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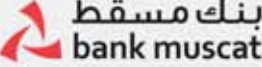
HM SENDS GREETINGS TO SPAIN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to King Felipe VI of Spain on the occasion of his country's National Day. His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere congratulations and best wishes to King Felipe and the friendly Spanish people further progress, advancement and prosperity. — **ONA**



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Muscat Airport Free Zone construction commences

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ASYAD Group has begun the construction work of Muscat Airport Free Zone, marking the launch of the first phase of the project, which is a qualitative addition to the region's infrastructure and aims to enhance its position as a global hub for business and foreign direct investment.

The first phase of the project includes preparing and levelling the land, establishing an internal road network and public service facilities, in addition to an administrative office complex that is expected to be developed in partnership with the private sector.

The project aims to provide a



modern and attractive work environment for attracting global and regional companies, financial institutions, general trading companies and start-ups; which will enhance the free zone's ability as a global business hub and offer logistical support and world-class facilities.

This step comes as a confirmation of ASYAD Group's com-

mitment to accelerating the implementation of its plans to contribute to stimulating economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman. The project's location next to Muscat International Airport will contribute to enhancing the economic importance of the free zone and achieving its integration within the integrated ASYAD logistics system. **>A5**

OMAN COMMITTED TO COMBAT COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY TRADE

During the first half of this year, no reports of currency counterfeiting were detected in the Sultanate of Oman



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is committed to utilising all its resources to combat the crime of trade in counterfeit currencies by strengthening security measures, prevention strategies, and raising community awareness.

Counterfeiting and promoting fake currency is a serious crime that undermines the national economy, erodes confidence in the financial system, and contributes directly to inflation.

It also triggers related crimes, such as fraud and money laundering, further damaging the economy. Brigadier Jamal bin Habib Al-Quraishi, Director General of Investigations and Criminal Investigations at the Royal Oman Police (ROP), emphasised that the police have dedicated significant resources to combat all crimes, including currency counterfeiting, to reduce its risks to

individuals and society.

He noted that, although counterfeiting remains at a manageable level and is not a widespread concern, it is essential to raise its risks and associated criminal activities.

During the first half of this year, no reports of currency counterfeiting were detected in Oman.

However, fraudulent methods promoting counterfeit currencies are more common, such as fake commercial advertisements offering to exchange counterfeit foreign currencies for Omani rials at attractive rates.

These offers often entice those looking for quick wealth, only for them to later realise they have

been defrauded. Brigadier Al-Quraishi also highlighted another criminal tactic where non-counterfeit foreign currencies, which their issuing countries have de-commissioned, are promoted for exchange.

People fall victim to this fraud due to enticing offers but later discover that their currencies are worthless.

Regarding the detection of counterfeit currency, Brigadier Al-Quraishi explained that official state documents, such as passports, identification cards, and banknotes, contain numerous technical security features designed to protect them from forgery. **>A3**

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of October 12, 2024



Deaths
42,175

Injured
98,336

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Hajj registration dates announced

1 The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs announced on Saturday the opening of registration for those wishing to perform Hajj from Oman for the 1446 AH season. **>A2**

OMAN

Food Security Lab to help cut imports

2 The 'Food Security Lab 2024' aims to raise self-sufficiency rates, reduce imports, increase export value, increase export value, and create employment opportunities. **>A3**

WORLD

Lebanese civilians killed in bombing



3 Several of Lebanese civilians were killed and injured on Saturday as a result of the occupation warplanes bombing various towns in Lebanon, amid widespread destruction. **>A6**

Jaber's psychological mastery leads Oman to another win over Kuwait

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's head coach Rashid Jaber once again proved his ability to get the best out of his boys against Kuwait, leading the Red Warriors to a commanding 4-0 victory at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Thursday night.

Remarkably, Jaber had previously guided Oman to a win over Kuwait during his earlier stint as national coach in 2002, when they secured their only victory in that year's Gulf Cup in Riyadh.

This latest triumph, part of the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to 2026, highlighted Oman's tactical skill and underscored the importance of psychological prepara-

tion in their success. Taking over the national team after two early defeats in the qualifiers, Jaber has made an immediate impact. He credited focused mental conditioning as a key factor in the victory.

"We focused heavily on the psychological aspect, boosting confidence and improving mental presence," Jaber said.

"This was positively reflected in the players' performance, as we emphasised ball possession, which our skilled players enjoy."

Jaber took the helm following two early defeats for Oman in the qualifiers, replacing Czech coach Jaroslav Silhavy. Under Jaber's leadership, the Omani team delivered a complete performance, dis-



mantling their West Asian rivals to the delight of the home crowd.

However, the head coach was quick to caution his players against overconfidence. "We must not let

complacency set in. The qualifiers are long and difficult, and while we celebrate tonight, tomorrow we start preparing for Jordan," Jaber added. "We've only reached 30

percent of our full potential. Our goal is to impose our style of play across the full 90 minutes in upcoming matches."

On Thursday, Oman's aggressive start paid off early in the game, with Abdul Rahman Al Mushaifri breaking the deadlock in the 17th minute after a neat exchange of passes with Salah Al Yahyai.

His shot struck the post before finding the back of the net. Kuwait struggled to respond and soon found themselves further behind when Muhsen Al Ghassani headed in Jameel Al Yahmadi's cross in the 30th minute, leaving Kuwait's goalkeeper Ibrahim Al Mukhaini with no chance.

Despite Kuwait coming out stronger in the second half, their

efforts went unrewarded. Oman capitalised on their defensive lapses, with Al Mushaifri netting his second goal in the 58th minute.

Amjad Al Harthi's precise cross found Al Mushaifri in the six-yard box, where he had time and space to finish clinically.

With Kuwait deflated, Oman sealed the victory with a late strike from Abdullah Fawaz, who burst into the box to slot home past Al Mukhaini.

The victory not only ended Oman's two-match losing streak but also kept Kuwait searching for their first win, after having opened their campaign with two draws. Next up, Oman will travel to Jordan to play in Amman on Tuesday, while Kuwait will face Palestine.



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PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....11:58pm
Asr.....3:19pm
Maghrib.....5:48pm
Isha.....6:58pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:48am

Hafeet Rail signs contract for modern freight locomotives



The locomotives will be custom-designed to withstand the region’s unique environmental conditions while adhering to the highest global standards of safety, security and sustainability

ABU DHABI: Hafeet Rail, the developer and operator of the UAE-Oman Rail Network, has partnered with Progress Rail, a



Caterpillar company, to supply 27 state-of-the-art EMD SD70ACS heavy-haul freight locomotives. The locomotives will be custom-designed to withstand the region’s unique environmental conditions while adhering to the highest global standards of safety, security, sustainability, and environmental protection. This took place during the inaugural Global Rail Transport Infrastructure Exhibition and Conference (Global Rail) 2024. Commenting on the announcement, Ahmad Al Musawa Al Hashmi, CEO of Hafeet Rail, said, “This partnership reaffirms our commitment to developing and operating a state-of-the-art railway network equipped with cutting-edge heavy-haul freight locomotives that meet international benchmarks. Additionally, our fleet is tailored to comply with GCC Railway Network standards, paving the way for efficient and streamlined freight movement between Oman and the UAE in the future.” “We are keen on forging partnerships that resonate with our mission to provide competitive freight solutions across the joint network. This initiative is poised to boost regional trade and unlock new prospects in the infrastructure, transportation, and logistics sectors of both countries, thereby enhancing economic diversification and fostering sustainable growth,” he added. John Newman, President and CEO of Progress Rail, said, “The GCC is geographically, financially and economically important on a global scale, and the UAE has been a driving contributor to the region’s growth. We are proud to have been selected to work with

Hafeet Rail to further connect Oman and the UAE. Progress Rail has developed strong trust and relationships with our business partners in the GCC through decades of investment in products, technologies and local teams. We greatly appreciate our relationship with Hafeet Rail and are looking forward to continuing our support of our customers’ growth in the GCC region.” The joint rail network’s new fleet boasts high-powered engines designed to haul a diverse range of cargo. These trains, each approximately two kilometres long, will transport various railcars carrying bulk materials, containers, petrochemicals, metallic products, and other industrial goods. These locomotives will ensure the safe, secure, and efficient movement of trains across the Oman-UAE railway network, meeting the needs of Hafeet Rail’s customers once the network becomes operational. The 27 locomotives are equipped with high-performance

engines and advanced filtration technologies, including pulse and sand filtration systems, as well as carbon emission reduction technologies, aligning with Hafeet Rail’s commitment to environmental sustainability and carbon reduction. Progress Rail’s extensive experience in the railway sector, especially within the GCC, has enabled it to understand the region’s specific requirements, allowing it to provide advanced locomotives tailored to the local conditions, in addition to its significant global presence, serving numerous countries worldwide. The signing of the contract for supplying the new fleet of locomotives follows the awarding of the main contracts, the contracts for the systems and technology to be used in the project, as well as the commencement of preparatory work to develop the UAE-Oman railway network. This underscores Hafeet Rail’s commitment to accelerating the progress of completing the first rail connection in the GCC. -WAM

1446 AH SEASON

Dates for Hajj registration announced in Oman

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs announced on Saturday the opening of registration for those wishing to perform Hajj from the Sultanate of Oman for the 1446 AH season. The registration process starts from Monday, November 4, and will continue until Sunday, November 17, 2024. The Ministry indicated that the registration process for pilgrims



from the Sultanate of Oman will be through the electronic platform (www.hajj.om). It is noteworthy that the Sultanate of Oman’s quota for this year is 14,000 pilgrims.

SYSTRA

Leading French company to provide consultancy services for rail network

SOHAR: Hafeet Rail, the developer and operator of the Omani-Emirati railway network, announced the appointment of SYSTRA, a leading French engineering and consultancy firm specialising in public transport and infrastructure, to provide administrative and engineering consultancy services for the joint network. Under the terms of the agreement, SYSTRA will deliver comprehensive technical support for the joint railway network, which includes contract management, overseeing the performance of contractors and suppliers to ensure full compliance with all requirements and standards, and providing essential technical support for managing health, environmental, safety, and security standards. Review engineering designs Additionally, SYSTRA will manage and monitor the project schedule, review engineering designs, and supervise project execution, testing and commissioning up to the start of operations.



