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ORBITAL ATHERECTOMY TECHNIQUE

Royal Hospital conducts eight complex surgeries

MUSCAT: A specialised medical team from the Royal Hospital's National Centre for Cardiac Medicine and Surgery (NCCMS) performed eight complex operations using the Orbital Atherectomy technique for the first time in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Adel Ali Al Jabri, consultant in interventional cardiology and catheterization at the NCCMS, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that this service, first introduced in June 2022, showed encouraging results that prompted the medical team to continue using it to treat patients suffering from complex

arterial blockages.

He added that another technique, the Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) technology, was also introduced for the first time in the Sultanate of Oman during the same period. This, he explained, helped in diagnosis and treatment of complex arterial cases.

Dr. Adel pointed out that the Orbital Atherectomy technique is an advanced method in treating calcified arterial blockages that cannot be treated by using traditional methods. He added that the technique allowed the removal of calcific deposits with high precision,

without harming the surrounding healthy tissue.

Dr. Adel reported that the OCT technology complements the Orbital Atherectomy technique, as it provides high-resolution images of blood vessels. This, he added, helps doctors diagnose arterial blockages more accurately and decide appropriate treatment for each patient's case.

The introduction of these two advanced technologies at the NCCMS represents a significant step forward in providing the best possible care for patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases. -ONA



Oman reviews green hydrogen strategy

Al Aufer stressed the significance of consolidating international cooperation to develop trade corridors of hydrogen and its derivatives



AMSTERDAM: Represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the Sultanate of Oman participated in a symposium on hydrogen that was held in the Dutch city of Amsterdam.

In his speech during the symposium, Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufer, Minister of Energy and Minerals, showcased Oman's strategy for the

green hydrogen sector.

He outlined the important steps Oman took to establish a competitive and sustainable hydrogen economy.

In this context, Al Aufer stressed the significance of consolidating international cooperation to develop trade corridors of hydrogen and its derivatives.

The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman that took part in the symposium

held meetings with different establishments, including the Port of Amsterdam and companies operating in the transportation of hydrogen.

The meetings were aimed at enhancing the existing partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the energy and logistics sectors, notably the transportation of liquid hydrogen. -ONA

ECONOMY CLASS



Oman Air redesigns earphones' packaging

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of ongoing efforts to increase the sustainability of its onboard experience, Oman Air has redesigned the packaging for its Economy Class earphones, replacing single-use plastic PET foil with a recyclable Kraft paper envelope.

Working with Linstol, a global eco-friendly in-flight products provider, the airline anticipates the change will enable it to eliminate 6.48 tonnes of non-recyclable waste material each year, an amount which equates to saving an estimated 110 trees from deforestation or conserving 207,360 litres of water.

"We are delighted to introduce this latest initiative on board, which represents our ongoing commitment to our planet by reducing the environmental impact of air travel, while ensuring our guests enjoy a comfortable and convenient experience that aligns with their values," said Con Korfiatis, Chief Executive Officer.

"We believe that small changes

make a big impact and we continue to look for innovative solutions in all corners of our operations, while promoting and advocating for initiatives that support both the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Oman's national objectives."

Oman Air continues to boost its sustainability efforts by integrating eco-friendly materials and cutting waste, thereby supporting the circular economy. Last year, the airline was able to save around 21.6 tonnes of plastic by replacing the wrapping for blankets and mattresses in its premium cabins with an eco-friendlier paper-based alternative, as well as reducing plastic water bottles and cuplets and more efficiently managing its potable water consumption.

Meanwhile, it has implemented various emissions reduction initiatives and is actively engaged in fostering the development of Sustainable Aviation Fuels in support of Oman's strategy to achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2050.

CARE ARRANGEMENT

Welfare of the elderly person

<FROM A1 The care arrangement can be terminated at the request of either the alternative family or by the elderly person.

Termination of arrangement Termination may also occur if the competent department finds

the alternative family neglectful or if either the caregiver or the elderly person passes away.

This decision marks a significant step forward in enhancing the welfare and dignity of elderly citizens in Oman, ensuring they receive the care and respect they deserve within a supportive family environment.



STRATEGIC EXERCISE

Defence Ministry Secretary-General visits sites of military exercises



INSPECTION: Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Zaabi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence, was accompanied by Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, and a number of senior officers. -ONA



MUSCAT: Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Zaabi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence, on Monday visited the sites of two military exercises carried out by institutions of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

The first visit was made to the site of a strategic exercise code-named "Decision Making 11", carried out by participants in the 11th course at the National Defence College.

The second visit was made to the site of an annual military exercise titled "Al Hazm", being implemented by participants in the 37th course at the Joint Command and Staff College.

At the two visits, Dr. Mohammed Nasser Al Zaabi was accompanied by Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, and a number of senior officers.

Al Zaabi and his accompanying senior officers listened to briefings about the objectives of the two exercises and their role in preparing the participants to deal with complex situations.

Earlier Maj Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies had viewed activities of the strategic annual exercise at the National Defence College. -ONA



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MEETING

HM receives message from Eritrean president

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received a written message from President Isaias Afwerki of the State of Eritrea. The message deals with relations between Oman and Eritrea. It was handed over to Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister when he received in his office on Monday Osman Saleh Mohammed, Eritrean Minister of Foreign Affairs. The two ministers discussed the bilateral relations and exchanged views on a set of regional and international issues. The meeting was attended by some officials from both sides. -ONA



GROWTH THROUGH TOURISM

Expression of Interest (Eoi)

Main Construction Works of Four Seasons and other Development

OMRAN Group announces that it is now open to receiving Expression of Interest (Eoi) applications for participation in Tender No. 14/2024, for the Main Construction Works consisting of Four Seasons Development and other future medium to large scale developments.

Tender Submission Closing Date	18.7.2024
Tender Process Details	Please visit: www.omran.om/tenders/



omran.om/tenders/

Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group)
Tel: +968 24 39 11 11
info@omran.om
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Empowering dreams: People with disabilities embrace hospitality sector

The 'GIFTed' initiative focuses on supporting individuals with disabilities in the tourism industry, fostering their abilities, and creating pathways to acquire practical skills and explore diverse employment opportunities

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With heads held high and smiles bright, the 'fabulous five' walked out, marking the successful conclusion of their six-month journey as part of the 'GIFTed' initiative. Launched by Omran Group in cooperation with dusicD2 Naseem Resort in Al Jabal Al Akhdar, this noble initiative aims to empower individuals with disabilities to work within the tourism and hospitality sector. The proud five graduates of the initiative were Ahmed Al Tubi (laundry department), Ahmed Al Dughari (stewarding), Fathi Al Amri (stewarding), Ahmed Al Awimiri (concierge) and Mohammed Al Awimiri (housekeeping). The graduation ceremony, held at the resort recently, was attended by notable figures including Her Highness Sayyida Hujaija bint Jaifur Al Said, Gilles Cretallaz, COO of Dusic International, and Prateek Kumar, Senior Vice-President of Operations at Dusic Hotels and Resorts. Also in attendance were senior representatives from Omran Group and the Al Wafa Centre for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in Al Jabal Al Akhdar. The 'GIFTed' initiative focuses on supporting individuals with disabilities in the tourism industry, fostering their abilities, and creating pathways to acquire practical skills and explore diverse employment opportunities. It strives to raise awareness of the capabilities of individuals with disabilities, enabling participants through specialised training for



the labour market, and promoting social integration by emphasising the vital role individuals with disabilities play in the community. This initiative is a key component of OMRAN's #IamTourism strategy, serving as a roadmap towards empowering national talent to succeed in this opportunity-rich sector. Jagdeep Thakral, General Manager of dusicD2 Naseem Resort, and the key mentor of the graduates expressed his pride: "It is with immense pride that I announce the graduation of our first cohort of students enrolled in the innovative GIFTed programme, meticulously designed for People of Determination. Witnessing these five remarkable individuals graduate after a challenging yet enriching six-month journey fills me with immense satisfaction." He highlighted the collective effort behind the programme's success: "The success of this programme would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication of the entire dusicD2 Naseem Resort team. Their selfless contributions – from men-



torship to personalised training – have played a pivotal role in empowering our graduates with the skills and confidence to excel in the hospitality industry." Thakral, recognised by the UN for his contributions to similar initiatives in the Far East, praised the graduates' achievements: "Not only did they excel academically, but all five have been offered full-time positions at our resort. This is a testament to their hard work, perseverance, and the pro-

gramme's effectiveness." Looking to the future, Thakral quoted Nelson Mandela: "We rise by lifting others. These powerful words resonate deeply within me. Our journey doesn't end here. We are actively preparing to welcome a new batch of students into the GIFTed programme, further expanding its reach and impact. "Furthermore, we aim to inspire and encourage other hotels within the Omran portfolio to embrace this transformative



initiative. By integrating GIFTed graduates into their teams, these hotels can contribute to building a truly inclusive hospitality landscape across Oman." Thakral concluded with a vision of inclusivity: "dusicD2 Naseem Resort is proud to be at the forefront of this movement in Jabal Akhdar. The GIFTed programme is more than just an upskilling initiative; it underlines the power of inclusivity and the transformative potential that lies within each in-

dividual. We are committed to nurturing a diverse and empowered workforce, one that reflects the vibrant communities we serve." Following the success of the first batch, Omran Group will continue to nurture and support professional development programmes that enrich the tourism sector with qualified national talent, contributing to a tangible and positive societal impact, and fostering a thriving and sustainable future for all.



The centre aims to prepare archaeological sites for tourism and enhance the knowledge of visitors about the historic significance of the Bisya and Salut area

archaeological artefacts on display are distributed across three main sections or halls: the Bronze Age Hall, the Iron Age Hall, and a section for World Heritage Sites. These sections collectively house 344 different archaeological pieces selected to support scientific texts in the exhibition halls. They represent various periods of human settlement in the region, highlighting the scale and nature of economic activities such as agriculture, trade, and mining. The exhibits vary from tools, stone and pottery utensils, seals, and bronze artefacts. Some pieces underscore external influences, reflecting Oman's relations with neighbouring civilisations in the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, and Persia.

BAHLA: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) stated that 7,546 tourists from inside and outside Oman visited Bisya and Salut Visitor Centre in Wilayat of Bahla since its opening in February 2023 until the end of May 2024.

The centre aims to prepare archaeological sites for tourism and satisfy the visitors' knowledge about the historic significance of the Bisya and Salut archaeological area, as well as the history of archaeological research in the region. Ahmed Mohammed Al Tamimi, Director of the Bisya and Salut Archaeological Site Department at the MoHT, said that the center explores the history of human settlement in the area and the cultural exchange between Oman and ancient civilisations.

The establishment of the centre is part of the MoHT's efforts to develop the site following archaeological excavations as well as the initiation of pathways to the archaeological sites. He added that the task of the MoHT is to establish such centres at several archaeological sites to provide information and make it more accessible by various display methods.

