshops aim at highlighting the tourism potential of the Sultanate with its picturesque nature, in addition to promoting the attractive destinations

Times News Service

NEW DELHI: Deliberations of the first workshop on promoting the tourism potentials of the Sultanate of Oman in the Indian tourism market began in the capital Delhi on Monday. The series of workshops are organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and will last till 31 July.

The workshops aim at highlighting the tourism potential of the Sultanate of Oman with its picturesque nature, in addition to promoting the attractive destinations and diverse experiences that make the Sultanate of Oman a unique destination.

They also aim at promoting a number of tourism patterns such as conference and exhibition tourism, besides shedding light on the latest developments in the Omani tourism sector.

The promotional workshops will be held in four major cities in the Republic of India that are a source of tourism traffic, namely Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, and Mumbai.

A number of tourism companies and hotel establishments will participate in the meetings, in addition to the most prominent partners of the tourism sector in India who represent travel agencies and tour operators.

Issa bin Saleh Al Shaibani, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of India, explained that the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of India are united by long-standing historic ties and joint cooperation in various fields, including the tourism sector.

He pointed out the importance of such seminars, which are represented in highlighting developments in the Omani tourism sector and the latest facilities to attract the Indian tourist market to the Sultanate of Oman and marketing offers and tourism packages offered by Omani travel and tourism companies.

For her part, Asma bint Salem Al Hajri, Assistant Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Directorate General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that these workshops are a continuation of the promotional events that the ministry started in India. This will contribute to promoting tourism and increasing the flow of more tourists.

She indicated that the number of visitors coming to the Sultanate of Oman reached 1,548,630 from January to May 2023, an increase of 95.1 percent compared to the same period last year, and 3-5-star hotels recorded an increase in their revenues to reach OMR98,431,000, an increase of 34.7 percent compared to the same period in 2022. The number of guests in these hotels reached 801,014, an increase of 27.3 percent compared to the same period last year.

And it showed that in 2022, 355,459 Indian travellers visited the Sultanate of Oman, compared to 106,042 travellers in 2021, which made India rank second among the largest export markets for tourists to the Sultanate of Oman, as Indian tourists represented 12.2 percent of the total number of tourists coming to the Sultanate of Oman.

She added that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism seeks, through this participation, to focus on distinguished tourism experiences in the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to promoting a number of tourism patterns, presenting new products, promoting destinations attractive to Indian customers, communicating with commercial partners in the market and maintaining relations with them, gaining direct insights into the conditions and trends of the Indian market, providing first-hand information about destinations, tourist attractions and accommodation facilities in the Sultanate of Oman, and presenting the most important tourism products that characterise the Sultanate of Oman.

She indicated that the ministry is working to strengthen the position of the Sultanate of Oman in the foreign tourism markets by participating in the prominent tourism events and activities that are held in various countries, whether they are exhibitions, workshops, forums or gatherings related to the tourism aspect, in addition to implementing media, awareness and introductory programmes through social media.

She stressed that the promotional events organised by the ministry in various global tourism markets are a major part of the promotional strategy pursued by the ministry to target markets and be present in them and establish direct relations with them and get acquainted with their requirements closely.

The introductory workshop included a visual presentation of the Ministry's tourism representation office in India, bilateral meetings and joint meetings between representatives of Omani tourism institutions and establishments participating with their counterparts in the Indian tourism market, and meetings between the Omani delegation and senior officials in the tourism sector in the Republic of India as well as the Indian media.

-With ONA inputs

GOVERNORATE OF AL DAKHILIYAH

Campaign launched to remove harmful trees in Bidbid

BIDBID: The Department of Agriculture Wealth and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Bidbid in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah carried out an extensive campaign to remove harmful including mesquite trees, in cooperation with a number of government and private institutions.

Engineer Ishaq bin Omar Al-Jabri, Director of the Department of Agriculture Wealth and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Bidbid, said that mesquite and other trees negatively affect growth of seasonal plants. With their surface roots, they compete for water and nutrients, so it is necessary to remove them, he said. The presence of open roots on the banks of the valley blocks the flow of water and forces it to change its path towards the farms of citizens.

Al-Jabri added that this campaign is a first stage and will be followed by other upcoming stages. The number of participants among the state's youth reached approximately 100 people and 7 equipment, and it operated in a number of villages.

It is worth noting that the Department of Agricultural Wealth in the Wilayat of Bidbid seeks to remove harmful trees by carrying out similar campaigns during the next phase. — ONA

Registration for 1445 AH Hajj to open in 2 months

For reviewing the Hajj statistics for the year 2023, the Hajj Mission held a press conference on Monday at the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs

REVIEW MEETING: Sultan bin Said Al Hinai, Head of the Hajj delegation explained that the Sultanate of Oman had utilised 99.7 per cent of its quota of 13,956 pilgrims.. - ONA

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani Hajj mission announced that registration of Oman's pilgrims for 1445 AH will be opened during the next two months.

This was unveiled during the concluding press conference held by the Hajj mission on Monday at the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs to showcase indicators and statistics related to the 1444 AH Hajj.

More than 13,000 Omani pilgrims had performed Hajj this year.

Sultan bin Said Al Hinai, Head of the Hajj delegation explained that the Sultanate of Oman had utilised 99.7 per cent of its quota of 13,956 pilgrims.

However, 44 beneficiaries could not complete the rituals of Hajj this season for various reasons.

"The mission worked in cooperation with the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other competent authorities in the Kingdom to find appropriate solutions to address the challenges, improve the system within the available limits, such as reducing irregular pilgrims where only a few cases were monitored and necessary measures taken against violators," Al Hinai said.

For the services related to the infrastructure works in the holy sites, he said that the Omani Hajj mission will do its best with the competent authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to discuss appropriate solutions to improve the environment suitable for the guests, which is the ultimate goal pursued by the governments to enrich the experience of pilgrims and Umrah performers.

The head of the mission indicated that the percentage of general satisfaction of the pilgrims of the Sultanate of Oman in the questionnaire evaluating Hajj companies, which includes Medina, Makkah Al-Mukarramah, and Mina, was 96 percent with a rating of 16,505. The satisfaction rate with regard to the Mina camp was 93 percent with a rating of 61.88, and the percentage was 94 percent for the level of housing in Medina, Makkah Al-Mukarramah, and Mina. The percentage of nutrition was 97 percent and the percentage of hygiene assessment was 94 percent.

NAMA WATER SERVICES

People urged to reduce water use due to green tide

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Nama Water Services (NES) has urged people to rationalise water consumption due to the effect of the green tide phenomenon on water production.

"We draw your attention that the main desalination and water production plants in the Wilayat of Barka have been affected by the green tide phenomenon, which results in a cessation and decrease in the quantities of desalinated water. It requires the operating companies to take a number of precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the plants and the quality of water production," the company said in a statement.

"To reduce the impact on consumers, Nama Water Services has activated emergency plans by operating alternative sources and reserve wells, and activating the interconnection between the desalination plants in Sohar, Barka and Al Ghubra."

"The company calls on its esteemed subscribers to cooperate by taking the necessary precautions and rationalising water consumption until the sea water quality improves. For more inquiries, please contact the call centre 1442," the company added.

A few months ago, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) had urged sea-goers not to catch and consume fish affected by the green tide phenomenon, as well as not to swim in these places.

The ministry had noticed a bloom of phytoplankton in what is known as the green tide in parts of the Wilayats of Duqm and Masirah, with the death of some fish.

According to environmental experts, green tide is huge accumulations of large green algae that occur in many parts of the world, but are more common in temperate and tropical latitudes.

The most affected areas are the eastern and western coasts of North America, Asia, and the Pacific Ocean. This incident occurs in a specific area, and is often seasonal or episodic, and is temporary and ephemeral.

According to what is known scientifically, The type of phytoplankton that causes the phenomenon of the green tide flourishes in Omani waters in specific months.

NEW PROJECTS

Promote Oman as investment hub

< FROM A1

They will also contribute to creating the appropriate environment for the success and development of all investments, empowering the private sector and motivating the sector to further invest, in addition to increasing the share of foreign direct investment (FDI) contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP). These new projects will also help in promoting the Sultanate of Oman as an ideal investment destination in various manufacturing industries.

Elaborating further about these projects the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion clarified that the investment opportunity to establish a new copper rods factory where an initial feasibility study is available for this project.

The investment of this project is worth OMR40.51 million with an expected return on investment of 22.72 percent. The project will be built on a land area of 2,000 square metres in Samail Industrial Estate and Ibri Industrial Estate.

Regarding the investment opportunity to set up a steel casting factory that will manufacture steel ingots, the project will be established in the Governorate of North Al Batinah on an area of 30,000 square metres, with an investment of OMR3.7 million.

An initial feasibility study is available for the project and the return on investment for this project is expected to reach 18.7 percent.

The investment opportunity to manufacture semi-rigid aluminium containers aims at establishing a new manufacturing facility to produce pre-formed aluminum that are used for food containers, dishes and trays for the retail and restaurant sectors, for which there is an initial feasibility study.

The project will be built on an area of land estimated at 10,000 square metres in Sohar Industrial City. The total investment for this project is OMR1.3 million and the return on investment in this project is estimated 15 percent.

Steel manufacturing plant

Another opportunity to establish a steel manufacturing plant aims at setting a new unit for the manufacturing of light structural steel blocks for long products for the needs of the construction sector.

An initial feasibility study is available for this project that will be built on an area of 10,000 square metres in the Governorate of Dhofar. While the total investment in this project is estimated at OMR77 million the return of investment in this project is 14.66 percent.

ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Efforts needed for conservation of Arabian Myrrh trees in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The second phase of the "Survey of Arabian Myrrh Trees in the Sultanate of Oman" has been completed.

The results of the study showed that myrrh trees in the Sultanate are going through a very critical stage and need urgent steps for their conservation Overgrazing is among the many challenges facing myrrh trees.

The survey, carried out by the Environment Authority represented by the Environment Conservation Office in Salalah, Dhofar Governorate, showed that the challenges facing myrrh trees are: Overgrazing (62 percent), insect activity (22 percent), drought (10 percent), and unsustainable harvesting methods (6 percent).

While the species is spread over an area of 92 square kilometres, the potential natural spread range is estimated at over 3,048 square kilometres.

Additionally, the study stated that the second phase relied on about 15 scientific indicators to gauge the current status of the species. For documentation, samples from 59 myrrh trees were taken in the Sultanate, which were recorded and documented. It is important to reconsider their classification at the national level according to references of the evaluation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN.2001), in terms of the presence of less than 250 trees in nature, with a decline of this species by more than 70 percent.

The importance of protecting the species has been emphasised through the Environment Authority and other relevant competent authorities at the regional and international levels, with the need to continue implementing the remaining stages of the study until the end of 2023. There is also a need to establish a garden of Arabian myrrh trees in areas of its spread in the Dhofar Governorate.

The "Survey of Arabian Myrrh Trees in the Sultanate of Oman" project, implemented by the Environment Authority represented by the Environment Conservation Office in Salalah, Dhofar Governorate, was carried out using precise scientific methods.

> With a decline of Arabian Myrrh Trees by more than 70 percent, less than 250 of these trees are left in the wild, according to International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN.2001)

The indicators were divided into the following categories: - Spatial indicators (date of inspection, name of the place, coordinates of the site, documentary image), vital indicators for trees (height, branching, diameter of the main trunk, tree canopy, leaves, flowering, and fruits), indicators of the degree of threat (grazing, drought, insects, crop harvesting methods).

Focus in the study was placed on the documentation aspect of the species by collecting gum and herbal samples. The study conducted an initial assessment of the age of a group of myrrh trees from the sample, which showed that the oldest tree is up to 40 years old, and the youngest is about 9 months old.

The study aims to identify the status of vital indicators of myrrh trees, and natural and human threats that have caused a decline in their numbers in their areas of spread in the Dhofar Governorate. This is in addition to defining accurate and up-to-date scientific information and data about it, with the possibility of developing a classification of the threat level at local and global levels for the species.

TRANSPORT MINISTRY CONSTRUCTS LINK ROADS IN KHAZAEN ECONOMIC CITY TO EASE TRAFFIC FLOW

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology began constructing link roads connecting Khazaen Economic City with Al Batinah Expressway. The project, which includes 7 km link roads, will contribute to traffic flow to and from Khazaen Economic City. — ONA

YOUR BIGGEST ROAD HAZARD IS IN YOUR HAND

A TIMES OF OMAN HANDS-FREE DRIVING INITIATIVE

Asset Management
Bank Muscat Money Market Fund
(Daily subscription and redemption)

1 year*: 3.96%
*annualized return

Unaudited Statement of Comprehensive Income for 6 months ended 30th June 2023

	30-Jun-23 RO'000	30-Jun-22 RO'000
Interest Income	2180	846
	2180	846
Expenses:		
Management fees	(216)	(101)
General and administrative	(97)	(35)
	(313)	(136)
Net Profit for the period	1,867	710
Earnings per unit	0.034	0.024

Unaudited Statement of Financial Position as at 30th June 2023

	30-Jun-23 RO'000	30-Jun-22 RO'000
Assets		
GCC Bonds	4,100	-
Fixed Deposits	34,505	28,631
Cash & Cash Equivalents	31,445	7,200
Accrued Interest	1,022	730
Total Assets	71,072	36,561
Liabilities:		
Creditors and accruals	(43)	(27)
Net Assets	71,029	36,534
Composition of net assets:		
Units issued	54,457	29,118
Retained Earnings	16,572	7,416
Net Assets Value (NAV)	71,029	36,534
Net Asset Value (NAV) per unit (Rial)	1.3043047	1.254668

Note: Due to figures displayed in 000's, immaterial variance is likely with actual numbers. The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any Unitholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of request.

