



HM GREETES PRESIDENT OF PORTUGAL

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Dr. Marcelo de Sousa of the Portuguese Republic on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to President Sousa, wishing him good health and happiness. His Majesty also wished the people of Portugal further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



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SAYYID SHIHAB PINS AVIATION WINGS ON RAFO PILOT OFFICERS



HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, pinned aviation wings on pilot officers after they passed out the flight training course. HH Sayyid Shihab also handed over His Majesty the Sultan's Cup for Aviation to Flying Officer Khalid Hamad Al Majrafi, on scoring the top position in the course. The event was attended by Air Vice Marshal Khamis Hamad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), Air Commodore Khalid Mohammed Al Abri, Director General of Operations and Air Commodore Yaqoub Rashid Al Maamari, Director General of Administration and Human Resources at the RAFO Command. — **ONA**

OMAN RECORDS OMR2.6 BILLION TRADE SURPLUS

The highest value among non-oil commodity exports was registered in the mineral products, with their value amounting to OMR1.16 billion



6.50 billion Omani rial was the total value of merchandise exports from the Sultanate by the end of March 2024

2.70 billion Omani rial was the value of crude oil exports by the end of March 2024 in the Sultanate of Oman

MUSCAT: The trade balance of the Sultanate of Oman recorded a surplus of OMR2.61 billion at the end of March 2024, compared to a surplus of OMR1.93 billion during the same period in 2023, according to preliminary statistics issued by the NCSI.

According to NCSI statistics, the total value of merchandise exports reached OMR6.50 billion by the end of March 2024, an increase of 16.7 percent over the same period of the previous year, when it was OMR5.57 billion.

Meanwhile, the total value of merchandise imports to the Sultanate of Oman amounted to OMR3.89 billion, an increase of 6.9 percent by the end of March 2024, compared to the same period of 2023, which amounted to OMR3.64 billion.

The increase in the value of exports is mainly attributed to an increase in the value of the Sultanate of Oman's oil and gas exports by 3.1 percent to reach OMR3.72 billion at the end of March 2024, compared to the end of March

2023, when it was OMR3.60bn.

The value of crude oil exports amounted to OMR2.70 billion by the end of March 2024, recording an increase of 13.3 percent compared to the same period of the previous year, while the value of refined oil exports decreased by 13.9 percent to OMR363 million. The value of liquefied natural gas exports also decreased by 18.1 percent to OMR682 million, compared to the end of March 2023.

Meanwhile, the value of non-oil merchandise exports increased by 44.9 percent by the end of March 2024 to reach OMR2.33

billion, compared to the end of March 2023, when it recorded OMR1.61 billion.

The highest value among non-oil commodity exports was registered in the mineral products, with their value amounting to OMR1.16 billion, recording an increase of 127 percent over the same period in 2023, followed by base metals and their articles, which recorded an export value of OMR352 million, a rise of 9.6 percent, and the products of chemical industries, with an export value of OMR253 million, recording a decline of 7.3 percent. — **A2**

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of June 9, 2024



Deaths
37,084
Injured
84,494

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

GCC states support Palestinian cause

1 The Sultanate of Oman took part in the 160th session of the GCC Ministerial Council, held in Doha. Oman's delegation in the session was headed by Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister. The meeting reviewed joint GCC action and decisions were taken regarding several matters. — **A3**

OMAN

OMR6 million pact to boost tourism projects

2 The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Sunday signed 10 usufruct contracts worth OMR6 million to implement projects in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. — **A2**



WORLD

Narendra Modi takes oath as India PM

3 PM-designate Narendra Modi took oath as Prime Minister of India for his third successive term on Sunday at an impressive ceremony which was attended by leaders from India's neighbourhood. — **A6**

EID HOLIDAY

Hospitality sector awaits 9-day Eid holiday rush

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The upcoming nine-day Eid holiday is going to give a big boost to tourism in the Sultanate of Oman, say officials and people associated with the hospitality industry.

The Eid Al Adha holiday begins on Sunday, 16 June, and ends on Thursday, 20 June, which means the long weekend essentially starts on Friday, 14 June, and continues until Saturday, 22 June.

According to the Oman News Agency, "On the advent of Eid Al Adha 1445 AH and as per the Royal directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, it has been decided that the holiday for employees of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other legal entities, as well as establishments of the private sector will start from Sunday, 9 Dhul Hija 1445 AH corresponding to 16 June 2024, to Thursday, 13 Dhul Hija 1445 AH, corresponding to 20 June 2024. Work shall be resumed on



Sunday 23 June 2024."

The Ministry of Labour pointed out that employers may agree on terms to engage employees on the said holiday— if deemed necessary—provided they compensate the workers for the holiday.

Tourism officials and hotel managers hope a lot of tourists from the GCC countries will visit Oman during Eid holidays.

"To escape the summer heat, we expect a large number of tourists to visit Jabal Akhdar and Dhofar,"

said Arup Singh Deo, Director of Operations and Projects at Al Nahda Hotels & Resorts.

A record-breaking 4 million tourists had visited Oman in 2023, and this holiday could help the country boost that number.

Commenting on the expected business, Arup Singh Deo, added, "Yes, this holiday will be good for us, especially since it will be a long weekend. We see a surge in visitors from the neighbouring countries, whenever the holiday in Oman and other GCC countries coincides. So we think that this will be good for our business."

Locals and expats in the country were looking forward eagerly to the holidays but the flight tickets have reached sky high. "I thought of going to India but the fare is 400 percent more than the normal price," said Ravi Kishan, an Indian expat.

Faisal, an Omani national, said, "We will be travelling to Salalah to enjoy the greenery. It is our annual tradition so we are looking

forward to it. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone Eid Mubarak."

Airfares soar

P Kumar, an Indian expat, said: "He wanted to travel to Patna, India but the airfares are too high, so I have dropped my travel plan."

He also said airfares from Muscat to Patna usually hovers around OMR120 to OMR 140 return, but this time it is around OMR300 return.

Instead of travelling to India, he would be travelling with his friends to the Daminiyat Islands.

He said, "We have made arrangements with a tour guide and he will take care of our entire stay. It's really hot these days here so we will be spending the day swimming and snorkelling. It should be fun."

Kabul Khan, who is from Pakistan, said that he will be visiting Jabal Akhdar with his family. "I want to show them the beauty of the Green Mountains," he added.

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MUSCAT



NAMAA HOSPITAL FOUNDATION STONE ON MONDAY

A ceremony will be held on Monday to lay the foundation stone of Al Namaa Hospital in the Governorate of North Al Sharqiyah. The project is worth OMR56.05 million. The Ministry of Health pointed out that the project will be established on an area of 428,000 sqm. Its construction will take 30 months to complete. -ONA

NCST

Value of re-exports from Oman increased by 26.8%

<FROM A1 The value of exports of plastics and rubber increased by 20.4 percent to OMR233 million, and those of live animals and animal products declined by 1.2 percent to reach OMR89 million, while the value of exports of other products reached OMR242 million.

The value of re-exports from the Sultanate of Oman increased by 26.8 percent to OMR442 million by the end of March 2024, compared to the end of March 2023.

The value of re-exports of transport equipment grew by OMR140 million, up by 49.3 percent, and the re-exports of electrical machinery and equipment recorded an increase of 22% to reach OMR103 million.

The re-export value of live animals and animal products increased by 8.6 percent to OMR39 million, while the re-export value of foodstuffs, beverages and liquids products decreased by 2 percent to reach OMR35 million.

The re-export of mineral products amounted to OMR28 million, recording an increase of 56.8 percent, and the value of other products amounted to OMR98 million.

On the other hand, mineral products constituted the largest value of merchandise imports to the Sultanate of Oman, recording OMR1.097 billion, at the end of last March 2024, with an increase of 15 percent, followed by electrical machinery & equipment and its parts, sound recording



and broadcasting equipment at a value of OMR605 million, recording a growth of 8.1 percent, by the end of March 2024, products of the chemical industries and related industries with a value of OMR375 million, with a growth of 2.1 percent, while transportation equipment declined by 2 percent to reach OMR330 million.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia topped the trade exchange transactions in non-oil exports, and their value reached OMR238 million at the end of March 2024, an

increase of 9.5 percent from the end of March 2023.

The United Arab Emirates topped the trade exchange transactions in re-exports from the Sultanate of Oman, reaching OMR175 million at the end of last March 2024.

The United Arab Emirates also ranked first in the list of the highest countries exporting to the Sultanate of Oman, with a value of OMR982 million, recording an increase of 1.4 percent, compared to the end of March 2023. -ONA

OMR6mn pact signed to boost tourism projects

The contracts were signed by Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and representatives of the investment companies



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism yesterday signed 10 usufruct contracts worth OMR 6 million to implement projects in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The contracts were signed by Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and representatives of the investment companies concerned.

The projects will come up in four governorates.

In Dhofar Governorate, the projects include the setting up of a 3-star hotel and a rest house in the Wilayat of Salalah, the establishment of a tourist camp in the

Al Khadhaf area in the Wilayat of Thumrait and the establishment of a 3-star tourist resort in the Wilayat of Shaleem W'al Halaniyyat Islands.

In the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah, the projects include the setting up of a 3-star hotel, an adventure centre and a luxury tourist camp in Barkat Al Sharaf, in addition to a 3-star resort in Misfat Al Abriyyeen in the Wilayat of Al Hamra.

In the South Al Batinah Governorate, the projects include the establishment of two tourist camps in the Wilayat of Nakhal, one in Wadi Mistal and the other in Al Abyadh area.

In the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, a tourist camp will be established in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali.

Amira bint Iqbal Al Lawati, Director General of Tourism Development at the Ministry of

Heritage and Tourism, said that the signing of the usufruct contracts comes as an extension of the investment programme for the tourism sector in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman to achieve the economic and social impact of the new projects and their contribution to serving local communities by providing job opportunities and enhancing local content. In addition to increasing the supply of hotel rooms and facilities in the tourism sector's requirements, in line with the objectives of the comprehensive tourism development plan.

Muslim bin Ahmed Al Hadary, the owner of the Al-Jusoor Al-Mania Resort project in the Wilayat of Salalah in the Dhofar Governorate, said that the project consists of chalets designed in a qualitative way that suits the nature of Dhofar and will provide tourism options for guests.

LIVESTOCK AND MARINE LIFE

Khazaen City feed unit to enhance food security

BARKA: A project on setting up an animal and marine life feed production unit in Khazaen City is progressing as scheduled, at 25 percent now. The project seeks to meet the needs of livestock and marine life.

The project, being implemented by Omani Bioproducts Company, is an investment shared by Oman Flour Mills Group and Nakheel Oman Development Company, said Eng. Abdullah Said Al Muzaini, Director of operations at the factory.

He added that the project aims at enhancing food security and



recycling agricultural and biological by-products into specialised value-added products.

Al Muzaini pointed out that the investment value of the pro-

ject upon completion of all three stages will be OMR37 million and that the unit will have a capacity to produce 100,000 tons of animal feed and alternatives, in addition to 300,000 tonnes of marine life feed.

In its first phase, the project is expected to produce 48,000 tons of animal feed and alternatives, in addition to 15,000 tons of marine life feed (both fish and shrimp feed), Al Muzaini explained.

Outputs of the second and third phases will be governed by local market needs and the global export market, he said. -ONA

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FROM JULY 18

‘Al Jabal Al Akhdar Summer’ activities to promote tourism

NIZWA: Al Dakhiliyah Governorate is taking steps to launch a two-month festival titled “Al Jabal Al Akhdar Summer” that will be held from 18 July to 14 September 2024..

The meeting, which was held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Sheikh Hilal Said Al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, discussed the prominent activities that will be included in the ‘Al Jabal Al Akhdar Summer’ in addition to forming a committee to supervise the activities to ensure their follow-up and readiness.