The centre features display boards summarising the history of archaeological research in the area, different patterns of human settlement, types of tombs, and trade relations that existed between neighbouring civilisations, as confirmed by archaeological excavations. The centre is equipped with modern tools to enhance information delivery, including interactive screens distributed throughout the centre.

In the field of scientific research, the Director of the Bisya and Salut Archaeological Site Department, explained that the centre operates through its various departments to complement the Ministry's efforts in surveying, scientific documentation, and regular monitoring of archaeological sites. It also oversees archaeological expeditions and provides support to researchers and enthusiasts in the fields of history and archaeology.

Al Tamimi pointed out that the archaeological artefacts on display are distributed across three main sections or halls: the Bronze Age Hall, the Iron Age Hall, and a section for World Heritage Sites. These sections collectively house 344 different archaeological pieces selected to support scientific texts in the exhibition halls. They represent various periods of human settlement in the region, highlighting the scale and nature of economic activities such as agriculture, trade, and mining. The exhibits vary from tools, stone and pottery utensils, seals, and bronze artefacts. Some pieces underscore external influences, reflecting Oman's relations with neighbouring civilisations in the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, and Persia.

He said that in the World Heritage List section, each Omani site listed in the World Heritage List has been allocated a dedicated display box with specific explanations provided. Additionally, the centre includes a laboratory for archaeological pieces, a children's corner, a cafe, and a collection of interactive screens offering various content to visitors.

He emphasised that visitors will be able to build a smooth and comprehensive understanding of the site through this unique experience, using special carts from the centre building to explore archaeological sites. They can also access interpretive points at each site, linking them to the information presented in the exhibition halls of the centre.

Regarding the partnership with the local community, which is one of the main pillars of the centre's work and the goals it aims to achieve, Al Tamimi explained that several meetings have been held with civil society institutions to crystallise this vision and formulate a sustainable partnership programme. This includes preparing and implementing a series of events tailored to different segments of the local community, with a strong focus on knowledge-building for young people.

The centre has set up a special corner for children that combines playful and educational elements, aiming to instill targeted information. Additionally, the centre has provided local community institutions with the opportunity to organise events and programmes both indoors and outdoors within its facilities.

He said that as part of its duties and responsibilities, the Bisya and Salut Visitor Centre has begun hosting a number of trainees in the fields of archaeological excavations, tourist guidance, and the management and organisation of community engagement events. In hosting events and programmes, Al Tamimi stated that the Bisya and Salut Visitor Centre provides outdoor spaces to attract various events for government entities, private organisations, and civil society institutions.



BILATERAL RELATIONS

HM the Sultan sends written message to Emir of Qatar

DOHA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.

The message deals with the bilateral relations and means of enhancing them between the two countries.

The message was handed over by Sayyid Ammar bin Abdullah Al Bussaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Qatar when he was received at Amiri Diwan in Doha by Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Emir. — **ONA**



WILAYAT OF SEEB

Vehicle fire doused in Muscat Governorate

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has extinguished a fire that broke out in a vehicle in the Wilayat of Seeb, Muscat Governorate.

CDAA said in a statement on Monday: “The firefighting teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance

Department in Muscat Governorate were able to extinguish a fire that broke out in a vehicle in the Wilayat of Seeb, without recording any injuries.”

The Authority urges the public to maintain vehicles on a regular basis and purchase a manual fire extinguisher after ensuring its validity.



Electricity generation in Oman rises by 1.4%

The NCSI statistics also showed that the Sultanate of Oman’s net electricity generation until the end of April 2024 rose by 1.3 percent to reach 10,825.7 GW/h

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman’s total generation of electricity till the end of April 2024 increased by 1.4 percent, reaching 11,196 GW/h, compared to 11,036.5 GW/h in the same period of 2023, showed the statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The statistics also showed that the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah and A’Dhahirah recorded total electricity generation reach-

ing 6,790.2 GW/h. Meanwhile, the governorates of North A’Sharqiyah and South A’Sharqiyah recorded electricity generation reaching 2,586.9 GW/h till the end of April 2024. The electricity generation in the Governorate of A’Dakhiliyah rose by 13.8 percent whereas it fell by 0.9 percent in the Governorate of Muscat, reaching 36.6 GW/h.

In the Governorate of Dhofar, electricity generation rose by 19 percent reaching 1,618.8 GW/h. Meanwhile, the total electricity



generation in the Governorate of Al Wusta decreased by 41.8 percent, reaching 44 GW/h.

The statistics also showed that the Sultanate of Oman’s net electricity generation until the end of April 2024 increased by 1.3 percent to reach 10,825.7 GW/h.

The net electricity generation in the Governorate of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah and A’Dhahirah fell by 2.7 percent, reaching 6,562.9 GW/h, and those

of Al Dakhiliyah rose by 13.8 percent to reach 9.6 GW/h.

In the governorates of North A’Sharqiyah and South A’Sharqiyah, the electricity generation increased by 4.1 percent, reaching 2,526.8 GW/h, and those in the Governorate of Muscat fell by 1.1 percent, reaching 36.4 GW/h. In the Governorate of Dhofar, it increased by 18.5 percent, reaching 1,540.2 GW/h till the end of April 2024. — **ONA**

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

‘Shurooq’ a driving force in local, regional economic development

SHARJAH: Since its establishment in 2009, the Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) has become a driving force in local and regional economic development.

Shurooq adopted a comprehensive strategy focused on four key sectors: real estate development, hospitality, commercial and entertainment centres, and arts and culture.

Shurooq aimed to ensure that the goal of this integrated strategy is to strengthen sustainability and continuously promote innovation.

Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, CEO of Shurooq, said, “What distinguishes Shurooq is its comprehensive development vision, rooted in its commitment to the Emirate of Sharjah and the competitiveness of the Emirati markets, with a focus on the social developmental returns of economic activity.” He emphasised that Shurooq is a development body that believes in the complementary relationship



between various sectors.”

He added, “Shurooq believes that success must be comprehensive. Through its real estate projects, it aims to establish high-quality residential communities and provide a range of options, services, and conveniences for residents, as seen in the Maryam Island and Ajwan projects.”

He highlighted that Shurooq is dedicated to establishing future cities and communities that operate with smart and sustain-

able systems, exemplified by the “Sharjah Sustainable City.”

The real estate development sector is intertwined with hospitality, tourism, entertainment, commercial centres, culture, and arts. The synergy among these sectors is crucial for enhancing social well-being and improving residents’ quality of life. This integration provides diverse options for social activities, learning, interaction, and shopping.

— **WAM**

SAUDI ARABIA

City Walk Garden attracts visitors to Jeddah Season 2024

JEDDAH: City Walk area is witnessing a large turnout of visitors who flock to enjoy various entertainment and tourism experiences, as part of Jeddah Season events 2024.

City Walk Garden is one of the most prominent attractions in the City Walk area, which attracts residents and visitors due to its natural beauty and distinguished location.

The garden is distinguished by its green spaces, wonderful seating, attractive modern design, along with its beautiful natural scenery, such as flowing water, fountains, various trees and flowers.

The garden provides visitors



with various services including food and beverage carts, making it unique tourist and entertainment destination for residents and visitors.

City Walk area offers visitors

a variety of entertainment activities and events that include motor skill games, arcade experiences, “Cairo Nights” and “China Town”, in addition to the widely popular Arabic plays. — **SPA**

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FIXED AND ATTRACTIVE RETURN

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Government Development Bonds

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

Security of Capital

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

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

Liquidity

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

Collateral Advantage

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

Who Can Invest?

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

How to buy the bonds?

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

Bank Account Details

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

MSX Investor Code

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

For any enquires:

Tel: +968 24822222

E-mail: mcd.support@mcd.om

Subscription & Auction Period

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

The minimum subscription amount is RO 100

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

Ministry of Finance | www.mof.gov.om

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

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FOUR-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT

Bangladesh PM on bilateral visit to China

DHAKA: A fortnight after Sheikh Hasina's visit to India, the Bangladesh Prime Minister on Monday departed from Dhaka for Beijing on a four-day official visit to China at the invitation of Chinese premier Li Qiang, local media reported.

Hasina's China visit, is believed to elevate the "strategic partnership" between Bangladesh and

China to a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership," the Dhaka Tribune reported.

Xi Jinping had visited Bangladesh in October, 2016, during which the two countries upgraded their relationship to "Strategic Partnership" while Sheikh Hasina last visited Beijing in July 2019.

A special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying Hasina and

her entourage departed from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 11:05am today, as per the Bangladesh newspaper The Daily Star.

During her China visit, Hasina will hold separate meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang and join a summit meeting on Trade, Business and Investment Opportunities between the two countries.

Dhaka and Beijing are likely to sign some 20 or so MoUs and announce inauguration of some development projects after a bilateral meeting between the two sides to be led by the two premiers, the Daily Star reported.

Bangladesh will seek China's assistance in areas of investment and trade and financial assistance

— ANI.



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Leftists win big, far right placed third in French snap election

The NFP coalition won 182 seats, whereas French President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Ensemble (together) alliance came second with 168 MPs

PARIS: The leftist New Popular Front (NFP) grabbed the top spot in the second round of the French legislative election on Sunday in a shock result that saw the far-right drop into third place.

The NFP coalition won 182 seats, whereas French President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Ensemble ("together") alliance came second with 168 MPs, according to provisional results published by France's Interior Ministry.

Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) and its allies unexpectedly landed in third place with 143 seats, far short of predictions after the first round of voting gave a clear victory to the anti-immigration populists.

Following the left-wing triumph, French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal – a Macron ally who had nevertheless been opposed to the calling of the snap election – tendered his resignation.



But this was rejected by the President on Monday, who has instead asked Attal to remain in office "for the time being in order to ensure the stability of the country."

What do the results mean?

None of the parties received enough seats for an absolute majority in parliament, meaning the chamber will be divided between different political groups with varying stances on key issues and little history of cooperation.

A hung parliament could throw French politics into chaos with weeks of deliberation to determine who will serve as prime minister. Macron, who is facing increasing unpopularity, may have to lead

the country alongside a prime minister who opposes his centrist policies.

Attal, from Macron's Renaissance party, had led a minority coalition government since January. It replaced the previous centrist government that collapsed following the passing of a contested immigration bill.

This most recent election was widely seen as a gamble by Macron to break the deadlock in parliament and secure a majority. This gamble now seems unlikely to pay out.

Macron's office says he will "wait for the new National Assembly to organize itself" before taking steps on a new government.

The National Assembly is scheduled to gather in full session for the first time on July 18.

From right to left

While the far right was denied the victory they had been expecting due to tactical voting, they managed to secure a significant boost in their number of seats from the 88 they had following the previous election.

Macron and his centrist allies will also likely not be too happy about the far left having taken the most seats.