Managed by Bank Muscat SAOG, Private Equity & Asset Management Division
PO Box 134, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24767449 Fax:24704478. or Email: fundbackoffice@bankmuscat.com

www.bankmuscat.com

C.R No. 1/14573/8

FOCUS ON ICT SECTOR

Programme to groom skills of fresh graduates kicks off

MUSCAT: Huawei's programme for 2023 in the Sultanate of Oman, codenamed "Seeds for the Future" kicked off on Monday under the patronage of Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The programme is supported by Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel).

The programme aims to groom the skills of undergraduates and fresh graduates.

Promoting innovation

It also seeks to exchange knowledge, promote innovation and increase awareness regarding the information and communications technology (ICT) sector.

During the "Seeds for the Future" programme, the "Tech-4Good" regional competition will be held in a bid to promote social entrepreneurship, problem solving skills and leadership through teamwork.

The regional competition brings together youth to explore means of utilising digital technology in tackling social issues. — ONA

NET ZERO EMISSIONS

< FROM A1

Oman plans to phase out fuel-operated vehicles

The contribution of capital will be in kind and not cash, by way of asset transfer in accordance with an asset valuation report for both parties," OOMCO said.

"We aim to expand in the electric vehicle market and encourage the use of green energy," OOMCO added.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology during its annual media briefing said that Oman is committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and the Sultanate plans to phase out fuel-operated vehicles and ensure that 79 percent of vehicles in the country by 2035 are electric.

As per the ministry's estimates, Oman will have at least 22,000 new electric vehicles (EV) on roads by 2040 and phase out all fossil fuel powered vehicles by 2050.

Also the government is considering ways to give incentives for electric vehicle owners. The Tax Authority had recently announced that electric vehicles and EV parts will be exempt from value-added tax (VAT), customs tax and registration fee in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has already installed more than 90 charging stations across the country in an effort to encourage adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and reduce carbon emissions.

The ministry has developed a plan to install more than 140 charging stations by the end of 2023, and more than 350 EV charging stations by the end of 2026. Automobile sector promises to be one of the key areas where carbon emissions need to be reduced and in this regard, Oman had already announced the manufacturing of the first electric vehicle in the Sultanate in February 2022 with the launch of its debut model - the Mays iE1.

بيت الخبرة
للمشاريع المتكاملة

Tender Announcement
(LV2023/SSC/T/01)
JULY 23, 2023

Tender Invitation

The House of Expertise for Integrated Projects & Trading extends an invitation to Experienced,Excellent, and First Grade Contractors to participate in the tender process for the construction of the School & Gymnasium at AlKhoud. The project encompasses a full built-up area of approximately 12,300 square meters, and the selected bidder will assume the role of the main contractor.

The following are the tender purchase details:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Deadline for last day Tender Documents Purchase	Deadline for Tender Documents Submission	Tender Fee
LV2023/SSC/T/01	Construction of School & Gymnasium	Thursday July 30, 2023 Not later than 4 pm	Thursday August 30, 2023 Not later than 12 pm	500 OMR

- Interested bidders are to submit an official "Expression of Interest" letter to the following email addresses, indicating their willingness to participate in the said tender:
  - To: Tender@linesandvisions.com
  - Cc: r_azri@sapsoman.edu.om
  - Cc: nabhan@sapsoman.edu.om
- Interested bidders shall transfer the tender fee to the following bank account and must attach the fee transfer receipt with the EOI letter and NO CASH will be accepted:
  - ***MEETHAQ Islamic Banking*** -Bank Account Number: ***0614-50020449-000-1***
    HOUSE EXPERTISE AND INTEGRATED TRD PROJ
- Full Tender Documents will be issued to the interested bidders via email as a link (digital copy) and the bidder must acknowledge the receipt of the same.
- Interested bidders will be requested to sign an NDA after purchasing the tender

WORLD

Delhi summit paves way for robust food safety

The discussion and outcomes of the sessions have laid a strong foundation for collective action in tackling regulatory challenges and ensuring the well-being of consumers worldwide

NEW DELHI: The first-ever Global Food Regulators Summit (GFRS) 2023 in New Delhi has paved the way for a more robust food safety and regulatory ecosystem, according to an official release.

This groundbreaking initiative has garnered global acclaim for its potential to transform and strengthen the world's food safety systems. The discussion and outcomes of the sessions have laid a strong foundation for collective action in tackling regulatory challenges and ensuring the well-being of consumers worldwide, the statement added.

The first technical session of the summit focused on food regulatory systems in different countries, key strategies adopted by food regulators to mitigate various risks associated with foods, challenges faced by the regulators globally and the exchange of perspectives on strengthening food safety systems across the food value chain through a cohesive approach.

VK Paul, member, India's NITI Aayog, delivered the special address during the opening session, deliberating on the importance of a national regulatory framework for an effective food safety control system.

"Harmonised global regulator regimes can play a crucial role in setting and enforcing standards & regulations to protect consumer health, promote fair trade practices and maintain public trust in the global food control system," Paul said. Raj Rajasekhar, vice chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission; and Rajesh Kumar Singh (IAS), secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade Industry, addressed the participants and emphasized on the need for providing an enabling environment for the food industry, having simpler regulations and decriminalisation of minor offences, without compromising on the food safety.

Professor Susan Jebb, chair, Food Standards Agency, UK and Isabelle Laberge, senior director and chief food safety officer, Canada shared their insights on innovations in standards setting and quality assurance and role of modern food regulations in creating a balance between innovations and food safety.

Minister for food safety, New Zealand, Rachel Broking, addressed the participants virtually, laying a greater emphasis on food safety across the globe. S Gopalakrishnan, special secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, presented the regulatory system being followed by FSSAI which set a platform for the panel discussions.

The opening session was followed by a panel discussion on 'Global Regulatory Framework', with panelists from eight different countries, including Brazil, Bhutan, Chile, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Mozambique, US and New Zealand. During this session, moderated by Shri Sanjeev Chopra, secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution, shared their experiences and successful initiatives from different countries, inspiring others to adopt similar approaches. — ANI

Times OF OMAN

Printed and published by: Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

MOVE FORWARD PARTY

Pita may be renominated for Thailand prime minister post

BANGKOK: The Move Forward Party may renominate Pita Limjaroenrat, the party's leader, for the post of Thailand prime minister in an effort to secure the senators' support, according to media report.

The party has petitioned the ombudsman to ask the Constitutional Court if Pita may be renominated to parliament for the role of the prime minister at the head of a coalition government, according to party secretary-general Chaithawat Tulanon, who made the announcement on Monday.

He hoped the renomination would be allowed and there would be enough support from the military-appointed senators, The Bangkok Post reported.

Pita was nominated as the sole prime ministerial candidate at the joint sitting of the 500- stong House of Representatives and the 249 current senators on July 13, but he failed to win a majority vote. His eight-party alliance mustered only 324 votes, well short of the needed 375.

The parliament then voted on July 19 to reject his renomination. Opponents argued that a failed motion could not be resubmitted during the same session of the Parliament and that this also applied to Mr Pita's nomination for prime minister, The Bangkok Post reported.

After the rejection, the Move Forward Party (MFP), which won 151 House seats, agreed to allow the Pheu Thai Party, its largest ally with 141 MPs, to take the lead and nominate a candidate for prime minister. Pheu Thai Party is expected to nominate a candidate for the prime minister's position at a joint sitting on Thursday, The Bangkok Post reported. — ANI

USS ANNAPOLIS

Another nuclear-powered submarine docks in S. Korea

SEOUL: A second US submarine arrived in South Korea on Monday, following the recent deployment of the first US nuclear-armed submarine in the country in four decades.

The USS Annapolis docked at a naval base on South Korea's southern island of Jeju to load military supplies as part of an unspecified operational mission, the South Korean navy said.

The move is seen as a part of the two allies joint effort to counter North Korea's nuclear threats.

Earlier, the USS Kentucky had arrived at a port in Busan on the mainland about a week ago.

North Korea responded to the arrival of the USS Kentucky with the test-firing of ballistic and cruise missiles.

The defense minister of North Korea even made veiled threats, suggesting the possibility of using a nuclear weapon in response to the submarine's docking.

The USS Annapolis, while powered by a nuclear reactor, is not nuclear-armed and is equipped with conventional weapons. Its primary mission is to destroy enemy ships and submarines.

In September last year, the USS Annapolis had participated in trilateral anti-submarine exercises with South Korea and Japan in international waters off the Korean Peninsula.

The USS Kentucky's docking in South Korea the previous week marked the first visit of a US nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine to South Korea since the 1980s. It coincided with talks between the US and South Korea aimed at coordinating responses in the event of a nuclear conflict with North Korea.

— DW

CLIMATE CHANGE

How do we fight wildfires as temperatures rise in Europe?

MADRID: Fire has burnt through forests for hundreds of millions of years, but now unprecedented wildfires are burning hotter and longer, partly due to climate change.

Declining rainfall and longer droughts are making forests so dry that localised lightning can spark a small fire that transforms into an inferno before firefighters can limit the damage.

Fires have been blazing in Canada for months, with firefighters struggling to bring them under control. Around 10 million hectares (24.7 million acres) of land have already burned, sending gigantic clouds of smoke over parts of the US.

Large fires have also broken out in Italy, Greece and Spain in recent days. Because of the heat and unfavorable winds, the Spanish weather service Aemet expects the risk of more fires to "go through the roof." The wildfire season in the Northern Hemisphere is in full swing.

On the other side of the world, so large was the scale of the Australian Black Summer megafires of 2019-20 that burnt nearly 60 million acres (24 million hectares) that once fire-resistant wet forests also went up in flames.

And as we continue to heat the planet by burning fossil fuels, those fires are set to worsen, endangering more people and wildlife.

"We are not on track to reduce risk now," said Hamish Clarke, senior research fellow at the school of ecosystem and forest sciences at the University of Melbourne in Australia in remarks last year to DW. "We need to change course urgently and seriously reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

Clarke co-authored an article in January last year on bushfire risk in Australia that argued "climate change is exceeding the capacity of our ecological and social systems to adapt," and that fire management is now at a "crossroads."

Here are three key areas through which fire management is attempting to adapt to a new climate reality.

Fighting fire with fire

Controlled or "prescribed" burning of forest vegetation, most often in the cooler months, helps lessen wildfire hazards in the summer by reducing the amount of kindling available to fuel fires. In fire-prone nations

like the United States, Australia, Portugal, Spain, Canada, France and South Africa, it's been a tried and tested fire management strategy for decades.

Also known as hazard reduction, these backburning strategies "are very effective at reducing the intensity and severity of fire," according to Victor Resco de Dios, professor of forest engineering at Spain's University of Lleida.

But to be an effective antidote, controlled burning under cool conditions now needs to be done across a "very large spatial scale to become effective," said the forest engineer.

With Europe, and especially countries around the Mediterranean like Greece, experiencing more severe summer wildfires, Resco de Dios suggests that "substantial hazard reduction" will demand prescribed burning across 1.5 million hectares (3.7 million acres) of land.

One problem with prescribed burning now, though, is that climate change has started to increase the risks.

After a controlled burning operation in New Mexico in May last year transformed into one of the worst wildfires

in the state's history, US Forest Service chief Randy Moore announced a pause in planned burning operations in national forests across the country — even if this was a very rare case.

First Nations people in the US and Australia were using a form of controlled burning to reduce flammable vegetation for thousands of years before Europeans invaded.

They used "frequent low-intensity" burning in the cooler months to reduce the wildfire threat, creating a grassy, park-like wooded terrain that also maintained biodiversity.

That's according to the authors of a February 2022 report, who also describe "the catastrophic risk created by non-Indigenous bushfire management approaches" whereby fire is less managed that suppressed during crises.

The neglect of Indigenous fire management techniques means "Australia's forests now carry far more flammable fuel than before [the] British invasion," state the researchers.