Commenting on the announcement, Ahmed Al Bulushi, Chief Executive Asset Management Officer, Oman’s global integrated logistics provider, and Board Member of Hafeet Rail, said, “Engaging SYSTRA, a globally recognised leader in railway and infrastructure consultancy, as our administrative and engineering consultant marks a pivotal milestone for the UAE-Oman Rail Network project. This partnership guarantees the highest levels of safety and security, in line with international standards. Furthermore, we are dedicated to fostering the development of national talent in both countries by harnessing SYSTRA’s unparalleled expertise and experience

amassed over six decades across eighty countries. This collaboration will undoubtedly propel our project to new heights of excellence and innovation.” Jean-Christophe Chuniaud, UAE and Europe Vice President at SYSTRA, added, “Our partnership with Hafeet Rail allows us to bring our global expertise to the UAE-Oman Rail Network project. We will provide innovative and sustainable engineering solutions, drawing on our substantial experience in railway projects worldwide. This collaboration aims to meet the highest international standards, achieving the project’s economic and social objectives.” The UAE-Oman Rail Network is poised to play a pivotal role in the infrastructure, transportation, and logistics sectors of both countries. By improving the connectivity of sea and land ports, manufacturing centres, and major markets, the network will facilitate trade and enhance the nation’s efforts to achieve sustainability and climate neutrality goals. -WAM

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JOINT EXERCISE

RAO conducts military drill

AL JABAL AL AKHDAR: Represented by the Sultan of Oman’s Parachute Regiment, the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) on Thursday carried out a practical demonstration drill of the Joint Omani-Iranian Military Exercise codenamed “Mountain Falcons”. With support from the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), the drill was conducted under the auspices of Maj. Gen Mattar-Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman, in the presence of Brigadier-General Kiumars Heidari, Commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Army Ground Forces. The drill took place in RAO combat training zone in areas mountainous of the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar. It began with a briefing, followed by the practical demonstration during which the participating forces demonstrated a high level of performance. The stages of the demo reflected the participating units’ ability to operate in full harmony and implement the drawn-up plans and training objectives. Military exercises form part of SAF annual training plans and programmes, which are often carried out jointly with armies of Arab and friendly countries. The practical demonstration drill was attended by senior officers. -ONA

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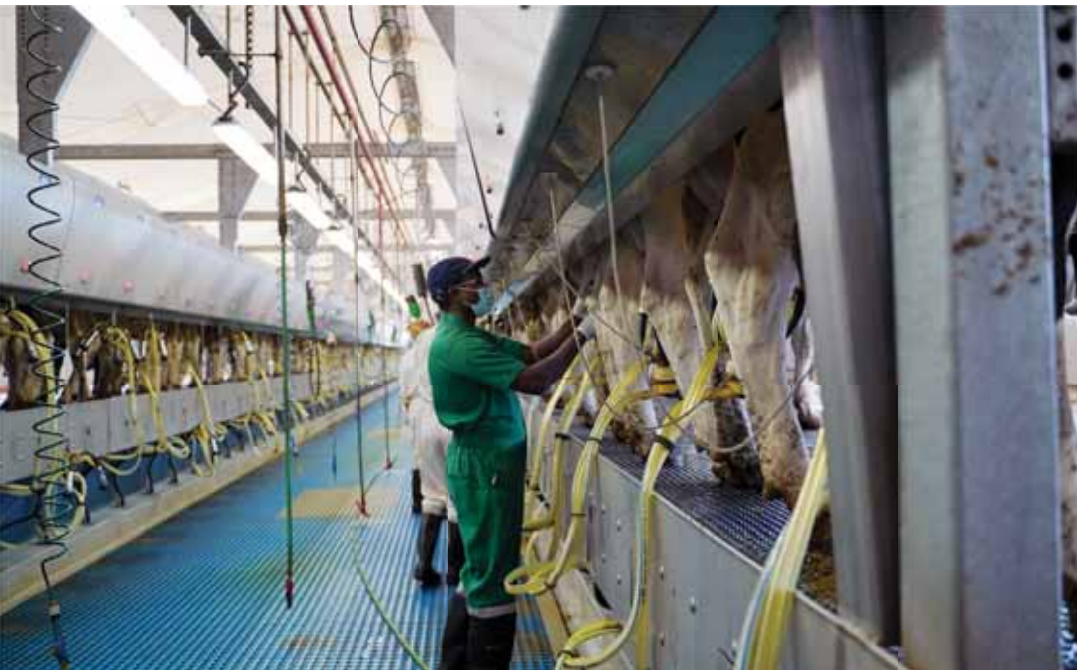
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Al Rifaa

Food Security Lab 2024 aims to raise self-sufficiency, cut imports



30 projects with an investment value exceeding OMR10 million will be signed at the end of fourth food security meeting

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The work of the “Food Security Lab 2024” to enhance food security and develop a package of investment opportunities related to local added value continues in Muscat.

Dr. Masoud bin Suleiman Al Azri, Director General of Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing and Official Spokesperson at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said: “By the end of the lab’s work, 30 projects with an investment value exceeding OMR10 million will be signed.

He added that these projects are related to a number of strategic crops in which self-sufficiency rates are low, such as onions, garlic, potatoes, fish farming, fish markets and projects in the water resources sector with the aim of raising self-sufficiency, reducing the import bill, increasing the value of exports and creating job opportunities for Omanis.

He pointed out that the food security laboratories that were launched in 2021, focus on attracting investment and enhancing lo-



cal content, added local value, employment and food security sector enablers, explaining that during the fourth laboratory, two pillars were added ie strategic planning and digital transformation.

The ministry assigned the digital transformation project in the first quarter of this year to the “Idhkaa” group with the aim of digitising all services provided by the ministry to the public or internal services. 248 services will be con-



verted digitally, he said expressing his hope that this project will be completed by the end of 2025.

He stressed that at the conclusion of the laboratory’s work, 10 services will be launched on the “Tharawat” platform, which will be comprehensive for all services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Regarding the investment project that the ministry is working

on to achieve the goals of “Oman Vision 2040”, Dr. Masoud bin Suleiman Al Azri explained that the project has reached advanced stages and includes more than 130 existing projects in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, some of which have begun trial or commercial operation, while others are underway, noting that according to feasibility studies, the investment value of these projects exceeds one OMR 1billion.

He stated that among the projects that have begun production are wheat projects, as the Sultanate of Oman’s production of this strategic crop has increased from 2,000 tonnes in 2022 to more than 10,000 tonnes so far, expressing his hope that these areas will increase with government support for this important crop and encouraging and motivating farmers by providing many advantages and incentives.

He said: “The Ministry has allocated agricultural areas for a number of crops such as mango, lemon and others, and work is underway on advisory studies for a number of agricultural cities proposed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in cooperation with the Ministry in the Wilayat of Saham and in the Najd Agricultural Region.

There is also an advisory study being conducted by the Food Investment Holding Company “Na-

taaj” for an agricultural industrial city in the Najd Agricultural Region in cooperation with the Ministry.

The Ministry of Economy, represented by the “Diversification” Programme, is working in cooperation with the Ministry on the economic clusters project in the Najd Agricultural Region with the aim of enhancing food security, raising self-sufficiency rates and reducing the import bill.

He added that there are some crops in which the Sultanate of Oman has achieved a good self-sufficiency rate of more than 75 percent, and there is a large abundance of fish reaching 158 percent, dates 97 percent, tomatoes 83 percent, milk 92 percent, and others, so the focus is on value-added industries, expecting that by the end of this five-year plan 2025, good rates of self-sufficiency will be achieved.

The Director General of Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing and the official spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources pointed out that the Sultanate of Oman currently imports 40 percent of its food, and there are good self-sufficiency rates in a number of agricultural crops and some products such as eggs and white meat, expressing his hope to reach high self-sufficiency rates when the Al Namaa Poultry Project is operational.

Organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in cooperation with the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, the National Investment and Export Development Program “Nazdar”, the National Employment Program and private sector companies, the meetings will conclude by next Thursday.

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Lab helps in detecting fake currencies

FROM The Royal Oman Police’s Criminal Laboratory plays a crucial role in detecting counterfeit currencies, whether domestic or foreign, through specialised experts using latest technologies and devices.

The Brigadier stressed the importance of international collaboration in combating currency counterfeiting and promotion, mainly through the coordination between the ROP’s General Directorate of Investigations and Criminal Investigations and Interpol.

This collaboration includes the exchange of information, expertise, and tools for law enforcement agencies to detect and investigate



counterfeiting crimes. Law enforcement personnel also receive specialised training in this field.

The Omani Penal Code addresses currency counterfeiting in Article 175, which stipulates: “Anyone who counterfeits, forges, or falsifies, in any way, a legally cir-

culating paper or metal currency within the country or abroad, or forges national public bonds, or promotes any of them knowingly, shall be punished with imprisonment for not less than five years and not more than 15 years.” The article prescribes a minimum 10-year sentence if the crime causes a decline in the national currency’s value or disrupts domestic or foreign market credit.

Brigadier Al-Quraishi praised the awareness efforts made by the ROP, in coordination with the Department of Public Relations and Security Media, through numerous lectures and awareness programmes for various segments

of society. These efforts include publications on official ROP social media accounts and participation in television and radio discussions to raise public awareness of currency counterfeiting crimes, the tactics used by perpetrators, and the importance of reporting suspicious activities.

He also commended citizens and residents for their awareness of the dangers of counterfeiting and their cooperation with authorities in reporting any suspicious activities, urging them not to be misled by false advertisements promoting the exchange of counterfeit foreign currencies at attractive rates.

WEATHER

Tropical depression likely to hit Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The low pressure in the Arabian Sea has been classified as tropical depression, with wind speeds of 20-25 knots at its centre, and is located approximately 950 kilometres from the Oman’s coastline.

According to the last update from the Civil Aviation Authority, the system is located near latitude 16°N and longitude 66.5°E, indicating that it is moving westward towards the Dhofar Governorate and the Gulf of Aden.

The CAA has said it may de-



velop into a deep depression over the next two days and the Sultanate could be affected with cloud advection accompanied by varying intensities of rainfall starting from the night of Monday, October 14, 2024.”



Jabjat

an ideal destination during the beautiful ‘Al Sarb’ season

MUSCAT: “Al Sarb” season in Dhofar Governorate is a beautiful time of the year characterised by warm weather and blooming flowers. The Jabjat area, located within the governorate’s mountain range, is a popular destination for tourists and locals alike, offering camping, picnics, and breathtaking natural scenery.

