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### DAMS IN MAHDHA WILAYAT RETAIN 3.3MN CUBIC METRES OF WATER

The dams in the Wilayat of Mahdha in Al Buraimi Governorate have stored 3.3 million cubic metres of water during the recent weather conditions. The quantities of stored water will benefit agriculture in the wilayat by replenishing the groundwater reserve in places that suffer from water deficit. **>A2**



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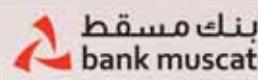
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#### TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

### OMAN

## Shura approves draft media law

**1** The Shura Council approved the draft media law and referred the bill to the State Council to round up the legislative session. The articles of the draft law saw discussions, with the Committee on Media, Tourism and Culture submitting proposals for amendment. **>A3**

### OMAN

## Omani women are a force for change

**2** Recent statistics from the National Centre for Statistics and Information underscore Oman's unwavering commitment to gender equality and empowerment, exemplified by a remarkable rise in the economic engagement of Omani women. **>A4**

### MARKET

## Oman's GDP in 2023 reaches OMR41.8bn

**3** The GDP at current prices in the Sultanate of Oman at the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 (from January to December 2023) recorded a decrease of 2.8 percent to reach (at market price) OMR41.8 billion, compared to the end of the fourth quarter of 2022. **>B1**

# HM'S STATE VISIT TO UAE SIGNALS ECONOMIC SURGE FOR BOTH NATIONS

Business leaders from both countries foresee an era of enhanced investment and economic growth

*Times News Service*

**MUSCAT:** The private sectors of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are brimming with optimism ahead of the upcoming state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the UAE on Monday. Anticipation runs high as both nations expect this visit to pave the way for a surge in trade and investment opportunities across various sectors, fostering greater economic cooperation. Business leaders from both countries foresee an era of enhanced economic and investment collaboration, aimed at fortifying the existing partnership and fostering a conducive business environment for investors. Mustafa bin Ahmed Salman, an Omani entrepreneur and Chairman of the Board of Directors of United Securities Company,



**STRONG RELATIONS:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on a state-visit to the United Arab Emirates on Monday. - File photo

hailed the visit as a testament to the deep-rooted fraternal ties between Oman and the UAE. He emphasised the significance of this visit in bolstering trade and investment ties between the two

nations, expressing hope for the signing of multiple agreements and memorandums of understanding. Highlighting the UAE's pivotal role as a major economic partner, Salman underscored the sig-

nificant Emirati investments in Oman, particularly in the Muscat Stock Exchange, with investments totalling approximately OMR1 billion. He also pointed out the potential benefits of the

proposed railway network project, which aims to connect Oman with the UAE, facilitating increased transport of goods, boosting trade exchange, and attracting investments. **>A2**

#### COMMERCE MINISTRY

## Oman received over OMR25 billion FDI in third quarter of 2023

**MUSCAT:** The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion explained that the volume of foreign direct investments in the Sultanate of Oman amounted to more than OMR25 billion until the end of the third quarter of 2023, marking an increase of OMR4.8 billion compared to the third quarter of 2022. The volume of foreign direct investment in the converting sector by the end of the third quarter of 2023 amounted to more than OMR1.4 billion. The industrial sector managed to attract 35 industrial projects with investments exceeding OMR800 million in several industrial activities in various industrial and free zones. The total volume of trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the countries of the world increased to about OMR37.6 billion in 2023. The total merchandise exports of the Sultanate of Oman reached OMR22.7 bil-

lion in 2023, of which OMR13.76 billion from the oil and gas sector, and OMR7.4 billion from the non-oil sector. The contribution of the re-export sector amounted to OMR1.5 billion, marking an increase of 12.8 percent. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion outlined its plan for 2024, which focuses on digital transition. The plan also lays emphasis on improving the quality services, cutting down costs, saving time and effort and achieving more flexibility at work. The plan also seeks to improve communication, operational efficiency and improve customer service through the electronic platforms that the ministry has launched earlier. This was unveiled during a media briefing organised on Sunday by the ministry under the motto "Digital transition roadmap". **>A5**

**GAZA DEATH TOLL**  
as of April 21, 2024

**Deaths 34,097**  
**Injured 76,980**

#### FIRST PHASE (2024-2030)

## Three service tenders floated as part of Sultan Haitham City project

**MUSCAT:** The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning floated three service tenders within the Sultan Haitham City project, first phase (2024-2030). The tenders relate to the construction of streets, service roads, culverts and pavements. They also cover the establishment of networks for electricity, water and wastewater services, in addition to broadband, communication and cooling networks and the three electrical substations. **First tender** The first tender provides for the implementation of 31 culverts, an 8-km section of roads, 7-km of side roads, a 30-km bicycle lane and 30-km pedestrian walks, in addition to traffic signals, traffic signboards and street lights. The services are expected to be implemented within 24 months, and these tenders target premium-class companies. The second tender provides for the implementation of water



networks (length 105 km), irrigation networks (54 km), rainwater drainage networks (62 km), a sewage network (93 km), communication and broadband networks, a cooling network and an electricity network (capacity: 100 MW of high, medium and low voltage). The tender winners (premium-class firms) have to complete pro-

jects within 18 months. The third tender deals with the construction of three electrical substations (for the transformation of 11/33 kilovolts) to cover an area of 7,500 square metres in neighbourhoods (6, 8, and 9). The tender winners (premium-class firms) have to carry out the projects within 15 months.

— ONA

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| Asr.....             | 3:37pm  |
| Maghrib.....         | 6:36pm  |
| Isha.....            | 7:50pm  |
| Fajr (Tomorrow)..... | 4:20am  |

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# Dams in Mahdha wilayat retain 3.3 million cubic metres of water

The Wilayat of Mahdha received the highest amount of rain among the states of the Sultanate of Oman

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The dams in the Wilayat of Mahdha in Al Buraimi Governorate have stored 3.3 million cubic metres of water during the recent weather conditions. Rain stations affiliated with the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Buraimi Governorate witnessed record amounts of rain during the weather conditions that the Sultanate of Oman experienced. Engineer Zayed bin Khalifa Al Jabri, Head of the Department of Agricultural Development and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Mahdha, said: "The quantities of water held by the dams in the Wilayat of Mahdha in the Al Buraimi Governorate amounts to 3.33 million cubic metres." Al Jabri confirmed that the quantities of water that overflowed were much greater than the quantities retained. Engineer Zayed Al Jabri added that the Wilayat of Mahdha received the highest amount of rain among the states of



the Sultanate of Oman. The rainfall reached 302mm, while rainfall in the Wilayat of Al Buraimi reached 146mm, and the Wilayat of Sunaynah recorded 84mm. Al Jabri explained that the heavy rains that the wilayat witnessed contributed to the overflow of all its valleys, whether the main valleys or those that feed them, in addition to the flow of all reefs, which led to the filling and flooding of all six dams in the state. Al Jabri stated that the quantities of stored water will benefit agriculture in the wilayat by supporting the groundwater reserve in places that suffer from low water reserves. It will contribute greatly to its availability to feed wells and falaj that are negatively affected during recurring periods of drought or lack of rain. Al Jabri confirmed that a field visit was carried out to all the dams after the weather improved in the governorate to confirm the quantities of water retained and water levels, ensure the safety of the dams, and record data to submit



the necessary reports. A number of procedures and measures were taken before the effects of the weather conditions occurred, which included emptying all dams of retained amounts of water, after which all dam gates were closed in preparation for receiving new quantities of water.

## OMR25mn pact to support SMEs, startups

**MUSCAT:** The joint committee tasked with managing the "Programme for Supporting Medium, Small and Microenterprises (MSMEs)" on Sunday signed a financing agreement with the Development Bank to the tune of OMR25 million. The agreement aims at generating more employment opportunities for Omani youth by providing soft financing for economic and social development projects. The programme offers loans to owners of self-employment enterprises. The agreement was signed on behalf of the joint committee of



the "Programme for Supporting Medium, Small and Microenterprises" by Zahir Marhoon Al Abri, Director General of Treasury and Accounts at the Ministry of Finance (Head of the Omani side at the Joint Committee), Said Mohammed Al Qahtani, Head of the

Saudi side at the Joint Committee, representative of the "Saudi Fund for Development", and Hussein Ali Al Lawati, CEO of the Development Bank. The Joint Committee for Managing the "Programme for Supporting Medium, Small and Microenterprises" is entrusted with financing institutions that provide financing services to MSMEs in the Sultanate of Oman. The panel follows up the assessment of financing portfolios to ensure optimal use of such fiscal support and to maintain the sustainability of the MSMEs. -OMA

## A1HM's visit to the UAE

Lujaina Mohsin Darwish, an Omani business leader and chairperson of the Mohsin Haider Darwish Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial & Consumer Solutions (MHD ITICS), lauded the robust economic relations between the two countries. She stressed the conducive investment environment in both Oman and the UAE, expressing optimism about the visit's outcomes in strengthening cooperation and fostering commercial partnerships. Echoing these sentiments, Emirati businessman Sheikh Muslim

bin Ham Al Ameri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bin Ham Group, stressed the transformative potential of His Majesty Sultan Haitham's visit in expanding trade and investment cooperation between Oman and the UAE. He highlighted the strategic significance of the bilateral relations, emphasising the keen interest of both leaders in nurturing these ties for mutual benefit. Sheikh Al Ameri praised Oman's promising investment landscape, citing the attractive incentives and facilities offered to foreign investors.

# Mesmerising performance by Swan Lake troupe

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Royal Opera House Muscat hosted the renowned Xi'an Acrobatic Troupe of China for their mesmerising performance of Swan Lake on April 18 and 20. Marking its 20th anniversary, the production captivated sold-out audiences both evenings with its breathtaking choreography and graceful ballet sequences. Pioneered of the adaptation of "ballet on shoulders" for Swan Lake, China's Xi'an Acrobatic Troupe fascinated audiences, drawing smiles, and creating awe-inspiring moments. This rendition of the classical ballet, set to Tchaikovsky's iconic music, offered a fresh perspective, blending stunning choreography, intricate costumes, and innovative staging, creating an enchanting



spectacle. Unique to this production by China's Xi'an Acrobatic Troupe is its groundbreaking "ballet on shoulders" adaptation, a first in the ballet's 147-year history. Building upon its award-winning 2008 World Tour, this anniversary production promised and delivered a more spectacular experience, incorporating over 100 distinct skills to captivate and challenge audiences. Infusing elements of both the ancient Orient and the West, Swan Lake by the Xi'an Acrobatic Troupe delivers a thrilling and visually stunning experience.

The timeless tale of a cursed princess transformed into a graceful swan, and her redemption through true love's declaration by a foreign prince, unfolds through a seamless blend of elegant ballet and awe-inspiring acrobatics. **Swan Lake fusion** Artistic Director, Zhang Quan expressed the troupe's joy in showcasing their Acrobatic Swan Lake fusion in Oman for the first time: "We are deeply honoured to debut our performance in Oman, bringing Acrobatic Swan Lake, a captivating fusion of Western Classical Ballet and mesmerising Chinese Acrobatic Arts, to the prestigious stage of the Royal Opera House Muscat. Our aim is to foster cultural exchange and enhance mutual understanding, thereby enriching the realms of art, culture, and economy for both nations."

Following their Oman tour, the Xi'an Acrobatic Troupe will grace Sadler's Wells for a limited run in June 2024, continuing to demonstrate the transformative power of the performing arts in transcending cultural barriers and fostering connections through creative expression. In the upcoming weeks, the Royal Opera House Muscat will continue to dazzle audiences with a diverse array of theatrical and acrobatic performances. From the rhythmic theatrics of the award-winning show Stomp! (25, 26, 27 April) to the captivating Cirque Eloise's Cirkopolis (3,4,5 May), audiences in Muscat can anticipate a season filled with unforgettable experiences. For more information and reservations, visit the ROHM website, app or contact the opera house's box office.

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COMMENTARY

## The reasons young Omanis struggle to get jobs



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

With scarcity of jobs in the country, many young Omanis are asking themselves why they went through four hard years of higher education to end up in a job queue. There are many job advertisements posted in the social media but more than half of them are for experienced candidates. Most companies advertise vacancies for fresh graduates where hundreds of Omanis apply but the job positions are only for one or two candidates. So it is a snail pace of employment where only a small percentage get to the interview stages because there are very few vacancies. But there is an alarming complaints that most companies advertise for jobs that do not exist. Why? Just to make the Ministry of Manpower happy that

they are seen to be looking to employ but they are not serious about it. When they get caught, they would say the company filled the vacancies internally. But what has inspired this tragic onset? Very simple. After Covid-19, many companies have now to make up for the losses of that time. They had to borrow from banks to keep them afloat when their income hit the all-time low. Two years later, they still fight to wipe out the losses and that's why they are struggling. They have loan repayments and these companies cannot afford to take up new employees. But why the Ministry of Manpower still push them to employ when they are still in debt? Again it is very simple. The ministry continues to get thousands of registrations from job seekers every year. It is left with no choice but to keep pressing companies to absorb them. Is it a vicious circle that has no immediate end? For the time being, yes. However, transparency is very important to educate the public to understand the current economic situation. But most important, Colleges and the Universities need to prepare their graduates about the harsh realities of employment. That may soften the blow once these graduates start queuing up for the jobs.

Mental preparedness is more important than practical readiness. Graduates will know what they are against and look at other alternatives. There are two possible solutions. Start their own entrepreneurship or cross our borders to look for jobs in the neighbouring countries. Both options can serve them well. The good news is that many government organisations are working hard to push up the economy to a sustainable level. One bright path is the business investments packages that are being promoted to foreign companies looking to diversify their portfolios to Oman. The second one is the promotion of tourism targeting Oman as one of the major destinations in the region. All this will not happen overnight but with careful steps, it will satisfy the job market sooner or later. It all depends on the right implementations. Oman is one of the fastest growing populations in the region, second only to Saudi Arabia. Official statistics show that there have been a steady baby boom since the year 2000 that has increased the population of Omanis by about 22 percent since then. That means Omanis in their twenties make up about 30 percent of the population. That has put an enormous strain in the job market.