The NFP is made up of communists, greens, socialists and Melenchon's far left France Unbowed, which many centrists consider as

dangerous as Le Pen's far right.

Edouard Philippe, a former prime minister under Macron, said he was ready to work with other parties to form a coalition government, but ruled out any deals with Melenchon.

EU's second-largest economy

As the EU's second-largest economy and the bloc's biggest military power, the uncertainty in France could have wider impacts, but some leaders in other European capitals were nevertheless relieved by Sunday's results.

In Paris enthusiasm, in Moscow disappointment, in Kyiv relief. Enough to be happy in

Warsaw," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on X. On Monday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz welcomed the results and said he hoped for the formation of "a constructive government."

"The German government and myself are relieved," he said. "It would have been a huge challenge if President Macron had had to cooperate with a right-wing, populist party. This has been averted."

Later, US President Joe Biden told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" show that France had "rejected extremism" and that US Democrats "will reject it, too."

Referring to Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, he said: "All my life, I have never known a more extreme candidate."

What did the French political leaders say?

Jean-Luc Melenchon, whose France Unbowed party belongs to the NFP, called the results an "immense relief for a majority of people in our country."

Olivier Faure, of the Socialist Party which is in the NFP alliance, said "we have to restore the country on a clear basis and the New Popular Front must take the lead in this new chapter of our history." Faure said there should be no "coalition of opposites" that simply builds on Macron's policies.

Jordan Bardella, the president of the far-right RN, had originally hoped to be the clear choice for prime minister. Due to the party's disappointing result in the election, he claimed that "France is being thrown into the hands of the far left" and condemned an "alliance of dishonor." —DW

RESCUE OPERATIONS UNDER WAY



Massive floods affect millions across India, Nepal and Bangladesh

NEW DELHI: Massive floods have swept through swathes of India, Nepal and Bangladesh in recent days, killing scores of people and affecting millions of others.

Large-scale rescue operations are under way, with authorities directing thousands to shelters while sending food and supplies to those who are stranded.

Major rivers including the Brahmaputra and the Koshi, which flow through several countries, have overflowed their banks due to heavy rains, BBC news reported.

Floods and landslides are not uncommon during South Asia's monsoon season, when it receives up to 90% of its annual rainfall.

But experts say the issue has worsened in recent years due to climate change.

Over the weekend in Nepal, authorities said 14 people had died since last Thursday, with key highways blocked and some bridges swept away by swollen rivers.

Authorities estimate that this year's monsoon has killed more than 40 people so far. They have

urged residents in the south-east of the country to be on alert as the Koshi river, which flows through Nepal and India, is flowing above the danger level.

In the Indian state of Assam, about 2.4 million have been affected by floods while 66 people have died since mid-May. Officials have warned of even more rains with water levels in the Brahmaputra expected to increase in the coming days.

Roads and vast areas of farmland have been submerged along the banks of the Brahmaputra, which flows through parts of India and Bangladesh, and other rivers.

In Bangladesh, authorities said two million people have been affected by floods with at least eight people dead.

The overflowing Brahmaputra has inundated a quarter of the districts in the country.

The UN's World Meteorological Organisation is predicting "above normal" rainfall for the South Asia monsoon season that is expected to last until September. — ONA

TWO-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT

Indian PM Modi arrives in Moscow to attend India-Russia Annual Summit

MOSCOW: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday arrived in Moscow for a two-day official visit to Russia on the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin to attend the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit.

PM Modi was received by the First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, Denis Manturov.

Manturov is senior to the Deputy Prime Minister who received the Chinese President during his visit to Russia. In a rare gesture, the first Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Manturov will also accompany PM Modi to the hotel from the airport in the same car.

PM Modi and the Russian President held a meeting on Monday. PM Modi will attend a community event in Moscow on Tuesday.

Ahead of PM Modi's visit, the Indian diaspora expressed enthusiasm to welcome PM Modi. Earlier, Savika, a member of the Indian diaspora said, "I am very excited. I have seen him (PM Modi) only on TV and this will be the first time I will see him in person and I am very happy that the Prime Minister is coming here."

Young members of the Indian diaspora in Moscow also raised slogans of 'Vande Mataram' and cheered for PM Narendra Modi ahead of his arrival to the country.

Another student Anshika Singh, who has been living there for 11 years, said, "I am very honoured and excited to meet the Prime Minister."

Sidhu, hailing from Tamil Nadu, has been living for 17 years, and said, "I am very excited to meet PM Modi and I am very grateful to the embassy of India for giving us the opportunity to meet PM Modi."

Abir Imtiaz, who has been liv-



ing in Moscow for 11 years asserted that he is feeling very proud. "I am feeling very honoured that our PM is coming to Moscow and we have the chance to meet him."

Deepali Choudhary, hailing Bihar's Muzzafarpur said she has brought painting for PM Modi. "I wish him a warm welcome to Moscow and I hope he enjoys his time in Russia."

Speaking with ANI, Ananya Rai, hailing from UP, said she has been living in Russia for 10 years. She said, "I am really excited to meet PM Modi. This is the first opportunity that I have gotten from the Embassy as well as the school to meet the Prime Minister."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday left for a two-nation visit today, beginning with Moscow. In a post on X, the Ministry of External Affairs said "PM Narendra Modi sets off on a 2-nation visit to Russia and Austria. The first leg of the visit takes him to Moscow for the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit. An opportunity to further accelerate - partnership."

In his departure statement, PM

Modi said, "Over the next three days, I will be in Russia and Austria. These visits will be a wonderful opportunity to deepen ties with these nations, with whom India has time-tested friendship. I also look forward to interacting with the Indian community living in these countries."

PM Modi said that he wishes to discuss aspects of bilateral cooperation with his friend President Putin.

"I look forward to reviewing all aspects of bilateral cooperation with my friend President Vladimir Putin and sharing perspectives on various regional and global issues. We seek to play a supportive role for a peaceful and stable region. The visit will also provide me with an opportunity to meet the vibrant Indian community in Russia," the PM said.

PM Modi added that the special and privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia has advanced over the past ten years, including in the areas of energy, security, trade, investment, health, education, culture, tourism and people-to-

people exchanges.

Notably, PM Modi and Putin have met 16 times over the past 10 years. The last in-person meeting between the two leaders took place on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Uzbekistan's Samarkand in 2022. In 2019, PM Modi was conferred the highest Russian state honour 'Order of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First'.

Earlier on Sunday, India's Ambassador to India, Vinay Kumar said, "The program includes a private meeting with President Putin, delegation-level talks, restricted talks, lunch on hosted by President Putin for Prime Minister and his delegation, visit to an exhibition center in the VDNKH Complex, Rosatom Pavilion, and also exchange of documents which we are preparing to sign and exchange during the visit."

"Prime Minister will also address a gathering of Indian community members who are very eagerly looking forward to this visit to Moscow by Prime Minister after a gap of nine years. The last Prime Ministerial visit to Moscow was in 2015. So these are some of the important elements of the program," he added.

Notably, India and Russia have a longstanding and time-tested relationship with more than 77 years of mutually beneficial diplomatic ties. The relations between the two nations were elevated to the level of "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership" in 2010.

After concluding his visit to Russia, PM Modi will depart for Austria in what is the first visit to the nation by an Indian Prime Minister in 40 years. — ANI

UNRWA calls for independent probe into school bombing in central Gaza

Commissioner-General of the UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini posted on his official account on the social media platform “X”:

“More than half of UNRWA facilities have been hit. 520 people were killed and nearly 1,600 were injured. Those responsible must be held accountable for violating international law.

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) called for “independent investigations” into the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) bombing of a UNRWA school housing 2,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

Commissioner-General of the UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini posted on his official account on the social media platform “X”: “More than half of UNRWA facilities

have been hit. 520 people were killed and nearly 1,600 were injured. Those responsible must be held accountable for violating international law.”

“Nine months on this brutal war, I call once again for a ceasefire. The longer this war goes on, the deeper the rift will become, and the more suffering people will endure”, Lazzarini added.

The IOF continued their aggression against the Gaza Strip by land, sea and air since 7 October 2023, resulting in the martyrdom



of 38,153 citizens, the majority of whom are children and women, and the injury of 87,828 others. Thousands of victims remain under rubble and on the roads, where ambulance and civil defence crews are unable to reach them.

There is no alternative to UNRWA

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdel Ati and the UNRWA Commissioner-General, Philippe Lazzarini, on Monday confirmed that there is no alternative to UNRWA, as it is the only agency that has a

mandate from the United Nations to provide relief and support to Palestinian refugees.

Abdel Ati said “suspending the financial contributions allocated to UNRWA is unacceptable, and means participating in the use of famine as a weapon of collective punishment against the Palestinians.”

Abswl Ati called on international community and international donor parties that are still suspending their contributions to reconsider the situation.

He affirmed that the agency is

one of the most important United Nations agencies, because it works in the humanitarian field, especially in light of the blatant violations of international law and international humanitarian law witnessed by the occupied Palestinian territories, and this confirms the importance of UNRWA and its role in taking care of refugee affairs inside and outside the Palestinian territories.

Abdel Ati stressed that UNRWA's work will not end until the Palestinian refugees obtain their rights, whether through return or

compensation, in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution No.194.

He added “The Republic of Egypt has a major and pivotal role in alleviating the suffering of our people in the Gaza Strip, as it provided more than 70% of the aid that entered the Gaza Strip, despite all the economic challenges it faces, in addition to providing treatment for the wounded in Egyptian hospitals.”

In turn, Lazzarini said that about 200 employees were killed as a result of military operations in the Strip, more than 50% of our institutions were destroyed, and more than 500 people were killed when they were trying to seek refuge in these UN institutions.

He stressed that there is no alternative to UNRWA, and it will be able to continue and provide the humanitarian development services it provides to Palestinian refugees if the international community commits to a road map that leads to political solutions.

Lazzarini pointed out that this week witnessed a large displacement of residents, as about 250,000 people were displaced from Khan Yunis in the absence of a safe place in the Gaza Strip.

— Wafa

SKYDANCE MEDIA

Hollywood icon Paramount agrees \$28bn merger deal

LOS ANGELES: One of Hollywood's oldest companies, Paramount Global, has agreed to merge with independent film studio Skydance Media.

Under the deal, Paramount's non-executive chair Shari Redstone will sell her family's controlling stake in the company in a complex transaction that will result in a new firm worth around \$28bn (£21.9bn), BBC news reported.

It marks the end of an era for the Redstone family, whose late patriarch, Sumner Redstone, transformed a chain of drive-in cinemas into a vast media empire.

As well as Paramount, the group includes the television networks CBS, Comedy Central, Nickelodeon and MTV.

According to the company, its TV channels have a global reach of over 4.3 billion subscribers across more than 180 countries.