The government has taken steps to regulate camping and protect the environment while also providing facilities and services to visitors. The increasing number of tourists has led to economic growth in the region, with local businesses opening up to cater to their needs.

With the end of the autumn season, Dhofar Governorate with its cloudy atmosphere and refreshing drizzle welcomes the “Al Sarb” season, which is more splendid than the autumn season.

“Al Sarb” or “spring” is awaited by the people of Dhofar Governorate after the rainy autumn clouds to enjoy the joy of family outings under the warmth of the sun, and in the natural landscapes whose flowers have bloomed and are

ready to pick their fruits, after the land has been watered and the streams and springs have overflowed with the autumn rain.

Camping in Jabjat, which has been called “the Star of the Al Sarb” for several years, is one of the favorite activities for families and individuals, as it has many sites designated for camping under the supervision of the relevant authorities with the aim of implementing environmental conservation standards and providing the necessary services for tourists.

His Excellency Sheikh Tariq bin Khalid Al Hinali, Wali of Taqah, said: “With the increasing number of visitors and tourists to the Jabjat area, and with the aim of protecting the natural environment and preserving the biodiversity and natural resources in the area.”

In addition to preserving the natural environment, it is also a model of the success of the multiple tourist seasons and diverse options offered by the Sultanate of Oman, placing it on the map of global tourist destinations throughout the year.



Duqm Forum to focus on Blue Economy

The event will be inaugurated by His Highness Sayyid Harib bin Thuwaini Al Said

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The fifth edition of the Duqm Forum, titled “Blue Economy... The New Investment Destination,” will commence on 20 October. Organised by the Al Wusta Branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in coop-



eration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, the forum will be held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event will be inaugurated

by His Highness Sayyid Harib bin Thuwaini Al Said, Assistant Secretary General of the Council of Ministers for Conferences. The forum will feature three key discussion sessions. The first session, titled “Pillars and Strategies

for Investment in the Blue Economy,” will explore government plans and strategies in shaping the blue economy investment landscape across various sectors. The second session, titled “Blue Investment Opportunities in Food Security, Logistics, Tourism, and Renewable Energy Sectors,” will focus on Oman’s infrastructure, investments, and the potential opportunities within the blue economy. The third session, “Global Technologies and Experiences that Enhance Investments in the Blue Economy,” aims to exchange ideas on the global technological solutions that can boost investments in the blue economy across multiple fields. The forum will bring together senior officials, experts, and speakers from Oman and abroad to share their insights on the future of blue economy investments. -With ONA inputs

Over OMR149.4mn revenues of hotels



MUSCAT: Revenues of hotels classified as 3-5 stars in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 7.8 percent by the end of August 2024 to reach OMR149.446 million compared to OMR138.650 million by the end of August 2023. Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information attributed this increase to an 8.4 percent increase in the total number of hotel guests, recording about 1,400,735 guests by the end of last August, compared to 1,292,509 guests by the end of

August 2023, while the occupancy rate recorded a growth of 2.3 percent. Statistics showed that the number of Omani guests increased by 7.5 percent to reach 541,035 guests, while the number of Gulf guests increased by 0.6 percent to reach 140,394 guests. The number of other Arab guests reached 69,087, an increase of 13.8 percent, while the number of European guests increased by 16.5 percent to reach 322,632. -ONA

CARE ACCORDED TO WOMEN

Oman to mark women’s day on October 17



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will mark on Thursday the Omani Women’s Day, which falls on 17 October every year. The event is designated this year for the fields of culture, literature and manuscripts. The celebration will comprise an operetta titled Hawa of Oman (Omani Woman) and honour a number of leading female personalities in the fields of culture, literature and manuscripts. Wadha Salim Al Alawi, Director of the Woman Affairs at the Ministry of Social Development, said that the celebration of the Omani Women’s Day reflects the Sultanate’s attention and care accorded to the Omani women, This comes in recognition for their contributions to the march of renaissance and comprehensive development in the Sultanate of Oman, and in response to the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on boosting the women’s competence and abilities and for providing women with the appropriate opportunities within the blessed renaissance march, she said. She also reaffirmed that the Ministry of Social Development



has designated this year’s event for the fields of culture, literature and manuscripts as to showcase the contributions of the Omani women in these fields in the national, regional and international arena. She also pointed out to the declaration of Muscat as Capital of Arab Women 2024, during the meeting of the 43rd Session of Arab Woman’s Committee at the Arab League, chaired by Oman at the beginning of 2024. The selection of Muscat as Capital of Arab Women 2024 would showcase the Royal Directives and national efforts for establishment of a motivating environment in the fields of innovation and intellectual property of patents of woman, she said. -ONA

NCSI

Arab Forum for Tourism to begin on Monday

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The activities of the second Arab Forum for Tourism Statistics, to be organised by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the Arab League, will kick off on Monday and continue for three days. The opening of the forum will be held under the patronage of Salim bin Mohammed Al Mahrooqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism. Muna bint Said Al Abri, Director of Communication and Media Department at the NCSI and chairperson of the Organising Committee of the forum, said that the Sultanate’s hosting the event coincided with the selection of Sur as Arab tourism capital for 2024. The forum aims to boost co-operation between the Arab



countries in the field of tourism statistics and development of statistical indicators used in measurement and analysis of tourism, she said, adding that the forum would see delivery of a number of working papers within four pillars which are significant. A number of experts from other countries and the regional and international organisations concerned with statistics and information and international tourism sector would participate in the event. -ONA

ASYAD GROUP

Free and special economic zones to boost export volume for pharma, food products

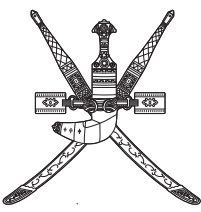
<FROM A1 This system connects various land and sea ports, the dry port, and the free and special economic zones, to increase the volume of exports and imports via air freight for products that require fast supply chains such as pharmaceutical products, food products, and e-commerce shipments. Muscat Airport Free Zone is a strategic project to establish an integrated logistics centre with global capabilities in the field of air freight As the entity responsible for developing and operating the zone, ASYAD Group is working to create an integrated commercial environment that provides pack-



ages of tax and customs exemptions and commercial facilities that will make the zone one of the most prominent investment desti-

nations in the region and an international business centre in Muscat Governorate. Through this project, the group also provides investment opportunities for the private sector by entering into long-term partnerships to develop a number of commercial projects to ensure the stability and sustainability of partner institutions in the long term. This model enhances the development of high-value strategic assets within the free zone. Faisal bin Ali Al Balushi, Senior Manager of Muscat Airport Free Zone, stressed that the group seeks, in cooperation with its private sector partners, to implement this strategic project, which re-

flects its commitment to strengthening its partnership to build an air logistics centre in the Sultanate of Oman, drive economic growth, and open new horizons for local and international companies in the logistics sector. He added that the free zone is an opportunity for the Omani private sector to achieve growth and benefit from the competitive advantages and promising investment opportunities it offers, noting that the group focuses in implementing its projects on contributing to achieving the goals of “Oman Vision 2040”, including improving the Sultanate of Oman’s ranking in the Global Competitiveness Index.



Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
418/2024	Providing tools and equipment for the occupancy program hall at the Down Syndrome Center	Companies specialized in the field of supplying office and educational tools, materials, and supplies and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third, or fourth degree.	Friday 01-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 21-11-2024 10:00 AM	10/- R.O.	25/- R.O.
419/2024	Equipping the sensory stimuli hall at the Al-Wafa Center for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities at Rustaq	Companies specialized in the field of supplying office and educational tools, materials, and supplies and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third, or fourth degree.	Friday 01-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 21-11-2024 10:00 AM	10/- R.O.	25/- R.O.
420/2024	Providing a planning, monitoring and evaluation system programs	Companies specialized in the field of designing, installing and maintaining software and information systems/equipping information data centers and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first, second, third or fourth degree of excellence.	Sunday 27-10-2024 02:00 PM	Monday 11-11-2024 10:00 AM	10/- R.O.	25/- R.O.
421/2024	Providing tools for the leatherwork workshop at the Vocational Rehabilitation Center at Al Seeb	Companies specialized in the field of supplying office and educational tools, materials, and supplies and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third, or fourth degree.	Friday 01-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 21-11-2024 10:00 AM	10/- R.O.	25/- R.O.
422/2024	Equipping the sensory stimuli hall at Al-Wafa Center for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities at Al-Buraimi	Companies specialized in the field of supplying office and educational tools, materials, and supplies and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third, or fourth degree.	Friday 01-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 21-11-2024 10:00 AM	10/- R.O.	25/- R.O.
423/2024	Providing and installing a meeting system in the meeting room of the Office of His Excellency the Undersecretary	Companies specialized in the field of design, installation and maintenance of software and information systems Registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Friday 01-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 21-11-2024 10:00 AM	10/- R.O.	25/- R.O.
424/2024	Implementing special questionnaires for the Ministry of Social Development 2024	Companies specialized in the field of design, installation and maintenance of software and information systems Registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Friday 01-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 21-11-2024 10:00 AM	10/- R.O.	25/- R.O.

❖

Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), on Sunday 13/10/2024

❖

For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry "

www.mosd.gov.om

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES

Several Lebanese civilians killed in bombing

BERUIT: Several of Lebanese civilians were killed and injured on Saturday as a result of the occupation warplanes bombing various towns in Lebanon, amid widespread destruction of buildings, facilities and infrastructure. The occupation warplanes and artillery targeted carried out intense airstrikes targeting sev-

eral towns in Lebanon, resulting in the killing of several civilians and causing the injury of dozens of others, including children and women. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) reported two more injured peacekeepers in southern Lebanon, saying its "Naqura headquarters

was affected by explosions for the second time in the last 48 hours." **Peacekeepers injured** "Two peacekeepers were injured after two explosions occurred close to an observation tower," UNIFIL said in a statement. It said one of the injured was taken to a nearby hospital, while

the other was receiving treatment at the base. "These incidents put again UN peacekeepers, who are serving in south Lebanon at the request of the [UN] Security Council under resolution 1701 [first issued in 2006], at very serious risks," UNIFIL said.