Since regaining ownership of native lands in the 1990s, Indigenous people have successfully practiced traditional fire management in the Kimberly region of northern Australia during the cooler dry season. — DW

Full story @ timesofoman.com/world

Asset Management
Bank Muscat Oryx Fund

Investing in stocks on MENA markets
(Daily subscription and redemption)

10 years*: 208%
*absolute

Unaudited Statement of Comprehensive Income for 6 months ended 30th June 2023

	30-Jun-23 RO'000	30-Jun-22 RO'000
Income		
Dividends	849	841
	849	**841**
Expenses:		
Management fees	(451)	(434)
General and administrative	(309)	(306)
	(760)	(740)
Net Investment Income	**89**	**101**
Fair value Gain or (Loss)	8,196	793
Realised Gain or (Loss) on sale	(1,189)	1,985
Net Profit for the period	**7,096**	**2,879**
Earnings per unit	**0.382**	**0.164**

Unaudited Statement of Financial Position as at 30th June 2023

	30-Jun-23 RO'000	30-Jun-22 RO'000
Assets		
Investments	51,785	38,905
Debtors and Receivables	67	12
Bank & Cash	1,108	6,379
Total Assets	**52,960**	**45,296**
Liabilities:		
Creditors and accruals	(110)	(92)
	(110)	**(92)**
Net Assets	**52,850**	**45,204**
Composition of net assets:		
Units issued	18,576	17,580
Retained Earnings	34,274	27,624
	52,850	**45,204**
Net Asset Value (NAV) per unit (Rial)	**2.845**	**2.571**

Note: Due to figures displayed in 000's, immaterial variance is likely with actual numbers. The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any Unitholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of request.

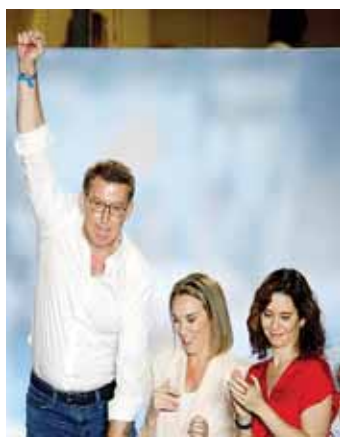
Managed by Bank Muscat SAOG, Private Equity & Asset Management Division
PO Box 134, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24767449 Fax:24704478. or Email: fundbackoffice@bankmuscat.com

www.bankmuscat.com

C.R No. 1/14573/8

Centre-right party wins Spain election

Despite the victory, the right-wing bloc falls short of a clear majority, making it more difficult to form a government



MADRID: Spain's centre-right Popular Party (PP) has won the election as the vote count is nearly completed, according to El Pais, a Spanish-language daily newspaper.

Spain's most uncertain national election, held for the first time in the middle of the summer witnessed the centre-right PP winning the election, while the governing Socialist Party (PSOE) resisted with a better showing than polls predicted. Despite the victory, the right-wing bloc falls short of a clear majority, making it more difficult to form a government.

The PP and far-right Vox together now have 169 seats, while the PSOE and Sumar (a grouping of 15 small leftist parties) obtain a combined 153. The PP is in the lead with 136 seats out of 350 in the Congress of Deputies (the absolute majority is 176 seats), followed by the PSOE with 122. Vox secures 33 and Sumar, 31. The rest of the seats are shared out between smaller regional parties, including some from Catalonia and the Basque Country, according to El Pais.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has claimed victory for the left with almost 99 per cent of votes counted, despite the result showing a hung parliament and the People's Party winning the most seats.

"We have won more votes, more seats and a higher percentage than four years ago," Sanchez told supporters.

According to the Interior Ministry, the turnout was four points higher than in 2019 at 70.33 per cent.

Spaniards voted on Sunday. Along with 208 of the 265 seats in the upper house, all 350 seats in the lower house of parliament will be up for election. In contrast to the upper house, where voters can select up to three regional senators, voters for the lower house must choose a party rather than a single candidate.

The winner will have three weeks to formally constitute their government, and King Felipe VI will meet party leaders to designate a candidate.

While Alberto Nunez Feijoo, the leader of the right-wing PP, is heavily favoured in the polls.

A potential PP-Vox government would represent a significant rightward shift for another EU member, continuing a recent trend in Sweden, Finland, and Italy.

However, nations like Germany and France are worried about the potential impact of the change on EU immigration and climate policies, Al Jazeera reported. — ANI

SEND US YOUR VIEWS AND COMMENTS
www.facebook.com/timesofoman

Tackling ACL injuries in Oman: Safeguarding athletes' performance and well-being

مستشفى الحياة الدولي
AL HAYAT INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL
Quality Care Without Compromise

Oman, a nation with a growing passion for sports and physical activity, has witnessed a concerning rise in Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injuries. As a sports injury specialist, it is crucial to shed light on this issue and raise awareness among athletes, coaches, and the general public. This article aims to educate readers about ACL injuries in Oman, their impact on athletes' lives, and the preventive measures that can be taken to minimize their occurrence.

The anterior cruciate ligament, located in the knee joint, plays a pivotal role in providing stability and preventing excessive movement. ACL injuries in Oman commonly occur due to sudden stops, pivoting, or direct contact during sports activities such as football, basketball, and sand skiing. These injuries can hamper an athlete's performance and lead to long-term complications if not addressed promptly.

Statistics and research findings indicate a concerning prevalence of ACL injuries in Oman. These injuries impact athletes of all ages and genders, from amateur to professional athletes. Moreover, they place a significant burden on the healthcare system and society as a whole.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of ACL injuries is essential for timely intervention. Athletes should be aware of indicators such as a "popping" sensation in the knee, immediate swelling, instability, and difficulty bearing weight. Seeking immediate medical attention when these signs are present is crucial, as early intervention significantly improves outcomes and prevents further damage.

DR. AHMED ABD EL SATTAR
Orthopaedic Surgeon

The diagnostic process for ACL injuries typically involves a physical examination and imaging techniques such as MRI or X-ray. Oman provides a range of treatment options, including both surgical (ACL reconstruction or reinsertion) and non-surgical approaches (physical therapy, bracing). Individualized treatment plans tailored to each patient's age, specific needs and circumstances are essential for optimal recovery.

Rehabilitation plays a critical role in the recovery process following ACL injury and surgical intervention. Collaborative efforts between orthopedic doctors, physical therapists, and athletic trainers provide comprehensive rehabilitation programs to athletes in Oman, focusing on restoring range of motion, strength, and stability.

Preventive measures are key to reducing the occurrence of ACL injuries. Proper warm-up routines, strength and conditioning exercises, and adopting safe techniques during sports activities are essential. Educating athletes, coaches, and parents about injury prevention strategies and techniques is vital in creating a safer sporting environment.

In conclusion, ACL injuries in Oman have emerged as a significant concern, affecting athletes across various sports and age groups. By understanding the causes, seeking timely medical attention, and adopting preventive measures, athletes can minimize the risk of ACL injuries and safeguard their well-being. Let us work collectively to create a sporting culture in Oman that prioritizes injury prevention, providing athletes with a platform to excel while maintaining their long-term health. Together, we can tackle ACL injuries and promote a safer and healthier sporting community.

BRIEFS

China: 11 killed after school gym roof collapses

BEIJING: 11 people were killed after the roof of a middle school gymnasium in China's northeastern city of Qiqihar collapsed on Sunday, CNN reported, citing the Chinese state media. There were 19 people in the gym at the time of the mishap.

Lagos plans mass burials for 2020 slain protesters

ABUJA: More than 100 people who died in Nigeria's anti-police protests in 2020 will soon be buried, a state Health Ministry official said on Sunday. The ministry said that the fatalities were from violence in several parts of the state, but not from the notorious protest site at the Lekki toll gate, where soldiers allegedly shot protesters. At least 103 bodies were gathered from across the state after clashes during the protests, said Olusegun Ogboye, the permenant secretary of Lagos state's Health Ministry. His statement came after the local media reported a leaked memo about the mass burial.

Afghanistan: At least 31 people killed, 74 injured

KABUL: At least 31 people have been killed, 74 are injured and 41 are reported missing in the flooding in Afghanistan over the last 72 hours, TOLO News reported, citing Taliban-led Ministry of State for Natural Disaster Management spokesperson Shafiullah Rahimi. — Agencies

FOR DISRUPTING TRAFFIC

Greta Thunberg fined for disobeying police

STOCKHOLM: A Swedish court on Monday fined climate activist Greta Thunberg for disobeying police at a protest last month.

Thunberg and other activists were detained for disrupting traffic in the oil terminal port in Malmo to protest against fossil fuel use. They blocked the entrance and the exit of the southern Swedish city's harbor.

According to the charge sheet filed against Thunberg, she "took part in a demonstration that disrupted traffic" and "refused to obey police orders to leave the site."

Thunberg on Monday admitted disobeying the police but argued that she had acted out of necessity, citing the need to fight climate change.

"It's correct that I was at that place on that day, and it's correct that I received an order that I didn't listen to, but I want to deny the crime," Thunberg said in court, according to the AFP news agency.

"My actions are justifiable," she was quoted as saying. "I believe that we are in an emergency that threatens life, health and property. Countless people and communities are at risk both in the short term and in the long term."

The court further ordered Thunberg to pay a fine of 1,500 Swedish kronor ($144). — DW

SPORTS

Pakistan in command

Shafique, Masood and bowlers put visitors on top against Sri Lanka on day one of the second Test match

COLOMBO: Half-centuries from Abdullah Shafique and Shan Masood, and seven wickets between Abrar Ahmed and Naseem Shah put Pakistan in a commanding position at the close of first day's play of the second Test match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground in Colombo on Monday.

After opting to bat first, Sri Lanka were dismissed for a paltry 166 in 48.4 overs. Right-arm spinner Ahmed bagged four wickets for 69 in 20.4 overs. He was well supported by Shah, who picked three wickets for 41 in 14 overs.

Left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi took one wicket, while two Sri Lankan batters were run out courtesy energetic fielding from Masood.

The tourists lost their opening batter Imam-ul-Haq with 13 runs on the board in 2.3 overs.

Shafique was joined by Masood and both batters stitched a 108-run partnership for the second wicket off just 117 balls.

Masood struck four fours and a six in his 47-ball 51 run knock before he top-edged a delivery for Kusal Mendis at midwicket to take a sharp catch off pacer Asitha Fernando. At stumps, Pakistan were 145 for two in 28.3 overs when bad light stopped play.

Shafique returned undefeated on 74 off 99 balls, smashing seven fours and two sixes. Captain Babar Azam remained unbeaten on 8 off 21 balls, hitting one boundary.

Fernando bagged both the wickets to fall for 41 runs.

The hosts were largely architects of their own downfall, capitulating for 166 before tea, having won the toss and elected to bat first on what had looked a pretty good batting surface.

It was certainly not the performance skipper Dimuth Karunaratne would have envisioned when he elected to bat following a rain-delayed start.

A combination of poor shot selection and outstanding fielding had seen just four Sri Lankan batters reach double figures before the innings folded. Of those, only Dhananjaya de Silva passed fifty, top scoring with 57.

Masood set the tone at the start of the game itself, effecting a direct hit to run Nishan Madushka out in the third over of the day. He would repeat the trick to run Prabath Jayasuriya out towards the close of the innings.

In between, Sadeera Samarawickrama was caught expertly at short leg for a third time in as many innings, while Dhananjaya was also dismissed courtesy a sharp catch in the deep.

And when Pakistan weren't producing such brilliance on the field, Sri Lanka's batters were offering up gifts, such as when Angelo Mathews edged through poking outside off, or when Kusal Mendis carved straight to point, as well as Dinesh Chandimal top-edging gently to midwicket.

Ramesh Mendis also ended in a similar way and by the time he fell, any prospect of the innings being salvaged was all but gone.

At this point, it was already clear that Sri Lanka had squandered good conditions, but to ram home the point further, Pakistan sprinted along at nearly seven an over for large parts of their innings.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 1st innings 166 all out in 48.4 overs (Dhananjaya de Silva 57, Dinesh Chandimal 34, Ramesh Mendis 27; Abrar Ahmed 4-69, Naseem Shah 3-41, Shaheen Shah Afridi 1-44) vs Pakistan 1st innings 145-2 in 28.3 overs (Abdullah Shafique 74 not out, Shan Masood 51; Asitha Fernando 2-41). - Agencies

PSG CONFIRM BID OFFER

World record $332mn bid for Mbappe by Saudi club Al Hilal

PARIS: Saudi Arabian football giants Al Hilal have made a record US $332 million bid for Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and French striker Kylian Mbappe, media reports said on Monday.

PSG confirmed the offer for its player and has given Al Hilal permission to open negotiations directly with Mbappe.

The 24-year-old France captain, who has a year left on his contract, has refused to sign an extension at the French champions and was not selected for their pre-season tour to Japan.

The 2018 World Cup winner plans to walk away as a free agent at the end of the upcoming season, and is widely expected to join Spanish giants Real Madrid.

Al Hilal's bid would make Mbappé the most expensive player fee in history, overtaking the US$262mn PSG paid for Neymar's rights when the team signed the Brazilian from Barcelona in 2017.

The bid represents Saudi Arabia's most ambitious move yet as part of a determined recruitment drive to lure the game's biggest players to the country.