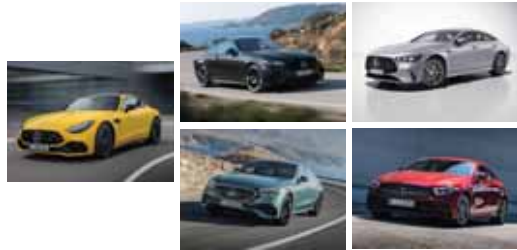
NEW BILL

## Shura Council approves draft media law, forwards bill to State Council



MUSCAT: The Shura Council on Sunday approved the draft media law and referred the bill to the State Council to round up the legislative session. The articles of the draft law saw extensive discussions, with the Committee on Media, Tourism and Culture submitting proposals for amendment. Abdullah Hamad Al Harthy, Chairman and Rapporteur of the Media Committee, read out the panel's report, including the articles proposed to be amended and the justifications quoted for such amendments. The discussions took place within the 7th regular session of the council's first annual convening during the 10th Term (2023-2027), held under the auspices of Khalid Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council. Dr. Ahmed Ali Al Saadi, Chairman and Rapporteur of the Legal

Committee, presented the panel's views on the draft media law and the amendments proposed by the Media, Tourism and Culture Committee. The draft media law was based on rapid developments that have been taking place in the media domain since the issuance of the laws governing media activities, making it necessary to merge the statutes into one uniform law. The new bill, once endorsed, will result in the abolition of the laws governing media activities, which are the "Printing and Publishing Law", the "Law on Private Radio and Television Establishments", and the "Law on Censorship of Artistic Works". It should be noted that the Shura Council will hold its 8th regular session on Monday 22 April 2024, to discuss the statement of the Minister of Information, Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi. — OMA



### Recall

Recall Date: 22/04/2024

| Brand of Commodity | Year of Production | Number of Affected Commodities |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
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| AMG GT 43          | 2021-2024          | 5                              |
| CLS 350            | 2021-2024          | 6                              |
| AMG E 53 4MATIC+   | 2021-2024          | 2                              |
| E 450 4MATIC       | 2021-2024          | 1                              |

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Recall Action

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To check the serial numbers of the affected commodities, please visit the website from Recalls & Warning: <http://recall.pacp.gov.om>



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Bose Krishnamachari  
Artist, Curator, President Kochi Biennale Foundation

The Oman Forum on Hotel, Tourism & Leisure under the Patronage of Ministry of Heritage & Tourism at Crowne Plaza Hotel Muscat, Qurum on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 at 8:30am.



Chief Guest  
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# Omani women are a force for change in society

The rate of economic participation among Omani women aged 15 and above surged to 32.1% in 2022

**MUSCAT:** Recent statistics from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) underscore Oman's unwavering commitment to gender equality and empowerment, exemplified by a remarkable rise in the economic engagement of Omani women.

The NCSI statistics paint a promising picture of women's economic participation in Oman.

According to the NCSI's special issue for the year 2023 on the labour market, the rate of economic participation among Omani women aged 15 and above surged to 32.1 percent in 2022, up from 27.7 percent the previous year.

Of particular significance is the composition of the workforce among Omani women.

The report reveals that a staggering 82 percent of economically active Omani women in 2022 were engaged in various occupations.

This figure underscores the pivotal role of Omani women as active contributors to the nation's economic landscape.

Delving deeper into sectoral distribution, the statistics highlight a balanced representation of Omani women across both government and private sectors.

In 2022, 95,652 Omani women aged 15 and above were employed in the government sector, accounting for 41 percent of the female workforce, while 136,093 women were actively contributing to the private and civil society sectors, constituting 59 percent of the female workforce.

Furthermore, the entrepreneurial spirit among Omani women seems to have flourished, with over 14,000 female business owners making their mark in sectors such as wholesale and retail trade, as well as manufacturing industries.

These figures underscore the growing economic empowerment and autonomy enjoyed by Omani women. Education remains a cornerstone of women's empowerment in Oman, with over 208,000 female students enrolled in school education and more than 70,000 pursuing higher education.

The declining illiteracy rate reflects concerted efforts to ensure equal access to education for women across all age groups.

This equitable distribution underscores Oman's commitment to fostering inclusive economic opportunities for women across diverse sectors.

The surge in workforce participation among Omani women reflects not only their growing economic empowerment but also the nation's concerted efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights.

Under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the government continues to champion policies and initiatives aimed at further enhancing women's participation and advancement in the workforce.

As Oman continues its journey towards progress and inclusivity, the remarkable contributions of Omani women serve as a testament to their resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to building a brighter future for generations to come.

## Catalysts for change and progress

In the heart of Oman's vibrant societal fabric, women stand as catalysts for change and progress. From the earliest days of Oman's renaissance to the present era, their indomitable spirit and unwavering dedication have carved a path towards a brighter, more inclusive future.

His Majesty's steadfast commitment to their empowerment has not only elevated their status but also paved the way for their active participation in various spheres of society.

Designated as a day of celebration on October 17 each year, Omani Women's Day stands as a testament to their unparalleled contributions across social, economic, cultural, scientific, and political domains.



This commemoration, rooted in the noble directives of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, honours the invaluable role of women in driving progress and prosperity.

## Challenges persists

Despite these advancements, challenges persist, particularly concerning cultural norms and societal expectations.

Her Excellency Ibtisam Ahmed Said Al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion (MOCIIP), acknowledged these hurdles while emphasising the unwavering belief in the transformative potential of Omani women.

Highlighting the multifaceted challenges faced by Omani women, Ibtisam underscored the pervasive influence of cultural norms and societal expectations.

These barriers, while formidable, have not dimmed the unwavering belief in the intrinsic potential of Omani women to catalyse societal progress across social, economic, and political spheres.

Drawing inspiration from the visionary directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Ibtisam stressed the pivotal role of women in realising Oman Vision 2040. Through strategic initiatives and policies aimed at enhancing women's participation and equality in the workforce, Oman stands poised to harness the full spectrum of talent and expertise that Omani women bring to the table.

Of particular significance is the landmark advancements made in legislative frameworks, notably the new labour law, which champions women's rights related to maternity, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. This milestone achievement not only acknowledges the invaluable contributions of working women but also reaffirms their right to pursue fulfilling careers while fulfilling their natural roles in society.

The strides made in political representation further underscore Oman's unwavering commitment to gender equality.

With women comprising 18 percent of the State Council and assuming leadership positions across various sectors, Oman stands as a beacon of inclusivity and progress in the region.

Moreover, Oman's steadfast dedication to upholding women's rights has garnered international acclaim, with the Sultanate's efforts recognised by the Human Rights Council and the Committee of Experts in following up on the CEDAW Convention.

These accolades serve as a witness to Oman's unwavering commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment on the global stage. Ibtisam highlighted the strides made by the Sultanate of Oman in advancing the status and economic rights of Omani women.



widows, housewives, and the elderly. These legal provisions serve to fortify women's rights and bolster their empowerment within Omani society.

In her impassioned remarks, Dr. Badriya bint Ibrahim Al Shehi, former Vice President of the State Council, writer, and esteemed novelist, provided profound insights into the challenges and opportunities facing Omani women. With a distinguished career spanning academia, literature, and public service, Dr. Badriya is widely revered for her intellectual prowess and unwavering commitment to advancing women's rights and empowerment.

Ibtisam underscored the significance of the Social Protection Law, which extends legal safeguards to women across various life stages and circumstances, including unmarried individuals,

Dr. Badriya acknowledged the pivotal role of women in shaping society, emphasising their fundamental contribution to raising future generations and nurturing societal values.

However, she cautioned against limiting women solely to traditional roles, urging for greater opportunities and avenues for women to pursue their ambitions and aspirations. Recognising the complex socio-economic challenges facing Oman and the broader global community, Dr. Badriya underscored the importance of empowering women to transcend societal barriers and fulfil their potential in diverse fields.



## Don't limit women to traditional roles

Dr. Badriya stressed the imperative of gender equality as enshrined in Oman's Basic Law, which guarantees women's rights and equal opportunities in employment, healthcare, and other domains.

Dr. Badriya said that Omani women have demonstrated a profound awareness of their values and traditions while actively engaging in various spheres of public life.

She celebrated the strides made by Omani women in securing prominent positions in government and beyond, citing their effectiveness, empowerment, and ability to excel in diverse roles.

Dr. Badriya stressed the importance of empowering women to transcend societal barriers and fulfil their potential in diverse fields. Dr. Badriya said that Omani women have demonstrated a profound awareness of their values and traditions while actively engaging in various spheres of public life.

# Evacuation plan against tsunami waves discussed

The workshop has been organised to discuss early warning methods and public awareness on tsunamis



**MUSCAT:** Represented by the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre at the Civil Aviation Authority, the Sultanate of Oman hosted a regional workshop titled “Modelling inundation from tsunami waves and preparing evacuation plans for the northwest Indian Ocean”.

The 5-day workshop, which began in Muscat on Sunday, is being attended by 70 participants from northwest Indian Ocean countries and representatives from the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM), the Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance (ACDA), academics from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and international experts and observers.

The workshop is conducted in pursuance of a programme of discussions on tsunamis, early warning methods and public awareness.

The programme of tsunami workshops falls within the purview of the Northwest Indian Ocean Enhanced Tsunami Warning project, which is undertaken by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Indian Ocean (Unescap) and the UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (Iocunesco).

The workshop, sponsored by the UNESCO’s International Oceanographic Commission and the Indian Ocean Economic Commission, seeks to devise inundation reference maps and draft preliminary evacuation

plans.

The workshop also lays emphasis on effective community response to the dangers of tsunamis, with the prime aim of realising the objectives of the UNESCO’s “Decade of the Oceans” tsunami programme.

The programme, which targets communities exposed to tsunami, envisages 100 percent preparedness by 2030.

The workshop’s recommendations are expected to outline modern methods and practices on evacuation plans before and after disasters like tsunamis.

The recommendations will provide guidelines for national and regional centres, advising them about how to handle disasters and deal with warnings as soon as they are issued. -**ONA**

## DOCUMENT NATURAL DISTRIBUTION

# Survey of marine mammal species in Khasab continues

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Environment Authority (EA), in cooperation with the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Musandam, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and the Omani Environment Society, is continuing the work of the third phase of the project to survey marine mammal species in the Wilayat of Khasab in Musandam Governorate.

The project aims to document the natural distribution of marine mammals and their relative abundance off the coast of the National Natural Park in Musandam Governorate, record and map their locations to create a national database for them and record noticeable human activities that may affect them or their habitats, such as fishing activities, ship movement, etc.

Engineer Aida bint Khalaf Al Jabri, head of the project team, said: “The work on the first day of the project showed an increase in the numbers of Indian Ocean humpback dolphins, which are found particularly in Khor Sham,



compared to the previous stages of the project. A large number of these dolphins have been recorded in various locations in the creek. The Indian Ocean humpback dolphin is distinguished by the presence of a thick hump on its back, from which the dorsal fin, curved backwards, protrudes.”

Al Jabri added that marine mammals play a major role in the ecosystem. Dolphins play an important role in combating infectious diseases and ensuring the reproduction of fish wealth by preying on old, sick fish.

Whales also help maintain a stable food chain, and their droppings play a major role in absorb-

ing carbon from the atmosphere. It is estimated that 400,000 tonnes of carbon are extracted annually from the atmosphere due to whales.

Engineer Noura bint Abdullah Al Shehhi, a member of the project team, said: “The third phase’s work included the use of modern and advanced technologies in collecting data with high accuracy and superior quality, most notably: a sonar device to detect depths, a device to determine wind speed, and a device to record the sounds of marine mammals, in addition to Modern, highly efficient photographic equipment.”

## OMAN METEOROLOGY

# More rains forecast for Oman

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Sultanate of Oman is likely to be affected by an air depression for three days from Tuesday, April 23, until Thursday, April 25, 2024, Oman Meteorology said.

Forecasts and analyses of the National Early Warning Centre indicate that the atmosphere of the Sultanate of Oman will be affected by an air depression from Tuesday, April 23, until Thursday, April 25, 2024.

It is expected that clouds will flow and form with chances of scattered rain of varying intensity, sometimes thunderous, accompanied by active downward winds and hail, leading to the flow of reefs and valleys over the Governorates of Al Buraimi, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Al Dhahirah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, North Al Sharqiyah, and Musandam.

**Details of the daily weather conditions:**

Tuesday, April 23, 2024: Flow and formation of clouds and scattered rain, sometimes heavy



thunderstorms ranging between (10-30 mm), leading to the flow of reefs and valleys over the Governorates of Al Buraimi, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Al Dhahirah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, North Al Sharqiyah, and Musandam, active winds ranging between (15-35) knots.

Wednesday, April 24, 2024: Continued flow and formation of clouds and scattered rain that may be thundery at times ranging between (5-20 mm), may lead to the flow of reefs and valleys over the Al Hajar Mountains and their adjacent areas and may extend to include the coastal areas of the Sea of Oman,

Active wind ranging between (15-35) knots.

Thursday, April 25, 2024: Continued flow and formation of clouds and scattered rain, which may be thundery at times (5-15 mm), may lead to the flow of reefs and valleys over the Al Hajar Mountains and their adjacent areas and may extend to include the coastal areas of the Sea of Oman, active wind ranging between (15-35) knots.

The Civil Aviation Authority calls on everyone to exercise caution during rainfall, valley flows, and low horizontal visibility, to check the sea condition, and to follow the weather forecasts issued by it.

## PRESS BRIEFING

# <FROM A1> 3,433 investors obtain ‘Investor Residency Card’

The briefing was attended by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Dr. Saleh Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Commerce and Industry, Ibtisam Ahmed Al Farooji, the Ministry’s Undersecretary for Investment Promotion, and Pan-kaj Khimji, Adviser for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation at the Ministry, among other officials.

During the media gathering, the Ministry launched the Rapid Intervention Initiative at the call centre of Invest Oman Lounge. The initiative demonstrates the Ministry’s endeavours to enhance the business climate, notably through the detection of challenges facing investors and fast intervention to address the hurdles.