The merger would combine Paramount, home of classic films such as Chinatown and Breakfast at Tiffany's, with its financial partner on several recent big releases, including Top Gun: Maverick and Star Trek Into Darkness.

Under the agreement, Skydance will invest around \$8bn in Paramount, including paying \$2.4bn for National Amusements, which controls the group.

National Amusements owns just 10% of Paramount Group's shares, but accounts for almost 80% of its voting rights.

Paramount said it expected to close the deal by the summer of

next year (2025).

Paramount Global traces its origins back more than a century to the founding of Paramount Pictures Corporation in 1914.

The studio has made many hit films, including the Godfather, Star Trek, and Mission: Impossible series. But the entertainment giant has struggled over the past decade. Paramount Global's shares have fallen by more than 75% in the last five years.

Skydance is owned by David Ellison, the son of Larry Ellison, who founded US technology giant Oracle. The announcement came after eight months of negotiations that saw Redstone holding talks with a number of potential partners including Sony and private equity firm Apollo. — OMA



IN PACIFIC OCEAN

Earthquake hits Japanese island

TOKYO: An earthquake measuring 6.3 magnitude on the Richter scale struck off the western coast of the Ogasawara Islands in the Pacific Ocean, south of the Japanese capital, Tokyo on Monday.

Japan Meteorological Agency said that the epicenter of the quake was at a depth of 530 km, measuring 3 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale of 7 in Ogasawara Village.

With no tsunami threat from the earthquake, there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

Japan is located at the meeting point of four tectonic plates, making it particularly vulnerable to seismic activity. It is also home to 100 active volcanoes.

— ONA

ROCKET SCIENCE

Ariane 6: How to build a space rocket step-by-step

CAYENNE: A week may be a long time in politics — for some, a day is quite enough — but in rocket science, not even a single year would get you past the first post.

It took Ariane 6, Europe's flagship heavy-lift rocket, two full years just to get a green light to be developed. And it took another eight years being built before its inaugural flight, which is scheduled for July 9, 2024 from French Guiana.

Building a whole new rocket system takes more than just creating a new rocket that shoots satellites into space.

A rocket system not only includes the rocket, often in various constellations, but also its engines, the fuel — which in Ariane 6's case is a new concoction of liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen — a dedicated launchpad and a manufacturing network to create it all.

Throw a global pandemic into the mix and 10 years is nothing. Here's how Ariane 6's decade in development evolved.

Ariane 6 timeline: 2014-2016

It all started in 2014, with a proposal from European industry: They said they wanted to completely change the way rockets were designed, developed, produced and launched.

The plan was, and still is, for Ariane 6 to be the main workhorse for Europe's space industry, launching European satellites into space on European-built rockets.

The European Space Agency (ESA) took the proposal to its 22 member states. Each had to sign off on the idea.

But the engineers were already hard at work designing the system.

“You need to have your concepts ready. You lay out your production system, how you want to manufacture and assemble your rocket,”



said ESA's Tina Büchner da Costa, an Ariane 6 launch system architect based at Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.

“We had to demonstrate that we could double the launch rate [compared to the rocket's predecessor, Ariane 5], and at the same time reduce the cost,” said Büchner da Costa.

In 2015, the first contracts were drawn up: The ArianeGroup, an aerospace company based in France, would produce the rocket, and the French space agency, CNES, got the launchpad.

And in 2016, they got the green light.

Ariane 6 timeline: 2017-2019

In 2017, the ArianeGroup began developing its manufacturing chain and producing the first elements of what's called a Flight Model 1 (FM1) version of the rocket.

During 2018 and 2019, four engines were tested and quali-

fied. First, the Vulcain 2.1 engine, which powers the lower stage of the rocket. Then, the Vinci engine in the upper stage of the rocket — the Vinci engine can reignite in space, allowing Ariane 6 to release satellites at different locations on a single mission.

There was also a solid booster P120 engine, and, finally, a new, auxiliary propulsion unit (APU) — all had to be built, tested and verified, step by step.

“On every engine, you have several valves and other components that have to be tested at their own level before you can integrate them into an engine,” said Büchner da Costa. “Once you go to full engine testing, that's a huge system that you need to test on a dedicated bench.”

A brand new test bench was built at a German Space Agency site at Lampoldshausen to test the entire upper stage of Ariane 6.

Meanwhile, in French Guiana, CNES had been digging a massive hole in the ground where eventu-

ally they would build the Ariane 6 launch site. “It all happens in parallel. You start with the small-est products and keep integrating them into a system that becomes more and more complex,” said Büchner da Costa.

Ariane 6 timeline: 2020-2022

During the pandemic years, even Ariane 6 took a hit. COVID-19 had an “immense impact” on construction at the launch site in Kourou, said Büchner da Costa.

“There were 700 people working here and within a few days, they got reduced to 50. The supply in materials slowed, logistics broke down, production in Europe slowed significantly,” she said. “You don't feel it at the paper stage, but you do feel it in production.”

By 2021, however, they had started moving bits of the rocket from Europe to French Guiana and conducted “early combined tests.”

They tested a mock-up of the central core of the rocket, the



cranes that move it to the launchpad and the cryogenic arms that fuel and cool the rocket at launch.

And — almost as a side note — they also custom-built the ship they used to transport launcher components so it was more climate-friendly: the “Canopee” sailing cargo ship uses a hybrid propulsion system, partially powered by wind.

Ariane 6 timeline: 2023-2024

Things started to pick up again in 2023. “We spent the whole of 2023 marrying the launchpad with the rocket,” said Büchner da Costa.

The main stage was tested in French Guiana. “We fired up the main engine and tested the full flight up to [the rocket's initial] separation,” said Büchner da Costa. That's over 7 minutes of flight.

The next part of the flight, where the upper stage goes in orbit, was qualified at the new test bench in Germany, “completely separately.”

At the same time, engineers in Switzerland tested the fairing — that's the bit that carries the cargo and, perhaps one day, a capsule for human spaceflight — and the separation of the fairing.

“You test your system, step by step, in an incremental way, before you add any critical elements,” said Büchner da Costa.

They did five complete count-downs and Büchner da Costa was there for them all. “It was really impressive to see, a full success,” she said.

A full success up to 2024: the year of Ariane 6's first full mission with cargo, including cubeSats satellites and scientific experiments.

At time of writing in late June 2024, six launches were planned for 2025 and eight for 2026. By 2027, the ESA aims to achieve a launch rate of 10 per year — and then keep evolving.

Ariane 6 is about versatility, said Büchner da Costa, calling the rocket an “eierlegende Wollmilchsau.” That's a German term for which there is no direct translation, but basically means something that can do a bit of everything.

“The ‘eierlegende Wollmilchsau’ is a pig that gives you milk, wool and lays eggs,” explained Büchner da Costa. “That's what we want from Ariane 6. The exciting thing is that [Ariane 6] gives us versatility. We want to fly anywhere.” — DW

SPORTS

SRI LANKA CRICKET

Jayasuriya is interim head coach



COLOMBO: Sanath Jayasuriya, the former Sri Lanka captain, will be their interim head coach through a home limited-overs series against India and an away Test tour in England, which ends mid-September.

He has not previously held a high-profile coaching position, but has been Sri Lanka men's chief selector as well as cricket consultant for Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) - the role he holds at present.

This decision from the board comes in the wake of Chris Silverwood's resignation from the role at the end of June, after the conclusion of the T20 World Cup 2024. SLC chief executive Ashley de Silva had said then that the board would advertise for the role, as well as seek out candidates it thought suitable. He'd also said Sri Lanka may choose a local coach for the role.

On Jayasuriya's appointment, de Silva said, "Sanath with his wealth of international cricketing experience is well positioned to guide the national team, until we find a permanent solution."

Jayasuriya had, in fact, been with the men's team during their World Cup campaign in the USA and the Caribbean in his capacity as consultant. That role is the first he held officially since his two-year ban for refusing to co-operate with investigations related to corruption, run by the ICC's anti-corruption unit.

Jayasuriya was one of Sri Lanka's most beloved cricketers of the nineties and aughts, having helped revolutionise white-ball cricket with his aggressive batting at the top of the innings.

He remains the fifth-highest ODI run scorer of all time, with 13,430 runs. He also has 323 ODI dismissals, making him the 12th-highest wicket-taker in the format. This is in addition to considerable exploits across 110 Tests and 31 T20I as well. - Agencies

Musetti seals spot in first Grand Slam quarter-final

The Italian joins Jannik Sinner in the last eight to make it the first time two players from the country have reached this stage of the Grand Slam

LONDON: Lorenzo Musetti reached his first Grand Slam quarter-final by surging past lucky loser Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard at Wimbledon on Monday.

The Italian 25th seed struggled against the big-serving Frenchman in the first set before adapting his approach to win 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-2.

It ends a remarkable run for 21-year-old Mpetshi Perricard, who was attempting to become the first lucky loser, man or woman, to reach the singles quarter-finals of a Grand Slam.

"It is a really phenomenal day for me," an emotional Musetti said in his on-court interview.

He will next face either French Open finalist and fourth seed Alexander Zverev of Germany or American 13th seed Taylor Fritz.

The Italian joins compatriot Jannik Sinner in the last eight at the All England Club to make it the first time two players from the country have reached this stage of the Grand Slam.

Playing on his 21st birthday, Perricard entertained the court two crowd in the early stages with trick shots and huge serves.

Standing 6ft 8in and using that height to his advantage, Perricard's positive approach brought the reward of a break at 3-3 and he calmly cruised through the remainder of the opening set.

But Perricard's confidence began to falter as Musetti settled and got to grips with his opponent's first serve, clinically moving



through the next three sets and making just eight unforced errors in the match.

The 22-year-old fell flat on his back after wrapping up the landmark victory with his third match point, before holding back tears in his on-court interview.

"It is tough for me to get emotional, but today I think I will," Musetti said.

"I've been dreaming of this moment since I was a kid. I always had a really beautiful family that always supported me, choosing my dream. It is tough to speak."

The win continues an impressive grass-court swing for Musetti, who was a runner-up to Tommy Paul at Queen's Club last month.

Gauff's woes continue with defeat to Navarro

Coco Gauff became the latest

high-profile seed to suffer a shock exit in the women's singles as she lost to fellow American Emma Navarro on Sunday.

Second seed Gauff was the highest-ranked player remaining, following Iga Swiatek's surprise defeat by Yulia Putintseva on Saturday. But the 20-year-old followed the world No.1 out of the door at SW19 after falling to a 6-4, 6-3 defeat by 19th seed Navarro.

It meant there were just two top-10 players remaining in the women's draw - fourth seed Elena Rybakina and Jasmine Paolini, who is seeded seventh.

Wimbledon has been Gauff's toughest Grand Slam to crack having never gone past the fourth round.

She has made it to the semi-finals of the Australian Open and Roland Garros, while she won her first major at last year's US Open.