This year season's activities will include the establishment of many cultural, social, sports, entertainment, heritage and popular activities as part of the governorate's plan to stimulate local tourism and promote the heritage and natural elements for which the Green Mountain region is famous.

The activities will also include an exhibition for productive families and small and medium enterprises, to encourage them to participate in the events and benefit from opportunities to promote tourism and create temporary job opportunities.

It is hoped that the activities in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate will help in attracting a large number of tourists from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA



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COMMENTARY

Are Omani youth changing our cultures?



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

There is a silent revolution in Oman where the youth are quietly changing the cultures of the country but are we noticing it?

We see profound patterns like social, behavioural, emotional and even psychological changes breaking all barriers of our cultures. They go through an irreversible shift of culture towards an uncharted path of the future of this country.

Do we see it happening? Of course, we do but we pretend it does not happen or just simply think it has to happen sooner or later. The question we all have is that to what price the future of the country will pay for the erosion of its once well preserved culture.

A culture of any country is well connected with its tradition and heritage. The three cannot be divided and go separate ways. The protectors of these three important social pillars are the youth and unfortunately it is them who are dismantling the foundation.

We can blame the social media, smart phones or electronics games that take most of their time and priorities. In other words, they are raised by devices in their hands and

that is the only culture they are exposed of. So who really to blame?

I hear parents all the time complain when their children do not get up to greet their elders or rush to the kitchen to serve coffee to guests in their houses. That shows that following cultures and heritage is not just the way the youth dress up but how socially they behave, too.

I often hear young Omanis saying that keeping up with their culture is 'going backward' because the world has changed. But they confuse with the physical world around us – that has really changed – and behavioural patterns that keep up with social respect. The latter has not changed.

Driving cars, using technology or living in cities is not about culture or tradition. It is about pattern of changes. Culture is about identities. It is also about being hospitable and respectful to people around us that lead to trusting relationships. The Omani youth must understand that preserving cultural awareness and appreciation lead to a positive self-image.

What also they do not realise now is that developing cultural education will

help their future children create a diversity of social networking to help them grow up in a close-knit family environment. It is not uncommon now to see children in their teens locking themselves up in their rooms in complete isolation with the real world.

If parents can preserve the culture to move on to the next generation then youth can create a bridge to be passed on to their children. Culture can also be a tool to promote peace to the international communities. This way, Omani youth can reach out to other youth of the world for lasting and trusting friendships.

Right here in Oman, the youth can use their culture to promote tourism by using their energy and passion towards that target. Tourist do not come to Oman for skyscrapers or big shopping malls. They come here to see our cultures and learn about our heritage. From this example, culture preservation is about economy.

In conclusion, culture and heritage is not about the past but both the present and the future. If the youth dismantle it, then they are destroying their future.

GCC ministers support the cause of Palestinians

Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister of Oman participated in the 6th joint ministerial meeting of the foreign ministers of the GCC

DOHA: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the 160th session of the GCC Ministerial Council, held in Doha, the State of Qatar. Oman's delegation in the session was headed by Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister. The meeting reviewed joint

GCC action and decisions were taken regarding several matters. The ministers underscored the unwavering positions of GCC states regarding regional and international issues, most notably the Palestinian cause.

Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, also participated in the 6th joint ministerial meeting between the foreign ministers of the GCC and Dr. Shaya Mohsin Zindani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Republic of Yemen.

The meeting highlighted developments in the Yemeni arena. Further, the meeting affirmed the firm, joint and supportive position towards the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council in a bid to reach a comprehensive and sustainable political solution in accordance with the GCC Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and Security Resolution 2216.

This, the ministers affirmed, must be done in a manner that preserves the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and independence of Yemen.

Moreover, the Foreign Minister took part in the 6th joint ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue between GCC foreign ministers and Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye.

During this meeting, the ministers underscored the development of historic GCC-Türkiye relations and joint cooperation in the fields of economy, trade and tourism.

The ministers stressed their mutual keenness to continue and intensify work to support the Palestinian cause.

They also underlined the importance of boosting political, diplomatic and legal work on the foundations of justice and unity of standards in dealing with various issues and challenges in a manner that contributes to establishing security and stability in the region and the world. -ONA





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‘Darrbak’ platform promotes adventure tourism in Oman



It is a successful example of promising companies that contribute to financial sustainability and enrich the tourism sector, thus contributing to the prosperity and growth of the economy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The ‘Darrbak’ platform represents an innovative interface for adventure tourism in the Sultanate of Oman. It is one of the emerging Omani companies that focuses on promoting adventure tourism. The platform is quite popular among Omanis and foreign tourists, and it came in response to the diverse and picturesque terrain Oman possesses. Since ancient times, Omani people have been able to adapt to the most difficult terrain to their advantage. They have conquered high mountains, built houses from rocks, and created roads and paths that still exist to this day. To preserve these paths and emulate the path of ancestors, these mountain roads have become a haven for lovers of adventure tourism. Jassim bin Mohammed Al Alawi, CEO of Darrbak, said: “The company decided to create a platform that facilitates users’ access

to service providers, whether individuals or companies, to provide many activities and experiences, most notably adventure tourism such as mountain climbing, diving, and cruises. The platform also includes various sports, artistic and cultural activities.” Al Alawi added that the company was founded in the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, and although the global crisis tightened the siege on many local and international companies and projects, the pandemic was an opportunity to learn and evaluate the experience. Al Alawi added that the platform includes about 72 tourism companies specialised in various fields, thus providing approximately 131 diverse experiences and activities in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. Regarding the mechanism for selecting adventure sites, the CEO of Darrbak pointed out that the platform team is test-

ing new sites to determine their suitability in terms of the difficulty and safety before presenting it to the public. He pointed out that the platform has achieved many successes at the local level. At the 33rd edition of the COMEX International Technology Exhibition, the platform won the “Scale” award, which is given to the best emerging technology companies. He stressed that the platform is supported by the Oman Technology Fund, which aims to invest in promising technology projects. Pointing out that the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority plays a pivotal role in supporting members of the platform team in terms of providing them with various workshops and involving them in local conferences and forums. Regarding the company’s future plan, he stated that the company aspires to expand in the future outside the Sultanate of Oman, which it has already achieved after signing cooperation with Saudi companies and a Kuwaiti company. Darrbak Company is a successful example of promising companies that contribute to financial sustainability and enrich the tourism sector, thus contributing to the prosperity and growth of the economy, as the tourism sector represents one of the most important sources of income diversification on which the Oman Vision 2040 is based.

Users must pay one-time insurance fee for LPG cylinders from December 2024

Cylinder prices shall be determined in accordance with a decision issued by the Minister of Commerce after the approval of the Ministry of Finance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Consumers in Oman must pay an insurance amount for the first time when purchasing the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinder from December 6, 2024, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), said on Monday.

Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of MoCIIP, issued a Ministerial Resolution No. 185/2024 for regulating the practice of filling and selling LPG cylinders. The new decision repealed previous decisions, namely 15/88 prohibiting the sale of LPG cylinders except in licenced warehouses and 11/94 a regulation regulating the sale, maintenance, and replacement of damaged ones.

The new regulation, which will come into force after 180 days from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette, aims to ensure supply chain and clarify each



company's identity and the route of distribution of cylinders to the final consumer.

Deposit amount for cylinder with an identification

The regulation governing the practice of filling and selling LPG cylinders confirmed that the cylinder user must pay the security deposit, by delivering it to the licensee practicing the activity of selling LPG cylinders, to the licensee practicing the activity of filling LPG cylinders being the owner of the cylinder with identification.

The user may obtain a cylinder with identification after paying the security deposit and replace the cylinder he owned in exchange for obtaining the cylinder with identification without the payment of the security deposit. The security deposit refund shall be paid when returning the cylinder with an identification to the cylinder distributor without obtaining another. In the event of loss or misuse of the cylinder with an identi-

fication, the licensee has the right to confiscate the security deposit stipulated in the regulation.

The Ministry further clarified that the new gas regulations offer several benefits. These include the following:

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is the body concerned with regulating and monitoring the activity, and the Ministry of Energy and Minerals the body concerned with regulating the sale of cylinders.

Cylinder prices shall be determined in accordance with a decision issued by the Minister of Commerce, after the approval of the Ministry of Finance.

Obligating the licensee (filling and selling gas cylinders) to replace the gas cylinder with identification with the cylinder made of iron within three years from the effective date of this decision (December 6, 2027).

The gas cylinder consumer must pay a security deposit for the first time (applicable in December

2024), and receive a receipt for receipt of the amount.

Replacing gas cylinders within a specific period of time (three years after the decision is implemented).

Receiving the cylinder purchase invoice.

Insurance amount for the ventilated cylinder:

The decision obligated the person consuming the cylinder to pay a one-time insurance amount to obtain it, which is determined according to the type, capacity and size of the cylinder. The user can replace the cylinder he owns in exchange for obtaining the cylinder with the ID without paying the insurance amount.

The consumer pays the amount to the person who sells the gas cylinder, and the seller delivers the amount to the person engaged in the filling activity, in his capacity as the owner of the cylinder. The decision explained that it is possible to recover the insurance when the user returns the cylinder without obtaining another one. How-



ever, in the event that the cylinder is lost or misused, the insurance amount will be confiscated.

For filling and selling activities

The decision requires obtaining a licence to practice the activities of filling and selling liquefied petroleum gas cylinders.

The General Directorate of Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is responsible for following up on the licensee's commitment to implementing the provisions of the regulation, controlling violations, and taking the necessary measures regarding them.

Procedures for obtaining a licence

A licence to practice the activity of filling LPG cylinders is issued according to the market need. The Ministry may reduce the quantity of LPG allocated to the licensee to fill LPG cylinders whenever the

public interest requires it.

The activity of filling LPG cylinders (packages) and (containers) shall be practiced through two separate licences in two independent locations. The licence period is for one year.

The licensee who is licensed to practice the activity of filling LPG cylinders must adhere to the following: Practicing the licenced activity within the geographical scope of the governorate specified in the licence.

Selling the cylinder to a licensed commercial facility (cylinder warehouse).

Not to raise the selling price of the cylinder above its specified price.

Administrative penalties

The decision authorised the Ministry to impose one or more penalties, ranging from a written warning, to an administrative fine not exceeding OMR1,000, suspension of the licence, and cancellation of it.

MINISTERIAL MEETING

Oman, Yemen underline keenness to enhance relations in all fields

DOHA: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister on Sunday met with Dr. Shaya Mohsin Zindani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Republic of Yemen.

This meeting was held on the sidelines of the joint GCC-Yemen ministerial meeting, hosted by the State of Qatar.

During the meeting, two sides underlined the depth of relations between Oman and Yemen and the joint keenness to boost relations in all fields. They also highlighted the continuous talks and cooperation between the two sides in support of the security and stability of Yemen, as well as



consolidating its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. Moreover, two ministers reiterated the importance of enabling means of achieving peace

and harmony among all components of the Yemeni peoples.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Ammar Abdullah Al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultan-

ate of Oman to the State of Qatar, Sheikh Ahmed Hashel Al Maskari, Head of the GCC Department at the Foreign Ministry and several officials from both sides. — ONA

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

UNICEF workshop reviews updated child protection manual

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Development and in collaboration with UNICEF Oman, a comprehensive validation workshop was held to review the updated "National Guidance Manual for Child Protection." This critical initiative represents a key milestone in the ongoing efforts to strengthen the national child protection system and ensure the well-being of children across the Sultanate.

The updated "Child Protection Manual" aims to establish a unified and clear referral mechanisms for the cases based on its level of danger along with case management system, to promote a cohesive approach among all stakeholders. By strengthening the roles of various entities in preventing and responding to risks, harm, and violence, the manual seeks to address child protection issues at both preventive and early intervention levels.