— Agencies



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

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

200,000 Palestinians in Jabalia face life-threatening conditions

Israeli forces have been surrounding Jabalia for a week, leaving residents without access to water, food, or basic necessities for survival, the Palestinian Civil Defence reported in a statement

GAZA: Approximately 200,000 Palestinians in the Jabalia area, north of the Gaza Strip, are facing imminent threats to their lives due to relentless Israeli bombardments and a dire lack of food and water. The region has been under a tight Israeli military siege for the seventh consecutive day. The Palestinian Civil Defence reported in a statement that "Israeli forces have been surrounding Jabalia for a week, leaving residents without access to water, food, or basic necessities for survival." Moreover, they highlighted that the Israeli occupation has denied medical teams and civil defense personnel the fuel and medical supplies needed to operate effectively, further exacerbating the already critical situation for those trapped in the besieged area. The Civil Defense called on international organizations to fulfill their humanitarian obligations and protect the citizens of Jabalia, urging immediate action to alleviate the suffering and restore access to essential resources.



The humanitarian situation in Jabalia is deteriorating rapidly, with food, medical supplies, and water being blocked from entering the region. Emergency medical teams are struggling to reach the wounded and recover the bodies of those killed. On Saturday morning, the Israeli military issued new evacuation orders for residents of Jabalia. However, many citizens are determined to remain in their homes rather than flee southward. The current military assault, which began on October 6, follows one of the most intense assaults on northern Gaza since May of this year. This marks the third ground offensive conducted by Israeli forces in Jabalia since the outbreak of the Israeli genocidal onslaught on Gaza on October 7, 2023. The attacks have not only targeted residential areas but have also devastated infrastructure,

isolating communities and destroying roads. A systematic campaign of starvation is underway, as access to essential supplies is severely restricted, including the targeting of bakeries. Meantime, Israeli drones and fighter jets continue to fire indiscriminately at any visible movement on the ground, further exacerbating the chaos and fear among the civilian population. **UN official stresses Palestinians' need to have unimpeded and safe access to their groves** A United Nations official stressed Friday the need for Palestinian farmers to have unimpeded and safe access to their groves. Speaking during the daily press briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said: "Yesterday, the Resident and Hu-

manitarian Coordinator, Muhanad Hadi, highlighted concerns related to the upcoming olive harvest while leading a diplomatic visit to Kifl Haris village in the Salfit governorate, alongside humanitarian and development partners." "Mr. Hadi stressed that the annual olive harvest is a key economic, social and cultural event for Palestinians and that last year, nearly 10,000 hectares of olive groves remained unharvested. The Humanitarian Coordinator has allocated \$750,000 from the Humanitarian Fund to support olive farmers this year, saying they must have unimpeded and safe access to their groves," he added. On Wednesday, 9 October, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Muhanad Hadi, together with humanitarian and development partners, led a field visit to Kifl Haris, located in the Salfit governorate, with diplomats

from eight member states to hear first-hand from Palestinian farmers about their challenges in accessing farmlands, especially during the olive harvest season. This advocacy initiative was part of the Humanitarian Country Team's (HCT) coordinated campaign around the season, where the ability of farmers to harvest is compromised, mainly due to Israeli-imposed access restrictions, and attacks by Israeli settlers and Israeli forces. **Nicaragua breaks diplomatic relations with Israel** Nicaragua has broken its diplomatic relations with Israel, the Central American nation said on Friday, calling the Israeli government "fascist" and "genocidal." Nicaragua's government, in a statement, said the break in relations was due to Israel's relentless attacks on Palestinian territories. Earlier in the day, the nation's

congress had passed a resolution requesting Nicaragua take action to coincide with the one-year anniversary of the Israeli onslaught on Gaza. The war, the Nicaraguan government said, now also "extends against Lebanon and gravely threatens Syria, Yemen and Iran." The ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza since October 7, 2023, has so far resulted in 42,150 documented Palestinian fatalities, with an additional 98,117 individuals sustaining injuries, the majority of whom are women and children. **US administration bears responsibility for continuing bloodbath in Palestine** Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the spokesperson for President Mahmoud Abbas, has stated that the US administration bears full responsibility for the ongoing war of genocide waged by Israeli forces against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank, including Jerusalem. He highlighted the current Israeli siege of northern Gaza and the continuous wide-scale attack on Jabalia and other areas in the North Gaza district, as well as attacks on Palestinian cities and refugee camps in the occupied West Bank. Abu Rudeineh asserted that "the US has provided persistent political, financial, and military support to the Israeli occupation, enabling it to continue its aggression against Palestinians and to defy international law and United Nations resolutions." He emphasised that this support hinders accountability for Israeli atrocities and exacerbates the situation. He called on the US to pressure Israel, its strategic ally, to halt its attacks and comply with international resolutions. Abu Rudeineh warned that the ongoing Israeli war crimes risk escalating into a broader regional conflict that could have dire consequences. — Wafa

IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES

UNICEF hails India's global contribution

NEW DELHI: Director of UNICEF Supply Division, Leila Pakkala on her first official trip to highlighted India's contribution to UNICEF's mission of improving children's lives. The visit by Pakkala from October 7 to October 11 coincided with UNICEF marking 75 years of its presence and partnership with the Government of India. The longstanding partnership with the Indian government has seen significant milestones achieved in various sectors such as child health, education, and protection for children in the country. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), works to protect the rights of children across the world and operates in 190 countries and territories. UNICEF India relies on the support and donations from businesses and individuals to sustain and expand health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, social policy and social protection and child protection programmes for all girls and boys in India. Located in Copenhagen, Denmark, UNICEF's supply and logistics headquarters, UNICEF Supply Division - is home to the world's largest humanitarian warehouse. It was noted by the officials that from 2016 to 2023, Indian businesses supplied goods and services worth nearly \$6 billion to UNICEF for its global work, making it the

third-largest supplier in 2023. This contribution includes vaccines, pharmaceuticals, and nutrition supplies vital for addressing the health and nutritional needs of children worldwide. "Indian suppliers of life-saving goods and services for children are key to UNICEF's work for children globally. UNICEF values these contributions which are central to our mission of saving the lives of the most vulnerable children not only in India but around the world," said Leila Pakkala. She met with key stakeholders to sustain and expand UNICEF's global supply partnership with India. "UNICEF procures notable volumes of child immunisation, health and nutrition products from India-based suppliers, and these play a vital role in UNICEF's global development and humanitarian operations," She added. "Ms. Pakkala's visit highlights the importance of UNICEF's global supply partnerships with India and great potential for deeper collaboration to address the needs of children worldwide," said Cynthia McCaffrey, representative of UNICEF India. UNICEF through its sustainable supply and procurement principles supports the Indian government in establishing and managing cost-effective end-to-end supply chains such as for im-

IN US ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Hurricane disinformation rampant

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden had had enough. This was very clear when the US president gave a short statement to journalists. "Anyone who seeks to take advantage of our fellow Americans' desperation, whether you're a company engaging in price gouging or a citizen trying to scam your neighbors: we'll go after you and we'll hold you accountable," he told reporters in Washington. Biden was referring to incidents that have taken place in recent days and weeks in the states affected by hurricanes Helene and Milton. For example: People trying to fly out of Florida before Hurricane Milton made landfall in the early hours of Thursday morning reported on social media that they were being quoted exorbitant ticket prices. There were also reports of hugely inflated prices at hotels and private Airbnb accommodation in Florida this week. Biden, however, didn't just criticize the profiteers. He also condemned the "reckless, irresponsible disinformation and outright lies that continue to flow" since Hurricane Helene — much of which are being spread by the Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump. **Trump spreads dangerous hurricane disinformation** In late September, Hurricane Helene devastated several southeastern US states, killing more than 200 people. As the clean-



up operation was still ongoing, Trump railed against the Biden administration and Vice President Kamala Harris — who is also his Democratic rival for the presidency on November 5. "The White House is doing nothing," Trump declared at a campaign appearance in Wisconsin last Sunday. "They've abandoned us in, you know, what's largely a Republican area" — where Helene has caused extensive damage. His followers reacted with vocal outrage. But what Trump said is not true. Republican governors of affected states such as Georgia and Florida have stated that they are in contact with Biden, and have received the help they needed from Washington. Despite this, Trump's campaign rhetoric about the Biden administration's supposed indifference

has resonated with people more powerfully than the truth. "It has a huge impact on Americans' trust in government," said Kathryn Olmsted, a history professor at the University of California, Davis. "If a presidential candidate, and former president, tells them that they cannot believe what the current government is saying, and that the current government is refusing to help them and is lying to them, then of course [Trump's] supporters are going to think that what he says is true," Olmsted, who conducts research into conspiracy theories, told DW by email. **Government battling hurricane rumours online** Trump also criticised FEMA, the US Federal Emergency Management Agency. Claiming that millions of FEMA dollars had gone

to irregular migrants, Trump declared that, as a result, there was nothing left for victims of the hurricane. According to the former president, people who had lost everything in the hurricane were getting only \$750 (about €685) in government aid. This, too, is false. FEMA does run a programme that helps migrants, but the budget for that is completely separate from the funds for disaster relief. And \$750 is just the initial emergency aid payment that those affected are being given to buy essentials like food, clothes and baby supplies. After this, those whose houses have been destroyed will be able to claim several thousand dollars in support. FEMA has detailed this information on a website set up specifically to counter disinformation. The Biden administration is also actively addressing hurricane disinformation online. The White House has an account on the social media forum Reddit, where it is sharing pictures and information about the government's response to hurricanes Helene and Milton. It's an unusual approach by the US government. But so close to the US presidential election, there is more than just its own reputation at stake. The disinformation is harming those most urgently in need of help. — DW

BEAT SALALAH IN FINAL

Oman Hockey League: Three-in-a row for Ahli-Sidab



MUSCAT: Heavyweights Ahli-Sidab Club stamped their supremacy on the domestic hockey circuit as they clinched the 2024 Oman Hockey League title for the third time in a row recently. In an entertaining final at the Hockey Arena in Al Amerat, the defending champions edged past Salalah 1-0 for completing a hat-trick of titles. Rashad Al Fazari scored the all-important goal in the final quarter (51st minute). Another team from Dhofar Governorate, Al Nasr Club, won the bronze with a 2-1 win over Seeb. Ahli-Sidab's Rashid Al Fazari emerged as the top scorer with seven goals. Ayman Faraj Salem of Salalah was named the league's Most Valuable Player (MVP) and his team-mate, Amjad Abdullah, was adjudged the best goalkeeper. Eng. Sami bin Salem Al Sahib, Executive Vice President of Corporate Strategy at Jindal Shadeed Company, handed over the awards in the presence of Dr. Marwan bin Juma Al Juma, Oman Hockey Association chairman.