The Rapid Intervention Window is managed by a specialised team that is fully prepared to serve investors. The team monitors the business environment and addresses all types of challenges posed to the investors.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion affirmed that it set 29 initiatives for 2023, with 18 of the initiatives completed and implemented by 100 percent, with a completion rate exceeding 85 percent, confirming that 42 initiatives will be part of its plan for the current year (2024).

During 2023, Oman Business Platform was developed, as the number of digitized services in the platform reached 24 out of 27 services, representing 89 percent of the Ministry’s services.

The Ministry indicated that the contribution of the converting sector to the GDP (at current prices) amounted to OMR2.6 billion in



September 2023, and the contribution of industrial activities amounted to about (16.7%), while the contribution of converting industries amounted to about (8.1%) of the GDP at current prices.

The Ministry pointed out that the launch of the “Made in Oman” campaign was aimed at highlighting national products available in the local market, promoting the logo of the new national product identity and encouraging industrial establishments to obtain their own licenses.

The campaign, explained that ministry, also aimed to consolidate the local consumer’s confidence in national products as a first choice and to establish a channel of communication and interaction between producers and consumers.

The media briefing touched on services offered through Invest Oman lounge, which caters to investors within the context of an integrated system focusing on investment in the Sultanate of Oman. The departments concerned include Oman Investment Authority, the National Pro-

gramme for Investment and Export Development “Nazdaher”, the Investment Promotion Sector at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and various government and private sector establishments.

Through this programme, 14 government departments and 6 private sector establishments join hands to serve investors under one roof. Nazdaher comprises the latest programmes on facilitating and accelerating procedures.

During the event, the Ministry showcased a total of 51 endorsed investment opportunities offered via Invest Oman platform, with an investment volume exceeding OMR1 billion.

More than 50 delegations were received at Invest Oman Lounge, while a total of 3,722 individuals and companies contacted Invest Oman Lounge via its customer service system.

As many as 3,433 investors from more than 60 countries obtained the “Investor Residency Card” until the end of December 2023, said the Ministry. -**ONA**

## CONSUMER PROTECTION AUTHORITY

# CPA intensifies its field visits

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) and its various directorates and departments in the governorates have intensified their field visits to the areas affected by the tropical situation associated with heavy rains.

The purpose of these visits is to assess the damage to specific sec-

tors and services, as well as to ensure the availability of goods.

The primary objective is to ensure that traders do not exploit the tropical situation and cause black marketing of goods.

In response to the increased demand of heavy equipment for cleaning, sediment removal, transportation, car washes, carpets, sewage suction services, and

shops selling household furniture, blankets, and bedspreads, the CPA and its related entities have developed a comprehensive action plan. This plan involves the formation of work teams that operate both in the morning and evening.

The teams cover the markets in the affected wilayats and are responsible for monitoring compliance with the regulations.



# TENDERS

The Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tenders below:

| Tender Number | Tender Name                                                                                                                                                                                           | Grade                                      | Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents | Last Date for Proposal Submission | Tender Fee (OMR)                          |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| NEGC/2024/02  | Supply and delivery of lubricants to Nama Generation power stations.                                                                                                                                  | Specialized Companies                      | 30-April-2024                                | 14-May-2024                       | 1,500/- (Plus VAT Total Amount: 75/- OMR) |
| NEGC/2024/03  | Design consultancy and supervision services For Construction of 48 MW Power Station at Dibba in Musandam Governorate with relocated 6x8 MW Wartsila DG sets from closed saih al kharai power station. | Specialized Companies registered with DCRP | 30-April-2024                                | 14-May-2024                       | 50/- (Plus VAT Total Amount: 2.5/- OMR)   |
| NEGC/2024/04  | Lease of (16) 4WD vehicles for Rural Areas Electricity Company S.A.O.C                                                                                                                                | Specialized Companies                      | 28-April-2024                                | 09-May-2024                       | 100/- (Plus VAT Total Amount: 5/- OMR)    |

- Collection of Tender: Interested and Specialized Companies and Establishments registered with Rural Areas Electricity Company, Tender Board and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) for tenders (NEGC/2024/03) may obtain the tender documents from Procurement & Contracts Section, Rural Areas Electricity Company at Wilayat Al Seeb, Al Mabelah or via email: tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om during the working days between 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM. The payment for each set of documents mentioned above is non-refundable.
- Bank Guarantee: Each bid should be accompanied with a temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers and addressed to Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C). Bids that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered.
- Offers Submission: Bids must be submitted in three sealed red waxed envelopes (Pre-Qualification, Technical & Financial), addressed to the Chairman of the Minor Tender Committee at Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C). Ensure each envelope is marked with the tender number and name. No indication or reference about the bidder is permitted on the envelope.
- Submission Location: The original hard copy of the bid bond should be dropped in the tender box at the Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 12:00 PM on the last date of submission.
- Site visit: For bidders requesting site visits, scheduling will occur upon receipt of an official request from the bidder.
- Rural Areas Electricity Company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.



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



# Oman sailors bag six more medals at GCC Youth Games in UAE

Following six more medals on Sunday, Oman's overall tally rose to 38

Times of Oman

**MUSCAT:** It was Oman sailors' day out on Sunday as the sailing events of the inaugural GCC Youth Games concluded at the Abu Dhabi Marine Sports Club. Oman sailors excelled in all the classes as they won six more medals, including two gold medals to add to the gold the Optimist team had won in the team event two days back. Following six more medals on Sunday, Oman's overall tally rose to 38. On Sunday, Abdul Al Qasmi clinched the gold in the ILCA4



class while the second gold of the day came when Elyas Al Fadali won the title in ILCA6 class. Elyas teammate, Hatem Al Araimi, bagged a bronze in ILCA6 class. Tamim Al Balushi, who played a key role in the team gold in Optimist class clinched two medals on Sunday winning silver medals in

two of Optimist class. Tarteel Al Hasani won a bronze in the girls' Optimist category to round off a successful day. Elsewhere, Oman handball team lost to Saudi Arabia 38-24 in Sharjah. The winners led 20-13. Also, in volleyball, Kuwait beat Oman 25-12, 25-16, 25-13 in Dubai.

Oman paddlers will begin their campaign in table tennis from April 23 at Shabab Al Ahly Club hall in Dubai. The team comprises four boys - Ahmed Al Riyami, Ali Al Rawahi, Luqman Al Farsi, Nasser Al Zaabi and two girls - Salma Al Nasiri and Taliyah Al Rawahi.



## BLOCK PARTY

### 2 dead, 14 hospitalised in Memphis shooting

**MEMPHIS :** Two people were killed while 14 others were admitted to hospital after a block party turned deadly at a park in Memphis, Tennessee according to police as per a CNN report. According to the Memphis Police Department, three of those injured in the incident on Saturday were immediately taken to hospitals in severe condition, and 11 more arrived at hospitals in private vehicles. **300 people had gathered** According to CNN, police said the shooting happened at a party where up to 300 people had gathered. Addressing a press conference, police disclosed that "a total of 16 victims were shot at the event." Officers responded at 7:19 pm to the scene, where they found five victims with gunshot wounds. Three of them were taken to local hospitals and two men were pronounced dead at the scene, as per CNN. According to the police, no sus-

pects were in custody as of Saturday night. Police believe at least two people opened fire at the event, Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn Davis said. It's unclear what led to the violence. Following this, Davis said on Saturday evening, "We are working tirelessly tonight to identify the individuals who were involved in this shooting." The investigation into the shooting remains ongoing. Davis said the department has received video footage from the scene and is looking for those responsible. Davis also asked anyone with footage of the incident or information to contact law enforcement. According to the Gun Violence Archive, the deadly incident extends the list of more than 115 mass shootings reported in the United States so far this year. The archive, like CNN, defines a mass shooting as one in which at least four people are shot, excluding the shooter. **ANI**

## POPULAR VIDEO CREATION

### US House of Representatives passes bill that could ban video app TikTok

**WASHINGTON:** The US House of Representatives passed on Saturday a bill that could see the wildly popular video creation and sharing app TikTok banned in the country unless it divests from its Chinese parent company ByteDance. The bill passed with 360 votes in favour, and merely 58 against. It is expected to go to the Senate for a vote next week. TikTok, whose popularity is particularly huge among younger generations, criticised the bill, which was part of a larger bill providing aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. **Free speech rights** The app warned that, if passed, the legislation would "trample the free speech rights of 170 million Americans, devastate 7 million businesses, and shutter a platform that contributes \$24 billion to the US economy, annually." US President Joe Biden has said he would approve the legislation if it makes its way to him.



**What does the bill stipulate?** The bill gives Chinese owner ByteDance nine months to sell the app, with a potential three-month extension if a sale was underway. The parent company would also be barred from controlling TikTok's algorithm, which feeds users videos based on their needs. Steven Mnuchin, who served as US treasury secretary under former President Donald Trump, has said he is interested in acquiring the app and has assembled a group

of investors. The latest bill is a revision of an earlier one passed by the House in March, which required ByteDance to sell TikTok within six months. However, some senators were concerned six months would be too short a deadline. **Why is there opposition to TikTok?** US officials have sounded the alarm over the app's growing popularity, particularly among young people, claiming it could allow Beijing to spy on its some 170 million users in the country. A number of Chinese national security laws compel organisations to assist with intelligence gathering. Lawmakers and officials are also wary that Beijing could directly influence TikTok content based on its interests. TikTok has denied that it could be used as a tool or that it has ever shared US user data with Chinese authorities, vowing never to do so even if asked. The bill's opponents argue that Beijing could easily get data on US citizens in other ways, including through commercial data brokers that sell or rent personal information. Among the opponents of the bill is billionaire Elon Musk, who now owns the social media platform X, formerly Twitter. "TikTok should not be banned in the USA, even though such a ban may benefit the X platform," Musk said. "Doing so would be contrary to freedom of speech and expression." **DW**

## TOURISM STRATEGY

### Canary Islands residents protest mass tourism

**PARIS:** Tens of thousands of people protested across the Canary Islands on Saturday to demand changes to the mass tourism model they say is overwhelming the archipelago. There is a demand for a reevaluation of the tourism strategy in the Spanish archipelago, as well as a pause on the number of visitors. Police said 20,000 demonstrators turned out for the rallies, while organizers put the number closer to 50,000. There were also demonstrations in Madrid and Barcelona in support of the rallies on the Canary Islands. **What are the protesters' demands?** Protest organizers say mass tourism perpetuates an economic

model that harms local residents. They want authorities to temporarily limit tourist arrivals to curb a boom in short-term rentals and hotel construction that drives up housing costs for locals. They are calling for restrictions on property purchases by foreigners. The protesters also want residents to have a greater say in what they see as uncontrolled development that is damaging the environment. Last week, several members of the Canaries Sold Out collective also began an "indefinite" hunger strike against the construction of two large luxury developments in southern Tenerife. **Millions of foreign tourists visit each year** Tourism is essential for the is-

lands' economy. The industry accounts for 35% of economic output and secures 40% of jobs. **14 million visitors** In 2023, about 14 million visitors, mainly from the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as around 2 million people from mainland Spain went on holiday there. "We are not against tourism," demonstrator Rosario Correo said. "We're asking that they change this model that allows for unlimited growth of tourism." Island officials are concerned about the impact on residents. A bill is expected to be passed this year to tighten rules on short-term rentals in response to complaints from residents who are priced out of the housing market. **DW**



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## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

### Over 50 drown after boat capsizes in Mpoko river

**BANGUI:** A river boat capsized in the Mpoko river in the Central African Republic's capital Bangui, killing over 50 people en route to a funeral, civil protection said on Saturday. Authorities said they were still searching for people in the water, as the incident is believed to have occurred on Friday. **What do we know about the accident?** Eyewitnesses and videos on social media suggest the boat was carrying over 300 people, en route to a funeral of a village chief some 45 kilometres (28 miles) from Bangui. Some passengers were standing, while others were perched on wooden structures.

The boat ran into difficulty shortly after setting off. Rescue services arrived 40 minutes after the sinking. Some of those injured were evacuated by motor-bike taxis. "We were able to extract 58 lifeless bodies," civil protection department head Thomas Djimasse told Radio Guira. "We don't know the total number of people who are underwater." Government spokesperson Maxime Balalou called for better compliance with river transport safety regulations. He announced launching an investigation into the incident and setting up a fund to support the families of the victims. **DW**





SPORTS

UAE rout Oman to be crowned ACC Premier Cup champions

Skipper Muhammad Waseem's century and Junaid Siddique's opening spell power the team to a 55-run win and book a place in the 2025 Asia Cup



**MUSCAT:** UAE dashed the dreams of Oman's maiden Asia Cup berth as they put up a masterclass performance to outplay the hosts by 55 runs in the final of the ACC Men's Premier Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Sunday. Put to bat first, UAE skipper Muhammed Waseem slammed a century (100) as they put up a solid total of 204/4. Oman's chase never gained momentum, courtesy of pacer Junaid Siddique's devastating opening spell (3/11), leaving them struggling at 11/3. The defeat was the first for Oman after five successive wins in the ongoing tournament but it ended the hopes of their maiden berth in the ACC Asia Cup while

UAE booked their spot in the coveted event. Coached by former Indian cricketer Lalchand Rajput, who took charge of the side in February this year, the UAE will feature in next year's Asia Cup for the second time, having previously participated in 2016. Oman, however, along with UAE and third-placed Hong Kong secured their spots in the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup, which will be played later this year. UAE's win also avenged the loss to the hosts in the group stage when Oman won by nine wickets on April 15. Siddique's early breakthroughs set the tone for UAE's triumph with two wickets in the first over

of Oman's batting. He removed the opening pair of Kashyap Prajapati and Naseen Khushi in a span of three balls as Prajapati nicked behind to Syed Haider off the third ball and then castled Khushi off the final ball of the over to leave the hosts at 2/4. He then dealt a hammer blow when he had Oman's in-form batter Aqib Ilyas, the hero of Friday's semi-final victory against Hong Kong, caught behind in his second over. Siddique's opening spell (2-0-11-3), certainly turned the scales in UAE favour and from 11/3, it needed something special from the rest of Oman batters to stage a fight back. Maqsood and Kail put on a 43-run stand in nearly five overs

to rekindle hopes before UAE's leg-spinner Muhammad Farooq extinguished those hopes with a double blow in the eighth over, grabbing two wickets off successive deliveries. First, Maqsood (14) was caught by Waseem off Farooq and then Ayaan Khan was caught behind by Haider as Oman slipped to 54/5. The hosts slid further as Kail, who looked to be the most comfortable batter till then, was stumped by Haider off Aayan Afzal Khan for 25-ball 30 that included four boundaries and a six and Oman's chase was almost over at 58/6. Rafiullah was Aayan Afzal Khan's second victim and the hosts stared at a heavy defeat with the score at 80/7.