The workshop brought together representatives from governmental institutions, academia, child protection committees, NGOs, community organizations, and

agencies serving executive authorities. Through collaborative discussions and expert insights, participants worked to refine the manual, ensuring it provides a robust reference framework for all involved in child protection efforts.

"The updated manual is a significant step forward in our collective mission to protect children at risk," said Sumaira Chowdhury, UNICEF Oman Representative. "It will enhance intervention mechanisms and ensure that all entities are equipped with the necessary guidelines to effectively address and prevent violence and harm against children."

The workshop highlighted the significance of a coordinated approach, utilising the strengths and resources of various sectors to create a safer environment for children. By promoting collaboration and sharing best practices, the updated manual seeks to enhance the effectiveness of child protection interventions throughout Oman.

UNICEF Oman remains committed to supporting the government and its partners in their efforts to safeguard children's rights and well-being.

MINA ART GALLERY

Art exhibition held in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Mina Art Gallery organised an art exhibition on the occasion of Eid Al Adha, called Eid Mubarak.

Mina Rezaee, the owner of Mina Art Gallery, said, "I have been painting for more than 30 years. After graduating from university, I started painting and at the age of 13 bagged the third prize and was awarded the bronze medal at an international competition held in Shanghai, China."

Mina Rezaee has been living in Oman for more than 17 years and has been associated with the Fine Art Society in Muscat.

She has also held two solo exhibitions in Bait Al Branda and Bait Al Zabir besides participating in more than 10 international exhibitions.





Pakistan School Muscat

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER

PSM intends to offer Making, Supply and fixing of Portacabins. The contractors with relevant experiences are invited for following bidding:

Tender No.	Tender's Name	Tender Collection Date & Time	Final Submission Date & Time
2024/005	Making, Supply and fixing of three porta cabins as per the given size.	Jun 10, 2024 to Jun 13, 2024 09:00 AM to 01:00 PM Working Days/Hours	Before and Until 10:00 am June 13, 2024

Experience contractor(s) having relevant experience of at least 3 years of similar nature jobs preferably in Oman, who wishes to participate in the bidding may collect the documents after payment of RO. 20,000 (non-refundable) per Job.

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In case of any query you may contact 0968 93690691
Email: tulaib@pakistanschool.edu.om, chairmanbods@pakistanschool.edu.om

The tenders shall be submitted in Original and complete with all relevant documents. Tenders not in compliance with tender's requirements shall not be considered.

Tender Documents shall be submitted in sealed envelope with clearly mentioned Tender Number/name, Company Name and POC's Number/name. The sealed envelope shall be dropped in the Tender Box available at Admin Office on or before the date mentioned above and addressed to:

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(PSM is not bound to accept the lowest Tender or any Tender)

Narendra Modi takes oath as India’s PM for third consecutive term

Apart from two terms as Prime Minister beginning 2014, Narendra Modi also has the distinction of being the longest-serving Chief Minister of Gujarat from October 2001 to May 2014



NEW DELHI: Indian PM-designate Narendra Modi took oath as Prime Minister of India for his third successive term on Sunday at an impressive ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan which is being attended by leaders from India's neighbourhood and Indian Ocean region.

Indian President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Narendra Modi, followed by other members of his team of ministers.

PM Modi was seen wearing a full-sleeved white kurta with churidar and blue half jacket.

The swearing-in ceremony is being attended by Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Bhutan PM Tshering Tobgay, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina and Seychelles Vice President Ahmed Afif.

Apart from two terms as Prime Minister beginning 2014, Naren-

dra Modi also has the distinction of being the longest-serving Chief Minister of Gujarat with his term spanning from October 2001 to May 2014. His previous two terms as Prime Minister have been marked by several key initiatives.

PM Modi has laid thrust on the motto of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' and on "development-oriented and corruption-free governance".

PM Modi has worked with speed and scale and ensured last-mile delivery of schemes and services.

His initiatives include Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Housing for All, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Man Dhan Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana and PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, UDAN, Make in India.

The JAM trinity (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar- Mobile) has led to the elimination of middlemen and ensured transparency and speed, powered by technology.

In his first term as Prime Minister in 2014, PM Modi launched 'Swachh Bharat Mission' a mass

movement for cleanliness across the nation on Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Anniversary. Under PM Modi's leadership, BJP-led NDA governments have worked to create next-generation infrastructure be it in terms of more highways, railways, i-ways and waterways.

He began PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation) to expedite pending projects that were delaying growth. PM Modi has also given special attention to India's rich history and culture and is passionate about environmental causes.

Recognising his efforts towards environmental conservation, PM Modi was honoured with the United Nations 'Champions of the Earth Award.'

Experts have said that PM Modi's foreign policy initiatives have enhanced India's stature on the global stage. He began his first term in office in presence of all Heads of States of SAARC Nations and invited BIMSTEC leaders at the start of the second.

PM Modi has been conferred

various honours including the highest civilian honour of Saudi Arabia Sash of King Abdulaziz.

PM Modi's clarion call for marking a day as 'International Day of Yoga' received an overwhelming response at the UN. In a first, a total of 177 Nations across the world came together and passed the resolution to declare June 21 as the 'International Day of Yoga at the UN.'

Born on September 17, 1950, in a small town in Gujarat, his family belonged to the 'other backward class' which is among the marginalised sections of society.

In his initial years, he worked with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and later devoted himself to politics working with the Bharatiya Janata Party organization at the national and state level.

PM Modi is known to have a powerful 'personal connect' with the people on the ground and is also known as India's most techno-savvy leader, using the web to reach people and bring about change in their lives. — ANI



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FOUR-DAY ELECTION CYCLE

Polls open in 20 countries to elect new European Parliament

BRUSSELS: Voters in 20 European countries are going to the polls on the biggest and final day of voting for the European Parliament.

Sunday's voting marathon winds up a four-day election cycle that began in the Netherlands last Thursday and in other countries on Friday and Saturday. The majority of EU votes will be cast on Sunday, with France, Germany, Poland and Spain opening the polls and Italy holding a second day of voting.

The biggest race on Sunday is in Germany, where 96 of the Parliament's 720 seats are at stake.

In Belgium, voters will also get to elect federal and regional chambers.

More than 360 million voters were called to cast ballots across the EU over four days, with projected overall results due later tonight.

Polling data compiled by Politico suggest the centre-right EPP will win 173 seats in the legislature, with the centre-left Socialists and Democrats on 143 and the centrist Renew Europe on 75. The main far-right grouping, the European Conservatives and Reformists, was projected to win 76 seats. — OMA



PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



South Korea to restart use of loudspeakers in response to balloons

SEOUL: South Korea has announced it will resume loudspeaker broadcasts of anti-North Korean propaganda in border regions in response to a continuing campaign of trash balloons sent southwards by Pyongyang.

More than 1,000 balloons carrying garbage bags containing waste paper, cigarette butts, and even excrement have landed in northern provinces of South Korea in recent weeks.

The North Korean regime says the campaign is in retaliation for propaganda leaflets sent northwards by South Korean activists and North Korean defectors.

The North temporarily halted its campaign last week, saying its "thorough countermeasure" had "given the South Koreans a full experience of how disgusting and labour-intensive it is to collect scattered waste paper."

But after 300 more balloons arrived in a fresh blitz on Saturday, the Seoul government says it will resort to its loudspeaker tactic discontinued back in 2018.

Seoul: 'Messages of light and hope'

"We will install loudspeakers against North Korea today and carry out the broadcast," the president's office said in a statement, adding that "the responsibility for the escalation of tension between the two Koreas will be entirely [down] to the North."

It added: "Although the measures we are taking may be difficult for the North Korean regime to endure, they will deliver messages of light and hope to the North Korean military and citizens," it added.

The broadcasts — a tactic dating back to the 1950-1953 Korean War which has been frozen without a peace treaty ever since — are likely to anger North Korea and potentially prompt dictator Kim Jong Un to take retaliatory military steps, according to experts.

"There is a high possibility the resuming of speakers could lead to an armed conflict," Cheong Seong-chang, director of the Korean peninsula strategy at Sejong Institute, told the AFP news agency.

"It is likely that North Korea will resume firing in the West Sea or fire at the balloons if the South sends any again. [The North] has been jamming GPS signals for several days last week and it is likely for this kind of provocation to appear in a much stronger form in the West Sea as well."

In 2020, the South Korean parliament passed a law making it illegal to send propaganda leaflets northwards. Last year, the country's Constitutional Court ruled that the law constituted an illegal restriction on freedom of speech and activists have continued to send flyers, money, rice and even USB sticks with South Korean TV shows and K-Pop songs over the border. — DW

REFUGEE CAMP IN GAZA

Death toll in horrific Israeli massacre in Nuseirat rises to 274, nearly 700 injured

GAZA: The Palestinian death toll resulting from the horrific massacre committed on Saturday by Israeli occupation forces in the Nuseirat refugee camp, in central Gaza, has risen to 274, with nearly 700 people sustaining injuries, mostly civilians, according to medical reports.

Local health authorities said 274 citizens, the majority of whom were children and women, were killed, and over 298 others injured due to the intense bombardment by Israeli forces from land, sea, and air on the camp.

This unprecedented onslaught, carried out from the air and ground, targeted the Central Governorate of Gaza, particularly the densely populated Nuseirat refugee camp, for over two hours under the pretext of saving four Israeli hostages.

Global condemnations pouring in following the horrific Israeli massacreEgyptian Foreign Ministry in a statement condemned the attack which it said is a "a blatant violation of all provisions of international law" and added it holds Israel responsible for the offensive and urged it to stop the "devastating" war on Gaza.

Humanitarian crisis

It also called on "influential international parties and the Security Council to urgently intervene to halt the Israeli war against the Gaza Strip and to take responsible action to end this humanitarian crisis," which has killed over 36,800 Palestinians.

The Jordanian Foreign Ministry also denounced Israel's "continued genocide in the Gaza Strip" also saying the attack constitutes "a blatant violation of international law and international legitimacy resolutions."

European Union Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell also in a post on X, formerly Twitter, called the attack "another massacre of civilians."

"Reports from Gaza of another massacre of civilians are appalling. We condemn this in the strongest terms," Borrell wrote.

The D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation in their joint declaration issued at the end of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers in Istanbul on Saturday demanded "an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire, the cessation of the Israeli aggression on the Palestinian people in Gaza, and the immediate implementation of the relevant UN Resolutions."

They also called on all countries to ensure Israel's strict adherence to provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Also, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, speaking at the opening of the D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers, said that there is no doubt those who perpetrated the massacre in Gaza will eventually be held accountable.

Fidan added that the international system is collapsing due to its "hypocrisy" and the "blindness" of some countries, adding that "it is high time that the UN Security Council should heed this call and not be kept hostage to one country."

"Standing with Gaza against such tyranny and oppression is a duty we should all fulfill in the name of humanity," he added.

— Wafa



Israeli entity exploits prisoners' issue to legitimise Gaza massacres

GENEVA: UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese said that the Israeli entity is exploiting the prisoners' issue to legitimise the killing, wounding, mutilation, starvation, and trauma of Palestinians in Gaza, and is intensifying acts of violence in the rest of the occupied territories.

Albanese added on the X platform that the Israeli entity could have released the prisoners eight months ago when the first ceasefire and prisoner exchange was proposed. However, the Israeli entity refused, and continue destroying Gaza and the Palestinians as a people.

Last Saturday, the occupation forces committed a massacre in the Nuseirat camp, resulting in the death of 210 citizens and the injury of more than 400 others, under the pretext of liberating four Israeli prisoners. — OMA



FIVE-SET THRILLER

Alcaraz beats Zverev, lifts French Open title

PARIS [FRANCE]: Dominant Carlos Alcaraz on Sunday produced one of the finest performances on the clay court to script an exceptional comeback victory over Alexander Zverev, claiming the French Open 2024 men's singles crown on Court Philippe-Chatrier in Paris.