Coach Mendis urges Oman to rise against strong rivals

Hosts draw with Afghanistan A in two-match T20 series at Oman Cricket Academy ground

MUSCAT: Oman's cricketing community is abuzz following a riveting bilateral T20 series against Afghanistan A, where the national team displayed their determination and skill, wrapping up the series with a 1-1 draw at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat recently. Head coach Duleep Mendis praised his players for their spirited efforts against such a formidable opponent, emphasising that these experiences are invaluable for their growth. "Playing against stronger teams like Afghanistan A is crucial. Our boys fought hard, and it was uplifting to see them rise to the occasion," Mendis remarked during his recent evaluation of the team's performances. The two T20 matches, played last week, provided Oman with a



vital opportunity to assess their capabilities ahead of the ACC T20 Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup, set to kick off at the Oman Cricket Academy on October 18. The tournament will feature A teams from five Asian cricketing powerhouses - defending champions Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan - alongside national teams from the UAE, Hong Kong, and the hosts, Oman. Oman shocked Afghanistan A (also known as AfghanAbdalyan) in the first T20 match, clinching victory by seven wickets after bowling out the visitors for 143 runs. Rafiullah emerged as the star with a four-wicket haul, while

Shoaib Khan's explosive 64 runs off 43 balls led the chase in just 18.3 overs, supported by Jatinder Singh's crucial contribution of 30 runs. In the keenly contested second match, Oman nearly pulled off another upset, chasing Afghanistan A's target of 190. Zubairullah Akbari's 56 and quick-fire knocks from Karim Janat and Shahidullah Kamal propelled Afghanistan to 190/6. Although Oman's Vinayak Shukla struck 74 runs and Ayaan Khan added 46, the hosts fell just short, finishing at 184/6. "We displayed a commendable fighting spirit against a strong team," Mendis commented after the matches. "Such performances



not only boost player morale but also allow our technical staff to identify areas for improvement." **Batters disappointed in WCL 2, says Mendis** While reflecting on the recent success, Mendis also acknowledged the team's disappointing performances in the World Cricket League (WCL) 2, where they currently find themselves in sixth position out of eight teams. "We have not yet performed to our potential in the WCL," he admitted. Oman's campaign began in Scotland, facing harsh weather and struggling to adapt to hybrid wickets, which were new to them. "It's been a learning curve," Mendis said. "We need to enhance our batting consistency. Adverse conditions have not helped our progress, but we must adapt and find our rhythm." With only two wins from eight matches and six points in total, Oman faces a tough road ahead, having secured victories only against Namibia and Nepal. Oman now compete in a T20 tri-series, which began on Saturday, involving Hong Kong and Afghanistan A that will precede the Emerging Teams Asia Cup. Mendis sees the upcoming matches as vital preparation. "These contests will provide significant exposure for our boys, allowing us to put forth our strong-

est team for the tournament. We are proud to host this event, showcasing emerging talent and appreciating the support from the Oman Cricket Board and the ACC," he said. With crucial WCL 2 fixtures approaching, Oman aims to leverage home advantage against Namibia and Nepal in November, as well as a tri-series in January before traveling to the USA. As they look to climb the WCL 2 table - currently led by Canada with 16 points (12 games) - Mendis remains optimistic, reiterating the importance of facing stronger teams to cultivate a competitive spirit. USA are second with 12 points from 8 matches while Netherlands are third with 12 from a similar number of games and Namibia are next with 10 from 12 games. Scotland are ahead of Oman with nine points (seven games) and Oman have six (eight matches). Nepal have three points from eight matches and UAE are at the bottom with just two points from seven games. As the Emerging Teams Asia Cup looms, Mendis concluded, "We are on a journey of development, and with each match, we are getting closer to where we want to be." His steadfast belief in Oman's cricket potential embodies the resilience that defines the team's spirit.

MULTAN TRIPLE CENTURION

Brook can be England's best ever, says Anderson

MULTAN: James Anderson believes Harry Brook can become England's best ever batter, surpassing even new record run-scorer Joe Root. Brook became the first England man to make a Test triple century (317) for 34 years in the astonishing innings and 47 runs victory over Pakistan in Multan. In the same Test, Root made 262, and in doing so he passed Sir Alastair Cook's previous England best of 12,472 career runs. Anderson, England's greatest ever bowler and leading Test wicket-taker, believes 25-year-old Brook is the ideal blend of Root and another great, Kevin Pietersen. "He's on the way to being in the top three that I've played with," Anderson said on his Tailenders podcast. "It's Root, Pietersen and him. He's definitely got all the attributes to overtake them. "He's just got everything. Without trying to big him up too much because he's still really early in his Test career, I do think that he's got the perfect amount of each of those two and that's what will make him the best that we've ever had." It is high praise from Anderson, whose haul of 188 Test caps is another England record. Along with Root and Pietersen, Anderson was also a team-mate of other outstanding England batters like Cook, Alec Stewart, Ian Bell, Michael Vaughan and Graham Thorpe. Brook has 1,875 runs in 19 Tests and 31 innings. He has a chance to become the fastest Englishman



to 2,000 Test runs, beating the 22 matches and 33 innings of the legendary Herbert Sutcliffe in 1928. Pietersen, perhaps the best three-format batter to ever play for England, had 8,181 runs when his 104-Test career ended in 2014. As a comparison, he had 170 runs fewer than Brook after 19 Tests. Anderson, who retired from Test cricket in July, said: "Brook has definitely got the temperament of Joe Root and the technique, even, of Joe Root. "But he's got the shots of both Root and Pietersen. He can destroy an attack if he wants to, he can play longer innings if he needs to." The run-scoring exploits of Brook and Root helped England set new landmarks in taking a 1-0 lead over Pakistan. England's 823-7 declared was their highest total in Test cricket since 1938. The 556 England conceded in Pakistan's first innings was the highest total any team has overturned to then go on and earn an innings victory. Brook and Root shared a part-

nership of 454, England's highest of all time for any wicket and the fourth-highest by any Test pair. "The thing that's really similar between Joe and Harry is that they love batting," said Anderson. "They literally couldn't care less what format it is. They just want to bat. "They want to have fun doing it. As much as Harry's the younger player and will be learning loads from Rooty, I still think Rooty learns from him as well. "Joe's one of those sorts of players that wants to keep developing and bettering himself and he does watch other players and try to add bits to his game. I'm sure he's doing that with Harry." Jack Leach took the three wickets England required for a record-breaking win over Pakistan and a 1-0 lead in the three-match series on Thursday. Though Pakistan began the fifth day six wickets down, Abrar Ahmed was absent through illness, and England were initially held up by Salman Agha and Aamer Jamal adding 109 for the seventh wicket. Leach needed only four deliveries to trap Salman lbw for 63, then took a sharp caught-and-bowled to remove Shaheen Shah Afridi. Naseem Shah charged to be stumped, giving Leach 4-30 in his first Test since January. Pakistan's 220 all out left England victors by an innings and 47 runs. No team in Test history has ever conceded as many as the 556 as England did in Pakistan's first innings then gone on to win by an innings. - Agencies

INDIA SQUAD ANNOUNCED



Bumrah named vice-captain for Test series against NZ

MUMBAI: Pacer Jasprit Bumrah has been named vice-captain for the three-Test homes series against New Zealand. With Rohit Sharma in doubt for the first Test against Australia, which begins in Perth on November 22, there is now more focus on India's vice-captain. The first Test begins on October 16 in Bengaluru. The 15-player squad resembles the one that was fielded for India's recent 2-0 Test series sweep over Bangladesh. India did not have a designated vice-captain for their most recent Test series against Bangladesh but Bumrah has performed the role for India in the past when he was the vice-captain in the two-Test home series against Sri Lanka in March 2022. Later, he served in the position in the two-Test tour of South Africa in 2023-24 and then in the five-Test series earlier this year against England. Bumrah has also led India once in the one-off Test in England in 2022, when Rohit was forced to sit out after having tested positive for Covid-19. India have cut down the size of the squad from 16 to 15. Left-arm pacer Yash Dayal, who was named in the squad for both Tests and was later released from the second match, has been left out. Experienced pacer Mohammed Shami's much-awaited return from a long injury layoff continues. Since the conclusion of last year's ODI World Cup, Shami has been working his way to recover from an ankle injury that required surgery. Young Delhi-tearaway Mayank Yadav, who recently made his debut for India in the T20I format against Bangladesh, has been named as a travelling reserve alongside Harshit Rana, Nitish Reddy and Prasidh Krishna. Notably, the young all-rounder

Nitish also made his debut for India during the ongoing T20I series against Bangladesh. India stamped their authority against Bangladesh by producing memorable performances in Chennai and especially in Kanpur. They have yet to lose a Test series at home since 2012. The second Test will start on October 24 in Pune. The series will conclude in Mumbai at the Wankhede Stadium, with the third Test commencing on November 1. **India's squad:** Rohit Sharma (captain), Jasprit Bumrah (vice-captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Dhruv Jurel (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep. Travelling reserves: Harshit Rana, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Mayank Yadav and Prasidh Krishna. -ANI



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WITHHOLDING TAX

The Tax Authority, represented by the Second General Directorate of Taxes, organised an introductory workshop on Withholding Tax, targeting officials in various ministries and government agencies.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



SOHAR ALUMINIUM INKS MOU

Sohar Aluminium signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources in North Al Batinah Governorate and Atta Saham Charity Team.

Muscat Stock Exchange trading value exceeds OMR826 million

In addition to the increase in trading value, the number of securities traded recorded a growth of more than 100 percent from about 2.2 billion securities to 4.7 billion securities

MUSCAT: The value of trading at Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose in the first nine months of this year to OMR826.1 million, registering a growth of 35.8 percent over its level in the same period last year, which amounted to OMR608.1 million.

This growth came with the improvement of investor confidence in the stock exchange and the rise in the shares of many companies, while the public joint-stock companies listed on the stock exchange distributed cash dividends and free shares to their shareholders. The companies also announced many positive developments that attracted investors and strengthened their optimism for further improvement in financial results.