Basil Hameed joined the wicket-taking party as he clean bowled Shakeel Ahmed to leave Oman at 99/8 at the start of 16th over. Pratik Athavale played a valiant knock to only narrow the margin of defeat with a 30-ball 49 that included four boundaries and three hits over the ropes along with Fayyaz Butt, who remained unbeaten on 23 off 16 balls as Oman ended a disappointing final at 149/9. Besides Siddique's three-wicket haul, Muhammad Farooq and Aayan Afzal Khan took two wickets each. Earlier, a skipper's knock by Muhammad Waseem helped the UAE put up a strong total of 204/4. Put to bat first, UAE openers,

Alishan Sharafu and Waseem played with ease and dominated the Oman attack as they raced to 59 runs in powerplay with the 50-run stand coming in just 5.2 overs. Both the batters displayed poise and hit the loose deliveries to boundaries and kept a steady run-scoring rate before Oman skipper Zeeshan Maqsood got the breakthrough in the tenth over of the match as he sent back Sharafu for 34. The 93-run partnership laid the foundation of a strong total and as Oman bowlers struggled to find success, Waseem and Vishnu Sukumaran put on another quick 59-run stand. Sukumaran made 18 and was out in the 16th over. A late charge by Asif Khan who slammed a 16-ball unbeaten 38 helped the team cross 200-run mark after Waseem was dismissed by Bilal Khan in the 19th over. Waseem's ton came off 55 balls with six boundaries and six maximums. UAE were 181/3 at that stage but Asif's blitz, which included five boundaries and two sixes, steered them to 204/4. Bilal was the most successful bowler for the hosts with 2/35 while Shakeel Ahmed and Maqsood bagged a wicket each as seven bowlers were tried out. **Brief scores:** UAE 204/4 (Muhammad Waseem 100, Alishan Sharafu 34, Asif Khan 38\*; Bilal Khan 2/35) beat Oman 149/9 (Pratik Athavale 49, Khalid Kail 30; Junaid Siddique 3/38, Aayan Afzal Khan 2/29, Muhammad Farooq 2/30).

IPL 2024

KKR edge past RCB in a thriller

KOLKATA: A solid batting effort, led by captain Shreyas Iyer (50 off 36), coupled with a collective bowling and fielding effort, helped Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) beat Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in a last-over thriller at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday. Mitchell Starc held his nerve in the last over and defended 21 runs as Phil Salt pulled off a brilliant athletic run out off the last ball to win it for KKR after Karn Sharma had provided a massive scare with three sixes in the final over. Salt laid the platform for KKR after being put into bat with a blistering 12-ball 48; Shreyas Iyer steered the ship in the middle overs; and Ramandeep Singh provided the final flourish with a 9-ball 24 to power KKR to 222/6. A collective bowling effort saw Andre Russell (3/25), Sunil Narine (2/34) and Harshit Rana (2/33) provide breakthroughs at crucial intervals as Starc held his nerve to defend 21 off the last over and win it for the hosts. Defending 223, KKR dismissed RCB openers inside the powerplay. The home team got the early breakthrough of Virat Kohli as Harshit Rana had him caught and bowled off a slower dipping high full toss. Kohli reviewed it unsuccessfully. He looked good for his 18 off seven balls, which included one four and two sixes. Captain Faf du Plessis followed as Venkatesh Iyer pulled off a



low diving catch at mid-on off Varun Chakaravathy. Will Jacks, though, kept the run flowing as he hammered four sixes and three fours, including three sixes and a four off Starc, in the sixth over, to take RCB to 74/2 at the end of the powerplay. KKR introduced Suyash Sharma as their Impact Player, replacing Rinku Singh in the seventh over. Jacks brought up his fifty off 29 balls with a six and a four off Chakaravathy. Jacks and Rajat Patidar added 102 runs off just 48 balls. Russell then turned it around for KKR, sending back Jacks (55 off 32) and Patidar (52 off 23) in the same over. Another bowling change brought rewards as Narine sent back Green and Mahipal Lomror in the same over to reduce RCB to 155/6. With 68 needed off 42, Dinesh Karthik and Impact Player Suyash Prabhudessai added 32 runs but Rana came back to dismiss Prab-

hudesai in the 18th over. Rana brought the equation to 31 off 12. Karthik cracked a six and a four off Russell in the penultimate over but Russell bounced back as he sent back Karthik off the last ball of the over. With 21 needed off six, a thrilling finish ensued. Earlier, KKR got off to a brisk start as Phil Salt and Sunil Narine added 56 for the opening wicket. Salt hit the fifth gear in the fourth over as he welcomed Lockie Ferguson with two sixes and four fours, making it a 28-run over. He raced to 48 off 11. Mohammed Siraj got the breakthrough as he had Salt caught at deep mid-wicket. And soon Yash Dayal had Narine caught at long off. And then two balls later, Cameron Green pulled off a spectacular catch at mid-wicket to dismiss Angkrish Raghuvanshi as KKR were 75/3 at the end of the powerplay. Shreyas Iyer and Venkatesh Iyer kept the runs ticking, but

**TODAY'S MATCH**  
 Rajasthan Royals vs Mumbai Indians  
 Jaipur, 6pm

Green dismissed Venkatesh against the run of play. Rinku Singh showed urgency, smashing a six off Karn Sharma. He, along with Iyer, added 40 off 29. Ferguson came back to get the wicket of Rinku, Russell was caught behind off a high full toss the next ball, but it was declared a no ball for height. Ferguson gave away just 11 runs from his last two overs as things slowed down for KKR. Russell and Shreyas then pressed the accelerator button, taking 22 runs off the 17th over from Dayal as Shreyas brought up his 50 off 35 balls with a six and a four. Shreyas, though, departed soon off Green in the next over. Ramandeep Singh cracked two sixes and a four off Siraj in the penultimate over. He, along with Russell, cracked three fours in the final over to propel KKR to 222/6. Ramandeep remained unbeaten on 24 off nine balls, while Russell was not out on 27 off 20. **Brief scores:** Kolkata Knight Riders 222/6 (Shreyas Iyer 50, Phil Salt 48; Cameron Green 2-35) beat Royal Challengers Bengaluru 221 (Will Jacks 55, Rajat Patidar 52; Andre Russell 3-25). -ANI

IPL 2024: SUNRISERS HYDERABAD BIG WIN

Powerplay was the difference, says Delhi Capitals' skipper

**NEW DELHI:** When Delhi Capitals (DC) opted to bowl in their first match of IPL 2024 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Saturday, they expected dew to play a role later in the evening. Which would have meant a target of around 220 also gettable. But the absence of dew in the chase helped Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), who got the balls to grip on the surface, register a 67-run win to move to second on the points table. "The only thought process behind [opting to bowl at the toss] was we thought there will be a bit of dew, which did not come," Rishabh Pant, Capitals captain, said at the post-match presentation. "If we could have restricted them to 220-230 we still had a chance. [The ball] stopped more [on the surface] in the second innings than what we anticipated. But when you have 260-270 to defend, it gives bowlers confidence." Sunrisers once again rode on the brilliant power-hitting display of openers Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, who helped them score a record 125 for 0 in the powerplay, the highest in all men's T20s. Abhishek fell for a 12-ball 46 while Head made 89 off 32 after his maiden IPL century in the last outing as Sunrisers posted 266 for 7, their third 250-plus total in IPL 2024. "I think powerplay was one of the differences," Pant admitted. "They got 120-130 runs in the powerplay and we were catching up throughout the match."



Pat Cummins, the SRH captain, had mixed feelings watching his openers bludgeon the opposition. "Part of me is very excited and elated, but the other thinks I will have to bowl on this later," he said. "Amazing, every game they keep delivering and keep playing the way we want to." The game saw 213 runs being scored in the powerplay, both innings combined, again a record in T20 cricket. Capitals romped to 88 for 2 in their chase of 267 and Cummins said that the pitch came into play once the ball became old. T Natarajan led Sunrisers' charge with the ball, picking up 4 for 19, his best figures in T20s. Mayank Markande and Nitish Kumar Reddy also returned two wickets apiece. **Brief scores:** Sunrisers Hyderabad 266/7 (Travis Head 89, Shahbaz Ahmed 59\*, Abhishek Sharma 46; Kuldeep Yadav 4-55) beat Delhi Capitals 199 in 19.1 overs (Jake Fraser-McGurk 65, Rishabh Pant 44; T Natarajan 4-19, Nitish Kumar Reddy 2-17, Mayank Markande 2-26).

FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Al Harthy takes impressive third in Imola qualifying

**MUSCAT:** BMW M4 GT3 driver Ahmad Al Harthy delivered his best performance of the season so far during qualifying for round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) in Italy on Saturday as he secured third position on the grid for the 6 Hours of Imola race. Having worked hard on qualifying and race performance of the No.46 Team WRT car throughout the three free practice sessions, the Omani and team-mates, Maxime Martin and Valentino Rossi, hoped for a stellar showing in the LMGT3 qualifying session. Al Harthy delivered, lapping with the sixth quickest time of 1m43.241 seconds (171.2 km/h) to progress into the all-important top 10 'Hyperpole' shoot-out for



the second time in as many FIA WEC race weekends. Then tasked with repeating the performance in Hyperpole immediately after the conclusion of initial qualifying, Al

Harthy went a notch faster. Posting a best time of 1m43.099 seconds (171.4 km/h), Al Harthy was the quickest of the BMW entries and claimed an impres-



sive third on the grid for the six-hour second round of the season – a mere 0.041 seconds shy of the LMGT3 front row. Having started the event on Fri-

day, with the fourth fastest time in opening practice, the squad worked hard on set-up and balance in sessions two and three to deliver a car which Al Harthy believes will

be strong in race trim too. After the qualifying, Al Harthy said: "I'm really delighted. It's a huge step forward from Qatar. I think we maximised everything we could for qualifying, from FP1 we continued working on the car – both long and short runs – to make sure we were strong in qualifying and the race. Getting into Hyperpole was the first target, going quicker then was the second, so I'm absolutely delighted with that. "Imola is a very tight and fast track, and there was a lot of traffic with the other classes. I'm really looking forward to a positive start to the race, making sure I'm able to give my team-mates the best possible chance. For sure, it's great to maximise the qualifying performance of this new BMW."

WHATSAPP TESTING NEW TOOL

WhatsApp is testing a new feature that will enable users to manage favourite contacts within the application. The new tool allows users to choose favourite contacts, rearrange them, or remove them from the favourite's list when needed. > B2

MARKET  
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSM INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,704.08 points, down by 0.28 percent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.56 percent at 443.67 points. Al Hassan Engineering, up 46.67 percent, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 3.77 percent, was the top loser. > B2



# Oman's GDP at current prices tops OMR41bn

Non-oil activities rose by 1.7 percent to OMR28.15 billion by the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 compared to OMR27.6 billion by the end of the fourth quarter of 2022

**MUSCAT:** The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Sultanate of Oman at current prices decreased by 2.8 percent to reach OMR41.8 billion (at market price) at the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 (from January to December 2023). At the end of the fourth quarter of 2022 the GDP at current prices had reached OMR43 billion, according to preliminary data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and

Information (NCSD). This decrease is mainly due to the drop in oil activities, which fell by 11.9 percent to OMR14.9 billion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 compared to OMR16.9 billion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2022. The contribution of oil activities reached 36 percent. Crude oil activities declined by 14 percent to OMR12.788 billion, while natural gas activities

increased by 2.4 percent to reach OMR2.183 billion. Non-oil activities increased by 1.7 percent to OMR28.153 billion by the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 compared to OMR27.6 billion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2022. The total industrial activities reached OMR7.7 billion by the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 compared to OMR8.2 billion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2022. Agriculture, forestry and fishing activities amounted to OMR966 million and service activities amounted to OMR19.4 billion. The contribution of the construction activities amounted to 7 percent, compared to 8 percent for wholesale and retail trade, 9 percent for public administration and defence, and 40 percent for other non-oil activities.

-ONA

KAMCO INVEST REPORT

## Net profits of MSX-listed firms touch OMR2.1bn

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Total net profits for Muscat Securities Exchange (MSX)-listed companies in Oman increased by 25.4 percent year-on-year (y-o-y) to \$2.1 billion in FY-2023 as compared with \$1.7 billion in FY-2022, according to a new report. "The rise in aggregate profits was driven by the Banking Sector which alone represented over 56.0% of the aggregate net profits in the exchange during the year," Kamco Invest said in its GCC Corporate Earnings Report: Q4-2023 April 2024.

"Moreover, sectors like Utilities and Energy also witnessed significant y-o-y absolute net profit gains during FY-2023 contributing to the overall net earnings increase," it further added.

In terms of quarterly performance, total net profits increased by 23.4 percent y-o-y to \$405.2 million in Q4-2023 compared with \$328.4 million in the corresponding quarter in 2022. Total Q4-2023 earnings of the Banking Sector, the biggest sector in the exchange by market cap, increased by 37.8 percent to reach \$258.8 million up from \$187.7 million in Q4-2022, the Kamco Invest report said.

"The Diversified Financial Sector followed with the second largest total net profits, reaching \$59.6 million during Q4-2023 as compared to \$8.2 million in Q4-2022 recording 627.3 percent y-o-y growth," the report further added.