Navarro will play Italian Paolini, who is also into the Wimbledon last eight for the first time after a tearful Madison Keys retired with an injury in the deciding set of their match.

"I don't have a ton of words but just really grateful to be out here on Centre Court," said Navarro, who sealed the biggest win of her career on her third match point.

"A tournament with so much history and tradition that so many legends have played on before - it's a real honour."

American Keys, 29, was forced to stop with the score locked at 6-3, 6-7 (6-8), 5-5 on Court One.

She appeared to pick up the injury when she hit a forehand while serving for victory at 5-2 in the final set.

Elsewhere, Croatian Donna Vekic progressed to the last eight by overcoming Spaniard Paula Badosa in three sets.

The world No.37 won 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 in a rain-interrupted game on court two.

Vekic will play New Zealand's Lulu Sun in the quarter-finals after her win over Briton Emma Raducanu. The British wildcard, 21, lost 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 in a dramatic contest on Centre Court. - Agencies

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The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR4 million, for a maturity period of 28 days and the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR16 million, for a maturity period of 91 days



The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR4 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.640 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.640 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the aver-

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR16 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.730 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.730 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.09396 per cent and 5.15948 per cent, respectively.

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

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with

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

Robust foreign inflows into India's sovereign bonds following JPMorgan Index Inclusion

In a significant development that could pull in foreign funds into India's debt market, JPMorgan Chase & Co added Indian government bonds to its benchmark emerging-market index starting June 28.

The inclusion of the index followed the Indian government's substantive market reforms for aiding foreign portfolio investments, the American multinational investment bank JP Morgan had said last year during the announcement.

Net inflows of money into India's debt markets have been positive in all but one month in 2024, data showed.

“The bond market saw foreign inflows in six out of the seven months so far in 2024, while equity flows are more mixed. Cumulative inflows to the bond market in 2024 are the strongest in recent years,” the Morgan Stanley report titled ‘India Fixed Income Strategy’ said.

One week after India's sovereign debt market secured a 1 per cent weight in JPMorgan's GBI-EM index, inflows into FAR bonds stayed consistent. Officially, 29 FAR government bonds were included in the suite of global bond indices for emerging markets.

This inclusion, according to

Growing appeal

The inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JPMorgan Government Bond Index-Emerging Markets index could be seen as yet another sign of its growing appeal to global investors as it continues to remain one of the fastest-growing major economies

This development holds significance particularly as various global manufacturing behemoths are looking at India for investments, as part of their diversification strategy in a post-pandemic world order. **-ANI**

China's passenger car exports up 28%

BEIJING: China's exports of passenger vehicles hit 378,000 units in June, marking a 28 percent increase year on year and staying flat compared to the previous month, the latest data showed.

With the South American market recovering, exports of Chinese-brand cars hit 325,000 units in June, up 31 percent year on year, while the exports of luxury vehi-

cles and cars made by Chinese and foreign-invested joint ventures reached 54,000 units, up 12 percent year on year, according to data released on Monday by the China Passenger Car Association.

In the same month, exports of new energy vehicles (NEVs) from China stood at 80,000 units, up 12.3 percent year on year. In the first half of this year, NEV exports

reached 586,000 units, up 21.2 percent year on year, the data showed.

Data from the association, covering all domestic passenger car manufacturers, also showed that in the first half of this year, retail sales of passenger cars surpassed 9.84 million units, up 3.3 percent year on year.

The association projects that passenger car consumption will

continue to rise due to the increasing popularity of privately owned vehicles and the rapid growth of smart electric vehicles.

The enthusiasm among car owners for NEVs, coupled with government incentives encouraging consumers to replace outdated vehicles with new ones, will continue to accelerate demand for cars, according to the association. **Xinhua**

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Campaign Period: 03.06.2024 - 31.08.2024. Benefits applicable for all purchases except Government Organizations & Ministries. *Cash gift in lieu of insurance* Cash Gift is given in Lieu of Insurance only as applicable for respective models. In case customer chooses insurance (as applicable), he/she will not be eligible for "Cash gift in lieu of insurance" offer. **Comprehensive 1 Year Insurance (Oman only) on all Chery models Insurance benefit under the campaign would be given upto the extent applicable for Private vehicles only. Additional premium as per Insurance norms will have to be paid by the RAC, Test & Driving School Company. "10 Years / 50,000 kms Service (whichever is earlier)" covering 6 services with the 1st & 2nd service at 5,000 kms and then 4 services at 10,000 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on all Chery models. ***Free for year Registration for all Chery models. \$ Test Drive & Win: 5 winners can win Samsung S24 Ultra 5G phone. Anyone taking a test drive of Chery vehicles during the campaign period are eligible to participate in the test drive & win offer. \$\$ Raffie: 4 winners can win 1500 Litres of Gasoline fuel as raffie. The raffie will be applicable for all Chery customers who purchase cars during the campaign period. \$\$\$ Grand Raffie: 1 winner can win a Holiday Package to Azerbaijan for 2 adults which includes flight tickets (Economy class) to Abu Dhabi and back to Muscat, 4-star hotel stay for 4 nights, 5 days with breakfast and 1 local sightseeing tour. Tentative date of raffie: 30th Aug 2024. Selection may include dealer-installed items. For further details & to check availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Chery showroom. Pictures and contents shown above are for illustrative purposes only. Campaign will not be applicable for non-eligible government departments & Conditions Apply. Credit approval is based on sole discretion of Finance. ESR is calculated for a tenure of 10 years.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Sembcorp Salalah, up 4.00%, was the top gainer while Muscat Insurance, down 9.09%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,686.96 points, down by 0.04% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.80% at 459.14 points. Sembcorp Salalah, up 4.00%, was the top gainer while Muscat Insurance, down 9.09%, was the top loser. Shares of OQGN were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 520 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO1.32 million, with more than 7.16 million shares changing hands. Out of 47 traded securities, 8 advanced, 22 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 61K while foreign investors were net buyers for RO 34K, followed by domestic investors for RO 28K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,615.02 points, down 0.02%. Prices of Muscat Finance, Oman United Insurance, OMINVEST,

Oman Arab Bank were up by 2.13%, 2.13%, 1.47%, 0.73% respectively. Prices of Muscat Insurance, Takaful Oman, Oman & Emirates Investment, National Finance, Al Sharqia Investment were down by 9.09%, 6.00%, 3.57%, 2.60%, 2.56% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,908.51 points, down 2.06%. Prices of were up by respectively. Prices of Oman Refreshment, Jazeera Steel Products, Oman Chromite, Al Anwar Ceramics, Galfar Engineering were down by 8.33%, 4.51%, 2.64%, 2.63%, 1.82% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.33% before closing at 1,828.15 points. Prices of Sembcorp Salalah, Abraj Energy, OQ Gas Networks, Ooredoo were up by 4.00%, 1.01%, 0.71%, 0.35% respectively. Prices of Shell Oman Marketing, OIFC, National Gas, Phoenix Power, Oman Telecom were down by 7.90%, 3.70%, 3.33%, 1.67%, 0.89% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,698.50	4,676.67	4,686.96	4,688.82	-1.86	-0.04
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,630.79	7,597.69	7,615.02	7,616.76	-1.74	-0.02
Industry Index	6,022.38	5,897.05	5,908.51	6,033.09	-124.58	-2.06
Services Index	1,828.44	1,817.85	1,828.15	1,822.21	5.93	0.33
MSX Shariah Index	461.69	458.68	459.14	462.86	-3.71	-0.80
MSX TRI INDEX	6,526.69	6,496.36	6,510.66	6,513.24	-2.58	-0.04
FINANCIAL TRI IDX	8,669.37	8,631.76	8,651.45	8,653.42	-1.98	-0.02
INDUSTRIAL TRI IDX	6,948.39	6,803.79	6,817.02	6,960.75	-143.73	-2.06
SERVICES TRI IDX	2,120.44	2,108.16	2,120.10	2,113.22	6.88	0.33
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
7,167,013	1,323,845	520	24,324,828,649	8	22	17	47

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JULY 8

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PR.PREV. CLOSEDIFF (RD)DIFF %LAST PDLAST BIDLAST OFFERPREV. VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000004735	SEBPCORP SALALAH	65,102	6,695	4	0.100	0.104	0.100	0.104	0.000	0.004	4.000	0.104	0.101	0.104	0.100	99,275,483
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	27,695	6,696	9	0.250	0.250	0.240	0.240	0.235	0.005	2.128	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.100	24,000,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	100	35	1	0.345	0.345	0.345	0.340	0.005	0.005	1.471	0.345	0.340	0.345	0.100	230,586,072
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	200,115	60,006	24	0.298	0.300	0.298	0.300	0.297	0.003	1.010	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.100	231,060,000
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	1,457,204	206,575	131	0.141	0.142	0.141	0.142	0.141	0.001	0.709	0.142	0.141	0.142	0.100	614,948,597
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	4,911	1,998	5	0.291	0.291	0.289	0.288	0.001	0.001	0.347	0.289	0.289	0.291	0.100	1,186,122,882
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	5,000	300	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.059	0.059	0.060	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	283,947	21,580	16	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.100	15,200,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,088,978	149,356	32	0.137	0.138	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.000	0.000	0.137	0.137	0.138	0.100	764,082,739
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	61,474	4,539	5	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.073	0.074	0.100	49,941,670
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	112,683	8,564	12	0.076	0.077	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.100	54,294,882
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	413,364	103,640	41	0.252	0.252	0.249	0.250	0.251	-0.001	-0.398	0.250	0.249	0.250	0.100	1,876,599,266
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	110,578	111,193	24	1.006	1.010	1.005	1.005	1.014	-0.009	-0.888	1.005	1.005	1.006	0.100	753,750,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	8,602	3,656	2	0.425	0.425	0.425	0.425	0.430	-0.005	-1.163	0.425	0.391	0.440	0.100	51,000,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	673	259	1	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.391	-0.006	-1.535	0.385	0.385	0.400	0.100	127,385,993
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	52,811	4,023	4	0.080	0.080	0.076	0.076	0.076	-0.002	-2.564	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.100	49,840,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	104,250	19,308	11	0.190	0.190	0.185	0.185	0.190	-0.005	-2.632	0.185	0.189	0.185	0.100	40,700,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	141,806	11,486	6	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.084	-0.003	-3.571	0.081	0.081	0.085	0.100	9,871,875
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	113,483	31,528	15	0.280	0.280	0.275	0.275	0.288	-0.013	-4.514	0.275	0.270	0.275	0.100	34,346,939
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	800	672	2	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.840	0.912	-0.072	-7.895	0.840	0.830	0.910	0.100	79,800,000
Total	30	4,285,556	752,108	346												