The third seed outlasted Zverev 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 to lift the trophy at Roland Garros.

Following his victories on hard courts at the 2022 US Open and on the grass at the 2023 Wimbledon, 21-year-old Alcaraz became the youngest player to win a Grand Slam championship on three separate surfaces with his four-hour, 19-minute victory on the Paris clay.

Similar to his performance against Jannik Sinner in the semi-finals, Alcaraz maintained composure to overcome Zverev while trailing two sets to one. After missing three weeks of action because of a right arm injury, the Spaniard improved his game to win 12 of the final 15 matches and win a major for the third year in a row when he arrived at Roland Garros.

Alcaraz previously won the opening set by locking in on the return following a tense start in which both players dropped their first serve game on Court Philippe-Chatrier.

Zverev began his second major final by serving back-to-back double faults, prompting the German to replace his racquet. He was broken three times in the first set and had to fend off two break opportunities to keep one of his service games at 2-4.

Although not always at his best, Alcaraz used a variety of tactics to disturb Zverev's flow, and he was eager to channel the enthusiasm of a large audience after winning any lengthy rallies. Despite conceding the first set, Zverev remained focused. He squandered three break points in the first game of the second set, but made no mistakes in the fifth and seventh games to get



back into the match.

The fourth-seeded German reeled off five consecutive games to seal both the second and third sets against the third-seeded Alcaraz. Alcaraz appeared to have regained control after taking a 5-2 lead in the third set, but Zverev used a hot streak to surge ahead.

Alcaraz and Zverev both sought to keep their opponents guessing, but it was Alcaraz's ability to score large points at important times that ultimately proved decisive. The Spaniard converted nine of the 16 break points he gained, while Zverev converted only six of 23.

Alcaraz served at 2-1, 15/40, which proved to be a turning point in the final set. The Spaniard attempted a second serve, which was called out, but the chair umpire reviewed the mark and called it in. After nearly double-faulting to lose serve, Alcaraz held serve and solidified his early fifth-set service break.

Alcaraz, who is 52-10 in Grand Slam matches, is the seventh Spaniard to win the Coupe des Mousquetaires. **-ANI**

ICC T20 World Cup: India edge Pakistan in a low-scoring thriller

Men in Blue struck early, with pacer Jasprit Bumrah getting the prized wicket of Babar for 13 in 10 balls, with Suryakumar Yadav taking a fine low catch at slips



NEW YORK [US]: A top-class bowling spell from pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and a match-saving knock by Rishabh Pant were the highlights as India defeated Pakistan by six runs in their ICC T20 World Cup clash at New York's Nassau County Stadium on Sunday.

After winning this thriller, India is at the top of Group A with two wins in two games and four points. Pakistan is in fourth place, having lost both their games to the USA and India. Their knockout stage chances look slim.

In the run-chase of 120 runs, Pakistan took a measured approach in starting overs, with skipper Babar Azam hitting only two fours.

Men in Blue struck early, with pacer Jasprit Bumrah getting the prized wicket of Babar for 13 in 10 balls, with Suryakumar Yadav taking a fine low catch at slips. Pakistan was 26/1 in 4.4 overs.

At the end of six overs of the powerplay, Pakistan was 35/1, with Mohammed Rizwan (17*) and Usman Khan (1*) unbeaten.

The surface was proving to be a difficult one for Pakistan as well, though they kept their composure and did not lose any wickets.

Pakistan reached the 50-run mark in 8.5 overs.

At the end of 10 overs, Pakistan was 57/1, with Rizwan (27*) and Usman (13*) unbeaten. With the pitch being a tricky one and Indian bowling being a strong point as well, the match hung in balance.

Just at the start of the second half, Axar Patel struck to remove Usman for 13 in 15 balls, with just one four. Pakistan was 57/2 in 10.1 overs. Fakhar Zaman was next up on the crease. He put India under pressure with a four and six immediately, but a fine catch by Rishabh Pant spelled his end for 13 in eight balls. Hardik Pandya got his wicket. Pakistan was 73/3 in 12.2 overs.

Bumrah's 15th over helped India get the major breakthrough of Rizwan. A fine delivery from Bumrah spilled his furniture, removing him for a well-made 31 in 44 balls, with a four and six. Pakistan was 80/4 in 14.1 overs.

At the end of 15 overs, Pakistan was 83/4, with Imad (7*) and Shadab (1*) unbeaten. They needed 37 runs to win in the final five overs.

The pressure of making the winning target with a steady run rate piled up on Pakistan, who lost Shadab for just four runs as he attempted to go high, but a top edge from his bat was caught by Pant on a delivery by Pandya. Pakistan was 88/5 in 16.3 overs.

Pakistan reached the 100-run mark in 18.1 overs.

Bumrah came in clutch in the 19th over, not only keeping the run-flow choked with his pace but also getting Iftikhar Ahmed out for five runs. Arshdeep took a fine catch near deep square leg. Pakistan was 102/6 in 19 overs, needing 18 runs in the final over.

Arshdeep came to bowl the last over and got Imad for 15 in 23 balls, with a four. Pant once again took a fine catch. Pakistan was 102/7 in 19.1 overs.

In the final over, Naseem tried to get Pakistan over the finishing line. However, Arshdeep came in clutch, not letting Pakistan hit their winning runs. Pakistan ended their innings at 113/7, with Naseem (10*) and Shaheen Shah Afridi (0*) unbeaten.

Bumrah delivered a world-class spell, taking three wickets for 14 runs in four overs. Pandya also took 2/24 in his spell. Axar and Arshdeep got a wicket each.

Earlier, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf's three-wicket hauls helped Pakistan restrict India to 119 in the high-voltage match of the T20 World Cup at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York on Sunday.

Pakistan came with a strong bowling attack giving Indian batters little room to go for their shorts.

After winning the toss Babar Azam-led Pakistan asked India to bat first.

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma opened for the Men in Blue and Shaheen Afridi started the attack for Pakistan. Rohit stunned the Pakistani pacer in the first over as he slammed a six over the deep square leg. India had a great start to the match as they ended the first over with 8/0 on the scoreboard.

The game was stopped as rain played a spoilsport after the first six balls.

After the game resumed, Kohli slammed a four towards the covers. However, the Indian talisman batter's knock had to come to an end after Naseem Shah removed Kohli in the third ball of the second over for four runs. **-ANI**

ICC T20 WORLD CUP

Disciplined Australia hand 36-run defeat to England despite fiery start by Buttler-Salt

BRIDGETOWN: Disciplined bowling from Australia in the second half of the innings after a fiery start by openers Jos Buttler and Phil Salt helped the 2021 champions secure a 36-run win over England in their ICC T20 World Cup match at Bridgetown, Barbados on Saturday.

Australia is at the top of Group B with two wins in two matches while England is at fourth place with a loss and a no-result game.

In the run-chase of 202 runs, the English opening pair of Jos Buttler and Phil Salt responded with almost the same aggression as Australia, keeping a run-rate of almost nine or ten per over during the powerplay. Both right-handers targetted pace quartet of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins and Marcus Stoinis with disdain, with Starc and Hazlewood going for 18 and 20 runs in their first two overs.

At the end of six overs of the powerplay, England was 54/0, with Buttler (21*) and Salt (29*) unbeaten. Australia reached the 50-run mark in 5.2 overs.

The seventh over by Starc proved to be expensive as he gave away 19 runs, including two sixes and a four by England's dominant opening pair.

However, in the next over, Adam Zampa's spin did its magic as Salt missed the ball completely and was cleaned up for 37 in 23 balls, with four boundaries and two sixes. England was 73/1 in 7.1 overs.

Zampa also ended Buttler's stay at the crease after being caught by Cummins at deep backward point while attempting a reverse sweep. The English skipper scored a fine 42 in 28 balls, with five fours and two sixes. England was 92/2 in 9.5 overs.

With Australia getting a big wicket of hard-hitting Will Jacks for just 10 in 10 balls, they had removed the top three of England's line-up. Stoinis got the wicket thanks to a brilliant catch from Starc. England was 96/3 in 10.5 overs. England reached the 100-run mark in 11.2 overs.

After a couple of slow overs,



Moeen Ali broke the shackles by smashing Glenn Maxwell for three sixes. However the start of 15th over, Jonny Bairstow (7*) gifted his wicket to Hazlewood with a slow-timed shot that was caught by Maxwell at deep-midwicket. Australia was 124/4 in 14.1 overs.

Pressure was piling up on the defending champions as they needed 76 in the final five overs. England had scored just 33 runs in between overs 10-15.

Cummins delivered a fine 16th over, getting the important wicket of Moeen for 25 in 15 balls, with three sixes. David Warner caught him near the boundary. England was 128/5 in 15.5 overs.

Livingstone broke a streak of boundary-less overs, smashing a huge straight six after 21 balls in 17.4 overs. England was left with 54 runs to get in the final two overs.

Livingstone lost his wicket while attempting a straight six against Cummins, getting out for 15 in 12 balls, with a six. England was 152/6 in 18.5 overs.

England could not chase down the total, ending their innings at 165/6, with Brook (20*) and Jordan (1*) unbeaten.

Cummins (2/23) and Zampa (2/28) were the top bowlers for Australia. Hazlewood and Stoinis got a wicket each.

Earlier, an explosive 70-run opening stand between openers Travis Head and David Warner helped Australia reach a competitive score of 201/7 in their 20 overs during the ICC T20 World

Cup contest against arch-rivals England at Barbados on Saturday.

None of the Aussie batters could get a big score. However, nearly everyone chipped a solid amount of runs with a great run rate to make sure the 2021 champions reached a solid score.

After being put to bat first by England, Australian openers Travis Head and David Warner put the team to a fine start. The second over by Will Jacks saw Australia get 22 runs, with a six by Warner and two maximums by Travis.

Warner continued to bully English pacers into submission, this time bludgeoning Mark Wood's express pace for three big sixes and a four in the fourth over. With another 22 runs from the over, Australia touched the 50-run mark in just 3.4 overs.

Head and Warner smashed Moeen Ali's spin around the park, but the veteran spinner got the prized scalp of Warner for 39 runs in just 16 balls, with two fours and four sixes. Australia was 70/1 in five overs.

In the very next over, Jofra Archer deceived Head with his slower ball which crashed into his middle stump. The attacking opener was gone for 34 in 18 balls, with two fours and three sixes. Australia was 74/2 in 5.4 overs.

At the end of the powerplay in six overs, Australia was 74/2, with Glenn Maxwell and skipper Mitchell Marsh yet to score.

For the next four overs, Australia's run flow slowed down, though Marsh hit some fine boundaries. Australia reached the 100-run mark in 9.3 overs. Maxwell, battling a poor run of form, took his time to settle. At the end of 10 overs, Australia was 102/2, with Marsh (18*) and Maxwell (10*) unbeaten.

Australia's run-rate got some much-needed uptick after two lesser productive overs as Chris Jordan's 13th over was smashed for 18 runs, including two fours and a six.

The duo of Marsh and Maxwell reached the 50-run partnership in 41 balls.

Liam Livingstone's part-time spin managed to end this 65-run partnership as skipper Marsh was stumped for 35 in 25 balls, with two fours and two sixes. Australia was 139/3 in 13.5 overs.

In the next over, spinner Adil Rashid got Maxwell's scalp, who could not find the desired elevation in his shot and handed a catch to Phil Salt at deep midwicket. Maxwell was gone for 28 in 25 balls, with three fours and a six. Australia was 141/4 in 14.2 overs.

At the end of 15 overs, Australia was 149/4, with Marcus Stoinis (8*) and Tim David (1*) unbeaten.