FY-2023 earnings of the Banking Sector, the biggest sector in the exchange by market cap, recorded an 18.6 percent gain to reach \$1.2 billion up from \$993.1 million in FY-2022. The Telecom Sector followed with the second largest total net profits, reaching \$222 million during FY-2023 despite witnessing 22.6 percent y-o-y decline from FY-2022 (\$286.8 million).

In the Banking Sector, net profits for Bank Muscat increased by 5.8 percent to reach \$551.9 million in FY-2023 as compared to



\$521.5 million during FY-2022. Bank Muscat attributed its yearly earnings growth to its proactive customer-centric strategies, business growth and efficiency which was underpinned by improving economic and business conditions in Oman through an increase in oil prices, consecutive years as well as budget surpluses due to Government's progressive vision and fiscal, economic, and structural reforms.

In the Telecom sector, Oman-Tel led the way in terms of total profits that reached \$194.3 million in FY-2023, down 18.1 percent y-o-y. Similarly, Oman Qatari Telecommunications Company posted FY-2023 net profits that reached \$278 million as compared to \$50 million in FY-2022. The decrease in net earnings was largely attributed to the absence of capital gain from the sale of towers, which was factored into the 2022 net profit. In context, excluding this gain, the net profit for 2023 reflects a notable 9.7 percent growth compared to the previous year, supported by stable EBITDA, and reduced financial costs.

Aggregate net profits for the Utilities Sector jumped 34.4 percent to \$175.9 million during FY-2023 as compared to \$130.9 million during FY-2022. The growth in total net earnings of the sector materialized after four out of the eight companies that comprise the sector reported y-o-y growth in their net profits during the year led by Phoenix Power Company (\$57 million) and Sembcorp Salalah (\$53.3 million). ACWA Power

Barka returned to profitability in FY-2023 to reach \$0.9 million as compared to a net loss of \$5.9 million in FY-2022.

The FY-2023 total net profit performance was mixed for the remaining sectors on the exchange. FY-2023 net earnings in the Diversified Financial Sector declined by 8.6 percent to reach \$192.7 million as compared to \$210.3 million during FY-2022.

Comparatively, FY-2023 aggregate net earnings for the Energy Sector improved by 7.2 percent y-o-y to reach \$212.4 million as against \$198 million in FY-2022.

GCC companies

After registering record profits during 2022, net profits reported by listed companies in the GCC declined by 13.7 percent or \$38 billion to reach \$240.5 billion in 2023 mainly led by fall in profits for some of the key large-cap sectors. The biggest decline was reported by companies in the Energy Sector with aggregate profits down by almost a quarter or \$39.1 billion to reach \$127.1 billion in 2023.

The Materials Sector was next with a profit decline of 78.3 percent or \$12.85 billion to reach \$3.6 billion followed by Capital Goods and Diversified Financials Sectors with profit declines of \$5.1 billion (-48 percent) and \$1.9 billion (-55.2 percent), respectively. These declines were partially offset by higher full year profits reported by companies mainly in the Banking, Real Estate and F&B Sectors.



جهاز الضرائب  
TAX AUTHORITY



## Announcement

The Tax Authority would like to draw the attention of taxpayers who are subject to Excise Tax and VAT to submit their returns for the first quarter of 2024, according to the forms prepared for this purpose through Tax Authority's Portal: [www.taxoman.gov.om](http://www.taxoman.gov.om) not later than **30 April 2024**. We hope that all taxpayers will abide and commit to the deadline of submitting.



 taxoman

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جهاز الضرائب  
TAX AUTHORITY



## Announcement

The Tax Authority would like to call the attention of income tax taxpayers whose fiscal year ends on **December 31, 2023**, to file their tax returns and pay their tax dues as follows:

- Taxpayers paying **(15%)** of income tax should file their tax returns no later than **April 30, 2024**.

All tax returns should be submitted according to the forms set for that purpose using the Tax Authority's online portal at [www.taxoman.gov.om](http://www.taxoman.gov.om)

We hope all taxpayers comply with filing their tax returns on the deadline.



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OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE



# MSM index ends lower marginally

Al Hassan Engineering, up 46.67 percent, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 3.77 percent, was the top loser

**MUSCAT:** The MSX index closed at 4,704.08 points, down by 0.28 percent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.56 percent at 443.67 points.

Al Hassan Engineering, up 46.67 percent, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 3.77 percent, 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 830 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.92 million, with more than 17.55 million shares changing hands. Out of 54 traded securities, 10 advanced, 20 declined, and 24 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR417,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR315,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR102,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,621.35 points, down 0.67 percent. Prices of Taageer Finance were up by 1.91 percent respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, Ahli Bank, Oman United Insur-

ance, Muscat Finance, Global Financial Investments were down by 3.77 percent, 3.15 percent, 2.08 percent, 1.92 percent, 1.41 percent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,770.92 points, up 0.47 percent. Prices of Al Hassan Engineering, Galfar Engineering, Muscat Thread Mill, Oman Cement were up by 46.67 percent, 5.22 percent, 3.09 percent, 2.22 percent respectively.

Prices of Voltamp Energy, Al Maha Ceramics, Al Anwar Ceramics, Jazeera Steel Products were down by 1.45 percent, 0.65 percent, 0.55 percent, 0.37 percent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.17 percent before closing at 1,839.67 points. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Phoenix Power, National Gas, Majan College, Oman Telecom were up by 2.60 percent, 1.64 percent, 1.19 percent, 0.92 percent, 0.58 percent respectively. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Dhofar Generating, SMN Power Holding, OIFC, Al Maha Marketing were down by 2.78 percent, 2.35 percent, 2.33 percent, 2.20 percent, 1.96 percent respectively.

— United Securities

MUSCAT  
STOCK  
EXCHANGE

| INDICES            |           |          |                |             |        |       |             |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------------|-------------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Index              | High      | Low      | Value          | Prev. Value | Diff   | Diff% |             |
| MSX 30 INDEX       | 4,720.39  | 4,704.08 | 4,704.08       | 4,717.06    | -12.98 | -0.28 |             |
| FINANCIAL INDEX    | 7,678.44  | 7,621.35 | 7,621.35       | 7,672.77    | -51.41 | -0.67 |             |
| Industry Index     | 5,787.92  | 5,718.95 | 5,770.92       | 5,744.16    | 26.76  | 0.47  |             |
| Services Index     | 1,842.78  | 1,837.49 | 1,839.67       | 1,842.78    | -3.11  | -0.17 |             |
| MSX Shariah Index  | 446.27    | 439.84   | 443.67         | 446.17      | -2.50  | -0.56 |             |
| MSX TRI INDEX      | 6,527.26  | 6,504.71 | 6,504.71       | 6,522.66    | -17.94 | -0.28 |             |
| FINANCIAL TR IDX   | 8,662.34  | 8,597.93 | 8,597.93       | 8,655.93    | -58.00 | -0.67 |             |
| SERVICES TR IDX    | 2,129.29  | 2,123.18 | 2,125.70       | 2,129.29    | -3.59  | -0.17 |             |
| INDUSTRIAL TR IDX  | 6,664.11  | 6,584.70 | 6,644.53       | 6,613.72    | 30.82  | 0.47  |             |
| FIXED INCOME INDEX | 1,027.09  | 1,027.09 | 1,027.09       | 1,027.09    | 0.00   | 0.00  |             |
| Trading Summary    |           |          |                |             |        |       |             |
| Volume             | Turnover  | Trades   | Market Cap     | Up          | Down   | Equal | Sec. Traded |
| 17,555,203         | 2,918,437 | 830      | 24,142,044,685 | 10          | 20     | 24    | 54          |

## SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 21

|                 | SECURITY NAME                          | VOLUME     | TURNOVER  | TRADES | OPEN PRICE | HIGH  | LOW   | CLOSE PR. | PREV. CLOSE | DIFF. RD. | DIFF. % | LAST PD. | LAST BD. | LAST OFFER. | PREV. VALUE | MARKET CAP    |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|------------|-----------|--------|------------|-------|-------|-----------|-------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| REGULAR MARKET  |                                        |            |           |        |            |       |       |           |             |           |         |          |          |             |             |               |
| OM0000001749    | OMAN CEMENT                            | 7,669      | 2,824     | 8      | 0.370      | 0.370 | 0.365 | 0.368     | 0.360       | 0.008     | 2.222   | 0.365    | 0.365    | 0.368       | 0.100       | 121,761,157   |
| OM0000003026    | OMAN TELECOM                           | 57,089     | 59,689    | 12     | 1.040      | 1.050 | 1.040 | 1.050     | 1.044       | 0.006     | 0.575   | 1.050    | 1.050    | 1.050       | 0.100       | 787,500,000   |
| OM0000001152    | OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT | 49,600     | 5,670     | 8      | 0.114      | 0.115 | 0.114 | 0.115     | 0.115       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.115    | 0.112    | 0.125       | 0.100       | 17,250,000    |
| OM0000001483    | NATIONAL BANK OMAN                     | 106,453    | 27,146    | 5      | 0.255      | 0.255 | 0.255 | 0.255     | 0.255       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.255    | 0.255    | 0.264       | 0.100       | 414,616,321   |
| OM0000001881    | OMAN EMBATES HO.                       | 20,000     | 1,750     | 4      | 0.088      | 0.088 | 0.087 | 0.087     | 0.087       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.087    | 0.087    | 0.088       | 0.100       | 10,603,125    |
| OM0000002226    | ALJAZEERA SERVICES                     | 113        | 27        | 1      | 0.240      | 0.240 | 0.240 | 0.240     | 0.240       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.240    | 0.240    | 0.250       | 0.100       | 14,688,026    |
| OM0000002374    | UNITED FINANCE                         | 142,890    | 8,716     | 6      | 0.061      | 0.061 | 0.061 | 0.061     | 0.061       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.061    | 0.061    | 0.061       | 0.100       | 21,723,765    |
| OM0000002440    | AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.              | 7,500      | 585       | 1      | 0.078      | 0.078 | 0.078 | 0.078     | 0.078       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.077    | 0.077    | 0.078       | 0.100       | 7,020,000     |
| OM0000002549    | BANK DHOFAR                            | 202,467    | 32,395    | 5      | 0.160      | 0.160 | 0.160 | 0.160     | 0.160       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.160    | 0.160    | 0.160       | 0.100       | 479,416,230   |
| OM0000002796    | BANK MUSCAT                            | 1,002,141  | 266,141   | 28     | 0.266      | 0.267 | 0.265 | 0.265     | 0.265       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.265    | 0.264    | 0.269       | 0.100       | 1,989,195,221 |
| OM0000003224    | RENAISSANCE SERVICES                   | 79,889     | 29,958    | 7      | 0.375      | 0.375 | 0.375 | 0.375     | 0.375       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.370    | 0.370    | 0.375       | 0.100       | 88,653,750    |
| OM0000003968    | OOREDOO                                | 53,082     | 15,811    | 12     | 0.297      | 0.298 | 0.297 | 0.298     | 0.298       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.298    | 0.299    | 0.301       | 0.100       | 193,981,381   |
| OM0000002176    | JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS                 | 416,917    | 112,578   | 14     | 0.271      | 0.271 | 0.270 | 0.271     | 0.271       | -0.001    | -0.369  | 0.270    | 0.270    | 0.270       | 0.100       | 33,722,449    |
| OM0000002168    | AL ANWAR CERAMIC                       | 270        | 49        | 1      | 0.181      | 0.181 | 0.181 | 0.181     | 0.182       | -0.001    | -0.549  | 0.181    | 0.178    | 0.181       | 0.100       | 39,820,000    |
| OM0000005005    | ALMAHA CERAMICS                        | 19,967     | 2,197     | 5      | 0.153      | 0.153 | 0.153 | 0.153     | 0.154       | -0.001    | -0.649  | 0.153    | 0.154    | 0.169       | 0.100       | 8,415,000     |
| OM0000003398    | SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK               | 2,924,321  | 356,784   | 63     | 0.123      | 0.123 | 0.121 | 0.122     | 0.123       | -0.001    | -0.813  | 0.122    | 0.121    | 0.122       | 0.100       | 680,424,045   |
| OM0000001533    | OMINVEST                               | 57,136     | 23,148    | 8      | 0.405      | 0.407 | 0.405 | 0.405     | 0.409       | -0.004    | -0.978  | 0.405    | 0.405    | 0.405       | 0.100       | 270,687,998   |
| OM0000004788    | MADINA TAKAFUL                         | 35,035     | 2,897     | 3      | 0.083      | 0.083 | 0.082 | 0.082     | 0.083       | -0.001    | -1.205  | 0.082    | 0.082    | 0.091       | 0.100       | 14,350,000    |
| OM0000003125    | GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.        | 257,300    | 18,218    | 18     | 0.071      | 0.071 | 0.070 | 0.070     | 0.071       | -0.001    | -1.408  | 0.070    | 0.070    | 0.070       | 0.100       | 14,000,000    |
| OM0000003000    | AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING   | 4,507      | 4,507     | 2      | 1.000      | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.020     | 1.020       | -0.020    | -1.961  | 1.000    | 1.000    | 1.020       | 0.100       | 69,000,000    |
| OM0000001087    | OMAN UNITED INSURANCE                  | 157,100    | 32,365    | 11     | 0.238      | 0.240 | 0.235 | 0.235     | 0.240       | -0.005    | -2.083  | 0.235    | 0.235    | 0.250       | 0.100       | 23,500,000    |
| OM0000004248    | SMN POWER HOLDING                      | 65,000     | 22,045    | 11     | 0.343      | 0.343 | 0.335 | 0.335     | 0.343       | -0.008    | -2.332  | 0.335    | 0.335    | 0.335       | 0.100       | 66,877,926    |
| Total           | 22                                     | 5,640,446  | 1,025,430 | 233    |            |       |       |           |             |           |         |          |          |             |             |               |
| Parallel Market |                                        |            |           |        |            |       |       |           |             |           |         |          |          |             |             |               |
| OM0000003521    | GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING       | 5,405,784  | 737,932   | 244    | 0.135      | 0.144 | 0.133 | 0.141     | 0.134       | 0.007     | 5.224   | 0.141    | 0.141    | 0.144       | 0.100       | 28,621,089    |
| OM0000002036    | MUSCAT THREAD MILLS                    | 3,777      | 378       | 2      | 0.100      | 0.100 | 0.100 | 0.100     | 0.097       | 0.003     | 3.093   | 0.100    | 0.098    | 0.100       | 0.100       | 1,639,411     |
| OM0000007084    | MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION               | 8,648      | 683       | 2      | 0.079      | 0.079 | 0.079 | 0.079     | 0.077       | 0.002     | 2.587   | 0.079    | 0.079    | 0.079       | 0.100       | 12,388,462    |
| OM0000003281    | TAAGEER FINANCE                        | 100,209    | 10,722    | 2      | 0.107      | 0.107 | 0.107 | 0.107     | 0.105       | 0.002     | 1.905   | 0.107    | 0.105    | 0.110       | 0.100       | 29,006,683    |
| OM0000005963    | PHOENIX POWER                          | 720,000    | 44,356    | 23     | 0.061      | 0.062 | 0.061 | 0.062     | 0.061       | 0.001     | 1.639   | 0.062    | 0.061    | 0.062       | 0.100       | 90,681,291    |
| OM0000001160    | NATIONAL GAS                           | 10,000     | 850       | 2      | 0.085      | 0.085 | 0.085 | 0.085     | 0.084       | 0.001     | 1.190   | 0.085    | 0.084    | 0.087       | 0.100       | 7,225,000     |
| OM0000001897    | MAJAN COLLEGE                          | 4,000      | 440       | 2      | 0.110      | 0.110 | 0.110 | 0.110     | 0.109       | 0.001     | 0.917   | 0.110    | 0.110    | 0.111       | 0.100       | 9,900,000     |
| OM0000001178    | MUSCAT GASES                           | 6,851      | 911       | 2      | 0.132      | 0.133 | 0.132 | 0.133     | 0.133       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.133    | 0.000    | 0.146       | 0.100       | 3,990,000     |
| OM0000001509    | DHOFAR INTERNATIONAL DEV. & INV. HO.   | 13,800     | 1,105     | 2      | 0.225      | 0.225 | 0.225 | 0.225     | 0.225       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.225    | 0.225    | 0.247       | 0.100       | 92,080,421    |
| OM0000001707    | OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY                   | 72,449     | 159,743   | 6      | 2.200      | 2.400 | 2.200 | 2.400     | 2.400       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 2.400    | 2.200    | 2.400       | 0.100       | 215,280,000   |
| OM0000002267    | GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS                 | 750        | 171       | 1      | 0.228      | 0.228 | 0.228 | 0.228     | 0.228       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.228    | 0.228    | 0.235       | 0.100       | 10,434,602    |
| OM0000002648    | NATIONAL FINANCE                       | 5,700      | 998       | 1      | 0.175      | 0.175 | 0.175 | 0.175     | 0.175       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.175    | 0.175    | 0.175       | 0.100       | 100,398,249   |
| OM0000004420    | BANK NIZWA                             | 158,505    | 15,333    | 3      | 0.098      | 0.098 | 0.098 | 0.098     | 0.098       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.098    | 0.097    | 0.100       | 0.100       | 219,221,397   |
| OM0000004925    | ALBATINAH POWER                        | 100,750    | 7,859     | 8      | 0.078      | 0.078 | 0.078 | 0.078     | 0.078       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.078    | 0.078    | 0.081       | 0.100       | 52,641,220    |
| OM0000004933    | AL SUWADI POWER                        | 126,820    | 10,399    | 9      | 0.082      | 0.082 | 0.082 | 0.082     | 0.082       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.082    | 0.081    | 0.084       | 0.100       | 58,581,320    |
| OM0000005280    | OMAN ARAB BANK                         | 81,550     | 10,602    | 2      | 0.130      | 0.130 | 0.130 | 0.130     | 0.130       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.130    | 0.130    | 0.135       | 0.100       | 217,023,300   |
| OM0000008868    | THE PEARL BHF                          | 1,500      | 183       | 3      | 0.122      | 0.122 | 0.122 | 0.122     | 0.122       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.122    | 0.120    | 0.134       | 0.100       | 61,988,633    |
| OM0000009072    | QO GAS NETWORKS                        | 203,820    | 294,415   | 143    | 0.145      | 0.146 | 0.144 | 0.145     | 0.145       | 0.000     | 0.000   | 0.145    | 0.139    | 0.146       | 0.100       | 827,940,468   |
| OM0000008934    | ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES                  | 785,945    | 243,210   | 24     | 0.310      | 0.310 | 0.308 | 0.309     | 0.310       | -0.001    | -0.323  | 0.308    | 0.308    | 0.308       | 0.100       | 227,991,800   |
| OM0000001772    | ABRAJ DESALINATION                     | 519,865    | 45,204    | 25     | 0.088      | 0.088 | 0.087 | 0.087     | 0.088       | -0.001    | -1.136  | 0.087    | 0.087    | 0.087       | 0.100       | 17,922,922    |
| OM0000003661    | VOLTAMP ENERGY                         | 37,006     | 10,024    | 8      | 0.270      | 0.272 | 0.270 | 0.272     | 0.276       | -0.004    | -1.449  | 0.272    | 0.265    | 0.274       | 0.100       | 22,641,548    |
| OM0000008710    | BARKA DESALINATION                     | 4,904      | 631       | 2      | 0.129      | 0.129 | 0.128 | 0.128     | 0.130       | -0.002    | -1.538  | 0.128    | 0.129    | 0.142       | 0.100       | 9,666,816     |
| OM0000001580    | MUSCAT FINANCE                         | 902,400    | 45,856    | 20     | 0.082      | 0.082 | 0.080 | 0.081     | 0.082       | -0.001    | -1.923  | 0.081    | 0.081    | 0.081       | 0.100       | 15,664,463    |
| OM0000007407    | DHOFAR GENERATING                      | 16,500     | 1,268     | 6      | 0.083      | 0.083 | 0.081 | 0.083     | 0.082       | -0.002    | -2.353  | 0.081    | 0.081    | 0.081       | 0.100       | 18,445,920    |
| OM0000003141    | BARKA WATER AND POWER                  | 17,915     | 6,307     | 5      | 0.362      | 0.362 | 0.350 | 0.350     | 0.360       | -0.010    | -2.778  | 0.350    | 0.350    | 0.350       | 0.100       | 55,000,000    |
| OM0000002200    | AHLI BANK                              | 89,852     | 13,907    | 4      | 0.155      | 0.155 | 0.154 | 0.154     | 0.159       | -0.005    | -3.145  | 0.154    | 0.155    | 0.170       | 0.100       | 361,847,250   |
| OM0000004776    | TAKAFUL OMAN                           | 110        | 10        | 2      | 0.051      | 0.051 | 0.051 | 0.051     | 0.053       | -0.002    | -3.774  | 0.051    | 0.051    | 0.058       | 0.100       | 12,750,000    |
| Total           | 27                                     | 11,293,930 | 1,665,720 | 557    |            |       |       |           |             |           |         |          |          |             |             |               |

### AUTOMOBILE SECTOR

Tesla cuts prices for select car models in US

**NEW DELHI:** Tesla cut the US prices of its Model Y, Model X and Model S vehicles by USD 2,000 each this week, days after the first-quarter deliveries of the automaker missed market expectations, according to media report.

The EV maker reported this month that its global vehicle deliveries in the first quarter fell for the first time in nearly four years as price cuts failed to stir demand.

Elon Musk-run automobile company lowered the prices for its Model Y base variant to \$42,990, while the long-range and performance variants are now priced at \$47,990 and \$51,490, respectively, according to its website, reported Reuters.

The basic version of the Model S now costs \$72,990 and its plaid variant \$87,990. The Model X base variant now costs \$77,990 and its plaid variant is priced at \$92,900.

— ANI

### NEW TOOL

WhatsApp is testing a new feature that will enable users to manage favourite contacts within the application.

The new tool allows users to choose favourite contacts, rearrange them, or remove them from the favourite's list when needed. It also allows users to add chat groups.

According to what was observed in the beta version of the application, users will be able to create a list of favourite contacts



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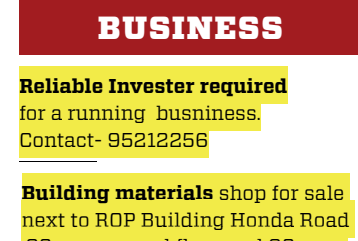
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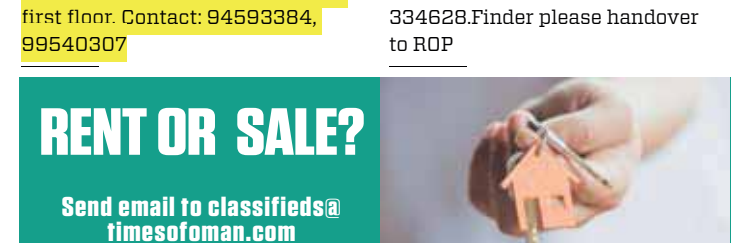
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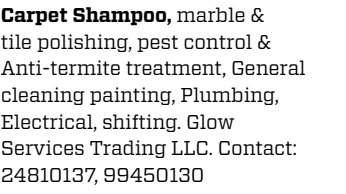
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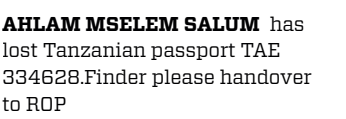
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**Chief accountant,** Indian Male, 20 yrs experience in finance,accounts up to finalisation. Well versed with ERP systems, audit, MIS, banking, budgeting etc. Valid D/L. Contact 79187945

**M.Com, Indian, Chief Accountant,** having D/L, 16 yrs experience in Oman up to finalization, audit, budgeting, MIS, VAT, Income Tax, Tax assessments, looking for a suitable position. 78233089.

**Indian male,** 32 yrs, MBA( Marketing)12 yr experience in Manager accountant & sales executive seek- ing position in Manager, accounts, sales fields. Contact : 97015751. Email: [vvcfadhil@gmail.com](mailto:vvcfadhil@gmail.com)

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**QA/QC inspector** with experience in refinery project have B.E mech, Cswip. Oman D/L. Contact: 79654434

**Site engineer & AutoCAD draftsman** with 20+ yrs of experience after completing my Diploma in Civil engineering (3 yrs course) including 13+ yrs of experience in Oman,valid Oman D/L. Contact: +968 96449195. Email: [shahkawsar2@gmail.com](mailto:shahkawsar2@gmail.com). LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/shah-muhammad-kawsar](https://www.linkedin.com/in/shah-muhammad-kawsar)

**Indian Senior project engineer HVAC,** mechanical 13 yrs experience in MEP construction. Contact: 97135658

**Sudanese civil engineer.** Project management & design (2 yrs experience). D/ L & Oman resident. Contact: 95221840

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**Civil Engineer Indian female,** age 31 looking for assistant-level civil engineering jobs. Contact: 91719385. Email: [anu98121@gmail.com](mailto:anu98121@gmail.com).

**Civil Project Manager** with 25 yrs of experience in contracting, consultant, client representative. Looking for suitable placement. Contact: 79081315. Email: [riyas05@hotmail.com](mailto:riyas05@hotmail.com)

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**Indian male** with 12 yrs of Logistics experience in leading Oman's Oil and gas industry, having valid Oman D/L. Contact: +968 93221397

**Indian male** with 9 yrs of logistics operation & purchase assistant experience with Oman D/L & Valid NOC. Contact/WA: +968 95915101. Email: [sayyadshahanawaz19@gmail.com](mailto:sayyadshahanawaz19@gmail.com)

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**Finance Manager** with 15 yrs of experience in oil & gas multinational company looking for suitable placement. Contact: 95230609

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**Indian male** (with D/L ) having 4 yrs Oman experience in (sales & administration) Contact: +968 77459910. Email: [muhammedwasique@gmail.com](mailto:muhammedwasique@gmail.com)

**Indian male** more than 3 yrs experience in indoor & outdoor sale in showroom & D/L available. Contact 79899350. Email: [oman30940@gmail.com](mailto:oman30940@gmail.com)

**Experienced in sales & Marketing** looking for a job in Sohar. Contact: 78501743

**Female,** well qualified with 10+ years experience in local market, looking for a marketing job. Valid D/L. NOC available. Contact :96042006

**Indian female** 14 yrs experience in Oman. Trained from European countries for sales n marketing. Worked in fashions (perfumes n skincare), FMCG and hospital with D/L. Looking for new opportunities. Contact: 96428887

**Sales & Marketing professional** for more than 12 yrs with reputed building material manufacturing & trading company in Oman, possess D/L, proficient in handling dealers & projects, looking for a suitable opportunity. Contact: 78191216

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**Omani National,** fluent in English looking for suitable placement in sales or administration. Contact: 78001487. Email: [modiburundi@hotmail.com](mailto:modiburundi@hotmail.com)

**Indian graduate** 7 yrs experience in sales with D/L. Contact: 98613373. Email: [syedismailnoor@gmail.com](mailto:syedismailnoor@gmail.com)



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SPORTS

# Verstappen charges to victory in action-packed Chinese GP

Red Bull driver hails ‘amazing’ weekend as he wins amid multiple restarts; McLaren’s Norris finishes second

**SHANGHAI:** Max Verstappen converted pole position into victory on Sunday in a Chinese Grand Prix full of incidents and overtakes, leading home McLaren’s Lando Norris and Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez to make it four wins from five races so far this season.

Verstappen led the vast majority of a strategic encounter at the Shanghai International Circuit that featured a Virtual Safety Car and two full Safety Car periods, the Dutchman keeping his cool at the front as the drama unfolded behind him.

Norris was one of three drivers, along with Ferrari pair Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz, to complete just one pit stop, making the most of the VSC and Safety Car phases to jump Perez for second position, which he managed to hold to the finish.