Karim Benzema, N'Golo Kanté and Roberto Firmino are among the big names to head to Saudi Arabia's lucrative league after Cristiano Ronaldo agreed to a deal with Al Nassr in December.

Lionel Messi opted against Al Hilal, instead choosing MLS team Inter Miami CF after leaving PSG.

But a host of players have made the move, with more expected to follow before the start of next season. Premier League stars such as Riyad Mahrez and Jordan Henderson have been linked with moves.

Chelsea, Manchester United, Tottenham, Inter Milan and Barcelona have all expressed an interest in Mbappe, who has previously said he intends to leave PSG for free at the end of next season.

The feeling at PSG is that he has already agreed to join La Liga giants Real Madrid on the expiration of his contract.

However, chairman Nasser Al Khelaifi has made clear his determination to take a tough stance, saying it is "impossible" that Mbappe be allowed to leave on a free transfer in 2024.

Al Hilal are one of the clubs owned by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. They have already signed Ruben Neves from Wolves and Kalidou Koulibaly from Chelsea this summer. - Agencies

TEST MATCH

India re-write Test record books with 'DravBall'

PORT OF SPAIN: India re-wrote the Test record books following a rare display of ultra-attacking long format cricket on day four of the second Test against West Indies at Port of Spain on Monday, becoming the team with highest team run-rate in a Test inning lasting minimum of 20 overs.

While England drawing polarising reactions from Test cricket lovers, purists with their 'Bazball' school of cricket, which focuses on positive and attacking gameplay and the need to achieve clear results, Indian skipper Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid seemed to have taken a leaf from England's book to present to fans what could be the first exhibition of 'Dravball'.

In their second innings, the Indian team went into white-ball cricket mode and smashed 181 runs in just 24 overs before declaring the innings.

India scored their runs at a run rate of 7.54, the highest in Tests by a team during an inning lasting at least 20 overs.

They broke the record of Australia, who had scored 241/2 in just 32 overs against Pakistan in Sydney in 2017. The Aussies had scored these runs at a run rate of 7.53. Notably, India also smashed the fastest team hundred in Test cricket history.

Skipper Rohit Sharma and Yashasvi Jaiswal (38) opened the innings for India and put on a stand of 98 runs in just 71 balls, that is 11.5 overs.

Following Rohit's dismissal, India reached the 100-run mark in just 12.2 overs, which is a total of 74 balls.

India surpassed the 22-year-old record held by Sri Lanka. They had reached the 100-run mark in just 13.2 overs, that is in 80 balls against Bangladesh in 2001 during the Asian Test Championship.

Rohit smashed the fastest half-century of his career. Batting in his T20I avatar, Rohit reached his half-century in just 35 balls.

Ishan Kishan also smashed his half-century in just 33 balls. Kishan smashed the second-fastest fifty by an Indian wicketkeeper. Rishabh Pant has the fastest half-century by an Indian keeper in just 28 balls.

At the time of declaration, Kishan was unbeaten at 52 in 34 balls, consisting of four boundaries and two sixes. His runs came at a strike rate of 152.94.

India set a massive total of 365 runs for West Indies to win the ongoing second Test and Windies lost two wickets in the final session of day four.

At the end of the day's play, West Indies were at 76/2, with Tagenarine Chanderpaul (24*) and Jermaine Blackwood (20*).

Earlier, India had declared their second innings at 181/2, with Kishan (52*) and Shubman Gill (29*) unbeaten.

Earlier, in reply to India's first innings total of 438, West Indies were bundled out for just 255 runs to trail by 183 runs.

Skipper Kraigg Braithwaite top-scored for the Windies with a knock of 75. Alick Athanaze (37), Tagenarine Chanderpaul (33) and Kirk McKenzie (32) played decent knocks for the hosts.

Mohammed Siraj, the leader of India's inexperienced pace attack, lived up to his billing and bagged career-best figures of 5 for 60 in challenging conditions.

Mukesh Kumar and Ravindra Jadeja took two wickets while R Ashwin got one wicket.

Brief scores: India 1st innings 438 and 2nd innings 181-2 decl (Rohit Sharma 57, Ishan Kishan 52*) vs West Indies 1st innings 255 and 76-2 (Kraigg Brathwaite 28, Tagenarine Chanderpaul 24*, R Ashwin 2-33). - ANI

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE

WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM
TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by September 2023 reaching $82.56, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 91 cents from the price of Friday, which was $81.65. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,799.07 points, down by 0.03 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.43 per cent at 477.72 points. Oman Packaging, up 9.89 per cent, was the top gainer while OIFC, down 8.05 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman's electricity, water production rises in May

Oman's net production of electricity till the end of May 2023 reached 15,045.8 GW per hour

MUSCAT: The total production of electricity in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 0.6 per cent till the end of May 2023 to reach 15,537.5 GW per hour compared to 15,440.1 GW per hour during the corresponding period in 2022, according to the preliminary data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

To break down the figures, the Governorates of Al Dhahirah, North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah, recorded a rise of 1 per cent in total electricity production till the end of May 2023 to reach 9,838 GW per hour. Meanwhile, electricity production in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah surged by 327.3 per cent to reach 35.4 GW per hour. A rise was also recorded in the following governorates: North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah by 6.6 per cent to reach 3,494.8 GW per hour and Dhofar by 13.4 per cent to reach 1,836.1 GW per hour.

Further, the governorate of Muscat recorded a decline in total electricity production by 82.6 per cent to stand at 89 GW per hour. Musandam governorate registered a drop of 1.7 per cent to reach 150.7 GW per hour and Al Wusta governorate also went down by 27.8 per cent to reach 93.5 GW per hour.

Oman's net production of electricity till the end of May 2023 reached 15,045.8 GW per hour. The net figures are inclusive of purchases by Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP) and the Rural Areas Electricity Company (RAEC).

The highest volume of net electricity production was registered in the Governorates of Al Dhahirah, South Al Batinah and North Al Batinah, which stood at 9,516.9 GW per hour.

On the other hand, total water production in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a rise of 1.6 per cent to reach 210,931,200 million cubic metres by the end of May 2023 compared to 207,673,700 million cubic metres during the corresponding period in 2022.

Dhofar governorate's water production recorded a rise during the same period by 4.2 per cent, followed by Muscat governorate which recorded an increase of 2.1 per cent. -ONA

BRAND MAKEOVER

Twitter: Elon Musk rebrands platform to 'X'

SAN FRANCISCO: Social media giant Twitter received a makeover on Monday, with a new logo replacing the blue bird for an X as part of a wider rebranding that was announced by owner Elon Musk.

"And soon we shall bid adieu to the twitter brand and, gradually, all the birds," Musk wrote on his account on Sunday. Musk also changed his profile picture to the company's new logo, a white X on a black background.

Musk said the logo was "minimalist art deco" and that "X.com" would now lead to twitter.com.

Before acquiring Twitter for $44 billion (€39.7 billion) in a messy takeover in October 2022, Musk had said buying the company was part of speeding up his ambition to create an "everything app" he calls "X."

After buying Twitter, Musk named the parent company X Corporation. The billionaire's rocket development company, Space Exploration Technologies Corp, is commonly known as SpaceX. Musk also founded PayPal in 1999 as a startup called X.com. - DW

SOHAR PORT AND FREEZONE

Partnership formed to set up Oman's first silicon metal plant

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone has signed a land lease agreement with Green Ferro Alloy (FZC) to establish Oman's first silicon metal plant in Sohar Freezone.

With a total investment of $68 million, this project reinforces Sohar's position as a global trade hub and represents a significant milestone in the economic growth and diversification of the region, meeting the growing demand for silicon metal in Asia, Europe, and North America.

The silicon metal plant, which will occupy a land area of 160,000 sqm, will be designed and built to produce high-quality silicon metal, initially at a capacity of 25,000 TPA in the first phase and expanding to 50,000 TPA in the second phase. The molten silicon metal is poured from the furnace into ladles and moulds, expertly cooled through moulds or continuous casting. After cooling, the silicon metal is crushed and packaged in large bags, ready for global export. This innovative process ensures premium quality silicon metal for the customers worldwide.

The director of Green Ferro Alloy, stated, "We are excited about this partnership with Sohar Freezone and the promising opportunities it offers to investors. By leveraging the strategic advantages provided by Sohar Freezone and its proximity to key markets, the establishment of the first silicon metal factory in the Sultanate will strengthen the mining sector in the area."

Commenting on this achievement, Omar Al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Freezone, DCEO Sohar Port said, "This agreement marks a pivotal moment for us as it strengthens our position in global trade and reinforces our commitment to economic resilience. The establishment of the first silicon metal plant in Oman showcases our dedication to diversifying industries. Moreover, it demonstrates our ability to attract significant foreign direct investment, fostering business growth by increasing throughput and creating new opportunities, shaping a brighter and more sustainable future for Sohar and beyond."

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR27 million

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR27.050 million by way of allotting treasury bills.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR3 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.670 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.670 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.30179 per cent and 4.31603 per cent, respectively.

Meanwhile, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR20.550 million, for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR98.766 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.765 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.94869 per cent and 5.01051 per cent, respectively.

On the other hand, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR3.5 million, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached OMR97.500 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR97.500 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.01374 per cent and 5.14229 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5.75 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.25 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. -ONA

INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

Chinese delegation explores investment opportunities in economic zones

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A delegation of 15 Chinese businessmen, accompanied by the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman accredited to the People's Republic of China, visited the Public Authority for Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) to strengthen the investment partnership between Oman and China.

The visit aimed to introduce investment projects and commercial opportunities available in Opaz's economic and free zones and identify the most promising economic sectors in Oman. During the visit, the delegation learned about the facilities and incentives offered to foreign investors by Opaz, as well as the services and modern technologies that support the business environment.

A detailed presentation was given on the economic, industrial, and free zones supervised by Opaz, including their nature of economic activities, the volume of investments and their contribution to the GDP.

The delegation emphasised the importance of focusing on several sectors that achieve mutual benefit for both countries, including building and construction, renewable energy, fisheries, as well as oil and gas industry sectors. This week, the delegation continues to visit economic and investment projects in Oman to explore opportunities for enhancing economic sectors and contributing to doubling the volume of trade exchange between the two countries.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

Well-managed migration can be engine of sustainable economic growth: FAO

ROME: Migration can be a positive force in development, but increased international collaboration is needed, QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said at an International Conference on Development and Migration in Rome.

"Migration should be a choice and not a decision based on hunger, poverty, conflict or climate extremes," he said, noting that a large share of migrants come from rural areas where livelihood opportunities are scarce and under strain. "We need to work collectively to ease the pressures that force people to migrate," Qu told participants in the Conference, convened by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy to address the root causes behind migratory trends.

Priority should be given to agrifood systems transformation and rural development for which partnerships are crucial

The FAO Director-General encouraged FAO members to adopt innovative policies that reduce the drivers of migration and noted that FAO welcomes and stands ready to support Italy's proposed "Rome process" to develop and implement a five-year plan to boost growth, investments and sustainable development in countries where outmigration trends are greatest.

He also highlighted that priority should be given to agrifood systems transformation and rural development and partnerships are crucial. "Let us act in solidarity with the most vulnerable to provide them with a better future and a better life, and ensure that no one is left behind," he said.