Australia reached the 150-run mark in 15.1 overs. Tim's brief knock of 11 in eight balls was ended by Jordan, who got the assistance of Livingstone at deep extra-cover. Australia was 168/5 in 16.5 overs.

Matthew Wade was next up on the crease and he kept the run-rate nice with some clean hitting along with Stoinis. Australia reached the 200-run mark in 19.3 overs.

Jordan ended Stoinis' quickfire knock at 30 in 17 balls, with two fours and two sixes, with Harry Brook taking a fine catch. Australia was 200/5 in 19.4 overs. On the very next ball, Pat Cummins was run out for a duck. Australia was 200/6 in 19.5 overs.

Australia ended their innings at 201/7, with Matthew Wade (16*) and Mitchell Starc (1*) unbeaten.

Jordan (2/44) was the pick of the bowlers for England. Rashid, Livingstone, Ali and Archer got a wicket each. **-ANI**

AUSTRALIA OUTCLASS ENGLAND

Complete team performance: Nasser Hussain on Australia win



BARBADOS [WEST INDIES]: After Australia's thumping 36-run win over England in the T20 World Cup 2024 at the Kensington Oval in Barbados, former cricketer Nasser Hussain said that it was a complete team performance from Mitchell Marsh's side.

Aussie spinner Adam Zampa was named the 'Player of the Match' after the 32-year-old bagged two crucial wickets in his four-over spell.

Speaking on Sky Sports, Nasser said the Aussies outclassed England in the 17th match of the marquee event. The former England skipper said that Australia's 201-run knock in the first inning was too much on Kensington Oval's pitch.

"Australia outclassed England, it was a complete team performance. A total of 201 was too many on that pitch, even with that short boundary," Nasser was quoted by Sky Sports as saying.

The 56-year-old added that England's decision to bowl Will Jacks in the first inning has backfired on the English side. Jacks bowled for just one over in the match and gave 22 runs.

"The decision to bowl Jacks backfired but I didn't like how they were too slow to go to their slower balls and cutters. I saw them obsessed by blowing away opposition with pace and I think it was a pace-off pitch and they didn't adapt quickly enough," he added.

Former England cricketer Michael Atherton also gave a similar statement and said that Jos Buttler's decision to bowl Jacks was odd as the 25-year-old is inexperienced.

"I thought the decision to bowl Jacks was odd on a couple of counts, as England have gone with pace in their line-up with Wood and Jofra Archer and also because Jacks is pretty inexperienced and the type of off-spinner that is quite floaty. It could have paid off against the lefties but it was a high-risk strategy and one that cost 22 runs," Atherton said. **-ANI**

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INDIAN REAL ESTATE

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to keep the repo rate unchanged again is a boon for the Indian real estate sector, said real estate consultancy firm Anarock. The mid-range and premium property segments together account for more than 55 per cent of the current supply.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,737.96 points, down by 0.7 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.18 per cent at 460.46 points. Barka Water & Power Company, up 6.67 per cent, was the top gainer while SMN Power Holding, down 4.19 per cent, was the top loser.

Value of fish output in Oman tops OMR147mn

The total quantity of fish landed by traditional fishing in the Sultanate of Oman till the end of March 2024 stood at 193,054 tonnes, up by 11.4 per cent, compared to the same period in 2023, when its total quantity was 173,267 tonnes

MUSCAT: The total value of fish landed in the Sultanate of Oman reached OMR147.3 million by the end of March 2024, comprising an increase of 0.5 per cent, compared to OMR146.5 million during the same period in 2023, according to the preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The total quantity of fish landed by traditional fishing in the Sultanate of Oman till the end of March 2024 stood at 193,054 tonnes, up by 11.4 per cent, compared to the same period in 2023, when its total



quantity was 173,267 tonnes.

The statistics also showed that the quantity of fish landed at the end of March 2024 through commercial fishing reached 23,826 tonnes, while the quantity of fish landed through coastal fishing reached 2,443 tonnes.

As for the same statistics, the highest quantity of fish landed through traditional fishing was recorded in the Governorate of Al Wusta, which reached 79,294 tonnes, followed by the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, which recorded 60,734 tonnes.

The Governorate of Dhofar recorded a fish landing of 22,119 tonnes, while the Governorates

of North and South Al Batinah recorded 14,898 tonnes. Fish landings in the Governorate of Musandam reached 9,969 tonnes, and Muscat recorded 6,039 tonnes.

NCSI statistics also showed that the largest quantity of fish landed by traditional fishing was the small pelagic fish, reaching 118,389 tonnes at the end of March 2024, compared to 88,784 tonnes at the end of March 2023, recording an increase of 33.3 per cent.

Meanwhile, the quantity of large pelagic fish landed at the end of March 2024 decreased by 22.7 per cent, reaching 39,959 tonnes, compared to 51,699 tonnes at the end of March 2023.

The quantity of demersal fish rose by 19.7 per cent at the end of March 2024, reaching 29,617 tons, compared to the end of March 2023, when the quantity reached 24,734 tonnes.

The number of sharks and rays landed recorded an increase of 10.9 per cent, reaching 1,284 tonnes at the end of March 2024, compared to 1,157 tonnes at the end of March 2023.

The crustaceans and molluscs landed till the end of March 2024 fell by 41 per cent, reaching 2,354 tonnes, compared to 3,994 tonnes at the end of March 2023, while the quantity of other fish landed reached 1,450 tonnes. -ONA

PROMOTING CLEAN ENERGY

Madayn inks pact to establish solar PV power plant at KOM

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM), the technology arm of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has signed an agreement with Solar Wadi Company to establish a solar PV power plant with a capacity of 1.4 MW.

This plant, costing approximately OMR500,000, will be installed and operational within a year at KOM, with a 25-year contract for installation, operation, and maintenance.

This agreement aligns with Madayn's objective to promote clean energy and contribute to the Sultanate of Oman's efforts to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Madayn is continuously working towards creating a dynamic live-work-play environment model while ensuring environmental preservation, particularly in the industrial sector.

In collaboration with its partners, Madayn is committed to raising awareness among inves-



tors in various industrial cities, encouraging the adoption of safe, sustainable, and innovative alternative sources. Madayn also focuses on several key areas, including managing hazardous and

non-hazardous waste, controlling liquid waste disposal into marine environments, reducing emissions of air and noise pollutants, ensuring proper handling and usage of chemicals (including storage,

transportation, and loading), storing hazardous materials, safely demolishing buildings and disposing of asbestos, mitigating land pollution and optimising water and energy consumption.

BEST DIGITAL SERVICES

Bank Muscat launches Tap'N'Go service on Android smartphones

MUSCAT: In line with global digital trends and the Bank's commitment to implementing online innovative banking solutions and services, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has launched the Tap'N'Go service available on various Android devices that are enabled with the Near Field Communication (NFC) feature.

The service eliminates the need of having a physical terminal to accept payments. To launch the new service, it is worth noting that a memorandum of understanding was recently signed by Bank Muscat and Visa.

The memorandum was signed by Abdullah bin Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager, Digital Banking, Bank Muscat and Manish Gautum, Visa's Country Manager for the Sultanate of Oman. Launching the new service came in translation of the Bank's vision "To



serve you better, everyday," aiming to facilitate customers' access to suite of innovative digital banking services and solutions that cater to their diverse needs and recent preferences. The new service also allows customers to initiate and complete transactions in a quick

and secure manner.

The new service is a revolutionary technology that allows merchants and business owners including home business owners to accept card payments directly on their Android phones and smart devices of version 11 and

above. All NFC-enabled payment cards may be used for customers to initiate payment transactions via the Tap'N'Go application. This digital service is available for Bank Muscat and Meethaq customers alike. However, merchants have to open a merchant account that allows business to accept card payments, in addition to opening a Bank Muscat corporate account. Furthermore, the technology also enables merchants to verify their transactions through the application which can be directly downloaded using the app stores on the Android smartphones.

Tap'N'Go users will receive a daily account statement on their registered email ID and may also check the completion status of their transactions by viewing the last transactions initiated through the application as well as verifying the transaction amounts. Customers may also void transactions through

the app on the day of its initiation.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdullah Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager, Digital Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "We are delighted about the launch of the new digital service. The digital transformation trends we are experiencing today have brought about a positive change in the manner of running businesses and initiating online banking transactions. Hence, this new technology will enable merchants to shift to using innovative banking options for initiating payment transactions quickly and securely. Bank Muscat is committed to constantly developing its online platforms including the Mobile Banking Application by means of supplying it with modern and innovative digital payment features. The continuous enhancement of the Bank's platforms is to keep pace with the latest digital developments, en-

hance customers' experience, and bring about better overall responsiveness to the Bank's services and facilities. Bank Muscat will continue its support to providing customers with the best banking services and solutions."

It is worth noting that the launch of Tap'N'Go application adds to the bank's growing portfolio of customer-centric services and facilities, including the Soft Token App authentication, Internet banking transactions, instant opening of Themaar Savings Plan, viewing access for minor accounts, payments to Pakistan and Bangladesh wallet, Pack transfer to Egypt, Friendi Mobile Top Up, payment to government for VAT, Excise Tax and Corporate income Tax, VAT statement for Corporate customers, Group Bill Payments which allow users to submit multiple Bill Payment transactions in a single click.

MADAYN



New interface launched to elevate digital document management

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has launched the new interface of 'Murasalat' system, which is designed for digital document management and is officially certified by the National Intellectual Property Office at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion.

The system operates with two main interfaces for managing correspondences and documents according to the National Procedures Manual for Electronic Documents issued by the National Records and Archives Authority in 2013.

Najma Al Amri, Director of Documents Department at Madayn, stated that the Murasalat System offers various features for users, such as electronic signature and stamping, and applies the standards of the National Records and Archives Authority and the approved data classification criteria.

"The system is divided into two interfaces. The first interface is dedicated to managing correspondences, allowing users to handle all current procedures and operations, such as creating, adding and approving internal and external transactions, exchanging

them between relevant parties, as well as providing all necessary tools for searching correspondences, tracking tasks, and generating reports," Al Amri said.

She added, "The second interface is the record management system, which focuses on storing and classifying documents according to the retention schedules approved by the National Records and Archives Authority, in addition to managing electronic storage during the intermediate period up to the endpoint. It should also be noted that a mobile application is now activated and linked to the system to facilitate the remote completion of tasks assigned to employees."

The launch of the new interface for the 'Murasalat' system reflects Madayn's commitment to digital transformation, aligning with the pillars and directives of the national vision and the comprehensive framework of the unified Government Digital Transformation Programme by the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology. Over the past two years, Madayn has made significant strides in this area, as evidenced by its constant progress in the evaluations conducted by the ministry.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION

FAO Food Price Index inches up in May

ROME: The benchmark for world food commodity prices increased for the third consecutive month in May, as higher prices of cereals and dairy products outweighed decreases in quotations for sugar and vegetable oils, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) reported.

The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in the international prices of a set of globally-traded food commodities, averaged 120.4 points in May, up 0.9 percent from its revised April level, while it remained down 3.4 percent from its level a year ago and 24.9 percent below its March 2022 peak.

The FAO Cereal Price Index

rose by 6.3 percent from April, powered higher by rising global wheat export prices, reflecting growing concerns about unfavourable crop conditions curbing yields for the 2024 harvests in major producing areas including parts of Northern America, Europe and the Black Sea region.