Leclerc and Sainz followed in fourth and fifth respectively, despite some concerns from the Monegasque in the closing stages that his tyres would not be able to make it to the end, with George Russell leading Mercedes’ charge en route to sixth.

Fernando Alonso had an off-set strategy after pitting for softs, rather than hards chosen by the drivers around him, under the mid-race Safety Car, forcing him into a



late stop for mediums and then a string of overtakes to recover from 12th to seventh – McLaren’s Oscar Piastri his final victim.

After his Q1 exit and some tyre-related struggles in the early laps, Lewis Hamilton worked his way up the order amid drama around

him, and thanks to some smart overtakes, to wind up ninth, with Haas driver Nico Hulkenberg claiming the final point on offer.



Alpine pair Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly sandwiched the Williams of Alex Albon in positions 11 to 13, while Kick Sauber’s Zhou Guanyu crossed the line in 14th as he made history by becoming the first Chinese driver to compete on home soil.

A trio of sanctioned drivers followed, with Lance Stroll classifying 15th, ahead of final finishers Kevin Magnussen and Logan Sargeant, after being given a 10-second penalty for his part in a collision with Daniel Ricciardo under the Safety Car.

Stroll ran into the back of Ricciardo just before the first Safety Car restart when the field bunched up at the tight final hairpin, and after the RB driver returned to the pits to retire with significant damage, stewards slapped the Canadian with his sanction.

Magnussen was 16th in his Haas after tipping the other RB of Yuki Tsunoda into a spin – and retire-

ment – at the exit of the Turn 6 hairpin earlier in the race, a move that also saw the stewards add 10 seconds to his time.

Logan Sargeant finished 17th and last in the second of the Williams machines to conclude another difficult weekend, having been hit with his own 10-second penalty for a Safety Car infringement involving Hulkenberg.

Alongside the two RBs, Valtteri Bottas failed to finish when his Kick Sauber developed an apparent engine issue and forced him to pull off the track, with problems removing his car leading to the first Safety Car period.

With the top-three finishers heading to the podium to celebrate, Verstappen’s latest win means he now sits 25 points – and a Grand Prix victory – clear of team mate Perez in the drivers’ standings, as the F1 field get set for another Sprint in Miami in a fortnight’s time. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE



## Arsenal return to top of Premier League

**LONDON:** Arsenal put their Champions League disappointment firmly in the past to beat Wolves 2-0 at Molineux and move back to the top of the Premier League on Saturday.

Having blown their chance to leapfrog Pep Guardiola’s side six days ago by losing at home to Aston Villa, then being knocked out of the Champions League by Bayern Munich on Wednesday, it was a welcome triumph for Mikel Arteta’s men.

Leandro Trossard’s strike in the last minute of the opening period may not have been the most eye-catching of the Belgian’s career but it was perfectly timed.

It came at the end of a half where Arsenal seemed to have got stuck after a bright start and nearly fell behind to Gary O’Neil’s injury-ravaged side.

Captain Martin Odegaard added the second deep into stoppage time at the end of the game, turning in from a tight angle after his initial cross had been blocked.

“I really liked the performance, the result, the clean sheet,” said Gunners boss Arteta. “But especially the way the team has individually shown that they still have another step forward to make and resilience that is needed in these moments to step in and say I’m here, I’m gonna make myself count and impact the team.”

The result means Arsenal are now a point clear of City, with a better goal difference but having played a game more. They have the chance to apply some significant pressure to the defending champions when they entertain beaten FA Cup semi-finalists Chelsea on Tuesday. - Agencies

THE FA CUP: SEMI-FINALS

## Silva scores late winner as Man City reach final

**LONDON:** Manchester City bounced back from the disappointment of the Champions League quarter-final exit to Real Madrid as Bernardo Silva’s late goal sunk Chelsea 1-0 at Wembley to seal a place in the FA Cup final on Saturday.

It was redemption for Silva after his poor spot-kick played a key role in City’s loss on penalties to Real. The Portuguese midfielder turned in the winner at the far post from Kevin de Bruyne’s cross six minutes from time.

Chelsea will regret missing a host of chances, nearly all falling to striker Nicolas Jackson, as they suffered another agonising Wembley experience after the extra-time defeat on penalties against Liverpool in the Carabao Cup final.

And Chelsea also feel they were victims of an injustice as they were infuriated that they were not awarded a second-half penalty when Cole Palmer’s free-kick struck Jack Grealish’s hand in the wall, only for the video assistant referee to rule no offence had taken place. City remain on course for another double of Premier League and FA Cup and will now face either arch-rivals Manchester United or Championship side Coventry City in the final.



The holders are always capable of moments of quality and it was no surprise that it was De Bruyne who unlocked Chelsea when they switched off fatally late on, the Belgian picking out Silva at the far post for the winner.

**Guardiola hits out at schedule** Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola says it is “unacceptable” that his side had to play an FA Cup semi-final so soon after a Champions League quarter-final.

Guardiola said Coventry and Manchester United - who play on Sunday at Wembley - should have played on Saturday.

“I don’t understand how we survived,” added the City boss.

Guardiola’s argument is that the other FA Cup semi-final between Manchester United and Coventry, who are not in European competition, should have been switched to Saturday to allow his players an extra day to recover.

“It’s unacceptable to let us play today,” he told *BBC Sport*. “It’s impossible, for the health of the players. It’s not normal. “One hundred and twenty minutes, the emotions of Madrid, the way we lose, honestly. I know this country is special [with the FA Cup] but it’s for the health of the players.”

TENNIS

## Tsitsipas sets up summit clash with Ruud in Barcelona

**BARCELONA:** Stefanos Tsitsipas will face Casper Ruud in the final of the Barcelona Open a week after beating the Norwegian to win the Monte Carlo Masters.

Greece’s world No.7 Tsitsipas overcame Serbia’s Dusan Lajovic 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, while Ruud edged past Argentine Tomas Etcheverry 7-6 (8-6), 6-4 on Saturday.

Ruud, the world No.6, has lost in three finals this year.

Meanwhile, American Taylor Fritz and Germany’s Jan-Lennard Struff will contest the final of



the BMW Open.

No.3 seed Fritz, the top seed left at the tournament in Munich, completed a 6-3, 6-4 win over



Chile’s Cristian Garin.

Home hope Struff, who is seeded fourth, enjoyed a comprehensive 6-2, 6-0 victory

over Denmark’s second seed Holger Rune.

**Rybakina stuns Swiatek to reach Stuttgart final**

Elsewhere, fourth seed Elena Rybakina ended world No.1 Iga Swiatek’s recent dominance at the Stuttgart Open, winning in three sets on Saturday to reach the final.

Kazakhstan’s Rybakina, 24, beat the Polish top seed 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, halting her 10-match win streak at the event.

Swiatek had won the previous two editions of the WTA 500 tour-

nament. Rybakina faces Ukraine’s unseeded Marta Kostyuk in Sunday’s final after she beat Marketa Vondrousova 7-6 (2) 6-2.

“It was, like always, a very tough match and I was fighting for every ball, it was such a close match,” said Rybakina.

“I’m really happy that I managed to win and I showed a good game.”

Rybakina will contest the final against Kostyuk, who came back from 5-1 down in the opening set to beat Czech Wimbledon champion and sixth seed Vondrousova. - Agencies

TENNIS

## Former Wimbledon champion Muguruza confirms retirement



**MADRID:** Former Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza confirmed her retirement from tennis on Saturday. The Spanish former world No.1 won Wimbledon in 2017, as well as the French Open the previous year.

The 30-year-old announced her retirement in Madrid before the Laureus World Sports Awards.

“The time has come to say goodbye. It’s been a long and successful career, but I feel the time is right to retire,” said Muguruza.

Venezuela-born Muguruza has not played since January 2023, and last March said she was taking an extended break from tennis. She turned professional in 2012 and won her first Grand Slam in 2016, defeating Serena Williams in the final of the French Open.

The following year she was victorious at Wimbledon, beating Venus Williams in the final and reaching No.1 in the world rankings.

“If 25 years ago when I started hitting my first tennis balls someone had told me that I would become a professional tennis player, that I would fulfil my dream of winning Roland Garros and Wimbledon, that I would become No.1 in the world and win the WTA Finals, I would have thought this person was crazy,” she said. - Agencies

# Dar Al Atta’s sponsors ground-breaking opportunities for students at MHA Oman

The signing ceremony underscored Dar Al Atta’s significant sponsorship contribution, illustrating a mutual commitment to fostering talent within the hospitality industry

**MUSCAT:** Dar Al Atta’s association signed with Muscat Hospitality Academy (MHA) Oman a memorandum of understanding



to revolutionise opportunities for aspiring hospitality professionals in Oman. A signing ceremony underscored Dar Al Atta’s significant sponsorship contribution, illustrating a mutual commitment to fostering talent within the hospitality industry.

Gracing the ceremony from Dar Al Atta was Maryam Issa Al Zedjali, Founder and President of the Dar Al Atta’s, alongside Siham Al Kharoosi, Manager of the Tamkeen Programme, highlighting their dedication to empowering

individuals through education and skill development.

Muscat Hospitality Academy was represented by Ammar Ghabriss, Managing Director of MHA Oman, signifying the academy’s pledge towards excellence in hospitality education.

This significant sponsorship by Dar Al Atta to Muscat Hospitality Academy is a testament to the charitable organisation’s commitment to enriching the community and providing tangible support to nurture talent in the hospitality



sector. It represents a dedicated effort to e Commenting on this step, the esteemed Maryam Issa Al Zedjali, founder and president of the board of directors of Dar Al Atta, said, “We are delighted to sign an agreement and cooperate with Muscat Academy of Hospitality. This programme is a wonderful opportunity to develop the skills of the beneficiaries of the initiative in the field of hospitality. Participants will be trained in cooking skills or professional hotel service. This programme provides an opportunity for personal and

professional growth. I would like to thank Habib Corporation and its partners for their support of the programme and their continued faith in the work of the association.” Ammar Ghabriss, Managing Director of MHA Oman shared, “This sponsorship by Dar Al Atta is a milestone for us at Muscat Hospitality Academy. It reflects our shared vision of fostering talent and providing them with the tools and knowledge necessary to succeed. We are excited about the prospects this partnership brings and the impact it will have on our

students’ futures.”

Muscat Hospitality Academy (MHA) Oman, in partnership with EHL Group, is a leader in hospitality education in Oman. MHA offers professional diploma programs designed by EHL Group and delivered by industry experts, ensuring global standards in hospitality education. Dar Al Atta is a charitable organisation in Oman dedicated to providing aid in education, housing, and health, with the mission to support and empower needy families. To learn more, visit <https://daralatta.org/>

EXEMPLARY RESEARCH WORK



## Top German college awards Indian student from Oman ‘best postgraduate student of year’

**MUSCAT:** A former student of Oman Dental College (ODC), currently working as a dentist at a dental clinic in Al Dakhliyah region, was awarded the ‘best postgraduate student of year, 2023’ by one of the top medical colleges in Germany, recently.

Dr Lakshmi Harish, 29, a resident of Oman, completed her MSc in restorative and aesthetic dentistry from the International Medical College, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany with honours and was awarded the ‘best postgraduate student of the year, 2023’ in the academic category.

Exemplary research work The certificate states that, “Dr Harish’s specialist knowledge and work in her master thesis towards the successful completion of MSc in restorative and aesthetic dentistry has been declared exemplary in terms of highest academic excellence and research leading to honours.”

### Beyond university’s expectations

In a recommendation letter issued by her thesis examiner for her PhD application, it is mentioned that her research work was acclaimed as far beyond the university’s expectations.

Dr Lakshmi graduated in October last, but her certificates had to be translated from German to English and also attested by the relevant ministries in Germany.

### She received certificates only last month

Great education in Oman Dr Lakshmi believes that the education she received in Oman prepared her well to face the highest academic challenges.

While her schools – Indian School Muladha, Indian School Al Ghubrah and Indian School Sohar – equipped her with a native-like English-language proficiency and competence in all the subjects; her under graduation programme not only made her a good dentist, but

also introduced her to the world of medical research and presentation skills.

### Ambassador of Oman

While she was studying at the ODC, she served as the ‘Ambassador of Oman’ in the Gulf Dental Students’ Association (GDSA) for two years and organised oral health awareness campaigns in Oman with her team.

She took part and presented in multiple conferences held in Oman, Dubai and Germany during her undergraduate studies.

After graduating, she started working as a full-time dentist at the Duroob Al Shifa Dental Clinic in Al Dakhliyah region.

Meanwhile, she continued to take part in professional development courses, conferences and international exams. She now has a diploma in primary care dentistry (Dip PCD RCSI) and membership of the faculty of dentistry (MFD RCSI) from the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI).

This opened up opportunities for her to join master courses in Germany and the UK. During her free time she likes to do yoga. She believes that there could be nothing more serene than practicing out in the welcoming nature of Oman. She feels that studying and working in Oman helped her greatly in becoming who she wants to be. The supportive nature and positive attitude from the people in Oman helped her grow.

The exposure to many cultures here equipped her with the skills to deal with people and fit into various cultures easily.

The real-life situation-based education provided in Oman helped her fit in the high standards of education and examination in Ireland and Germany, and Lakshmi noted that she would like to extend her heartfelt gratitude to her teachers in Oman.

Dr Lakshmi, who is now planning to do her PhD, hails from Kozhikode, India.

COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Bank Nizwa provides aid to families affected by recent adverse weather

**MUSCAT:** Reaffirming its dedication to corporate citizenship, and its commitment to community welfare, Bank Nizwa, the most-trusted Islamic bank in the Sultanate of Oman, has pledged OMR100,000 as aid for the families impacted by the recent adverse weather conditions.

This philanthropic gesture comes in response to the national call for support, and comes as a fundamental component of the bank’s corporate social responsibility framework that reflects its ongoing dedication to the welfare of the community.

The funds will be disbursed through the Omani Charitable Works Authority, a reputed organization renowned for its impactful welfare initiatives dedicated to uplifting communities in need.