While forced displacement should be tackled, Qu said that migrants also bring "immense contributions" to host countries that should be positively acknowledged noting that most migrants move within their own region. "Well-managed migration can be an engine of sustainable economic growth" as migrants can help in areas facing labour shortages, ageing populations and skill gaps in specific sectors including agriculture, he said. -WAM

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman Packaging, up 9.89 per cent, was the top gainer while OIFC, down 8.05 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,799.07 points, down by 0.03 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.43 per cent at 477.72 points. Oman Packaging, up 9.89 per cent, was the top gainer while OIFC, down 8.05 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 383 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.35 million, with more than 7.06 million shares changing hands. Out of 51 traded securities, 16 advanced, 19 declined, and 16 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net buyers for OMR245,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR222,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR23,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,849.59 points, down 0 per cent. Prices of Muscat Finance, Al Batinah Development Company, Oman United Insurance, National Finance, and Bank Muscat were up by 1.79 per cent, 1.05 per cent, 0.77 per cent, 0.65 per cent, and 0.36 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, and Al Anwar Investment were up by 2.22 per cent, 1.41 per cent, 1.37 per cent, and 1.16 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,149.70 points, up 0.59 per cent. Prices of Oman Packaging, National Biscuits, Oman Chromite, Oman Refreshment, and Galfar Engineering were up by 9.89 per cent, 9.85 per cent, 6.52 per cent, 6.25 per cent, and 1.20 per cent respectively. Prices of Raysut Cement, Al Anwar Ceramics, Voltamp Energy, and Oman Cement were up by 3.45 per cent, 2.76 per cent, 0.83 per cent, and 0.83 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.52 per cent before closing at 1,684.65 points. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Oman National Engineering, Abraj Energy, and Oman Telecom were up by 2.20 per cent, 0.94 per cent, 0.66 per cent, and 0.50 per cent respectively. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Sharqiyah Desalination, Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, and Phoenix Power were up by 6.12 per cent, 3.85 per cent, 3.45 per cent, 3.45 per cent, 2.99 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,805.94	4,792.90	4,799.07	4,800.52	-1.45	-0.03
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,863.19	7,834.48	7,849.59	7,849.79	-0.21	0.00
Industry Index	6,153.89	6,097.18	6,149.70	6,113.90	35.81	0.59
Services Index	1,694.93	1,684.51	1,684.65	1,693.39	-8.73	-0.52
MSX Shariah Index	477.72	475.89	477.72	475.68	2.05	0.43
MSX TR INDEX	6,324.52	6,307.36	6,315.48	6,313.33	2.16	0.03
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,580.18	8,548.86	8,565.34	8,565.57	-0.23	0.00
SERVICES TR IDX	1,870.99	1,859.49	1,859.65	1,861.58	-1.93	-0.10
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,573.88	6,513.30	6,569.41	6,531.16	38.25	0.59

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
7,060,321	2,347,934	383	23,908,119,852	16	19	16	51

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JULY 24

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	12,210	1,319	3	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.935	0.108	0.100	0.108	0.100	16,200,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	34,000	8,850	7	0.260	0.262	0.260	0.262	0.260	0.002	0.769	0.262	0.260	0.262	0.100	26,200,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	154,006	153,709	22	0.995	1.000	0.995	1.000	0.995	0.005	0.503	1.000	0.989	1.000	0.100	750,000,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	987,625	276,525	43	0.279	0.281	0.279	0.280	0.279	0.001	0.358	0.280	0.279	0.280	0.100	2,101,791,177
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	228,100	86,628	18	0.380	0.380	0.371	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.000	0.380	0.371	0.380	0.100	253,978,862
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	7,624	2,058	3	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.270	0.292	0.100	33,722,449
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	184,098	11,252	7	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.061	0.062	0.100	21,723,765
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	5,000	305	2	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.060	0.062	0.100	12,200,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,214,125	127,483	13	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	481,956,540
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	308,500	25,914	14	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.084	0.085	0.100	16,769,390
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	21,127	1,811	5	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.082	0.086	0.100	15,050,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	4,305	1,605	3	0.373	0.373	0.372	0.372	0.373	-0.001	-0.268	0.373	0.372	0.373	0.100	242,151,254
OM0000003000	Al MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	3,000	3,270	2	1.090	1.090	1.090	1.090	1.099	-0.009	-0.819	1.090	0.000	1.090	0.100	75,210,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	10,000	3,600	1	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.363	-0.003	-0.826	0.360	0.000	0.360	0.100	119,114,176
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	91,000	6,575	11	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.072	0.073	-0.001	-1.370	0.072	0.072	0.074	0.100	6,480,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	13,624	954	3	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.071	-0.001	-1.408	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.100	8,531,250
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	48,100	11,940	8	0.253	0.253	0.247	0.247	0.254	-0.007	-2.756	0.247	0.247	0.250	0.100	54,340,000
Total		17,3,326,444	723,799	165												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	1,500	300	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.182	0.018	9.890	0.200	0.185	0.000	0.100	6,487,172
OM0000001186	NATIONAL BISCUIT INDUSTRIES LIMITED	130	551	1	4.240	4.240	4.240	4.240	3.860	0.380	9.845	4.240	4.246	4.246	1.000	4,240,000
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	2,146	10,034	11	4.700	4.900	4.600	4.900	4.600	0.300	6.522	4.900	4.600	4.950	1.000	14,700,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	233	396	1	1.700	1.700	1.700	1.700	1.600	0.100	6.250	1.700	1.650	1.700	0.100	85,000,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	15,328	1,399	9	0.091	0.093	0.091	0.093	0.091	0.002	2.198	0.093	0.091	0.093	0.100	14,466,187
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	6,800	388	2	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.001	1.786	0.057	0.056	0.057	0.100	17,507,341
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	173,700	28,983	21	0.167	0.169	0.165	0.169	0.167	0.002	1.198	0.169	0.160	0.169	0.100	34,304,709
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO.	4,000	383	2	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.095	0.001	1.053	0.096	0.089	0.096	0.100	2,880,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	10,450	6,009	4	0.576	0.580	0.570	0.580	0.576	0.004	0.694	0.580	0.580	0.570	0.100	91,350,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	416,011	126,722	57	0.303	0.306	0.303	0.305	0.303	0.002	0.660	0.304	0.304	0.305	0.100	234,911,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	150,000	23,277	3	0.152	0.156	0.152	0.156	0.155	0.001	0.645	0.156	0.140	0.156	0.100	89,497,868
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	2,220	509	3	0.230	0.230	0.229	0.229	0.228	0.001	0.439	0.229	0.227	0.238	0.100	10,480,368
OM0000002333	SALALAH PORT SERVICES	280	118	1	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.000	0.000	0.420	0.000	0.420	0.100	75,531,708
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	63,000	19,530	8	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.310	0.000	0.000	0.310	0.305	0.315	0.100	37,200,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,094	104	2	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.094	0.096	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	42,941	6,098	3	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.141	0.142	0.100	237,056,220
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	1,000	120	1	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.127	0.100	50,972,425
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	21,246	2,550	4	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.121	-0.001	-0.826	0.120	0.120	0.130	0.100	9,768,330
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	29,800	2,771	2	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.094	-0.001	-1.064	0.093	0.093	0.095	0.100	7,905,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	561,857	47,845	11	0.087	0.087	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.085	0.086	0.100	17,510,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	6,701	653	3	0.095	0.098	0.095	0.098	0.100	-0.002	-2.000	0.098	0.095	0.098	0.100	93,548,051
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	427	19	2	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.045	-0.001	-2.222	0.044	0.041	0.049	0.100	3,740,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	83,298	5,413	8	0.064	0.067	0.064	0.065	0.067	-0.002	-2.985	0.065	0.061	0.065	0.100	95,069,095
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	335,750	56,416	19	0.168	0.169	0.168	0.168	0.174	-0.006	-3.448	0.168	0.167	0.168	0.100	33,600,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	13,714	384	2	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.029	-0.001	-3.448	0.028	0.028	0.031	0.100	18,896,848
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	69,942	1,964	5	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	0.029	-0.001	-3.448	0.028	0.027	0.029	0.100	20,003,378
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	3,000	375	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.130	-0.005	-3.846	0.125	0.122	0.125	0.100	12,225,270
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	135,630	6,239	13	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.049	-0.003	-6.122	0.046	0.046	0.049	0.100	7,360,000
Total		28,2,152,198	349,549	200												

TIGHTENING SUPPLY

Oil prices ease ahead of Fed, ECB rate hikes

SINGAPORE: Oil prices eased on Monday as traders awaited more rate hike cues from US and European central banks, with tightening supply and hopes for Chinese stimulus underpinning Brent at $80 a barrel.

Brent crude futures dipped 31 cents, or 0.4 per cent, to $80.76 a barrel by 0644 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was at $76.74 a barrel, down 33 cents, or 0.4 per cent, Reuters reported.

The benchmarks rose 1.5 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively last week, their fourth straight week of gains, as supply is expected to tighten following Opec+ cuts.

"While another Fed rate hike this week may drive some short-term price volatility, we expect tightening market conditions on Opec's supply cuts and increasing market speculation of further stimulus in China to continue to push prices higher through 3Q23," analysts from National Australian Bank said in a note.

Investors have priced in quarter-point hikes from the Federal

Reserve and European Central Bank this week so the focus will be on what Fed Chair Jerome Powell and ECB President Christine Lagarde say about future rate hikes.

Rising interest rates have dampened investments and strengthened the greenback, making dollar-denominated commodities more expensive for holders of other currencies.

"Another bearish piece of news worth considering is the UAE's view that the existing Opec+ cuts are adequate to balance the market," said Mukesh Sahdev, head of downstream and oil trading at Rystad Energy.

United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei said on Friday that actions by Opec+ to support the oil market are sufficient for now and the group is "only a phone call away" if any further steps are needed.

In China, market participants expect Beijing to implement targeted stimulus measures to support its flagging economy, likely boosting oil demand in the world's No. 2 consumer.

China's state planner on Monday unveiled measures to promote, encourage and spur private investment in some infrastructure sectors, and said it will also strengthen financing support for private projects.

Last week, US energy firms made their deepest oil rig cut since early June, with operating units down by seven to 530, energy services firm Baker Hughes said on Friday. -BNA

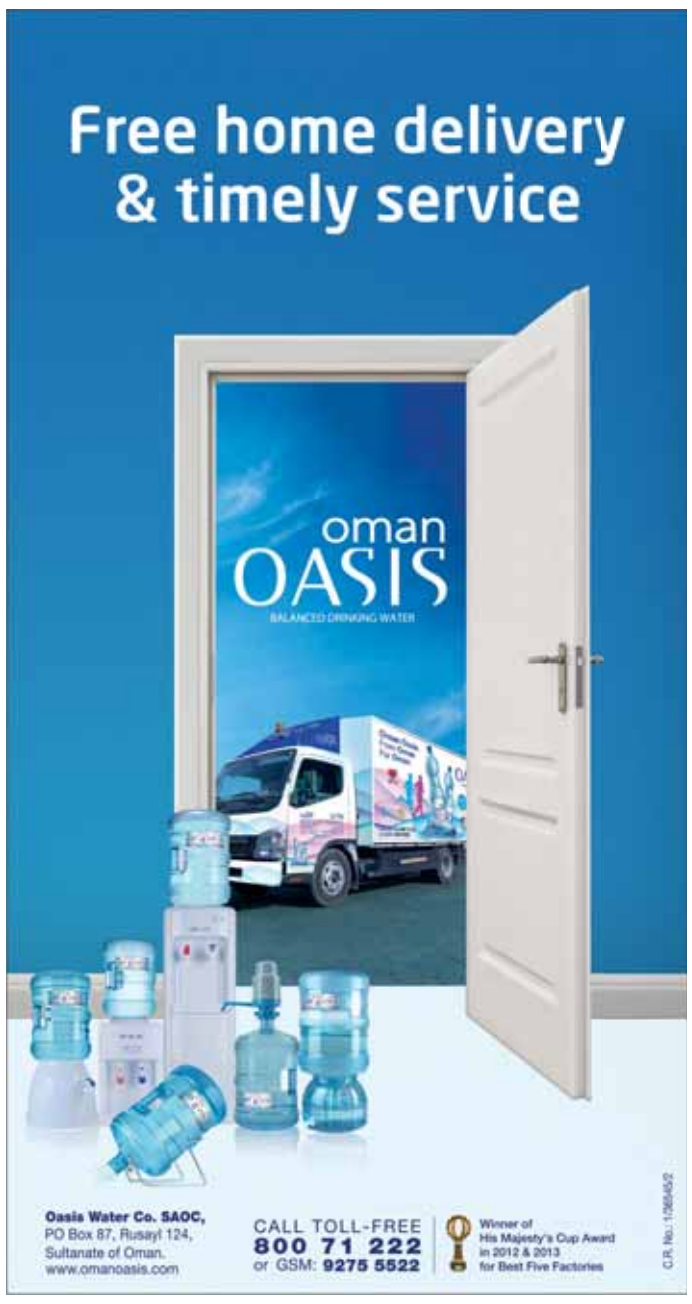
BOURSES

Foreign Portfolio Investors stay bullish on Indian markets

NEW DELHI: Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have pumped Rs153,539 crore in India so far in 2023-24 as Indian equity markets continue to attract FPIs, official data put out by the central government showed on Monday.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has laid down data on net Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPI) in India during the last three years and the current financial year. In 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23, the net FPI investments were Rs 267,100 crore, Rs (-) 122,241, and Rs (-) 40,936 crore, respectively. Sitharaman's response in Lok Sabha today was in reply to a query by a member whether there has been an increase in foreign institutional investment in the country.

— ANI



VINTAGE VEHICLES

Why India's Parsi community is automobile-obsessed?

NEW DELHI: On a balmy Sunday morning in Cusrow Baug, a Parsi colony in Colaba, Mumbai, the first people to stir are the motorcyclists. Soon after sunrise, a row of vintage and classic machines line up under the archway of the colony, their riders raring to go, wearing T-shirts that sport the logo of the "Vintage Zoroastrian Bikers of Bombay" (VZBB for short) — the riding club to which they belong.

As the name suggests, to become a member of the VZBB one must own a vintage motorcycle, must be a follower of the Zoroastrian religion — one of the world's oldest faiths — and must reside in Mumbai (formerly called Bombay). However, as Xereus Zend, one of the founding members of the group says, "It's not a religious thing, about being a Zoroastrian. It's more a cultural thing. It's how you connect with your motorcycle. In Bombay you know that a Parsi-owned car or a Parsi-owned bike is something that's well-maintained, something that's loved, something that's not man-handled."