The FAO Sugar Price Index, meanwhile, decreased by 7.5 percent from April, mainly driven by pressure from the good start of the new harvest season in Brazil. Lower international crude oil prices also exerted downward pressure on sugar prices, by lowering demand. The FAO Vegetable Oil Price Index declined by 2.4 percent from April. -WAM

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Barka Water & Power Company, up 6.67 per cent, was the top gainer while SMN Power Holding, down 4.19 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,737.96 points, down by 0.7 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.18 per cent at 460.46 points. Barka Water & Power Company, up 6.67 per cent, was the top gainer while SMN Power Holding, down 4.19 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Galfar Engineering were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 502 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR1.66 million, with more than 10.18 million shares changing hands. Out of 50 traded securities, 15 advanced, 15 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR162,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR124,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR38,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,814.10 points, down 0.75 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Insurance, United Finance, Al Madina Takaful were up by 3.96 per cent,

1.75 per cent, 1.28 per cent respectively. Prices of Ahli Bank, National Bank Oman, Sohar International Bank, Bank Nizwa, Oman Arab Bank were down by 2.60 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 1.44 per cent, 0.91 per cent, 0.65 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,962.20 points, up 0.47 per cent. Prices of Muscat Thread Mill, Jazeera Steel Products, Raysut Cement, Voltamp Energy, Galfar Engineering were up by 4.21 per cent, 3.57 per cent, 2.38 per cent, 1.92 per cent, 1.18 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Flour Mills were down by 1.73 per cent respectively. Services Index was down by 0.24 per cent before closing at 1,784.54 points. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, National Gas, Shell Oman Marketing, Oman National Engineering were up by 6.67 per cent, 1.27 per cent, 1.25 per cent, 0.88 per cent respectively. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Salalah Port Services, Al Suwadi Power, Majan College, OQ Gas Networks were down by 4.19 per cent, 3.33 per cent, 1.33 per cent, 0.91 per cent, 0.70 per cent respectively.-- United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%	
Industry Index	5,962.70	5,927.71	5,962.20	5,934.25	27.95	0.47	
Services Index	1,788.84	1,782.16	1,784.54	1,788.84	-4.30	-0.24	
FINANCIAL TRIDX	8,896.65	8,845.07	8,857.98	8,924.86	-66.89	-0.75	
SERVICES TRIDX	2,074.51	2,066.77	2,069.52	2,074.51	-4.99	-0.24	
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00	
MSX Shariah Index	461.03	459.09	460.46	459.62	0.84	0.18	
MSX TR INDEX	6,625.35	6,578.48	6,579.03	6,625.35	-46.33	-0.70	
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,848.22	7,802.72	7,814.10	7,873.11	-59.00	-0.75	
INDUSTRIAL TRIDX	6,879.54	6,839.17	6,878.97	6,846.71	32.25	0.47	
MSX 30 INDEX	4,771.32	4,737.57	4,737.96	4,771.32	-33.36	-0.70	
Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,189,922	1,656,689	502	24,338,345,755	15	15	20	50

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 9

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. (B/D)	DIFF. %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	7,050	2,045	5	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.280	0.010	3.571	0.290	0.280	0.290	0.100	36,220,408
OM00000002374	UNITED FINANCE	92,760	5,379	2	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.001	1.754	0.058	0.058	0.062	0.100	20,655,383
OM00000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	113,308	8,943	8	0.078	0.080	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.001	1.282	0.079	0.071	0.081	0.100	13,825,000
OM00000005275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,000	801	3	0.800	0.810	0.800	0.810	0.800	0.010	1.250	0.810	0.780	0.810	0.100	76,950,000
OM00000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	42,000	4,864	5	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.115	0.114	0.001	0.877	0.115	0.114	0.116	0.100	17,250,000
OM00000001533	OMINVEST	5,300	2,014	1	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.100	253,978,862	
OM00000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	182,100	15,476	17	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.084	0.089	0.100	10,359,375
OM00000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	3,500	613	1	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.176	0.180	0.100	38,500,000
OM00000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	5,000	370	1	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.072	0.074	0.100	6,660,000
OM00000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	9,000	621	2	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.065	0.069	0.100	13,800,000
OM00000003968	OOREDOO	5,585	1,679	6	0.301	0.301	0.300	0.301	0.301	0.000	0.000	0.301	0.300	0.301	0.100	195,934,213
OM00000004735	SEMBICORP SALALAH	448,760	43,206	20	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.088	0.098	0.100	92,593,479
OM00000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	75,000	5,400	4	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.072	0.073	0.100	48,591,895
OM00000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	253,860	74,697	27	0.295	0.295	0.294	0.294	0.295	-0.001	-0.339	0.294	0.293	0.305	0.100	226,438,800
OM00000003026	OMAN TELECOM	7,326	7,707	5	1.054	1.054	1.051	1.051	1.055	-0.004	-0.379	1.051	1.041	1.051	0.100	788,250,000
OM00000002786	BANK MUSCAT	449,865	113,566	30	0.253	0.255	0.251	0.252	0.253	-0.001	-0.395	0.252	0.251	0.253	0.100	1,891,612,060
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	258	100	1	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.388	0.390	-0.002	-0.513	0.388	0.385	0.390	0.100	91,777,980
OM00000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	885,991	125,182	89	0.142	0.142	0.141	0.141	0.142	-0.001	-0.704	0.141	0.141	0.149	0.100	610,617,973
OM00000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	288,330	21,456	17	0.075	0.075	0.073	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.073	0.074	0.100	52,866,069
OM00000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	2,520,058	347,841	51	0.139	0.139	0.137	0.137	0.139	-0.002	-1.439	0.137	0.128	0.147	0.100	764,082,716
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	608	194	1	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.276	-0.006	-2.174	0.270	0.262	0.280	0.100	439,005,519
Total	21	5,397,659	782,124	296												
Parallel Market																
OM00000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	300	86	2	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.270	0.018	6.667	0.288	0.255	0.288	0.100	46,080,000
OM00000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	24,043	2,289	4	0.095	0.099	0.095	0.099	0.095	0.004	4.211	0.099	0.095	0.104	0.100	1,623,016
OM00000001096	DHOFAR INSURANCE	1,400	291	3	0.200	0.210	0.200	0.210	0.202	0.008	3.960	0.210	0.200	0.210	0.100	23,678,042
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,300	121	2	0.092	0.096	0.092	0.096	0.090	0.006	3.333	0.093	0.091	0.090	0.100	18,000,000
OM00000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	783	60	1	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.074	0.002	2.703	0.076	0.070	0.076	0.100	37,303,565
OM00000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	185,707	58,126	19	0.310	0.319	0.310	0.319	0.313	0.006	1.917	0.319	0.316	0.319	0.100	25,967,477
OM00000001160	NATIONAL GAS	40,000	3,188	8	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.001	1.266	0.080	0.079	0.081	0.100	6,800,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	3,438,656	587,220	79	0.171	0.172	0.171	0.171	0.169	0.002	1.183	0.171	0.165	0.175	0.100	34,710,682
OM00000001772	ALANWAB INVESTMENT	320,000	25,160	6	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.087	0.096	0.100	18,128,000
OM00000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	9,000	522	3	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.100	4,930,000
OM00000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	1,800	162	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	1,890,000
OM00000002549	BANK DHOFAR	28,516	4,363	1	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.153	0.000	0.000	0.153	0.153	0.000	0.100	458,441,770
OM0000002372	OMAN OIL MARKETING	4,260	3,408	2	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.100	48,020,000
OM00000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	95,371	97,278	8	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020	0.000	0.000	1.020	1.020	0.000	0.100	70,380,000
OM00000001160	ALMAHA CERAMICS	52,132	4,770	7	0.169	0.169	0.168	0.168	0.168	0.000	0.000	0.168	0.168	0.168	0.100	9,240,000
OM00000005963	PHOENIX POWER	26,302	1,550	6	0.058	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.100	46,202,486
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	10,000	700	2	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.068	0.000	0.100	15,556,800
OM00000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	20,000	3,060	3	0.151	0.154	0.151	0.154	0.155	-0.001	-0.645	0.154	0.152	0.170	0.100	257,088,140
OM00000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	900	98	1	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.110	-0.001	-0.909	0.109	0.100	0.110	0.100	9,810,000
OM00000004430	BANK NIZWA	46,009	2,430	5	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.109	0.110	-0.001	-0.909	0.109	0.109	0.111	0.100	243,827,880
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	2,645	1,203	1	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.463	-0.008	-1.728	0.455	0.430	0.460	0.100	71,662,500
OM00000002200	AHLI BANK	11,662	1,774	4	0.154	0.154	0.150	0.150	0.154	-0.004	-2.597	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.100	352,448,620
OM00000002333	SALALAH PORT SERVICES	658	191	1	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.300	-0.010	-3.333	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.100	53,152,846
OM00000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	10,000	1,236	3	0.329	0.329	0.320	0.320	0.334	-0.014	-4.192	0.320	0.320	0.328	0.100	63,885,392
Total	24	4,323,444	811,089	17												

HOUSING MARKET

Steady repo rate supports confidence in Indian real estate

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to keep the repo rate unchanged again is a boon for the Indian real estate sector, said real estate consultancy firm Anarock. "This (policy) stability ensures that home loan interest rates remain low, making housing more affordable for potential buyers. With unchanged borrowing costs, both

developers and homebuyers benefit from increased market confidence and predictability," said Anuj Puri, Chairman, of Anarock Group. The mid-range and premium property segments together account for more than 55 per cent of the current supply. Together, they recorded approximately 76,555 units sold in the first quarter of 2024 - nearly 60 per cent of the total sales.

"The buyers of this segment are sensitive to volatile interest rates, and upward hikes would cause many of them to defer home purchases. This policy continuity supports sustained demand in these two segments," Puri said post RBI monetary policy meeting. In the affordable housing sector, the most cost sensitive, PMAY Urban has sanctioned 118.64 lakh

homes against a demand of 112.24 lakh homes, affordable housing (homes priced under Rs 40 lakhs) sales in the first quarter of 2024 recorded 26,545 units - a mere 20 per cent of the total sales. "However, as we have seen, unchanged home loan rates alone are insufficient to induce new vibrancy in the affordable segment," he said. -ANI

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

German enterprises embrace business opportunities in China

STUTTGART: Amid a sluggish global economic recovery, German executives voiced their dedication to enhancing their market presence in China during a promotion event for the China International Import Expo (CIIE) held in Stuttgart. German enterprises are leveraging the CIIE to align their development with the demands of the Chinese market, according to the executives at the event, which gathered about 150 Chinese and German officials, business representatives, and trade delegates. "Since joining the CIIE in 2018, we have successfully introduced the concept of deep cleaning into the Chinese market and led the market positioning of several of our products, unlocking new opportunities," said Tobias Wahl, board chairman of the Hawk brand at Karcher Group, at the promotion event.

Germany's Karcher Group, a leader in the cleaning industry, has participated in the CIIE for six consecutive years. Over time, the expo has spurred Karcher to continuously boost its investments in China. "In recent years, Karcher has maintained a double-digit growth in the Chinese market. Our cumulative investments in China have reached 2 billion yuan (\$276 million), accelerating our transition from exhibitors to investors," said Wahl, adding that the group has expanded and optimised its factories and integrated high-quality industry resources to advance localisation strategies. He added that this year, the company will showcase many pioneering products, featuring green, intelligent, and innovative concepts, at the 7th CIIE. Preparations for the 7th CIIE are well underway and German enterprises lead Europe in both the number of exhibitors and the exhibition space. Seventy-five companies have signed up, covering more than 26,000 square meters at the venue, according to Wu Zhengping, deputy director general of the China International Import Expo Bureau.