Muscat Stock Exchange recorded growth in its various indicators in the first nine months of this year. In addition to the increase in trading value, the number of securities traded recorded a growth of more than 100 percent from about 2.2 billion securities to 4.7 billion securities, and the number of transactions executed increased from about 109,000 to more than



159,000. The market capitalisation recorded gains of more than OMR1.16 billion after rising at the end of September to OMR24.51 billion, recording an increase of 4.3 percent. The percentage of non-Omani ownership in the shares of companies listed on the stock exchange reached 19.1 percent at the end of September.

July 2024 witnessed the highest trading value at about OMR152.4 million, February came second at OMR129.8 million, April came third at OMR119 million, while June recorded the lowest trading at OMR42 million.

In terms of the number of executed deals, March came in first place with more than 26,000 deals, April came second with about 23,000 deals and January came in third place with 21,000 deals. In contrast, August recorded the lowest number of deals executed stood at 12,517 deals.

Abraj Energy Services topped the most traded companies

in terms of trading value of OMR130.6 million, followed by Bank Sohar International at OMR109.9 million and Bank Muscat at OMR75.4 million.

At the sector level, the services sector accounted for 42.6 percent of the total trading value after witnessing trading worth OMR352.5 million. The financial sector came in second place with trading worth OMR313.8 million and the industrial sector came in third place with trading worth OMR73.7 million.

The atmosphere of optimism was reflected in the main index of the stock exchange, which rose by 196 points in the first nine months of this year and closed at the end of September at 4,710 points, compared to a decline of 179 points in the same period last year.

The sectoral indices recorded varying increases, except for the Sharia index, which closed down. The financial sector index rose by 333 points and closed at 7,726

Omani stock market rebounds with strong earnings

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market experienced a 1.65 percent increase this week, rebounding from four weeks of losses, according to an industry watcher.

"This surge was primarily driven by positive earnings results released throughout the week. Initially, the market faced losses due to geopolitical tensions in the region, which heightened investor fears and posed risks of further escalation," said Ahmed Negm, Head of Market Research MENA at XS.com.

"However, the onset of the third-quarter earnings season, featuring universally positive results, helped various sectors achieve gains and push the market higher. Despite the potential for continued positive results in the coming weeks, the ongoing geopolitical tensions remain a factor likely to weigh negatively on market sentiment," he further added.

The financial sector led with gains, posting an increase of 1.63 percent. Bank Muscat saw a significant rise of 3.19 percent, followed by Sohar International Bank, which climbed by 3.65 percent and became the most traded stock in terms of



value and volume. Additionally, Bank Nizwa experienced a 0.94 percent increase, contributing further to the sector's overall positive performance.

In the services sector, there was also notable growth, with a 1.15 percent increase overall. OQ Gas Networks led the way, up by 1.39 percent, while Ooredoo added a 0.36 percent increase to the sector's gains. Strong earnings from Al Batinah Power, Musandam Power, and Al Suwadi Power supported their respective stocks which performed well, posting

increases of 2.67 percent, 7.92 percent, and 2.63 percent, respectively.

The industrial sector saw modest gains, increasing by 0.21 percent. Galfar Engineering & Contracting and Construction Material Industries led the sector, with gains of 4.24 percent and 8.89 percent, respectively. However, not all was positive as Al Anwar Ceramics and Oman Cement experienced declines of 3.13 percent and 1.30 percent, despite the positive results for the third quarter from Oman Cement.

"Looking ahead, the upcoming OQEP listing on October 28, 2024, is poised to significantly influence the Muscat Stock Exchange. With a projected market capitalisation representing approximately 11.6 percent of the total market cap, this addition could potentially reshape market dynamics," said Ahmed Negm.

"This is particularly noteworthy as the market has been in a prolonged period of stagnation over the past two years, and the OQEP listing could serve as a crucial catalyst. Investors will closely monitor how this development affects sector weightings and overall market performance," he further added.

BLOCKS 3&4



Tethys September oil production in Oman reaches 231,719 barrels

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before government take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore the Sultanate of Oman, in September 2024 amounted to 231,719 barrels of oil, corresponding to 7,724 barrels of oil per day.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for the month of September 2024 was \$83.85 per barrel. The OSP, as published by the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.

Tethys Oil, through its wholly owned subsidiary Tethys Oil

Block 3 & 4, has a 30 percent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East with 20 percent and the operator CC Energy Development (Oman branch) holding the remaining 50 percent.

Tethys Oil is an oil exploration and production company with focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The company's core area is the Sultanate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58.

Tethys Oil has net working interest 2P reserves of 21.7 mmbo and networking interest 2C Contingent Resources of 15.5 million barrels of oil (mmbo) and had an average oil production of 8,818 barrels per day during 2023.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Is the US really experiencing a boom in green energy jobs?

NEW YORK: After casting the deciding vote to pass the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States Senate in August 2022, Vice President Kamala Harris touted the bill as "a historic achievement for our country that will directly benefit millions of Americans."

Two years later, in the final weeks of her own whirlwind presidential campaign, Harris has been reminding voters about the "hundreds of thousands of high-quality clean energy jobs" and the "thriving clean energy economy" resulting from the legislation.

"I will recommit the nation to global leadership in the sectors that will define the next century," Harris said in late September. She also outlined her economic policies in the battleground state of Pennsylvania and vowed to "expand our lead in clean energy innovation and manufacturing."

Two years later, what's the verdict on the IRA?

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), one of the key achievements of the Biden administration, is the largest climate investment in US history. Most analysts have said the government pledge to invest \$370 billion (€330 billion) in clean energy technology, manufacturing and innovation over the next decade has already had a galvanizing effect on the national economy.

"No matter how you look at it, the IRA is a success. It could be the most transformative policy we've seen in recent history," said Bob Keefe, executive director at E2, a nonprofit that advocates for environmental economic policies. He told DW by email that since the IRA was signed into law two years ago, private companies have invested at least \$140 billion into



more than 340 major clean energy projects across the US.

"This is all positioning America to finally compete in what's expected to be a \$20 trillion global marketplace for clean economy goods," said Keefe. According to E2, in 2023 — the first full year of grants, loans, investments and other incentives under the IRA — 58% of all new positions created in the energy sector were green. That equates to 149,170 jobs primarily in electric vehicles, energy efficiency and renewables.

That job growth was more than three times faster than overall US employment, according to E2's latest Clean Jobs America report, "set[ting] the stage for the next several years as the industry begins to feel the full impact from historic investments and incentives in the IRA."

"Government investments have definitely catalyzed private-sector

investments," said Keefe. "By creating these tax credits and other investments, by extending them for the next 10 years — and by backing them up in many cases with direct government investments — businesses now have better clarity that investing in factories, green energy projects and shifting their business models toward an electric future makes sense."

US economy seeing 'clean energy manufacturing boom'

Electric vehicle projects, in particular, make up more than a third of all clean economy projects announced in the past year, with the US intent on catching up with Chinese and European automakers. Recent data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that EV projects are helping to drive a 34-year high in auto manufacturing jobs.

More than 90% of those projects

are in manufacturing, which could sway potential voters come November 5. Earlier this year, the National Association of Manufacturers trade advocacy group credited parts of the IRA with "support[ing] manufacturers across the United States, with direct investments and tax credits generating a major increase in manufacturing construction and jobs."

"The overall economy is enjoying a clean energy manufacturing boom that's creating tens of thousands of good jobs," said Jack Conness, a policy analyst with the nonpartisan Energy Innovation think tank in San Francisco. In an email, he said the IRA has reduced inflation numbers "more than other major global economies" kept the unemployment rate in check and pushed the US toward "finally becoming a major clean energy manufacturing player at the international level." -DW

MARKET

Sohar Aluminium signs MoUs to boost agriculture, support social initiatives

The first MoU stipulates that Sohar Aluminium will fund the maintenance project of Falaj Al Rawdah in the Wilayat of Saham in North Al Batinah Governorate. The second MoU was signed to support funding the construction of an investment building for Ataa Saham Charity Team

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In recognition of the importance of public-private sector partnership in the development of the agriculture sector and supporting charitable associations in the Sultanate of Oman, Sohar Aluminium (SA) signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources in North Al Batinah Governorate and Atta Saham Charity Team.

The signing ceremony was held under the patronage of Sheikh Rashid bin Ahmed Al Shamsi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development and attended by Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Abdullah Al Battashi, Wali of Saham, their Excellencies members of Shura Council of the Wilayat of Saham, members of municipal council, representatives of Sohar Aluminium and other dignitaries.

The MoUs were signed by Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Kharusi, General Manager of HR and Corporate Affairs at Sohar Aluminium, Eng. Athab bint Rashid Al Rashdi, Manager of Water Resources Department at the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources in North Al Batinah Governorate and

Saif bin Rashid Al Sinani, Chairman of Atta Saham Charity Team.

The first MoU stipulates that Sohar Aluminium will fund the maintenance project of Falaj Al Rawdah in the Wilayat of Saham in North Al Batinah Governorate. This project is part of Sohar Aluminium's social investment initiatives, which aim to provide support to various segments of the community. It further serves preserving natural heritage and agriculture key components in the Sultanate of Oman.

The second MoU was signed to support funding the construction of an investment building for Ataa Saham Charity Team. The building consists of 3 floors and is built over 2,900 sqm of land. This commercial building will contribute to supporting the team's charitable and social activities in the Wilayat of Saham.

Upon signing the agreements, Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Kharusi, General Manager of HR and Corporate Affairs at Sohar Aluminium said, "Corporate Social Responsibility at Sohar Aluminium is a core principle that guides our values and operations. We recognise that our success is linked to the well-being of the people and environment around us. It is our responsibility to give



financial and natural resources for these communities".

On the other hand, Wali of Sham, commented, "We are pleased of this strong partnership with Sohar Aluminium, which brought fruitful and sustainable outcomes. Together, we are fostering a culture of care, compassion, and responsibility to support the community. Our nation thrives when we stand together, supporting one another and striving for a brighter future for the generations to come. Let us continue to build on this momentum and encourage more partnerships that focus on creating positive change and impact".