People who live in Mumbai, where around 70,000 of the approximately 100,000-strong Parsi community reside, will be all too familiar with what he means. After all, the VZBB is just one example of Parsis who honor and treasure their machines. In Mumbai one is never too far away from a pristine Parsi-owned car or motorcycle that has been painstakingly maintained over the years.

Parsi pragmatism

So much so that there was a time when while scouring the classifieds section of a newspaper for used automobiles, one would pay special attention to ads that bore the words "Parsi-owned." A stamp of approval that indicated the machine, no matter of what vintage, was in immaculate condition, and was worth the possibly higher price it commanded.

Karl Bhote, a 37-year-old Parsi classic car enthusiast on a mission to preserve India's automotive heritage, puts the longevity of Parsi-owned cars and bikes down to the community's "pragmatic" nature not to replace a product unless it was essential.

"It's just a sense of responsibility, a sense of dignity towards the product that you have. You just treat it in a particular way," he says. And a perfect example of this is the 1955 Fiat 1100 Millecento that he owns, popularly known in Indian classic car circles as the "Dalda 13." The car once belonged to India's first female photojournalist, Homai Vyarawalla, who drove it from 1955 till 2009, only giving it up when in her mid-90s she found its upkeep rather difficult. But simply acquiring a new machine when her existing car worked perfectly well was unthinkable.

It's a sentiment echoed by 69-year-old Fram Dhondy, whose 1957 Fiat 1100 Elegant has clocked over 900,000 kilometres and is still used regularly.

"There was a lot of pressure on me about 25 years back to sell it. [People would ask] 'Why are you using such an old car? There are modern cars available.' I said 'Okay, but I am not going to sell it.' Even when I was small, and Dad used to drive us around, I realized it has never let us down anywhere. So, I said, 'When you have such a reliable machine, why let it go?'"

Handed-down generations

Today, Fram's son, Anosh, is the third generation Dhondy to drive that very machine, and like his grandfather and father before him, has no intention of ever selling the car. Both Fram and Anosh attribute the Parsi fondness for vintage and classic automobiles to the community's inherent love for all things old, citing the fact that the refrigerator in the family home is 80-years old and still going strong.

However, others believe the Parsi fondness for automobiles began simply because of the community's standing in society. Though small in number, the Parsis flourished under British rule in the port city of Bombay, now Mumbai. Which meant that Parsis like Rustom Cama and Jamshedji Tata became the first Indians to own cars in the country, while Suzanne Tata became the first Indian woman to acquire a driver's license.

Bhote counters that money is a deciding factor when it comes to the Parsi love for automobiles. "The wealthy Parsis obviously had cars, but that's not because they were Parsi, it's because they were wealthy. So did the Gujarati merchants, Marwari merchants and everybody else." -DW

LIFESTYLE

PRO KITESURFERS ENJOY OMAN

United by their passion for kiting, Khareef instructors, students and their special guests shared an epic kitesurfing experience riding approximately 10 km from Hikman's coastline to its corals; enjoying the breathtaking ambience of abundant ecosystems

Professional kite surfers have come to share their skills and expertise with avid kiters in Oman in Bar Al Hikman, located a 5 hour drive south of Muscat.

Hosted by Khareef Kiteboarding, a kite school in its third year running, the pro riders visited from The Netherlands, sponsored by international kiting brands Harlem and Naish.

United by their passion for kiting, Khareef instructors, students and their special guests shared an epic kitesurfing experience riding approximately 10 km from Hikman's coastline to its corals; enjoying the breathtaking ambience of abundant ecosystems and exceptional kiting conditions of Hikman.

Paris Hooper-Kay and Johanna Mueller, founders of Khareef Kiteboarding, explain 'It's an incredible opportunity to be able to touch shoulders with such talented riders, let alone host them in the hidden gem of the Middle East, Bar Al Hikman, Oman. To watch and learn their technique and effortless flow on the water is indescribable. Chatting and laughing with the guys that have been on international podiums only proved how magical kitesurfing is and the ability it has to bring like-minded people together all across the globe'.

The sport combines elements of surfing, windsurfing, and paragliding, and involves riding on a small surfboard or a kiteboard (twintip) while being propelled by the wind and large kite, controlled by a bar and harness connected to the riders body. Kitesurfers use the power of the wind to perform various maneuvers, such as jumps, tricks, and riding waves. It requires skill, balance, and knowledge of wind conditions for a thrilling and dynamic experience on the water.

Pro kiteboarder and Harlem kite designer Victor Looijestijn, when asked about his favourite part about kitesurfing, answers 'at the moment because I'm designing kites I love the product itself, and it brings me joy to see the joy and ease of use from others' he adds, 'sometimes when I'm kiting myself I love a day with smooth riding with no pressure but just enjoying the moment'.

Kitesurfing first emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, with the first patent for a kitesurf filed by Gijsbertus Adrianus Panhuise in 1977 in the Netherlands. It has since become increasingly popular as an extreme water sport worldwide, with advancements in equipment design and safety measures making it more accessible to a wider range of enthusiasts.

'Kitesurfing is considered a relatively new sport, meaning the Kitesurfer-community is growing rapidly every day. We've seen this really come to light in Oman, as just 3 years ago we had approximately 10 kites in the sky on a busy day at the beach (maybe 2-3 of them being local, Omani riders) we're now seeing 30-40 kites in the sky and the sport has grown popular amongst the locals as well. In the past 3 years, 70% of our kitesurfing-students have been Omani, many of them female riders. It's absolutely amazing to see how this sport is unfolding and continues to grow, and we're immensely grateful to be part of it and to share our love for kitesurfing with so many new faces'.

Kitesurfing competitions have attracted professional athletes and gathered increasing interest among spectators. Held in various locations around the world, showcasing the skills and talents of kiteboarding athletes, some of the most significant kitesurfing competitions include Red Bull King of the Air held in Cape Town, South Africa, the GKA Kite World Tour featuring freestyle, wave, and strapless freestyle disciplines in multiple locations worldwide, the KiteFoil World Series that involve a series of hydrofoil racing events held in different countries, the Kiteboard

Racing World Championships that holds International competitions focused on kiteboard racing, and the Tarifa Strapless Kitesurfing Pro dedicated to strapless freestyle kitesurfing.

'Different competitions seek different outcomes,' Naish pro kitesurfer Stig Hoefnagel and third place podium winner of The King of the Air (2021) explains, 'from Big Air Kite League, to GKA. 'The King of the Air with only 18 spots available for kiters is one of the more competitive ones.

The Big Air kite league however, really gives the podium for people who have not kited before..with millions watching around the world, this is like the holy grail of kitesurfing.'

Scott Barendsen shares his experience explaining 'I'll be honest, on the first day, when reaching Bar Al Hikman, I wasn't sure what to do- there's no phone signal, and the living seemed basic.

But after one night, I feel like a new person- this place opens your eyes and allows one to be grateful. It makes you realize how little you need, in order to live simply and happily. We talk to each-other much more, there are no distractions, I don't even know where my phone is. This place holds a special place in my heart'.

SPORTS

PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY IN USA

Bellingham makes Real debut in win over Milan

LOS ANGELES: Young England midfielder Jude Bellingham impressed on his Real Madrid debut in a 3-2 pre-season win against AC Milan in Los Angeles on Sunday.

It was another Englishman, Fikayo Tomori, who got his name on the scoresheet, heading the opener for AC Milan, but two second-half goals from Federico Valverde and a superb winner from Vinicius Jr, who ran on to a sublime Luka Modric pass, sent the majority of fans in a 70,000 crowd at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena home happy.

Bellingham's 62-minute debut had flashes of his natural technique and confidence, twice bringing roars of approval from the crowd and then praise from his manager Carlos Ancelotti.

Ancelotti said Real Madrid are "lucky" to have the "fantastic" Jude Bellingham after the match.

"It is rare to find player with this kind of quality," Ancelotti said. "He is only 20, so he can improve. We are lucky to have him in our squad. He was fantastic. He has a lot of rhythm, moves well and has quality finding open spaces."

Real signed Bellingham from Borussia Dortmund on a six-year contract.

Hislop 'conscious' after collapsing on air

Former West Ham goalkeeper Shaka Hislop is conscious and recovering after collapsing on air before Sunday's friendly between Real Madrid and AC Milan.

The 54-year-old was working as an analyst for US broadcaster *ESPN*. He stumbled and fell to the ground face forwards during a pre-match pitch-side interview at the Rose Bowl.

Dan Thomas, presenting alongside Hislop, called for assistance as the channel cut for a commercial break.

Temperatures in California on Sunday were reported to be about 30C, but it is unclear if heat was a factor in Hislop's collapse.

In an update at half-time, Thomas said: "My mate, Shaka, not here, but as it stands, it's good news.

"He's conscious. He's talking. I think he's a little embarrassed about it all. He's apologised profusely. Not a man who likes people to make a fuss of him.

Hislop played 121 games for West Ham in two spells from 1998 to 2002 and 2005 to 2006. He won 26 caps for Trinidad and Tobago. - Agencies

Germany put six past debutants Morocco

Popp scores a brace as world No.2 side begin their FIFA Women's World Cup campaign in style

MELBOURNE: Germany began their 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup campaign in style as captain Alexandra Popp scored twice to see off debutants Morocco in Melbourne, Australia, on Monday.

It was a comfortable victory for world No.2 side Germany, who are heavy favourites to top Group H.

Striker Popp, who was ruled out of the Euro 2022 final through injury, made her mark with two clinical headers in the first half.

Klara Buhl pounced on a rebound shortly after half-time to extend Germany's lead, before Morocco's Hanane Ait el Haj and Yasmin Mrabet poked into their own net on separate occasions.

Germany continued to cause problems and completed the rout when substitute Lea Schuller added a sixth, firing it into an empty net after a swift counter-attack on the right.

It was a strong performance from Martina Voss-Tecklenburg's side as they created numerous chances and looked sharp going forward, hitting the woodwork on two occasions and having a goal ruled out for offside.

Germany thus maintained their impressive record in the group stages of the competition, losing only once in 25 matches.

Morocco, one of eight teams making their World Cup debut this year, were dangerous in flashes, but they lacked the clinical touch that Germany's Popp provided at the other end.

Germany have scored 16 goals in their past six World Cup games

With some of Europe's bigger nations underwhelming in their opening matches, Germany took their opportunity to put a marker on the competition, confirming their position as one of the favourites.

Morocco, ranked 70 places lower than Germany, were not as poor as the scoreline suggests, as they pressed high and caused problems on the counter-attack.

Germany face Colombia in their second group game in a strong position, while Morocco face South Korea next, hoping to pick up their first points at a Women's World Cup.

Borges' hat-trick in Brazil's easy win over Panama

Ary Borges scored the first hat-trick of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup as Brazil cruised to 4-0 victory over Panama in Adelaide, Australia, on Monday.

The winger netted a double in the first half and set up Bia Zaneratto shortly after the interval with a backheel, before heading home the fourth goal.

It means Brazil maintain their perfect record of winning all nine of their opening games at Women's World Cups. They are well placed to qualify from Group F, after France were held by Jamaica.

Both of Brazil's goals in the opening 45 minutes came in similar fashion - perfectly clipped crosses from the left by Debinha, met by the head of Borges.

The first header beat Panama keeper Yenith Bailey, while the second was kept out but tucked away by Borges on the rebound.

Borges unselfishly gave up a chance to seal a hat-trick, laying off for team-mate Zaneratto to finish a superb team move into the roof of the net - but she completed her treble after 70 minutes by heading through Bailey's legs.

Panama - one of eight first-time contenders in 2023 - were completely outclassed, rarely able to escape their own half.

Substitute Girelli seals Italy's victory

Italy's Women's World Cup trip started on the right foot as veteran Cristiana Girelli's goal proved decisive, helping the Azzurre beat Argentina 1-0 in Group G in Auckland, New Zealand, on Monday.

This is Italy's second consecutive and fourth overall appearance at a Women's World Cup, while Argentina are seeking a breakthrough as they have yet to reach the knockout phase or even register a win in their previous three World Cup appearances.

Italy had the ball into the net twice in the first half, but both Arianna Caruso and Giacinti's celebrations were cut short due to offside.

In a desperate bid for an opening victory, Italy threw on Girelli in the 83rd minute which turned out to be the turning point.

Four minutes later, Lisa Boattin whipped in a cross from the left, and Girelli out-jumped her marker to beat Correa with a looping header.

Deep into stoppage time, the Albiceleste had a chance to equalise, but Durante saved Florencia Bonsegundo's free-kick from 20 yards.

Italy now face Sweden on Sunday, while Argentina take on South Africa. - Agencies

MATCH BEGINS ON JULY 27

England name unchanged squad for Oval Ashes Test

LONDON: England on Monday named an unchanged 14-man squad for the fifth Ashes Test at the Kia Oval, as they look to bounce back from the disappointment of drawing in Manchester with a win to square the series. The final Test begins on July 27.

Despite being "pretty much perfect throughout", in the words of captain Ben Stokes, England were unable to force victory at Old Trafford as heavy rain over the weekend meant only 30 overs were possible on day four and none at all on day five.