Parallel Market

OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	24,000	1,139	3	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.001	2.128	0.048	0.048	0.050	0.100	14,743,024
OM0000005690	OMAN ARAB BANK	42,500	5,907	9	0.138	0.139	0.138	0.139	0.138	0.001	0.725	0.139	0.138	0.139	0.100	232,047,290
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	4,218	228	2	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.000	0.000	0.054	0.054	0.057	0.100	4,590,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	5,000	500	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.103	0.100	1,639,411
OM0000002549	BANK DHOAFAR	100	16	1	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
OM0000002372	OMAN OIL MARKETING	423	334	1	0.790	0.790	0.790	0.790	0.790	0.000	0.000	0.790	0.790	0.889	0.100	48,407,250
OM0000003141	BAHKA WATER AND POWER	980	394	2	0.320	0.320	0.309	0.309	0.309	0.000	0.000	0.309	0.309	0.309	0.100	49,440,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	107,986	33,438	15	0.310	0.315	0.300	0.310	0.310	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.100	25,234,853
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	294,301	94,181	14	0.320	0.321	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.100	63,883,392
OM0000007407	DHOAFAR GENERATING	41,956	3,058	10	0.072	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.100	16,223,520
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	656,059	42,027	30	0.065	0.065	0.063	0.064	0.064	0.000	0.000	0.064	0.063	0.064	0.100	31,413,529
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	1,190	128	2	0.117	0.117	0.116	0.116	0.117	-0.001	-0.855	0.116	0.116	0.120	0.100	38,940,011
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	167,585	17,411	8	0.105	0.105	0.103	0.104	0.105	0.001	0.952	0.104	0.104	0.105	0.100	232,643,115
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	113,000	8,701	6	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.078	-0.001	-1.282	0.077	0.077	0.080	0.100	16,337,860
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	94,554	5,580	6	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.059	0.060	-0.001	-1.667	0.059	0.059	0.063	0.100	86,289,486
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	951,844	156,050	41	0.164	0.166	0.162	0.162	0.165	-0.003	-1.818	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.100	32,883,804
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	10,000	1,500	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.154	-0.004	-2.597	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.100	86,055,642
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	287	1,128	2	3.750	4.050	3.750	4.050	4.180	-0.110	-2.644	4.050	3.744	4.050	1.000	13,365,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	22,650	2,642	2	0.119	0.119	0.116	0.116	0.120	-0.004	-3.333	0.116	0.113	0.116	0.100	9,860,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	35,000	1,645	2	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.050	-0.003	-6.000	0.047	0.045	0.050	0.100	11,750,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	1,250	1,375	1	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.200	-0.100	-8.333	1.100	1.100	1.100	0.000	55,000,000
OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	180	54	1	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.330	-0.030	-9.091	0.300	0.300	0.000	1.000	3,307,514
Total	22	2,574,973	377,346	161												

RENEWABLE ARM

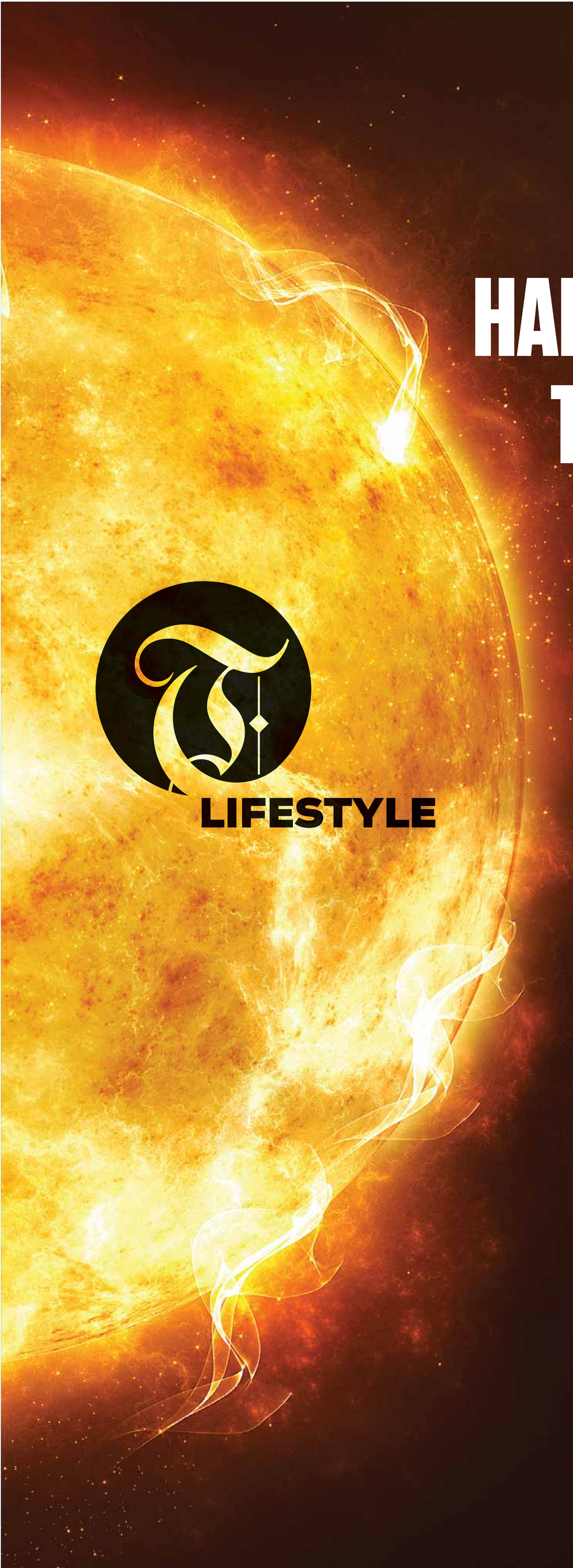
L&T finalises mega orders for solar plants in Middle East

DUBAI/RIYADH: The Renewable arm of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has finalised mega orders with a leading developer in the Middle East to build two gigawatt-scale Solar PV plants. The plants will have a cumulative capacity of 3.5 GW. The scope of the orders also includes grid interconnections encompassing pooling substations and overhead transmission lines.

Detailed engineering and initial construction work are expected to commence shortly. Last month, L&T announced having won a solar-cum-storage plant order in India. Now, with the fresh mega orders from the Middle East, L&T's renewables portfolio is poised to reach 22 GWp (Gigawatt Peak) cumulative capacities, comprising solar and wind generation projects already commissioned and those in the making.

T Madhava Das, Whole-time Director & Sr Executive Vice President (Utilities) – L&T, said: "The successive order wins stand testimony to our proven engineering and project management capabilities to meet the requirements in terms of plant performance, workforce mobilisation, safety, quality

and timeline. We cherish this level of customer trust." S N Subrahmanyam, Chairman & Managing Director – L&T, said: "The Middle East is far ahead in creating sustainable energy infrastructure and in providing a smart lifestyle. These orders are welcome additions to our green portfolio, as we build the company of the future with next-generation technologies."



LIFESTYLE

KEEPING COOL BY HARNESSING THE SUN'S ENERGY



Scorching hot temperatures can be made bearable by switching on the air conditioning — which is energy intensive and costly

Sweltering summer temperatures are increasingly common, especially in cities where closely packed buildings and paved surfaces trap heat. When temperatures climb above 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit), it can be a serious health hazard, especially for the elderly and sick. And while drawing curtains to block out the sun during the day and ventilating homes during the night when its cooler may help, many turn to power intensive air conditioning units. Fortunately, the sun itself can help us to stay cool. Given that the sun generally shines for extended periods during the summer, solar power is ideal for producing the large volumes of electricity needed to cheaply run air conditioning that help make extreme heat more bearable.

How many solar panels are needed to cool a home? This depends on the energy efficiency of the cooling system and the number of sunshine hours. But to given an example, for a well-insulated apartment of around 40 square meters (430 square feet), a small air conditioning unit requiring less than 1,000 watts would be enough. A standard solar panel of around 2 square meters can generate up to 400 watts of electricity in direct sunlight, although on cloudy days it may only produce around 30% of that amount. But generally speaking for the small flat, electricity from three to four solar panels should be enough to run an air-con unit. If, however, the home is poorly insulated or there are several devices such as computers running, it will heat up more and therefore require a bigger cooling system

with higher power demands. In this case more solar panels could be installed.

How much does solar cost? Solar energy has plummeted in price, with panels now costing only a tenth of what they did in 2005. In cities, they are often installed on rooftops or balconies. To run a small air conditioning system, a so-called balcony power station which has four panels (1,600 watts) and costs around €1,000 (\$1,080) in Europe, is usually sufficient. The solar power is simply fed into the grid via a normal socket. Larger roof systems — which are installed by professionals — are more expensive. For a system with 25 panels (10,000 watts), homeowners in Germany can expect to pay between €13,000 to €18,000. A solar panel of 400 watts which faces the midday sun generates roughly 400-800 kilowatt hours per year. With a service life of 30 years, this results in a solar power price of less than 10 euro cents per kilowatt hour (kWh), which is usually significantly cheaper than electricity from the grid.

Do they still work at night and during power cuts? Cooler night temperatures often remove the need for cooling systems and the energy required to power them. But those who do want to use solar power at night will requires a battery unit. A battery with 5-10 kWh for roof solar panels currently costs between €3,000 and €8,000 in Germany, including the price of installation. Since solar energy is generally fed into the grid, a home unit is no safeguard against power cuts. Except with the addition of a special control system that comes with a price tag of at least €1,000. -mw

SPORTS

Clash of titans as Spain take on France in semis

The first semi-final of Euro 2024 pits two powerhouses of European football and is expected to be an intense encounter

MUNICH: A mouth-watering clash between two titans of European football, Spain and France, awaits in Munich on Tuesday in the first semi-final of the Euro 2024. The match kicks off at 11pm, Oman time.

Spain have lit up the tournament so far, and are the only team to win all five of their games.

They are also joint-top in number of goals (11) and top on total attempts (102) and balls recovered (230), demonstrating how impressive they have been both going forward and defensively.

“My players are insatiable,” beamed coach Luis de la Fuente after the quarter-final win over Germany. “There’s always room for improvement, of course, but we can’t question their pride, quality and commitment.”

Standing in La Roja’s way, though, are a solid France side who have kept four clean sheets in their five matches so far.

Les Bleus are aiming for a fourth



major tournament final in the last eight years (after reaching the Euro 2016 showpiece and the 2018 and 2022 World Cup finals) – an incredible record which attests to their reservoir of big-game experience. “We’re in the semi-finals and it’s something we shouldn’t take for granted, even if we may be used to it recently,” said coach Didier Deschamps after the quarter-final victory over Portugal. “Now we go to win it.”

Youth vs experience
Given Spain are missing Dani Carvajal and Robin Le Normand

through suspension, coach Luis de la Fuente is likely to select Jesús Navas at right-back.