Bank Nizwa’s Chairman of the Board of Directors, Sheikh Khalid Abdullah Ali Al Khalili, emphasized, “This initiative underscores the deep-rooted Islamic values and principles that guide our actions at Bank Nizwa. Just as in principle where if one part of the body suffers, the rest of the body responds with vigilance and care, our commitment to supporting the affected families reflects the essence and identity of our institution. We firmly believe that addressing the challenges posed by climate extremes is a collective duty shared by all sectors - public, private, and charitable organisations alike. In these trying times, our hearts go out to all those im-



acted by the recent climatic conditions in the Sultanate. We stand in solidarity with the community, hoping that our contribution will help alleviate their burdens and restore a sense of normalcy.”

Bank Nizwa’s philanthropic initiatives are integral to its corporate social responsibility framework, aligning seamlessly with its sustainability agenda. As an ar-

dent proponent of social progress, the bank endeavours to deepen its community partnerships through its CSR efforts, thereby contributing to the socio-economic advancement of the nation.

As the leading Islamic bank in the country, Bank Nizwa goes beyond its role as a financial entity, demonstrating a resolute commitment to the welfare of the

communities it serves. By extending meaningful support, the bank aims to foster an environment where the people of Oman can thrive.

Additionally, Bank Nizwa encourages fellow organisations and customers to join in extending support and compassion to those grappling with the aftermath of adverse weather conditions.

MESMERISING EXPERIENCE

## Payyanur Souhruda Vedi Muscat presents ‘PAYYANUR FEST 2024’

**MUSCAT:** Payyanur Souhruda Vedi Muscat (PSV Muscat) is set to host the much-anticipated PSV Fest 2024 on April 26, 2024, at the Grand Hall of Al Falaj Hotel.

This event promises to be a vibrant celebration of Payyanurian culture, uniting Payyanurians worldwide and showcasing their socio-cultural endeavours.

At the heart of PSV Fest 2024 is the theatrical masterpiece “Street Light,” intricately designed and directed by the renowned artist, Santhosh Keezhattoor.

With an impressive portfolio, including collaborations with Malayalam cinema legends like Mammooty and Mohanlal, Keezhattoor brings his creative genius to the stage, promising a mesmerising experience for drama enthusiasts.

PSV Muscat, known for its commitment to humanitarian causes, aims to provide a platform for its members to stay connected with their roots, even while away from their hometown.

Through initiatives like PSV Fest, the association fosters a



sense of belonging and community among Payyanurians globally.

Over the years, PSV Muscat has earned acclaim for its cultural contributions, notably through its previous theatrical productions such as ‘Mazhapaattu,’ ‘Kelu,’ and ‘Udayasankranti,’ each receiving widespread acclaim for their authenticity and artistic excellence.

The highlight of PSV Fest 2024 extends beyond theatrical bril-

liance, with a lineup of diverse cultural programmes sure to captivate attendees.

As part of the festivities, distinguished personalities from various fields, including art, music, literature, film, sports, and social work, will be honoured for their outstanding contributions to society.

PSV Muscat is honoured to welcome Dr. Talib Al Balushi as

the chief guest of the event, celebrated for his captivating performance in the Malayalam film ‘Aadujeevitham (The Goat life).’

Joining him will be esteemed educationalist Premachandran, alongside other notable guests, adding to the allure of this grand celebration.

PSV Muscat extends a warm invitation to all residents and visitors of Muscat to join us for PSV Fest 2024.

Entry to the event is free, with gates opening at 5:30 PM.

Come, immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Payyanurian culture and experience a night of unforgettable performances and camaraderie.

About Payyanur Souhruda Vedi Muscat (PSV Muscat) is a close-knit association of Payyanurians across the world, dedicated to uniting its members and coordinating socio-cultural activities. Through initiatives like PSV Fest, the organisation strives to promote cultural exchange, foster community spirit, and contribute to humanitarian causes.

ROUND-UP

# Bank Muscat grabs Best Local Bank in Oman Award from EMEA Finance

The award was received on behalf of the Bank by Mohammed Sultan al Habsi, Chief Representative, UAE Representative Office, Bank Muscat, at a ceremony held recently in Dubai

**MUSCAT:** Confirming its leadership in the banking sector and in a continuation of its excellence in the field of banking services and facilities, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, grabbed the Best Local Bank in Oman Award within EMEA Finance's Middle East Banking Awards.

The award was received on behalf of the Bank by Mohammed



Sultan al Habsi, Chief Representative, UAE Representative Office, Bank Muscat, at a ceremony held recently in Dubai, and in the presence of a number of prominent figures at the level of the Middle East and the world.

Being continuously honoured by EMEA Finance, one of the prestigious institutions in honoring the leading entities in the markets in which it operates, is a confirmation of the Bank Muscat's excellence in providing incomparable



products and services catering to all segments of society. It also reaffirms the trust of the international financial community in the Bank's performance and launch of unparalleled products and sustainable services.

Bank Muscat is committed to translating its customer-centric vision through the introduction of new services and various innovative added value offers and enable customers to benefit from them based on their different needs. The Bank is keen to develop its strategy to contribute to the implementation of the digital transformation

plans of Oman Vision 2040, resulting to the launch of a variety of modern services with benefits that suit the needs of different categories, and in line with the latest global trends in the sector.

Bank Muscat also provides a distinctive banking experience by offering a variety of options suitable for all segments. Through its long-term strategy, the Bank seeks to solidify its presence by the expansion of branch network and the provision of top-notch services to customers across the Sultanate. As of today, the Bank has a number of over 180 branches and more than

870 self-service devices including Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs), Multi-Function Kiosks, Business Cash Deposit Machines (BCDMs), and Statement Printers.

The Bank is also keen on developing products and offering exclusive deals and benefits that provide added value to customers such as Personal Finance, Auto Finance and Housing Finance. Special attention is paid to the privilege banking customers and priority banking customers while developing these services, to serve them better. Up to the end of 2023, the base of users using the digital Bank Muscat platforms hit 1.8 million, benefiting from a wide range of services and products online.

In a testament of its leadership in the sector, the Bank won multiple awards from local and global prominent organizations. It was awarded the Best Private Bank in Oman by Global Finance, and the Best Retail Bank in Oman 2024 by MEED. It also won three awards from Euromoney in three different categories which are Oman's Best Investment Bank, Oman's Best Bank for SMEs and Oman's Best Bank for Corporate Responsibility. Locally, the Bank won Oman's Most Trusted Brand Award from APEX Media.

EXCEPTIONAL DRIVING EXPERIENCE



## Explore a fine selection of certified pre-owned vehicles from Mercedes-Benz Oman at exclusive prices

**MUSCAT:** Mercedes-Benz Oman is offering exclusive prices on a fine selection of Certified Pre-Owned vehicles, with prices ranging from OMR17,955 to OMR41,995, including Value Added Tax, until June 30, 2024.

Meticulously maintained by trained technicians using Genuine Mercedes-Benz Parts, each vehicle offers reliability, luxury, and comfort, ensuring an exceptional driving experience.

"Mercedes-Benz is known for building some of the best-engineered vehicles in the world, and our Certified Pre-Owned vehicles are reliable and made to last. They are covered by a warranty and passed a thorough 150-point vehicle inspection performed by our qualified technicians to ensure the safety, quality, and value customers expect from Mercedes-Benz," Shaun Michael, Chief Executive Officer at Mercedes-Benz Oman, said.

The select models currently available at an exclusive price include the A 200 in Cosmos Black with leather in two-tone Classic Red and Black and the CLA 250 Coupé in Digital White Metallic with leather in two-tone Classic Red and Black. Also included are the E 200 in Polar White with ARTICO

Man-Made Leather Hazelnut; the GLC 200 4MATIC Coupé in Obsidian Black and Leather in Cranberry Red/Black; and the Mercedes-AMG GLE 53 4MATIC+ Coupé in Mojave Silver Metallic and Two-Tone AMG Leather Truffle Brown.

The selection of Certified Pre-Owned vehicles was manufactured in 2023, except for the Mercedes-AMG GLE 53 4MATIC+ Coupé, which was made in 2022. They all have relatively low mileage, starting from 3,945 kilometres up to 16,926 km, and have been meticulously cared for and are well-maintained by Mercedes-Benz.

Being part of the exclusive Certified Pre-Owned Mercedes-Benz family entitles customers to many complimentary benefits and rewards, such as an unlimited-mileage warranty of one year with an option to extend up to two years, 24/7 roadside assistance for certain vehicles, and a history of all services performed. There are also a number of service packages available.

For more information about the exclusive offer or to book a test drive, please visit <https://www.shop.mercedes-benz-mena.com/oman/en/buy-used/book-a-test-drive-campaign/>

UNIQUE CULINARY EXPERIENCES

## Mall of Muscat expands its leisure and dining spectrum with opening of two exclusive outlets

**MUSCAT:** Mall of Muscat, leading leisure and entertainment destination, has enhanced its diverse portfolio with the introduction of two exciting new outlets, Bubble Lab and Dose Cafe. These additions have lifted the mall's already wide-ranging offerings, providing visitors with unique culinary experiences.

Taking a prime spot in the main atrium on the ground floor on the mall Bubble Lab is already impressing visitors. Renowned for putting a creative spin on the traditional tea and gelato scene, Bubble Lab is Oman's beloved destination for bubble tea and gelato enthusiasts. The outlet offers an innovative selection of iced teas, smoothies, and an array of gelato flavours, all designed to bring joy and a smile to its patrons. With a focus on flavourful beverages and delightful treats, Bubble Lab is heading to become a go-to spot for those in pursuit of bubbly bliss.

Newly opened Dose Cafe is located in the main atrium on the Ground Floor. Originating from Kuwait, with branches across the GCC including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Oman, Dose Cafe is a renowned specialty coffee house. It takes pride in its selection of 100% Arabica specialty beans, sourced from regions with ideal climates for coffee cultivation. These beans are known for their full cup taste and unique flavours. Dose Cafe distinguishes itself by employing specialised brewing techniques such as V60, Chemex, Hario drip, Aeropress, and Syphon, enhancing the coffee-drinking experience. Additionally, it offers a variety of freshly baked goods and light meals, all made from scratch with the finest ingredients. Dose Cafe is already a sanctuary for coffee lovers and those who appreciate freshly made, premium food.

The introduction of Bubble Lab and Dose Cafe underscores Mall of Muscat's commitment to providing a dynamic and enriching shopping and leisure experience. These outlets are set to cater to the eclectic tastes and preferences



es of mall visitors, adding to the mall's reputation as a comprehensive destination for not just shopping but also for innovative beverages, world-class beauty products, and the latest fashion trends.

A spokesperson for Mall of Muscat expressed excitement about the new additions, stating, "We are pleased to enrich the Mall of Muscat experience with Bubble Lab and Dose Cafe. Each outlet brings a unique flavour to our diverse range of offerings, reinforcing our commitment to offering our visitors a dynamic and comprehensive shopping and leisure experience. We are pleased to welcome everyone to these new destinations, inviting them to discover what makes each outlet special."

Mall of Muscat, an epitome of retail, leisure, food, and adventure in Oman, offers an unmitigated experience, combining shopping, entertainment, and thrill-seeking adventures in one grand locale. Traversing over 200,000 square meters and hosting more than 240 brands, it caters to every shopping need, enhanced by the convenience of ample parking. The leisure experiences are equally diverse, featuring the largest aquarium in the Middle East, Oman Aquarium, and an advanced cinematic experience at Novo Cinema. Culinary delights abound with a wide range of international cuisines. Fashion enthusiasts find their paradise here, with an array of choices from budget-friendly to luxury brands. Adventure is redefined with Fun VR, Oman's leading Virtual Reality Gaming Arena, Fabyland's varied attractions for younger guests, and Xtreme Zone's active play areas. Mall of Muscat offers a splendid voyage filled with joy, luxury, and exhilaration, inviting visitors to delve into a special outing.

Located in Mabela, in close proximity to the Muscat International Airport, Mall of Muscat beckons with its charm. Boasting an expansive collection of 240+

brands that span fashion, lifestyle, sports, and electronics, this retail haven occupies an impressive 200,000-square-meter expanse, generously adorned with over 3000 parking spaces. Within its precincts lies a treasure trove of family-friendly attractions, designed to delight all members of the household. Specifically catering to the young audience, the Mall also features specialized kids' outlets all dedicated to ensuring children's boundless entertainment. The Mall boasts an impressive lineup of anchor tenants that serve as its pillars of attraction. Among these prominent establishments are the Oman Aquarium, Lulu, Matalan, Homes R Us, Centrepoint, Max, R&B, Fabyland, Xtreme Zone, Red Tag, Riva, Family Outlet and Novo Cinemas – all contributing to an unparalleled shopping and leisure experience. When it comes to indulging the palate, the Mall presents an array of exquisite dining options. Renowned names like Costa, Gloria Jeans, Cinnabon, Pappa Roti, McDonalds, KFC, and Charleys among others, ensure that visitors can savour an exquisite range of culinary delights that cater to various tastes and preferences.



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LIFESTYLE

# SUGAR CRAVINGS LINKED TO LONELINESS: STUDY

A recent study published in JAMA Network Open sheds light on the link between loneliness and unhealthy eating habits. Researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, led by Dr. Arpana Gupta, found that social isolation can trigger a craving for sugary foods, leading to weight gain and other health issues.

The researchers explored how brain chemistry is altered and how it processes food cues based on social settings in 93 participants. Their findings revealed those who experienced loneliness or isolation had a higher percentage of body fat and displayed poor eating behaviors, such as food addiction and uncontrolled eating.

Scientists used MRI scans to monitor how the participants responded to abstract images of sweet and savory foods. The results showed those who experienced isolation had the most activity in certain regions of the brain that play a key role in responding to sugar cravings.

Those same participants showed a lower reaction in regions that deal with self-control.

Dr. Gupta emphasizes the importance of social connections in regulating unhealthy eating behaviors. For those struggling with social anxiety or self-isolation, experts recommend techniques such as journaling, identifying triggers, and practicing mindfulness to alleviate stress and build confidence. -OMA



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