Currently, renowned German companies such as Siemens, Bayer, SAP, Mercedes-Benz, and Volkswagen have confirmed their participation at the event. "Bayer deems the Chinese market pivotal within its global strategic landscape, with the import expo serving as a crucial conduit for Bayer to engage with the market dynamics, facilitate exchanges, and cultivate



LIFESTYLE

RESEARCHERS DISCOVER
POTENTIAL TARGET
FOR CANCER
IMMUNOTHERAPY

At present, immunotherapy treatments, including adoptive T-cell transfer, cancer vaccines and immune checkpoint blockade (ICB), represent a promising option for cancer patients

RESEARCHERS have discovered a possible target for cancer immunotherapy. The research, directed by Professor Massimiliano Mazzone, discovered that the CDA gene is one of the most elevated metabolic genes in immunotherapy-resistant cancer. Inhibiting this gene through pharmacological or genetic intervention resulted in improved T-cell infiltration, enhancing the efficacy of immunotherapy in PDAC, a type of pancreatic cancer.

Study done by VIB-KU Leuven Centre for Cancer Biology and findings were published in Nature Cancer.

At present, immunotherapy treatments, including adoptive T-cell transfer, cancer vaccines and immune checkpoint block-

ade (ICB), represent a promising option for cancer patients. Despite the high response rates with prolonged survival in subsets of melanoma, lung, and renal cancer patients, ICB struggles to show clinical benefit in several other tumors such as in most of colorectal cancer and pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) patients.

PDAC is one of the most aggressive and lethal cancers with an overall 5-year survival rate of 9%. In Belgium alone, pancreatic cancer is the 9th most common cancer with 2242 diagnoses in 2021. Most patients are diagnosed at advanced stages with distant organ metastases, resulting in less than 20% of patients being eligible for surgery at the time of diagnosis. Most therapies, including

ICB, are not effective and many patients who undergo surgery ultimately relapse.

A team led by Professor Massimiliano Mazzone at the VIB-KU Leuven Center for Cancer Biology investigates ways to bypass immunotherapy resistance. In their most recent study, co-authored by Tommaso Scolaro, Marta Manco, Mathieu Pecqueux and Ricardo Amorim, the team studied the role of an enzyme called cytidine deaminase or CDA in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma.

Professor Massimiliano Mazzone, "CDA is an enzyme that helps recycle parts of DNA and RNA. It also deactivates some cancer drugs, which can make these treatments less effective. While the consensus is that CDA plays

a role in resistance to chemotherapy, its role in immunotherapy resistance was never studied. We decided to take a closer look and to determine if CDA is indeed a roadblock for treatments such as ICB."

By analyzing multiple datasets of PDAC tumors that were both responsive and resistant to ICB treatment, the team proved that the presence of CDA in cancer cells results in the creation of uridine-diphosphate (UDP). UDP is a molecule that can signal certain immune cells known as tumor-associated macrophages (TAMs). In doing so, UDP can hijack TAMs, turning them immunosuppressive. An important finding, because TAMs make up approximately 50% of tumor mass and are widely associated with tu-

mor progression.

Tommaso Scolaro, first author of the research paper, "To our excitement, our study showed that CDA indeed contributes to immunotherapy resistance. This led to our next hypothesis that inhibiting the gene responsible for creating CDA could in turn weaken the immunosuppressive properties of PDAC tumors that are typically resistant to treatments such as ICB."

As a next step, the team looked at ways to inhibit the CDA gene in cancer cells. Through pharmacologic and genetic interventions, the team was able to disrupt the interactions between CDA expressing cancer cells and TAMs. This led to better infiltration of T-cells and a higher susceptibil-

ity for immunotherapy treatments in resistant PDAC tumors, confirming that targeting CDA in cancer cells (or the UDP receptor in TAMs) can overcome the immunosuppressive qualities of a tumor. Better yet, the team also noted the same results in other cancer types such as melanoma.

Massimiliano Mazzone, "The results of this study are very positive to say the least. Not only does this propose a new potential target to enable immunotherapy in resistant cancer types, but it also improves our understanding of what drives immunosuppression in tumors. PDAC is one of the deadliest cancers out there. While our results give hope, more research is needed before we can bring this to the patient." -ANI

SPORTS

OLYMPIC GAMES



Emotional moment to see Olympic Rings at the heart of Paris, says IOC president

PARIS: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach expressed happiness with Paris’ iconic Eiffel Tower getting decorated with the five Olympic rings.

The IOC Media page on X shared a picture of Bach posing near the iconic monument.

“Emotional moment to see the Olympic Rings at the heart of Paris. Getting more real everyday.” - IOC President Thomas Bach #Paris2024,” tweeted IOC Media.

The Eiffel Tower is all decked up for the Olympic Games, starting from July 26 and going on till August 11. On Friday, the installation of the iconic five Olympic rings took place between the first and second floors of the Eiffel Tower when it was exactly 50 days to go until the Opening Ceremony of the marquee sporting event.

The rings installed were 29 metres wide, 13 metres high and about 30 tonnes. Each ring had a diameter of nine metres.

Paris 2024 president Tony Estanguet commented as quoted by Olympics.com: “It is wonderful. There are a lot of emotions, and we can feel that things are

happening. With the Olympic Torch Relay travelling across the country and now with the unveiling of the Olympic rings, it will transform the face of Paris and rally the entire nation for these memorable Olympic Games.”

The Eiffel Tower was also the inspiration behind the design of the medals, each of which contains a piece of this legendary monument, as well as the podium design, which features geometric shapes carved into them.

The Olympic rings will be displayed in their traditional colours that have become a such a big part of sporting culture - blue, yellow, black, green, and red from left to right - by day, and will turn white by night. These rings are made out of 100,000 low-intensity LEDs, the rings will shine until the end of the Paralympics in late September.

In the Olympics, India will be looking to outdo their all-time best tally of seven medals, including a gold, which they achieved in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. In the Paralympics, India will be aiming to outdo their best tally of 19 medals, including five gold, achieved at the 2020 edition in Tokyo. **-ANI**

Need to cross the finish line: Mendis


 Mendis leading Oman to the third T20 World Cup is not only a significant personal milestone, but also a record for the national team

Ashok Purohit

NORTH SOUND, ANTIGUA: Oman coach Duleep Mendis is a man of few words outside the dressing room. A widely travelled cricketer, the Sri Lankan great has been at the helm of Oman team for more than a decade.

He is leading Oman to the third T20 World Cup, not only a significant personal milestone but also a record for the national team. In the previous two T20 World Cups in India (2016) and Oman-UAE (2021), Oman tasted success with one win each in both the editions. Oman upset Test-playing nation Ireland in the Indian city of Dhar-amshala and in 2021, they defeated Papua New Guinea (PNG) at home.

Both the victories were in the opening matches of the respective editions that was played in a different format, with a preliminary round in place. The 2024 ICC Men’s T20 World Cup, co-hosted by the West Indies and the USA, is being played in a different format with 20 teams being featured in the



main tournament for the first time.

Mendis’ record of a winning start at each of the World Cups was nearly achieved this time too as Oman went close to achieve a victory against Namibia in their Group B opener at the Kensington Oval in Barbados before agonisingly being beaten in a Super Over.

Despite the narrow defeat to Namibia, Oman came with all guns blazing against the mighty Australians in the second match at the same venue and lost only after a spirited fightback.

Praised by experts

Irrespective of the two back-to-back defeats, Oman’s performance in both the matches are being praised by experts, former cricketers, players and commentators

alike.

However, coach Mendis was not impressed. He said: “It is good to hear that Oman made an impact, they nearly won, and they gave a good fight to Australia. Frankly, it doesn’t help. All we want to see the box where there is W written or a tick in the win section. It is good to listen to praises on the boys’ performances, but we didn’t achieve what we set for – the points.”

The Sri Lankan great said: “It is important to cross the finish line. For me to cross the finish line is what matters, as I know the players can do it. So, a bit disappointed on bow things have turned up so far. But I have the belief in them and hope they will get the much-needed two points against Scotland.”

Mendis said: “Our bowlers have been very good. To defend 109 against Namibia and then strange Aussies in nearly three-fourth of the match reflects our bowling strength. The batters have been failed om the top and if the top four-five batters don’t score, one cannot win matches. The fielding has been overall good, but we dropped catches at crucial times and misfielded at key moments.”

The coach hoped that the team will put up their all-round show against Scotland at the picturesque venue that has been named in honour of one of the greatest cricketers the modern cricket has seen, Sir Vivian Richards. The original master blaster and who better an inspiration for Oman batters to come good on Sunday.

T20 WC

Miller’s fighting fifty powers South Africa’s first win over the Netherlands in ICC event

NEW YORK : A fighting half-century by David Miller helped South Africa overcome brilliant opening spells by pacer Vivian Kingma and Logan Van Beek to secure a four-wicket win against the Netherlands in their ICC T20 World Cup match at Nassau County Stadium in New York on Saturday.

With this win, South Africa have finally toppled the Dutch side in an ICC event, after losing to them in the T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia and Cricket World Cup last year in India. South Africa are at the top of Group D with two wins in two games, while Netherlands is at the third spot with a win and loss in two games.

In the run-chase of 104 runs, South Africa did not have a fine start as the pace duo of Vivian Kingma and Logan van Beek managed to make early in-roads into Proteas batting. Quinton de Kock was run out without facing a ball by Paul van Meekeran and Max O’Dowd, followed by opener Reeza Hendricks being castled by Van Beek for just three runs in 10 balls.

Kingma struck twice, removing dangerous Aiden Markram (0)



and Heinrich Klaasen (4) quickly. Skipper Scott Edwards and Tim Pringle did fine job as fielders to sink Proteas to 12/4 in 4.3 overs.

The pair of David Miller and Tristan Stubbs, two finishers, were given the responsibility of rebuilding the innings and taking Proteas to victory.

At the end of six overs, Proteas were 16/4, with Miller (1*) and Stubbs (6*) unbeaten.

Proteas looked really scratchy on this trick surface, struggling to score boundaries, with Miller getting the first boundary in the ninth over.

Halfway through the innings, Proteas were 32/4, with Miller (13*) and Stubbs (9*) unbeaten.

With a massive six over long-on by Miller, South Africa reached the 50-run mark in 11.5 overs.

In the second half, run-scoring

got a little easier for Proteas and they managed to get a four or six at least per over. At the end of 15 overs, SA were 75/4, with Miller (33*) and Stubbs (31*) unbeaten.

However, after playing a maiden, pressure got the better of Proteas and Bas de Leede got Stubbs caught by Van Beek for 33 (37 balls), with a four and six. South Africa were 77/5 in 16.2 overs.

Miller tried to ease off some pressure with a six in the 18th over but Marco Jansen was cleaned up by Van Beek for just three runs in five balls. South Africa were 88/6 in 17.5 overs.

Miller fought to keep Proteas alive, reaching a well-made half-century in 50 balls, with three fours and three sixes. Miller hit a six, ending the Proteas chase at 106/6 in 18.5 overs. Miller scored 59* in 51 balls, with three fours and four sixes.

Kingma (2/12) and Van Beek (2/21) were the top bowlers for the Netherlands.

Earlier, brilliant bowling effort from Marco Jansen, Anrich Nortje and Ottneil Baartman helped South Africa to restrict Netherlands to 103/9 in the 16th match of the T20 World Cup. **-ANI**



Hosein picks fifer as West Indies clinch 134-run win over Uganda

GUYANA : Akeal Hosein weaved magic with his spin and restricted Uganda to the joint-lowest total in the history of the T20 World Cup.

Hosein was the architect of Uganda’s downfall, his relentless attack allowed the co-hosts to hammer their opposition comprehensively and sealed a thumping 134-run win at the Providence Stadium on Saturday (local time).

Hosein completed his five-wicket haul in the first seven overs. Uganda batters struggled to read his variation and lost their wickets by getting bowled or trapped in front of the stumps for LBW.

They struggled to counter Hosein and the rest of the West Indies bowlers joined the action to make quick work of Uganda.

Uganda folded on 39 in 12 overs which is the joint-lowest total in the competition’s history. The Netherlands bundled out for a score of 39 against Sri Lanka in Chattogram in 2014.