But which France player will be his direct rival? Kylian Mbappé? Ousmane Dembélé? Bradley Barcola? All are significantly younger than Navas and thrillingly quick. Can experience and nous cope with them? Mbappé will be a huge figure. When fit and firing, the France forward is arguably the most dangerous and clinical figure in world football. He’s yet to fully stamp his authority on this tournament, but for a player who has

bags of talent like he does, he only needs a minute.

How to deal with Spain’s wingmen

When football produces daring, exciting players, the eternal question is: how quickly can rivals ‘work them out’ and thus diminish their impact?

Didier Deschamps’ analysts have spent a good amount of time figuring out how they can – or whether they can – produce positional, marking and philosophical solutions



to cope with Spain’s dynamic duo of Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams.

Jules Koundé will be well versed in the panic and consternation Williams can cause in defenders, but the Frenchman is as dependable as they come on the right flank. He was unsettled by Portugal forward Rafael Leão on Friday, but ultimately emerged unscathed.

He’ll be buoyed by that, along with his Player of the Match contribution against Belgium, stifling another wily operator in Jérémy Doku with consummate ease.

Rodri metronomy vs Kanté chaos theory

Meanwhile, as a metronomic presence in the Spanish midfield, Rodri will be expected to exert his typical influence on proceedings. Spain’s No16 is blessed with unparalleled intelligence and positional dexterity, so Deschamps may have to mitigate, rather than eliminate entirely, this influence. How key could N’Golo Kanté be in that exercise? The latter has been back to his bustling best at Euro 2024, and nobody can disrupt the rhythm of an opponent like Kanté. - Agencies

ENGLAND VS NETHERLANDS

It’s a semi-final so it will be tough, says defender Ake

BERLIN: Netherlands defender Nathan Ake says they are “very close” to achieving their dreams as they prepare to face England in the Euro 2024 semi-finals on Wednesday. They had to come from behind to beat Turkey 2-1 on Saturday but the Netherlands’ biggest test could come against England.

It will be familiar territory for Ake, who plays for Manchester City in the Premier League and will come up against several club teammates. “I’m looking forward to it. There’s a lot of players I know from the Premier League,” said Ake. “We know their individual qualities and it’s a semi-final so it will be tough. We’re building momentum.”

“We came through tough stages at the start of the tournament and now we’ve got through another test so I think we’re ready for it.”

“Underdog or not - it doesn’t matter. We focus on ourselves. We know what we need to do. We are very close now.”

Both sides have progressed to the semi-finals despite facing criticism from supporters and media.

England, who needed a penalty shootout to beat Switzerland in their quarter-final, were runners-up in 2021 but have stumbled through so far.

Plastic cups were thrown at manager Gareth Southgate following the goalless draw with Slo-



venia, and he has been booed and questioned throughout.

Ake says “every team in the semi-finals deserves to be there” but the Dutch have also underwhelmed, failing to flatter in the group stages and playing a poor first half against Turkey.

Liverpool forward Cody Gakpo, joint-top scorer in the tournament, said: “England won so that’s a good sign - like us! In the end, it’s the most important thing.”

“You can play good football but still go out. Obviously I think everyone knows each country can play a little bit better but if you win, that’s all that matters.”

Dutch manager Ronald Koeman says his side will ‘have to fight’ but is excited by the prospect of two ‘big nations’ going head-to-head. - Agencies

FORMULA ONE

I thought it was never going to happen again: Hamilton after Silverstone win

LONDON: Lewis Hamilton has had to wait for it, but he finally had his moment of redemption at the British Grand Prix on Sunday and returned to the top step of a Formula 1 podium - two years, seven months and two days since he last stood there. In doing so, he broke the record for wins at a single track, and did it in front of his home crowd and his family.

“I can’t stop crying,” he said straight after climbing out of his car. Later, he said: “That might be the most emotional ending to a race I think I have probably ever had.”

To understand those tears, you have to consider what Hamilton has been through in that period.

His last victory was at the 2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, as his fierce title fight with Red Bull’s Max Verstappen came to a dramatic climax.

A week later, in Abu Dhabi, Hamilton lost the chance to win a record eighth championship after the then race director, Michael Masi, made up the rules as he went along in a late safety-car period.

In the 945 days between his last win and this one, Hamilton said on Sunday, he had doubted himself; doubted, too, whether another victory would ever come.

“The adversity we have gone through as a team and I have personally experienced,” he said, “the constant challenge, like we all have, to get out of bed every day



and give it your best shot.

“So many times when you feel like your best shot is not good enough, and the disappointment sometimes you can feel.

“We live in a time when mental health is such a serious issue and I am not going to lie (and deny) that I have experienced that.

“There have definitely been mo-

ments between 2021 and here when I didn’t feel like I was good enough, or I thought it was never going to happen again. I have never cried coming from a win. It just came out of me. It is a really great feeling and I am really grateful for it.”

Hamilton won a race-long fight with Verstappen and Lando Norris. He had just enough to hold off

a late charge from Verstappen’s Red Bull to take his 104th career win, and his ninth at home to become the record-holder for victories at a single circuit.

Verstappen was hit by two separate periods of rain, came alive in the closing laps to take second place from Norris, who grabbed the final position on the podium.

Norris’ team-mate Oscar Piastri, who was also in the lead fight for the first half of the race, took fourth place ahead of Ferrari’s Carlos Sainz.

Behind Sainz, Hulkenberg impressed in a Haas heavily upgraded for this race in sixth place, while Aston Martin’s Lance Stroll and Fernando Alonso took seventh and eighth as Williams’ Alex Albon and RB’s Yuki Tsunoda completed the points positions in the top 10. - Agencies

SOUTH AFRICA TEST SQUAD

Breetzke gets maiden SA Test call-up for West Indies tour

JOHANNESBURG: David Bedingham, Dane Paterson and Dane Piedt are the only players from South Africa’s makeshift squad that toured New Zealand in February to be named for their next red-ball assignment, against West Indies in August.

While Bedingham is seen as central to the future of South Africa’s long-format batting, Paterson, 35, has been included to add experience in the absence of Anrich Nortje and Marco Jansen, and Piedt, 34, to have a second spinner in addition to Keshav Maharaj.

The rest of the players were all part of South Africa’s home series against India earlier this year with the exception of batter Matthew Breetzke, who has

earned his first Test call-up.

Breetzke is currently playing for Northants and was part of a South African A side that toured Sri Lanka last year. With Dean Elgar’s recent international retirement, he will provide batting back-up to a top five that will likely include Aiden Markram, Tony de Zorzi, Tristan Stubbs, Temba Bavuma and David Bedingham.

Red-ball coach Shukri Conrad confirmed that Stubbs would take over the No. 3 spot, with de Zorzi moving up into Elgar’s opening slot.

Wicketkeeper-batter Ryan Rickelton has been recalled after last playing Tests in the home series against West Indies in March 2023 and will compete with incumbent gloveman Kyle Ver-



reynne for a spot at No. 6.

The only seam-bowling all-rounder in the squad is Wiaan

Mulder, who also last played Tests at home against West Indies, after Jansen was rested from the tour.

Jansen will also miss the October Tests in Bangladesh and “be ready for Sri Lanka and Pakistan”, Conrad said.

The pace attack will be led by Kagiso Rabada and Lungi Ngidi with Nortje not considered after he opted out of a central contract this year with the aim of focusing primarily on T20 cricket. Paterson and left-arm Nandre Burger are the other two pace options.

South Africa’s first-choice Test players have not been in action since the New Year’s Test, which they lost to India after being to miss the New Zealand series and honour SA20 commitments.

South Africa lost that series 2-0 and sit in seventh place on the WTC points table, but have

only played four matches. They have eight more Tests scheduled in this cycle - two in the West Indies, two in Bangladesh in October and home series against Sri Lanka and Pakistan - and have hopes they could put themselves in a position to compete for a spot in the WTC final.

The first Test takes place in Trinidad from August 7 and the second in Guyana a week later.

South Africa squad: Temba Bavuma, David Bedingham, Matthew Breetzke, Nandre Burger, Gerald Coetzee, Tony de Zorzi, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Dane Paterson, Dane Piedt, Kagiso Rabada, Tristan Stubbs, Ryan Rickelton, Kyle Verreynne. [With inputs from ESPNcricinfo.com]

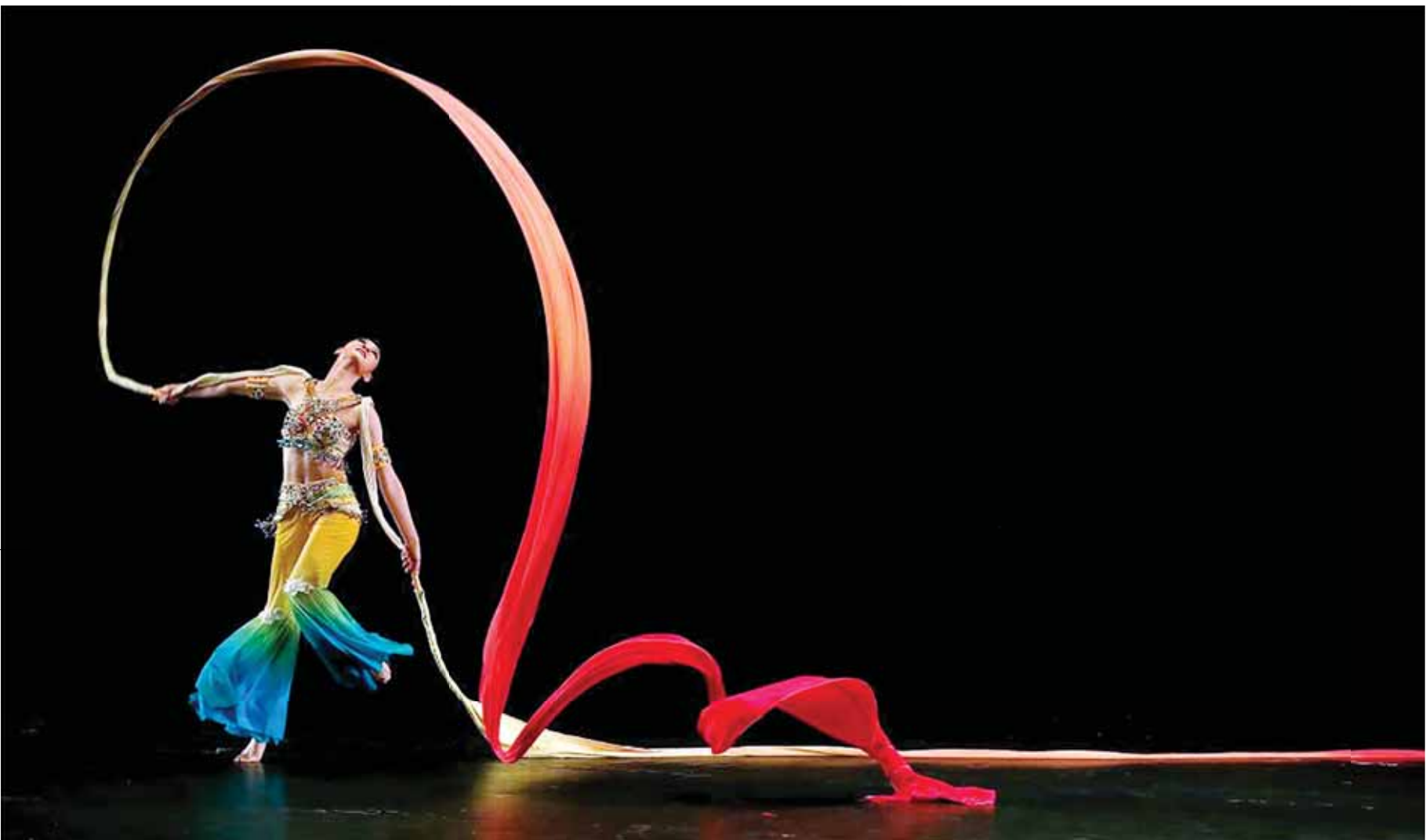
IN PICTURES



Highlight of Palio in Siena
A Carabiniere, known as the gendarmerie of Italy, performs on the Palio in Siena. Palio in Siena, or 'Palio di Siena' in Italian, is a historical horse race held twice a year in Siena since 1656. **Xinhua**