The result meant Australia retained the urn with a game to spare.

As in 2019, England go to south London unable to win the series but with the incentive of denying Australia their first win on these shores since 2001. "It is a massive game for us and 2-2 sounds a lot better than 3-1," Stokes said.

England will have to assess the fitness of Chris Woakes, who has had a major impact in his two appearances and is the side's second-leading wicket-taker with 12, but has reported feeling quad stiffness.

England squad: Ben Stokes (capt), Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Jonathan Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Dan Lawrence, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Josh Tongue, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood. - Agencies

AUSTRALIAN SKIPPER EYES WIN

Good to retain Ashes but work to do for next Test: Cummins

MANCHESTER: In contrast to four years ago, there won't be any big celebrations from Australia on retaining the Ashes with skipper Pat Cummins aware the Manchester rain helped them escape with a draw on Sunday after being dominated by England.

Cummins was part of the side in 2019 when they eventually shared the series 2-2 having also retained the urn at Old Trafford, albeit with a convincing victory on that occasion, and those who featured that year have often spoken about it leaving unfinished business.

There was a flatness all-round at the end of this game with England knowing their chance of regaining the Ashes had gone while the visitors were aware they'd put in one of their worst performances under the Cummins-Andrew McDonald era. However, Cummins did make reference to their earlier success in the series which put them 2-0 up.

"It's a bit of a strange one," Cummins said. "As a group [we're] proud that we've retained the Ashes but it's off the back of not our greatest week. It feels like it's good to retain the Ashes, but we know we've got a fair bit of work to do for next week."

The final Test begins on July 27.

He said: "I don't think there will be huge celebrations. Maybe a bit of a pat on the back for retaining the [Ashes]. There's been a lot of work gone into putting us into a position where a draw does make us retain the Ashes. But there's a Test match starting in three days so that's going to be our full focus.

"It's a pretty similar group to 2019 when we retained it and we all came away feeling okay but we felt like we'd just missed what we'd come over to achieve. In some regards whatever happened today wouldn't really change how we look at next week. We want to win it to make sure we win it outright."

Barring Marnus Labuschagne, who had an excellent Test with scores of 51 and 111, there wasn't a part of Australia's performance that functioned close to their top level. But one of the main areas that came in for focus was Cummins' captaincy during England's rampaging innings of 592 which came at more than five an over.

Cummins insisted he had not felt overwhelmed as a captain and instead turned the focus on his own bowling which fell significantly below his usual high standards. "As a bowler it's frustrating that I didn't bowl very well at all, not up to the standards I try and keep myself to," he said. "I let through more boundaries than I normally do. Probably just one or two bad balls an over. I don't know [why] really. [My] rhythm felt pretty good, I felt like I was pretty clear in my own mind with plans.

"In terms of captaincy I think there have been a few of those moments where the [England] batters have played well, the game moves very quickly.

"We knew coming into this series they were probably going to have a couple of days where it went their way and the game moves really quickly, so it was one of those days. It's tough, frustrating, but that's cricket. We've been on the other side of it plenty of times." - Agencies

TRAVEL

GENEVA

THE GOURMET CAPITAL OF EUROPE

RAHUL DAS
rahuldas@timesofoman.com

For as long as I can remember, Geneva has always wanted to be Europe's food capital. I was not always convinced but this summer, I finally conceded the point. But, even then I had doubts.

Shouldn't Paris with its numerous Michelin starred restaurants have that distinction? Or Florence in Italy, which is known for its delicious Tuscan cuisine? Or Amsterdam in the Netherlands which is popular all over the world for its pancakes and iconic stroopwafels? And what about London, which has the largest number of international restaurants and the world's best fish and chips?

But time has been on Geneva's side as it boasts a gastronomic scene that is renowned for its exceptional diversity and unforgettable culinary experiences.

From the enchanting lakeside fondue to the innovative creations of Michelin-starred restaurants, the fine dining establishments in Geneva have earned worldwide acclaim. Visitors and food enthusiasts alike can prepare to embark on a gastronomic journey that will captivate their taste buds and leave a lasting impression on their senses.

Geneva's fine dining scene is a haven where haute cuisine meets innovation, attracting culinary enthusiasts from around the world.

With twelve prestigious Michelin-starred establishments, Geneva's gastronomic landscape is unparalleled.

Le Chat-Botté delights guests with contemporary French cuisine infused with Mediterranean flavours.

Nestled in the heart of Beau-Rivage Genève hotel, this restaurant offers a dining experience that effortlessly combines prestige and taste.

For a remarkable culinary adventure surrounded by vineyards, Domaine de Châteauvieux is a must-visit destination.

Just a short distance from Geneva, this historic 16th-century establishment adds an elegant touch to French cuisine. The restaurant showcases dishes made with exquisite ingredients like Blue lobster from Brittany and Simmental beef filet, served within the delightful gourmet ambiance where tradition and innovation intertwine, promising an unforgettable dining experience.

As summer unfolds in Geneva, the culinary scene transforms into a paradise for those seeking fresh and vibrant flavours. From vegetable-focused dishes to succulent seafood, there is an abundance of options to celebrate the season.

Indulge in the epitome of a gourmet lakeside experience at Restaurant de la Plage, where guests can immerse themselves in breathtaking views of Lake Geneva. This culinary gem showcases the region's local fish and seasonal produce, tantalizing the taste buds with delectable dishes like Perch Fillets from Lake Geneva and Trout from Guibert's in Montreux. The soothing sounds of lapping waves provide a serene backdrop, further enhancing the dining experience for guests.

Guests can experience the treasures of the sea at Octopus, the recently established seafood haven located in the Champel district. This establishment, adorned with ample natural light, is committed to showcasing the finest selection of fish and seafood, with an array of tantalizing dishes, including Octopus carpaccio with pomegranate and caper, Grilled octopus tentacle with pepper emulsion, and Crispy octopus tentacle with egg. The menu also offers the opportunity to delight in the delicate flavours of red mullet, scallops, and teriyaki salmon, resulting in an unforgettable seafood dining experience.

The gastronomic adventure continues at Indian Rasoi in Carouge, where Swiss and Indian influences are skilfully blended to create dishes that transport guests to the vibrant streets of India. Delights include succulent Tandoori salmon, delectable Samosa with chickpea curry, and aromatic Roganjosh lamb infused with saffron and ginger. The fusion of flavours in these dishes captivate and tantalize the senses, making it a truly immersive experience.

> Embark on a culinary journey through this captivating city, where every bite tells a story and every meal is an opportunity to discover new and exciting flavors. Experience the richness, diversity, and creativity of Geneva's gastronomic landscape and savor the remarkable culinary offerings that await you in this culinary paradise.

In Old Town, Les Armures restaurant serves up a selection of Swiss specialties cooked according to age-old recipes, giving guests the opportunity to indulge in some truly refined cuisine.

A restaurant in Geneva well-known for its typical cuisine and historic setting, this restaurant, known as one of the oldest in the city, has become a must as a dining establishment. Over the years, it has become one of Geneva's favourite restaurants. The attentive and professional service will help make your meal a memorable event.

People travelling to Geneva from Oman should not miss - restaurant Balila where the world class Lebanese restaurant offers an exquisite dining experience that celebrates the rich culture and flavors of Lebanon.

"We are passionate about providing our customers with an exceptional culinary experience that is infused with the warmth and hospitality that Lebanon is known for. Our team of talented chefs has spent years perfecting our menu, which features a wide range of traditional Lebanese dishes as well as contemporary twists on classic favorites. From our signature hummus and falafel to our succulent grilled meats and seafood, our menu is sure to delight even the most discerning palate," they proudly claim.

If you want to try Japanese food, don't miss SACHI at the Mandarin Oriental, Geneva.

SACHI's innovative design features stylish table seating for guests to share exquisite combinations of modern Japanese signature dishes. The elegant restaurant with a zen garden terrace, curated by a specialist Japanese gardener, provides an idyllic setting on the Rhône waterside.

Chef Mitsu, trained by the master Nobu Matsuhisa, is a renowned local figure in Japanese gastronomy. He will guide guests through a range of unique and surprising flavors.

Geneva's culinary scene is a vibrant tapestry of flavors, showcasing the city's commitment to culinary excellence and global gastronomy.

From haute cuisine to international fusion and traditional Swiss delicacies, Geneva offers a diverse range of culinary experiences.

Embark on a culinary journey through this captivating city, where every bite tells a story and every meal is an opportunity to discover new and exciting flavors. Experience the richness, diversity, and creativity of Geneva's gastronomic landscape and savor the remarkable culinary offerings that await you in this culinary paradise.

ROUND-UP

Omantel unveils 'To Dhofar' campaign

The campaign covers Omantel's CSR initiatives and SME support in Khareef, and it is an addition to the activities and initiatives that are planned for Khareef to help offer visitors a unique experience

MUSCAT: Omantel, the first and leading telecommunication company in Oman, announced the launch of its marketing campaign named 'To Dhofar', joining forces with Dhofar Municipality to enhance visitors' experience during the Khareef season by offering a plethora of services and activities to keep them connected and entertained.

Saba Albusaidi, Senior Manager of Corporate Affairs at Omantel, commented, "We have launched the To Dhofar campaign as part of our marketing initiatives and it is strongly linked to our corporate strategy that puts the society at the centre of our operations. The campaign covers our CSR initiatives and SME support in Khareef, and it is an addition to the activities and initiatives that are planned for Khareef to help offer visitors a unique experience. Moreover, our collaboration with Dhofar Municipality comes from being the technology partner, and we are keen on increasing our brand presence in Khareef Dhofar as it is the most prominent tourism event in the region and attracts millions of people from Oman and abroad."

She also added, "In line with our CSR strategy, we will engage with the local communities in Dhofar and carry out initiatives that support the society, among these initiatives are the clean-up in Ain Jarziz in Sahel Ittin for the children with Down Syndrome, and a one-week training program to enhance the technological skills of the visually impaired adults in collaboration with Al Noor Association for the Blind in Dhofar, in addition to other initiatives with the Omani Bahjah Orphans Society including training program on technology and robots, and tree-planting in cooperation with Luban Land Volunteering Team.

"We seek to enhance our brand identity as the leading telecom company in Oman that offers integrated solutions, and we have partnered with a number of local SMEs to organise events and activities, primarily Salah Eat, which will take place in As Saadah Park, in addition to activities for kids and others for adults to try and experience 5G-based technologies through live experiments and video games at Omantel 5G Bus.

Besides, Omantel offers foreign visitors a 'Tourist Pack' an easy-to-activate prepaid SIM card with essential voice minutes and internet data to make calls, navigate way through online maps and stay connected with family and friends while on holiday. The SIM card can be conveniently obtained through local airlines (Oman Air, Salam Air), O-Taxi, and Omantel's outlets in Dhofar. Visitors can also avail of Omantel's wide 5G coverage that covers most of the populated areas in Dhofar.

Omantel is the Sultanate's first and leading integrated telecommunications services provider, enabling the digital society to flourish, allowing new ways of doing business and delivering a world of information, news and entertainment.

TOURISM INVESTMENT

Big turnout of investors to take part in Muscat Exhibition and Forum for Tourism Investment Opportunities

MUSCAT: Eng. Siham bint Ahmed Al Harthiya, Chairperson of the Tourism Committee and member of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry confirmed the readiness of the Chamber to organise the Muscat Exhibition and Forum for Tourism Investment Opportunities.

Noting that efforts are continuing in preparation for the launch of the forum on August 7, under the patronage of Salim bin Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism.

Eng. Siham Al-Harithiya expressed her happiness at the large turnout of investors to register to participate in the forum to learn about the tourism investment opportunities that will be announced during the forum and the accompanying exhibition. Additionally, Eng. Siham Al-Harithiya indicated that the forum will witness the announcement of a group of investment opportunities in the tourism sector, and in various fields, including sports tourism and real estate tourism.

The Chairperson of the Tourism Committee of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that the forum will witness a wide participation of investors, businessmen and specialised companies from within the Sultanate of Oman, as well as large participation from the Gulf Cooperation Council, and various Arab, Asian, European and international countries.

Al-Harthiya indicated that registration for participation in the Muscat Tourism Investment Opportunities Exhibition and Forum is still ongoing until 5 August.

Engineer Siham Al-Harithiya stated that the forum will start on Monday, August 7, in the Great Hall of the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center, and will continue for two days. Where the first day will host the presentation of tourism investment opportunities to investors and attendees, then bilateral meetings will be held between investors to review the opportunities available by the participants and exhibitors, followed by the continuation of the exhibition &bilateral meetings (B2B) will be held between investors and companies until the end of the Exhibition on the next day (Tuesday 8 August).

Eng. Sahm touched on the exhibition accompanying the forum. She explained that it will witness the participation of a large number of small and medium-sized companies specialized in the field of sports tourism, adventures and entertainment. Referring to the distinguished participation of Russian and Thai companies specialized in the supply of hotel and tourist resort requirements. In the conclusion of her speech, the Chairperson of the Tourism Committee of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry indicated that the forum will also witness honouring the pioneers of tourism and real estate investment in the Sultanate of Oman.