West Indies flattered their fans and maintained their unbeaten run in the ongoing edition of the competition.

Earlier in the innings, the game started with two quiet overs after West Indies won the toss. Johnson Charles decided to open his arms and play on the offensive foot against the Uganda pacers.

Johnson’s compatriot Brandon

King was dismissed by left-arm spinner Alpesh Ramjani. Nicholas Pooran smashed three quick towering sixes to keep the momentum in West Indies’ favour.

Pooran’s attacking intent was out shortly as he attempted to clear the rope in skipper Brian Masaba.

The co-hosts enjoyed a short-lived 29-run stand between Charles and captain Rovman Powell. In the 11th over, Powell showed his sheer power as he muscled the ball out of the stadium and registered a 107m six.

However, both batters couldn’t make the most of their strong start. After the duo’s dismissal, Uganda found a way back and pulled off successive yorkers to keep West Indies batters at bay.

Their death bowling was executed to near perfection. They restricted the hard-hitting duo of Andre Russell and Romario Shepherd mainly to runs behind square.

But their well-executed efforts in death overs went in vain with Russell picking up four boundaries which powered West Indies to 173/5.

Brief Score: West Indies 173/5 (Johnson Charles 44, Andre Russell 30*; Brian Masaba 2-31) vs Uganda 39 (Juma Miyagi 13*; Akeal Hosein 5-11, Alzarri Joseph 2-6).

OMAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

OMR4mn pact inked to invest in lands of OOC

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company on Sunday signed an agreement to invest in the lands of Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) and Omani sports associations and federations.

The agreement deals with constructing facilities opposite the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher on an area of 18,000 square metres at a cost of OMR4 million.

The agreement stems from the Ministry’s efforts to explore investment opportunities that generate financial sustainabil-



ity for the sports associations and federations.

In this drive, the Ministry acts in cooperation with the OOC and the Sports Activities Fund.

The project includes the setting up of commercial, entertainment and service facilities to serve the local community and visitors.

Besides its designs that reflect

Oman’s architectural heritage, the project comprises a fuel filling station that uses renewable energy, an area for charging electric cars, an integrated world-class vehicle service centre and smart office spaces available for investors in the heart of Muscat, the capital city.

The agreement was signed by Basil Ahmed Al Rowas, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports, and Eng. Hamad Salim Al Maghdari, CEO of Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company.

-ONA

-ANI

IN PICTURES



Event held to celebrate upcoming Dragon Boat Festival
An aerial drone picture shows boats with Dragon Boat Festival decorations during a celebration event on the lake of Xochimilco in Mexico City, capital of Mexico. *Xinhua*



Expats savour taste of Dragon Boat Festival flavour
International students display zongzi and fragrance sachets at Tianjin University in north China's Tianjin Municipality. *Xinhua*



International canine beauty show held in Bucharest, Romania
A Bichon Havanese dog waits to compete at an international canine beauty show in Bucharest, Romania. *Xinhua*



Samba Festival celebrated in Helsinki, Finland
Girls perform in a parade during the Samba Festival in Helsinki, Finland. *Xinhua*



Varun Dhawan and Kriti Sanon during a Father's Day celebration event
Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan and actress Kriti Sanon pose for a picture during a Father's Day celebration event hosted by Fossil, in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



Strongman and Strongwoman Competition held in Dunnville, Canada
A participant competes during the truck pull challenge of the Strongman and Strongwoman Competition at the 2024 Dunnville Mudcat Festival in Dunnville, Ontario, Canada. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

All-new Preface sedan redefines automotive excellence in Oman

Built on the advanced Compact Architecture platform, this exceptional model is poised to redefine driving pleasure for Omani consumers while setting new benchmarks in automotive excellence



this exceptional model is poised to redefine driving pleasure for Omani consumers while setting new benchmarks in automotive excellence. It reaffirms the brand's unwavering commitment to providing Omani customers with unmatched technology, comfort, safety, power and performance.

'Perfected presence'
The new Preface, a frontrunner segment C sedan, represents a harmonious fusion of technol-

ogy, design, intelligence, driving precision, and safety - heralding a new era of 'perfected presence' on Oman's roads.

Exterior elegance
Crafted to command attention on the road with class leading dimensions & flawless lines, the new Preface redefines driving with its sleek design and forward-thinking technology. From its sophisticated front face to its aerodynamic exterior details, every aspect of the new

Preface exudes elegance and style. With the longest, widest, and largest wheelbase in its class, this sedan promises a high-value driving experience for the people of Oman.

Built on CMA platform
The new Preface is ingeniously crafted on Geely's Compact Modular Architecture (CMA) platform, which forms the foundation of its design philosophy. This platform harnesses advanced engineering to seamlessly integrate aesthetics, functionality, and performance. By leveraging the advanced capabilities of the CMA platform, the new Preface achieves a perfect balance between elegance and performance. From its sleek exterior contours to its meticulously crafted interior, every aspect of the new Preface showcases the engineering brilliance empowered by the Geely CMA platform.

Comforting interiors
Step inside the new Preface and discover a world of luxury and comfort. Spacious and elegant camel brown-coloured interiors, meticulously crafted with exquisite details, invite you to indulge in every journey. The functions are within reach and effortless

to operate. The power windows and an easy-to-use interface ensure a comfortable and convenient driving experience. The 13.2" infotainment display paired with the Harman Infinity Deluxe Headrest Audio System can transform your drive into an oasis of entertainment and relaxation. This 12-Speaker luxury audio system with dual headrest speakers, create an immersive sound that surrounds you in every seat. Designed for maximum comfort, the new Preface not only boasts perforated PVC leather seats but also a leather steering wheel with cruise, radio and Bluetooth control. The smart steering wheel provides precise handling, complemented by a column shifter that ensures smooth gear changes for a truly responsive driving experience. Advanced features like six-way power-adjustable driver seats and four-way lumbar support, ensure personalized comfort for every passenger. Additionally, the anti-virus air filter ensures a clean and healthy environment, allowing you to breathe easy on every ride.

Power: Heart of new Preface
The new Preface sets a new benchmark in its class with unmatched

performance figures, offering a driving pleasure paired with control and precision. Under the panoramic power sunroof, the new Preface delivers unmatched power and performance through its impressive powertrain.
Fuelled by a robust 2.0L turbocharged 4-cylinder engine and Drive-E 2.0TD+7DCT transmission, it dominates the road with the fastest acceleration in its segment, propelling from 0 to 100 km/h in a mere 6.9 seconds. With 215 horsepower and 325 Newton-meters of torque, the new Preface ensures a thrilling driving experience on the diverse Omani terrains, without compromising on control or efficiency.
Advanced safety features
Safety takes centre stage in the new Preface, setting new standards in the segment with 360-degree camera view and an array of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS). From Forward Collision Warning (FSRA) to Lane Departure Warning (LDW), Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB), and Lane Keeping Assist (LKA), the new Preface ensures unparalleled protection for every passenger.

MGI Vision Chartered Accountants Hosts MGI MENA Conference and International Committee Meeting 2024 in Oman



MGI VISION Chartered Accountants hosted the MGI MENA Conference and International Committee Meeting 2024 at Crown Plaza, Sultanate of Oman. A highly anticipated two-day event that brought together 42 esteemed members from around the globe. The event, held in the vibrant city of Muscat, was a resounding success, marked by dynamic networking, insightful discussions, and the forging of new connections.
Held on 30th and 31st of May 2024, the conference was a testament to the collaborative spirit and professional excellence that MGI Worldwide embodies. The gathering featured a diverse array of participants, including industry leaders, experts, and representatives from various regions, all united by a common goal: to share knowledge, foster partnerships, and

drive the accounting profession forward.
Mr. Abdul Majid Al Abri, Partner at MGI Vision Chartered Accountants, welcomed all members and expressed his hopes for fruitful discussions that could lead to actionable outcomes both regionally and internationally. "Networking and meeting professionals in person will enhance collaboration and cooperation between firms. Sharing each firm's best business practices, which can be tailored to meet individual firm's needs and requirements, will undoubtedly contribute to achieving our collective goals and objectives," Al Abri added.
Mr. Piyush Thakkar, Managing Partner of MGI Vision Chartered Accountants stated that this conference is a good opportunity for all members to understand each other's strengths and

use those strengths for personalized and better-quality services to clients - the values that MGI worldwide stands for.
Chris Borneman briefed on long strategic plans, initiatives and the work that central team is doing. He also emphasized on the power of collaboration.
Conference also covered sessions on ESG, work life balance and International Standard on Quality Management (ISQM 1 & 2).
Piyush Thakkar expressed gratitude to all attendees for their active participation and contributions, underscoring the importance of such gatherings in driving the industry forward. "These sessions are crucial for our collective growth and success," Thakkar emphasized, "and we are thankful for the enthusiasm and expertise each participant brought to the table."

Ominvest and Oman In Focus sign pact to explore Empty Quarter Desert

MUSCAT: Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest) and Oman In Focus Company have joined forces to create the documentary film 'Empty Quarter Desert', aimed at showcasing the pristine nature and ecological diversity of the desert.

This collaboration underscores Ominvest's commitment to support the ecotourism sector in Oman as well as to support the SMEs exploring the nation's unique tourist and natural treasures. The agreement was signed by Abdulaziz Al Balushi, Group CEO of Ominvest, and Maisa Al Hooti Owner and Founder of Oman In Focus.
"The Empty Quarter Desert" is the latest in a series of documentary films by Oman In Focus, produced in collaboration with wildlife experts and filmmakers both local and international. The film will be broadcast in multiple languages on various specialized regional and international satellite channels.
Abdulaziz Al Balushi empha-



sized that the agreement reflects the Ominvest's dedication to promoting tourism in Oman, encouraging eco-tourism, supporting Omani small and medium enterprises, and raising awareness about preserving the Omani environment as part of Ominvest ESG strategy.
In a press statement, he commended the dedication of Omani companies to documenting the wildlife of the Sultanate of Oman, emphasizing Ominvest's efforts in preserving and sustaining the environment, positioning it as a unique tourist attraction

on the global tourism map, and promoting it on international satellite channels.
Maisa Al Hooti expressed her gratitude to Ominvest for sponsoring this project. She stated that the support of leading Omani companies exemplifies the private sector's partnership in promoting tourism and exploring Oman's environmental diversity. The film, created by a team of international and local photographers, will facilitate the exchange of expertise and highlight the unique wildlife of the Empty Quarter desert.

Alizz Islamic Bank wishes Oman Scouts success in its mission to assist with Hajj pilgrimage

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank recently hosted some of the volunteers from Oman Scouts and Guides at the bank's head office to encourage them for enlisting to assist the pilgrims with Hajj. It is an honour to have more than 40 volunteers from the Omani Scouts who will be deployed around the holy sites in Makkah and Madina to help Hajj pilgrims.
Every year a delegate of Omani Scouts volunteers aim to serve people during the Hajj season. These dedicated young Omanis, put their effort into serving the pilgrims in the holy land enabling them to perform their rituals. This includes assisting the medical delegation in performing their mission by receiving and registering patients, being on duty at the mission headquarters around the



clock, responding to the inquiries of pilgrims and those frequenting the mission headquarters, and preparing a daily report to the head of the mission on the mission's performance.
Speaking about hosting these young Omanis, Issa bin Salim Al Riyami, Head of Sharia Compliance & Audit of Alizz Islamic Bank said, "The dedication and com-

mitment of these Omani Scouts is truly inspirational. We are proud to see the nation's youth volunteering their time and effort to assist those performing one of the five pillars of Islam and we wish them success in their endeavour. Alizz Islamic Bank continuously strives to support national initiatives of Sultanate of Oman that serve the community."





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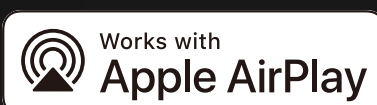


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