It is worth noting that Sohar Aluminium is a responsible company that always seeks to create a positive impact on social development through its continuous support and cooperation with all stakeholders.

back to the community and contribute to a sustainable future. The two projects that we are funding today address key issues such

as environmental sustainability, heritage preservation, and charity and community development. By investing in these areas, we are not

only enhancing the lives of individuals, but also fostering stronger, more resilient communities and supporting creation of sustainable

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INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

Tax Authority hosts workshop to strengthen compliance with withholding tax regulations



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Tax Authority, represented by the Second General Directorate of Taxes, organised an introductory workshop on Withholding Tax, targeting officials in various ministries and government agencies.

The workshop aimed to raise the percentage of commitment of government agencies in ap

plying the provisions of WHT. The workshop received a wide participation of more than 100 participants, which reflects the keenness of government agencies to adhere to the provisions of the tax and apply them accurately.

During the workshop, ImanAbdulrhman Al-Hindasi, Tax Inspector, reviewed the withholding tax laws and how to apply them, focusing on the importance of coopera

tion between the public and private sectors to overcome the challenges facing to implement the taxes.

Specialists stressed the importance of complying with tax regulations, noting that holding such workshops represents a crucial step to enable taxpayers to fully understand their tax rights and duties, raise their tax awareness, and build bridges of trust with the tax administration.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

IMF lowers annual borrowing costs for members by 36%

NEW YORK: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reduced its members' borrowing costs by approximately US\$1.2 billion annually, according to IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

In a press release on Friday, Georgieva stated, "The approved measures will lower IMF borrowing costs for members by 36 percent, or about \$1.2 billion annually." She added that the number of countries subject to surcharges is expected to decrease from 20 to 13 by fiscal year 2026.

Surcharge policy

The IMF this year conducted its first review of the surcharge policy since 2016 in response to

global high-interest rates that have raised borrowing costs.

The IMF imposes regular interest rates, along with additional surcharges, on loans that exceed certain thresholds or durations, as well as commitment fees for precautionary arrangements.

Essential part

Georgieva affirmed, "Charges and surcharges remain an essential part of the IMF's cooperative lending and risk management framework, where all members contribute, and all can benefit from support when needed."

The new changes will take effect on 1st November.

Five countries – Ukraine, Egypt, Argentina, Ecuador, and

Pakistan – currently pay the highest surcharges to the IMF, based on research by Boston University's Global Development Policy Centre.

Argentina's Finance Minister, Pablo Quirno, noted that the country, presently the IMF's largest debtor, is expected to save over \$3 billion due to these reforms.

The announcement did not meet the expectations of some academics, non-profit organisations, and other economists who have called for the complete removal of IMF surcharges, citing that they impose additional burdens on borrowing countries facing challenging economic conditions and hinder the effectiveness of IMF support. -WAM



RESEARCHERS GIVE INSIGHTS INTO POSSIBLE CAUSE OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Evidence from earlier studies suggests that Alzheimer's disease starts when the blood-brain barrier (BBB), which protects the brain, decreases. Due to this weakening, toxic substances may be able to enter the brain and cause Alzheimer's to develop

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University will investigate the possibility that specific brain proteins are involved in the onset of Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease is a neurological condition that gradually impairs thinking and memory abilities. Nearly 7 million Americans 65 and older have Alzheimer's disease, and the condition claims more lives than breast and prostate cancer combined. This information comes from the Alzheimer's Association. Evidence from earlier studies suggests that Alzheimer's disease starts when the blood-brain barrier (BBB), which protects the brain, decreases. Due to this weakening, toxic substances may be able to enter the brain and cause Alzheimer's to develop. The NIH-backed study will

examine the potential function of epitope (Eph) receptors in Alzheimer's disease. Eph receptors are proteins initially investigated by Bing-Cheng Wang, a professor of pharmacology at Case Western Reserve's School of Medicine, for their role in brain development and cancer. They mediate various cell-to-cell interactions. These proteins, according to Matthias Buck, a professor of physiology and biophysics at the School of Medicine, and his colleagues, may be involved in the BBB's disintegration, which is crucial for protecting the brain from damage during strokes and the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. The new study expands on Buck's 15 years of Eph research. Working with Buck's lab, which is studying a part of the Eph receptor protein using

advanced imaging and computational techniques, researchers from Texas Tech University and the University of Tennessee will study how this protein behaves in living cells. And scientists at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center are using crystallography to understand the protein's structure. "Alzheimer's is very complex, which is why this project requires a collaboration of special skills," Buck said. "Since some infectious agents can pass through the blood-brain barrier and Eph receptors are helpful, we plan to enlist the assistance of more local and national partners as this research gains momentum. We anticipate this research will result in discoveries that will one day make it possible to treat an illness that impacts millions of people worldwide." - ANI

Retirements of ‘Big Four’ overwhelming: Djokovic



Rafael Nadal has been described as a ‘legend’ and ‘one of the greatest of all time’ after the tennis icon confirmed he will retire at the end of this season

SHANGHAI: Novak Djokovic is targeting a 100th ATP title this weekend but says the imminent prospect of being the final active player from the ‘Big Four’ of men’s tennis feels “overwhelming”. For many years, Djokovic had intense and rewarding rivalries with Roger Federer, Andy Murray

and Rafael Nadal, who joined him in the famed quartet. Djokovic beat Czech teenager Jakub Mensik 6-7 (4-7), 6-1, 6-4 on Friday to reach the Shanghai Masters semi-finals and is still chasing tour success. The win came a day after Nadal announced he will retire in November.

Federer retired in 2022, while Murray ended his own career in August. “[Nadal] has been my greatest rival. The rivalry I had with him has impacted me the most in my career by far,” Djokovic said after his win against Mensik. “We knew that that moment is coming sooner than later, but it’s still a shock, you know. “Roger a few years ago, when he announced retirement, and Andy as well this year. I mean, it’s a bit overwhelming for me to be honest. “I don’t know what to make out of it. I still enjoy competing. But part of me left with them, a big part of me.” Serbia’s Djokovic has won 24 Grand Slam titles - a men’s record - and claimed a long-awaited Olympic gold earlier this year.



Nadal has been described as a “legend” and “one of the greatest of all time” after the tennis icon confirmed he will retire at the end of this season. ‘Big Three’ rivals Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic have led the tributes to Spain’s 22-time Grand Slam champion, who will compete for the final time at next month’s Davis Cup Finals in Malaga. Known as the ‘King of Clay’ during an illustrious career in which he won 14 French Open titles, Nadal retires as the second-most successful men’s singles player of all time, behind only Djokovic. Nadal is also a four-time US Open champion and won both the Australian Open and Wimbledon twice. “You have inspired millions of children to start playing tennis, and I think that is probably the greatest achievement anyone can wish for,” said Djokovic, who confirmed he will be present in Malaga to “pay respect” to Nadal’s career. “Your tenacity, dedication, fighting spirit is going to be taught for decades. Your legacy will live forever.” While 24-time Slam winner Djokovic is still competing, Federer retired on 20 titles in 2022 - and famously cried alongside Nadal after the Swiss played his farewell tournament at the Laver Cup two years ago. Among many titanic battles for the sport’s major prizes, the pair contested arguably “the greatest match ever played” in the 2008 Wimbledon final. “What a career, Rafa! I always hoped this day would never come,” said Federer. “Thank you for the unforgettable memories and all your incredible achievements in the game we love. It’s been an absolute honour.” Jannik Sinner, the current men’s world No.1, said: “It’s tough news for all the tennis world. I was very lucky to get to know him and he’s an unbelievable person. “He gave to all of us a lot of emotions when we saw him playing.” Among the other sports stars to pay tribute to Nadal, Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo said: “Rafa, what an incredible race you’ve had! Your dedication, passion and incredible talent have inspired millions around the world. It has been an honour to witness your journey and to be able to call you a friend. Congrats on an amazing career! Enjoy your retirement!” - Agencies

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

Van Dijk sent off in Netherlands draw



BUDAPEST: Virgil van Dijk was sent off as the Netherlands picked up a Nations League point with a 1-1 draw in Hungary on Friday. The hosts had led through Roland Sallai’s first-half volley. But Liverpool defender Van

Dijk was dismissed following two yellow cards in the space of three minutes. His first was for dissent and the second was for bringing down Kevin Csoboth on the wing. The red card was Van Dijk’s first for the Netherlands and came on

his 77th appearance, late in the game. However, soon after his exit, the 10 men were level when Denzel Dumfries headed in from Cody Gakpo’s free-kick. Before his dismissal, Van Dijk had completed 145 of his 152 pass-

es. That was not far off the total of Hungary’s entire team, who only completed 173 passes. The Netherlands announced on Saturday that Van Dijk would leave their camp given the red card rules him out of Monday’s match against Germany in Munich. - Agencies

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE



Undav’s brace as Germany edge Bosnia-Herzegovina

BOSNIA: Deniz Undav scored twice as Germany beat Bosnia-Herzegovina 2-1 in the Nations League at Stadion Bilino Polje on Friday. The Stuttgart striker gave Germany the lead with a fine first-time finish from Florian Wirtz’s lay-off. Moments later, debutant Tim Kleindienst had a goal ruled out for offside. Bosnia had a huge chance to level but Ermedin Demirovic crashed his shot off the post. And soon after ex-Brighton man Undav netted from Maximilian Mittelstadt’s cross to

double Germany’s lead. It was his third international goal as he earned only his fifth cap - and his second start. Undav thought he had a hat-trick - and Serge Gnabry had the ball in the net - but both efforts were ruled out for offside. And Edin Dzeko, 38, gave Bosnia hope with a fine header from eight yards out. But the hosts could not find an equaliser in Zenica. **Other results:** Group 1: Estonia 3 Azerbaijan 1, Czech Republic 2 Albania 0, Slovakia 2 Sweden 2, Ukraine 1 Georgia 0. Group 4: Iceland 2 Wales 2, Turkey 1 Montenegro 0. - Agencies

Ex-Liverpool defender Matip retires at 33

LONDON: Former Liverpool defender Joel Matip has announced his retirement from football aged 33. The defender joined the Reds in 2016 from German side Schalke and went on to make 201 appearances for Liverpool, winning five major trophies. Matip provided an assist in the 2019 Champions League final for Divock Origi’s goal in the 2-0 victory against Tottenham in Madrid, helping Liverpool win their sixth European Cup. Injuries limited the defender to just nine appearances in Liverpool’s 2019-20 Premier



League-winning side, which ended the club’s 30-year wait for a league title. Matip left Liverpool at the end of the 2023-24 campaign, having sustained an anterior cruciate ligament injury

which curtailed his final season at the club. He earned 27 caps for his country and retires as a free agent, having failed to join another club following his departure from Liverpool. - Agencies

AGAINST FINLAND

Injured Saka out of England squad

LONDON: Bukayo Saka has withdrawn from the England squad for Sunday’s Nations League game against Finland and returned to Arsenal for further assessment. The 23-year-old winger was substituted early in the second half against Greece on Thursday after picking up an injury in his right leg. Saka has been an ever-present for Arsenal so far this season, scoring three goals in 10 appearances in all competitions. The Gunners first match after the international break is away at Bournemouth on 19 October. Liverpool’s uncapped midfielder Curtis Jones, who was added to the England squad earlier this week, has also withdrawn because of a personal commitment.