It is worth noting that the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry held a press conference recently, in which it revealed that it will organise the Muscat Exhibition and Forum for Tourism Investment Opportunities next August. During the forum, investment opportunities will be presented to investors wishing to invest in the tourism sector, such as hotels, resorts, entertainment cities and other vital projects, as well as presenting investment opportunities in the sports tourism sector, such as holding international sports events and tournaments, establishing sports medical cities in the Sultanate of Oman and other projects in sports investment. In addition to investing in real estate development and opportunities in establishing integrated cities.

In addition to holding bilateral meetings that bring together investors and companies, shedding light on the foreign investment law, as well as honouring the pioneers of tourism and real estate investment in the Sultanate of Oman.

DIGITAL INITIATIVE

'Code with Vodafone' opens for registration to inspire and develop generation of young coders

MUSCAT: Aspiring tech whizzes from across Oman can now register for Code with Vodafone, targeting young minds ages 10-13 across the Sultanate to enable the rise of the coder generation. The initiative has been designed and executed in partnership between Vodafone Oman and Code Academy, a training institute that specialises in delivering IT and trending technology programmes.

Code with Vodafone is one of several socially impactful digital initiatives on the company's horizon. In collaboration with its strategic partners, Vodafone aims to harness technology to bring together individuals, organisations and entities as one, enabling growth and development beyond the telecom industry in Oman.

Sayyid Fahad Abdul Aziz Saud Al-Busaidi, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Vodafone Oman, said: "Code with Vodafone, in partnership with Code Academy, has been formulated to bridge the technical knowledge gap between school and higher education, with longer-term aspirations to build the foundation for the creation of a new vocational career path. Our determination to offer value in Oman is not only restricted to our customers, who benefit from our market-leading products and services – we want to work together with multiple partners to bring about positive change across all sectors of society."

Catalysed by the latest coding capabilities, Code with Vodafone will offer in-person and online courses to talented young people in problem-solving, programming,

cyber security and emerging technologies such as data science and AI – in addition to soft skills and innovation. The programme will consist of two phases, a three-week 'boot camp', and a one-year online program which will include bi-monthly sessions on coding and will run until July 2024. Vodafone will also provide soft-skill development opportunities and guest speakers for the students. Youths looking to unlock new coding horizons are invited to register for the boot camp through the Vodafone website until July 27.

The initiative draws upon Code Academy's wider curriculum, Future Tech, which comprises three age-based stages educating students from Grades 1-12. It is the brainchild of a group of specialists from the academic and industry sectors that aims to discover the talents of school students, develop their skills and deepen their passion for technology.

Describing the program's birth, Dr. Mohammed Al-Badawi, Code Academy CEO said, "It is an outcome of more than two years of preparation and development; including reviewing the current education curricula, studying similar programs regionally and internationally, investigating local society needs and global trends in the IT field, and securing the necessary approvals from the concerned governmental bodies."

He added, "The program does not only provide the knowledge and technical skill, but it also includes modules for improving several characteristics of the child's personality in the problem-solving and critical thinking, communications and presentation, teamwork and time management. It is indeed preparing the school-aged students for post-school studies in the universities and professional institutions."

Vodafone Oman is dedicating its resources, talents and expertise to design and create opportunities that will digitally empower Omanis to reach their potential.

SAUD BAHWAN Group

Saud Bahwan Automotive LLC
ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED C.R NO:1703412

Facebook.com/toyotaoman

@toyotaomanofficial

Youtube.com/toyotaoman

www.toyotaoman.com

شانجان أوتو
CHANGAN AUTO

CS95

4WD 3 ROW 7 SEATER

INTRODUCING

THE ALL-NEW 2024MY CS95

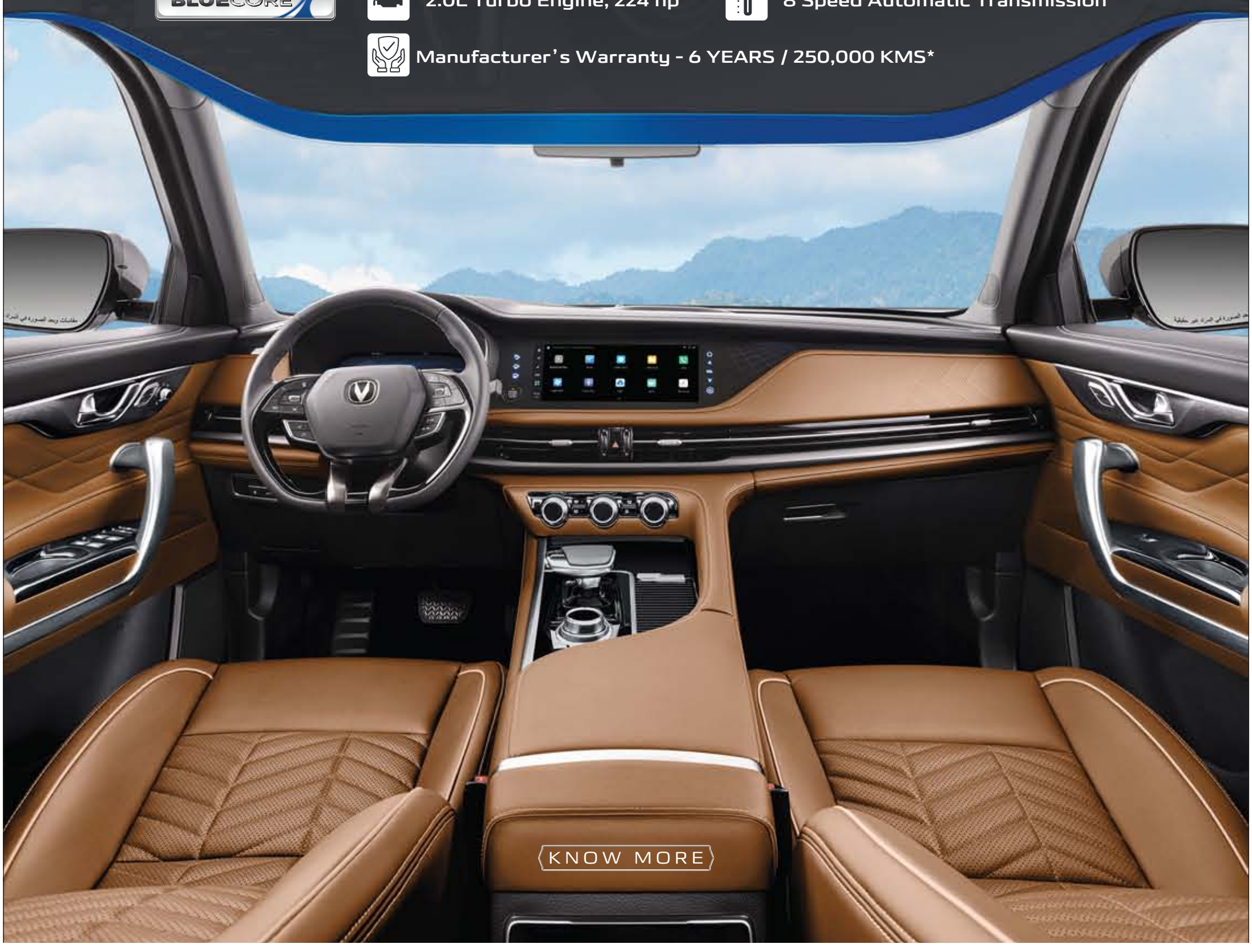
HIGH-PERFORMANCE INTELLIGENT 7 SEATER FAMILY SUV

BLUECORE

2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp

8 Speed Automatic Transmission

Manufacturer's Warranty - 6 YEARS / 250,000 KMS*



*Whichever is earlier. Images shown are for illustrative purpose only. Specification may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN AUTO Showroom.

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

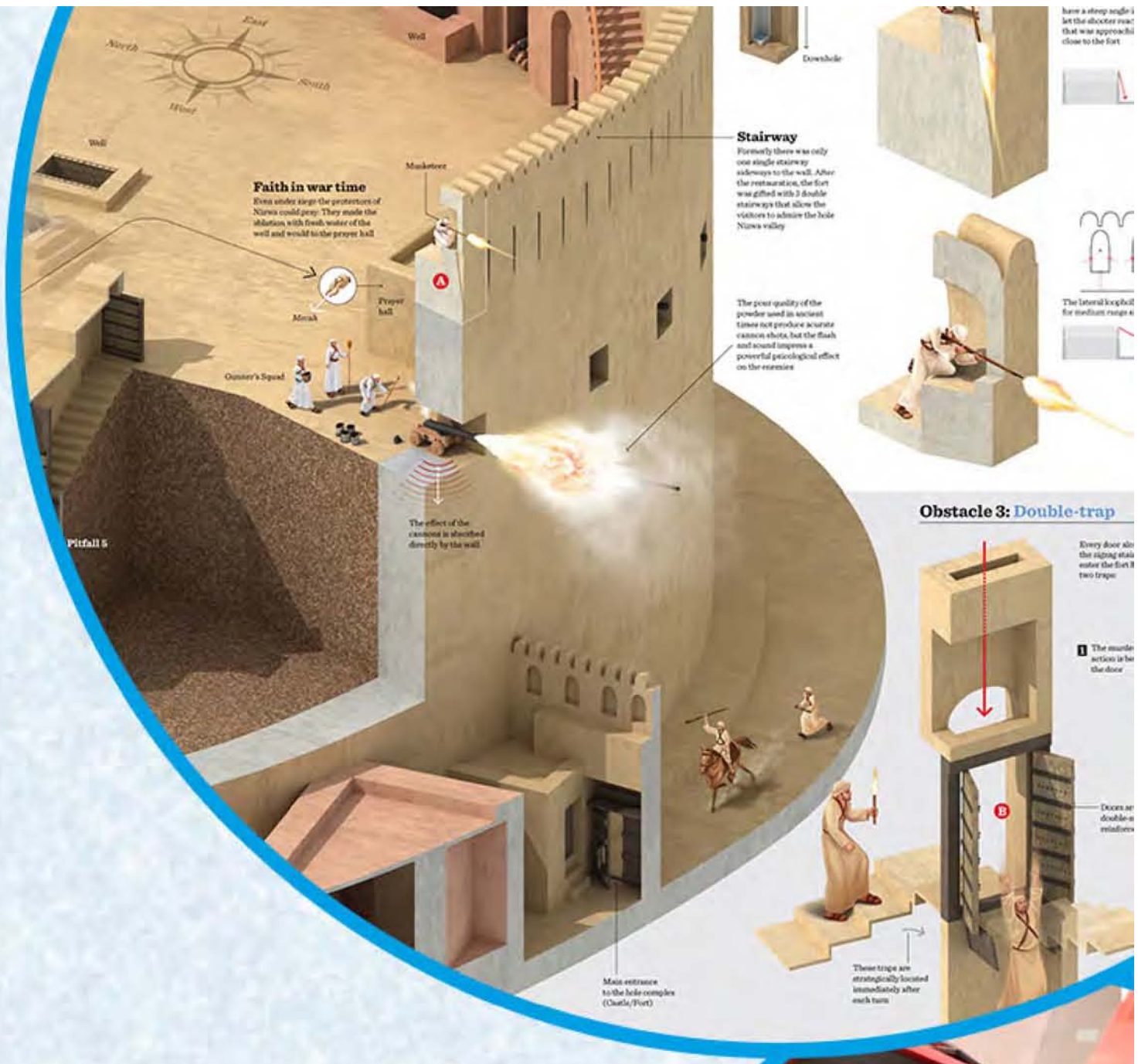
For more details contact:
Qurum 94641010, Mawaleh 97888180, Sohar 95351200
Barka 96581495, Ibra 95500965, Ibri 79326176
Nizwa 94962202, Salalah 96562624, Buraimi 94419793

www.changanoman.com

changanoman

800 50800

C.R. No: 1232361



novagram

Let Novagram tell your story

Infographics
Infomercials
TV Ads
Corporate Videos
Insta Reels
Video Editing
Multimedia & Animation
Studio Services

CALL US:
90139993

sales@novagram.om

مجموعة مسقط للإعلام
Muscat Media Group

SUZUKI

Celebrate this Eid with
SUZUKI's savings offer

Offer includes:

- VAT Charges
- Insurance (Oman & UAE) + Registration
- 2 Years / 40,000 Kms Service
- 5 Years Unlimited Mileage Warranty
- Quality Window Tinting

Vehicles shown are for illustrative purposes only.

Offer is valid from 11.06.23 to 10.08.23

MOOSA ABDUL RAHMAN HASSAN & Co. LLC | 94760010 Wattayah | 94106970: For branches at Salalah | Sohar | Nizwa | Sur | Ibri | 800 76 200 | suzuki.moosagroup.com | suzuki.oman | suzukioman | Suzuki Global