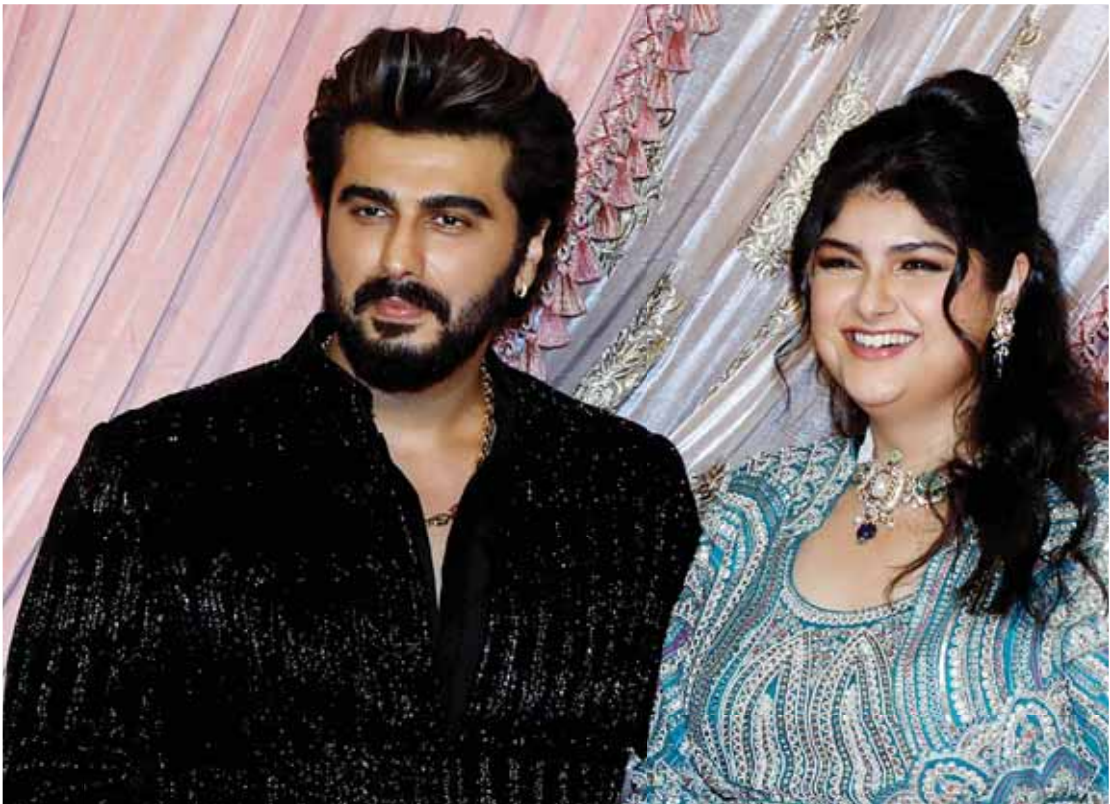
Green Development Forum of SCO Countries opens in Qingdao
A participant takes photos at the exhibition area of the Green Development Forum of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Countries in Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province. **Xinhua**



Classical dance show 'Beauty Beyond Words' staged in Bucharest
A member of Beijing Dance Academy performs during the Chinese classical dance show 'Beauty Beyond Words' on the main stage of Bucharest's National Theatre in Bucharest, Romania. **Xinhua**



Zuhair Murad's Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Haute Couture collections at Paris Fashion Week
A model presents a creation of Zuhair Murad's Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Haute Couture collections during Paris Fashion Week in Paris, France. **Xinhua**



Arjun Kapoor and Anshula Kapoor arrive to attend the sangeet ceremony of Anant Ambani with Radhika Merchant
Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor and his sister Anshula Kapoor pose for a photo as they arrive to attend the sangeet ceremony of Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani's son Anant Ambani with Industrialist Viren Merchant's daughter Radhika Merchant, at Jio World Centre in Mumbai. **ANI Photo**



Central China's Yuzhou City promotes development of Jun porcelain industry
A staff member arranges Jun porcelain products at a Jun porcelain company in Shenhui Town, Yuzhou City, central China's Henan Province. **Xinhua**

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat’s Green Sports programme continues to enhance infrastructure of sports teams

The bank recently celebrated the inauguration of the lighting system project for Azaiba Sports and Cultural team in the Wilayat of Baushar

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to enhance its leading role in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, remains committed to support youth sports teams through its annual Green Sports programme.

Recently, the bank celebrated the inauguration of the lighting system project for Azaiba Sports and Cultural team in the Wilayat of Baushar, Muscat Governorate. The event was held in the presence of Sheikh Saif Ahmed Al Khalili, Chairman of Baushar Club, Said Ahmed Al Salmi, Regional Manager of Meethaq branches and team members.

During the ceremony, Said Ahmed Al Salmi, Regional Manager of Meethaq branches, said: “The Green Sports Programme continues to achieve success in supporting sports and youth across the Sultanate. The programme witnesses a great turn out each year as the local teams compete to benefit from the support provided that includes greening of football pitches, water desalination and lighting.



I would like to congratulate the team for the successful execution of the lighting project and we wish them all the best.”

Speaking on the occasion, Salim Said Al Rahbi, Head of Azaiba Sports and Cultural team, said: “I am pleased to extend my appreciation to Bank Muscat for the continuous support given to develop local sports teams. We are happy to see the completion of the lighting system project which will help the team to further take advantage of the space and develop their sports skills. The field will also represent a suitable venue for the team to launch events in the evening and to organize different cultural and sports activities.”

The Green Sports programme is one of Bank Muscat’s key sustainable social responsibility initiatives. It aims to promote entrepreneurship, partnership, and community empowerment by supporting talented Omani youth in sports and culture. The programme also enhances the role of cultural sports teams in supporting national sports by improving sports stadium infrastructure across the Sultanate. To date, the programme has supported 183 teams and benefited over 50,000 team members in various governorates of the Sultanate.

Since its inception in 2012, the Green Sports programme reaffirms the Bank’s commitment to providing ample opportunities for young Omanis to develop their talents. It goes a long way in developing the sporting skills and talents of Omani youth, thereby leading to all-round development of the sport.



EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Europcar Oman & Bahrain unveils Wellness Lounge and Energize Lounge

MUSCAT: Europcar Oman and Bahrain recognises the demanding nature of the mobility services industry and has created a space for employees to relieve stress and recharge themselves.

The leading mobility services company has always been committed to promoting a healthy work-life balance and fostering a positive corporate culture.

The newly opened wellness lounge introduces a well fitted out gym and a yoga studio equipped with all the necessary facilities. A yoga instructor leads two classes each week, one exclusively for women and another for men.

Additionally, there will be a gym trainer who is set to conduct an in-house fitness classes twice a week for both genders. The lounge aims to release endorphins through exercise, improving mood and reducing stress levels.

The staff also benefits from the guidance of a Dietician in their weight loss journey or amp up the body muscles as is required for the individual health journey. At the Wellness Lounge, no aspect of health is left unattended to as a Mental Health Counselor is around to seek help from as well.

The Energize Lounge which is a unique gaming centre aims to create a vibrant and engaging atmosphere within the office via games such as Table Tennis, Billiards, PS5, Chess, and Carom.

The new Europcar Oman and Bahrain headquarters in addition to the above offers an array of exciting spaces including:

- ‘The Boardroom’: A spacious and airy room equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities, providing an ideal setting for important meetings and presentations.
- ‘The Networking Hub’: An ideal venue for hosting various networking events, fostering connections within the industry and strengthening partnerships.



Nitin Sapre, CEO of Europcar Oman and Bahrain, stated, “This dedicated space reflects our commitment to employee well-being and work-life balance. It’s an investment in our employees’ happiness and a testament to our dedication to attracting and retaining top talent. By providing a place where our team can prioritize their physical and mental health, we aim to enhance their overall satisfaction and engagement.”

“The wellness lounge offers a range of benefits, including stress reduction, improved health and fitness, increased productivity, team building, and reduced absenteeism. Together, we aim to create a healthier and more vibrant workplace.”

In August 2024, Europcar also planning to launch the much awaited Europcar Premier League in-house featuring games from their Energize Lounge such as Table Tennis, Billiards, PS5 Games, Carrom, Chess, Darts etc.

OPENS 2ND SHOWROOM AT LEICESTER



Malabar Gold & Diamonds strengthens presence in UK

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with a retail presence of 350 showrooms across 13 countries, has just unveiled its 2nd showroom in the UK at Leicester.

The new showroom was inaugurated by Peter Soulsby, City Mayor for Leicester in the presence of Abdul Salam K.P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group, Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mohammed Ziad, Head of Operations – UK & Europe, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Santhosh T, Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Naufal Thadathil, Zonal Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers and well-wishers. Located on Belgrave Road’s Golden Mile, the new showroom spans over 2,000 sq. ft and features an impressive collection of over 20,000 jewelry designs from 20 countries, catering to bridal, occasional, daily, and office wear in gold, diamonds, and precious gems.

“We began our operations in the UK a year ago with our first showroom in London, and it gives me immense pride that we are launching our 2nd showroom in the UK, in Leicester, within such a short span, which is a testament to the trust placed by our customers. We remain committed to elevating the jewellery shopping experience for customers with world-class products and assurances like transparency, 100% value for exchange, lifetime maintenance, etc. With every new store opening, we are inching one step closer to our vision of becoming the leading global jewellery retailer,” said M P Ahamed, Chairman, Malabar Group.



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