Captain Harry Kane and midfielder Jack Grealish returned to training on Saturday after missing the Greece game with knocks.

Lee Carsley’s side are second in League B Group 2 with six points from their opening three matches. - Agencies

ROUND-UP



CHANGAN UNVEILS ALL-NEW ‘UNI S’ CROSSOVER IN OMAN: A NEW STANDARD IN STYLE, DESIGN AND INNOVATION



The UNI S is powered by a robust 1.5-liter turbocharged engine paired with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission (DCT), delivering an exhilarating driving experience and advance safety

MUSCAT: Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (Changan Oman) announced the launch of the all-new Changan UNI S, a cutting-edge crossover that combines advanced technology, dynamic performance, and modern design.

The UNI S is powered by a robust 1.5-liter turbocharged engine paired with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission (DCT), delivering an exhilarating driving experience and advance safety.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, “We are thrilled to introduce the premium Changan UNI S to Oman which represents the future of crossover design and engineering, combining performance, technology, and style in one impressive package. All new Changan UNISis two wheel driver reimagines driving experience by combining exceptional performance, cutting-edge safety, and advanced safety and technology. The New Model UNI S offers spacious, elegantly designed cabin with smart screens and voice commands for a comfortable and enjoyable journey. He also added that Changan UNI S offers 6 years or unlimited km mileage which provides total peace of mind to all buyers.

At the heart of the Changan UNI S is a robust 1.5L turbocharged engine, generating 185 horsepower and 300 Nm of torque, paired with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission (DCT) UNI S ensures a smooth, responsive driving experience. Changan is committed to sustainability and reducing its environmental footprint. The UNI S is front wheel drive crossover designed with eco-friendly materials in manufacturing processes, reflecting the brand’s dedication to a greener future.

All-new Changan UNI S Exterior design representing modernity and elegance, the border less front grille and LED headlights provides it a commanding presence on the road. UNI S has LED headlights with



auto on/off functionality, daytime running lights, and power-folding mirrors with integrated turn signals provide both style and practicality. UNI S panoramic sunroof enhances the luxury experience, while a remote engine starter offers added convenience. The sleek rear features LED tail-lights and Power tail gate provides unparalleled convenience open and close the tailgate with a single touch of a button.

The new Changan UNIS has spacious and well-appointed Interior provides comfort for both driver and passengers. High-quality materials and customizable ambient lighting create an inviting atmosphere for every journey. The Interior blends comfort with Faux leather seats wand power-adjustable settings for the driver and front passenger offer a premium feel, while a single-zone automatic air conditioning system with rear vents ensures optimal comfort for all passengers plus experience ultimate driving comfort with our innovative oval steering wheel. Its unique design complements the natural movement of your hands, ensuring an enjoyable driving experience and unparalleled control.

The vehicle is equipped with var-

ious Technology features including 12.3-inch a touchscreen infotainment display, 540-degree camera system, Bluetooth and Apple Car Play for seamless connectivity.

The wireless charger for your phone, without any wires or hassle keeps devices powered, and a six-speaker sound system delivers excellent audio quality for both driver and passengers.

Advance Safety is unique selling point of the UNI S, which comes packed with radar assistance features. This includes adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning (LDW), and forward collision warning (FCW). The UNI S is equipped with multiple airbags, including driver, passenger, side, and curtain airbags, ensuring maximum protection. The 540-degree provides a comprehensive view of the surroundings, with a transparent vehicle image for an unobstructed perspective for easy parking.

The Changan UNI S also offers advanced driver assistance features such as traffic jam assist (TJA), automatic emergency braking (AEB), and a tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS), providing additional peace of mind and confidence in handling various road conditions.



ROUND-UP

MCBS wins Global Connection Award at NASA Space Apps Hackathon 2024

The NASA International Space Apps Challenge is a global hackathon that brings together coders, scientists, designers, and innovators to create solutions using NASA's open data for Earth and space challenges

MUSCAT: MCBS students secured the prestigious Global Connection Award at the NASA Space Apps Hackathon 2024, held on 5 and 6 October in Bidiyah, North Sharqiyah.

The NASA International Space Apps Challenge is a global hackathon that brings together coders,



scientists, designers, and innovators to create solutions using NASA's open data for Earth and space challenges.

Students from MCBS were among the 75 teams who participated in this event. The event

attracted a diverse group of participants including students from higher education institutions, schools, researchers, academics, community groups, and individuals with a passion for solving Earth and space challenges.

The second edition of the hackathon in Oman was hosted by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in collaboration with NASA.

The winning team comprised undergraduate Computer Science

students Ali Al Sulaimani, Mota-sim Al Obaidani, Abrar Albalushi, Nooh Al Qasbi, Tasnim Al Wahabi, and Amina Al Harthi.

The MCBS team won the award for their project, a website that connects people globally through

an interactive map to address climate-related issues. The platform provides real-time updates on environmental challenges and allows users to share their climate stories, promoting global collaboration and awareness.

CENTER FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF HR



Dhofar University concludes training course on Conference and Event Management

MUSCAT: The Center for Training and Development of HR at Dhofar University successfully concluded a four-day training course on "Conference and Event Management," aimed at enhancing participants' skills in all stages of managing conferences, from planning and preparation to execution and final evaluation.

The course was led by Ahmed Said Buraik, Managing Partner at Raya Services and Business, who has over 18 years of experience in organising a wide range of events. The training covered key topics

such as comprehensive planning, managing partners and vendors, participant registration, and marketing using the latest technological tools.

At the end of the course, participants expressed their appreciation for the valuable training they received, highlighting their intent to apply the acquired skills in organizing future events within their respective units, thereby improving performance and raising the standards of event management at the university.

INDIAN SOCIAL CLUB

ISC presents Dancemania 2024

MUSCAT: The Indian Social Club Oman announced Dance-mania 2024, an exhilarating dance competition that promises to showcase the incredible talent of dancers from our community. This exciting event will take place, with preliminary rounds scheduled from November 4 to 7, culminating in a grand finale on November 9 at the CBFS Hall, Bousher.

Dancemania is designed to

bring together dancers of all ages and styles, creating a vibrant platform to celebrate the art of dance. We are pleased to welcome a celebrity judge from India, whose expertise in the world of dance will ensure a high level of competition and recognition for the participants.

Registration for Dancemania has officially begun. Participants can register through the Indian Social Club website or at our office.

GLOBAL BUSINESS REVIEW MAGAZINE AWARDS

Sohar International recognised for excellence, wins 'Best Corporate Banking - Oman' award

MUSCAT: Sohar International, Oman's best bank, continues to set new benchmarks in the banking sector. Honoured with the 'Best Corporate Banking - Oman' title by the Global Business Review Magazine Awards 2024, the bank's exceptional performance, operational excellence, and innovative product portfolio stand out.

Dedicated to driving socio-economic progress, Sohar International empowers its clients to achieve their goals through tailored financial and advisory solutions offered by its Wholesale Banking Group, all while aligning with Oman Vision 2040 to support businesses of all scales.

Dr. Manish Dhameja, Chief Wholesale Banking Officer at Sohar International, stated: "We are truly honoured to receive the 'Best Corporate Banking - Oman' award, a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation in banking. At Sohar International, we understand that market leadership carries great responsibility, which is why we uphold strong business fundamentals and adopt global best practices across our products, processes, and people. This award reflects our ability to consistently deliver innovative financial solutions that meet the evolving needs of our corporate clients. By staying attuned to market dynamics and forging strategic partnerships, we remain committed to driving Oman's economic growth and supporting the goals of Oman Vision 2040."

Sohar International has solidified its reputation as a trusted financial partner, playing a pivotal role in national projects and supporting corporates with innovative financial solutions. The bank's Unified Transaction Banking Platform offers a comprehensive suite of services, including supply chain finance, liquidity management, and digital trade finance, while its API Banking Portal empowers government entities, corporations, and fintech companies with ad-



vanced financial tools. By providing deep business insights, Sohar International enables clients to optimize returns, navigate market volatility, and make informed, long-term decisions. This holistic approach, coupled with secure payment gateways and efficient corporate banking solutions, has not only helped businesses thrive but also contributed to the overall economic growth of Oman.

With tailor-made banking solutions designed to enhance the experience of its elite clients, alongside multiple accolades recognizing its focus on digital innovation, operational excellence, and customer-centricity, Sohar International has solidified its position

as the preferred financial partner in Oman.

Sohar International has been recognized as the 'Best Performing Company' in the Large Cap category at the prestigious Alam Al-Iktisaad Awards 2024. In addition to this distinguished accolade, the bank has consistently earned recognition for its innovative services and market leadership throughout the year. Most notably, Sohar International was awarded the prestigious 'Digital Leadership in Banking' accolade at the DX Oman 2024 summit, underscoring its cutting-edge approach to digital transformation. The bank also secured the 'Best Mobile App Oman 2024' title and

was honored as Oman's Best Bank by the renowned Middle East Euromoney Awards for Excellence. At the Oman Banking & Finance Awards 2024, Sohar International garnered multiple honors, further solidifying its standing as a leading financial institution. Other key recognitions include the 'Highest Year-on-Year Growth in Total Assets among GCC Banks' by the Alam Al-Iktisaad Awards and the 'Most Innovative Digital Bank for Ecosystem Services - Oman 2023' by The Global Economics, UK. These accolades collectively reinforce Sohar International's unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and leadership within the financial sector.



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