

HM PRESIDES OVER PASSING OUT OF OFFICERS AT SANDHURST ACADEMY



Bank profits surge as oil prices rise, Covid cases dip

3 Legends League Cricket has added two players from SA to its pool of players for Season 2. **>A8**



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TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:18pm
Asr.....	3:40pm
Maghrib.....	6:59pm
Isha.....	8:18pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:10am

TRAGEDY

Five killed, 14 injured in road accident

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Five persons died and 14 injured in a bus accident in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

In a statement, the Royal Oman Police said: “Five people have died and 14 others sustained moderate to serious injuries when a bus carrying 19 passengers met with an accident in Al Jabal Al Sharqi in the Wilayat of Al Hamra in Al Dakhiliyah governorate.” The Ministry of Social Development said the bus carrying 19 passengers, including children, was on a recreational trip organised by the ministry for orphans. “With great sadness and sorrow, the Ministry of Social Development received the news of a road accident in the eastern mountains of the Wilayat of Al Hamra. The bus was carrying some employees of the youth hostel and the children of welfare Centre. Five people died and 14 others were injured, with injuries ranging from moderate to serious.”

The Ministry is closely following up with the authorities concerned about the details of the accident, hoping that the Almighty God bless the deceased with His mercy and forgiveness, and grant the injured a speedy recovery, health and wellness.

A specialised technical team from the General Traffic Department went to the accident site to determine the causes, ROP said.

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

Citizens urged to apply for elections registration

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Interior continues receiving applications for registration via the elections’ website (/elections.om/) for citizens who have not registered in the elections register for the election of members of the municipal councils for the third term.

The Ministry of Interior had earlier urged citizens not registered in the elections register to apply for registration through the elections website and to ensure that their ID Cards are provided with electronic attestation system (PKI) -**ONA**

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MOH NO: 290/2022

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- الآلام والتنميل في اليدين والساقين

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Holy Prophet Hijra holiday on 31 July

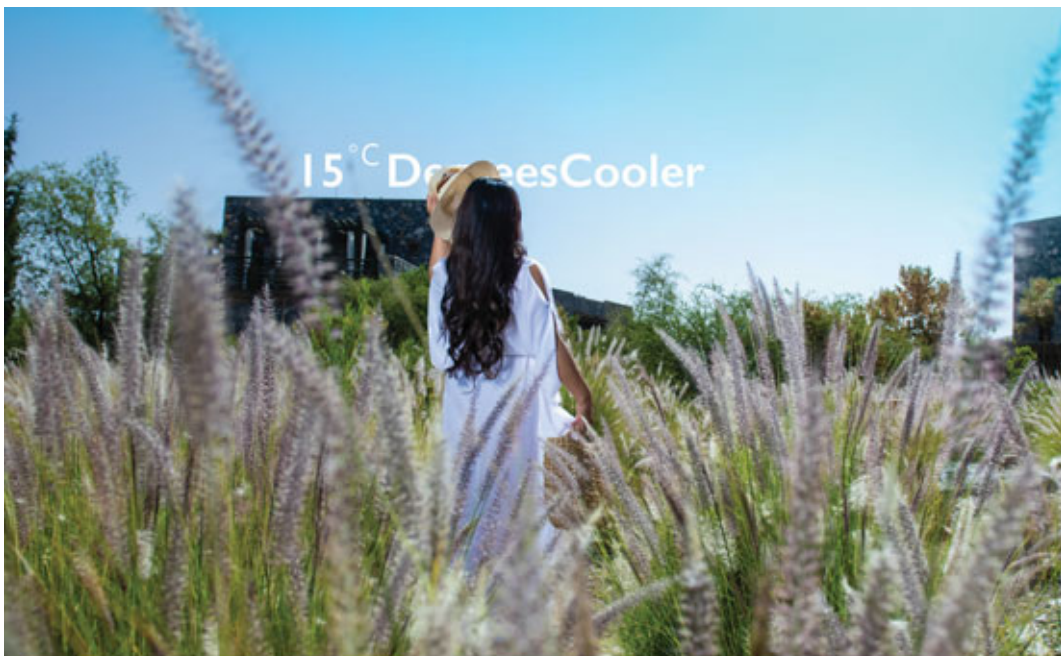
The moonsighting of the month of Muharram will be announced by the departments concerned, the Ministry of Labour has stated



decision issued by the Ministry of Labour reading as follows:

“On the occasion of the Holy Prophet’s Hijra Anniversary and the new Hijri year 1444 AH, and as the first day of Muharram falls on the weekend, Sunday 31 July 2022 has been decided as an official holiday for employees of the State’s Administrative Apparatus and other legal entities, as well as establishments of the private sector. The moonsighting of the month of Muharram will be announced by the departments concerned.

Employers may agree on terms to engage employees on the said holiday—if deemed necessary due to the nature of their work—provided they compensate the workers for the holiday” -**ONA**



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سماة زرقاء صافية، مناظر مشمس، وديان شاسعة و هجوه دنيال الحجر السادر و العديد من الأنشطة الخيرية للاستمتاع بالموسم كما يجب.

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ANTWERP

Belgium’s Minister visits Shabab Oman II



MUSCAT: Royal Navy of Oman ship “Shabab Oman II” opened its doors to visitors and for those seeking information about sailing ships, during its docking at the port of Antwerp in Belgium, the Oman News Agency said.

Annelies Verlinden, Federal Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Belgium, a number of ambassadors of brotherly and friendly countries, diplomats residing in Belgium, and a number of businessmen visited the ship.

The ship’s captain welcomed the visitors in the presence of Najim bin Sulaiman Al Abri, Oman’s ambassador to Belgium and head of its mission to the European Union. A number of diplomatic staff at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Belgium were present on the occasion.

This comes as part of the ship’s participation in the second phase



of the Long Dhow Racing Festival 2022 in Antwerp, Belgium.

The Belgium Minister and the attendees listened to a briefing about the sixth international voyage of the ship “Oman, the Land of Peace”.

The Minister and visitors were introduced to the facilities on the second Oman Youth Ship and its training programmes and tourist attractions in the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA



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3rd August 2022

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HM signs Visitors’ Book

<FROM A1 Later, His Majesty the Sultan met Omani officers studying at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He congratulated them at attaining this stage of training and underscored the significance of pursuing the course of learning and hone their scholarly and military skills. He wished the officers success in their future missions.

On this auspicious occasion, His Majesty the Sultan presented a memento to the Commandant

of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. His Majesty the Sultan accepted a souvenir from Maj.Gen Capps for His Majesty’s presiding over the passing out of the officers’ batch.

The ceremony was attended by Her Highness the Honorable Lady, Spouse of His Majesty the Sultan, Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said and the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Kingdom.

His Majesty the Sultan signed the ‘Visitors’ Book, marking the occasion. — **ONA**





جامعة التقنية والعلوم التطبيقية
University of Technology and Applied Sciences

إبراء
Ibra

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND APPLIED SCIENCES

AUCTION NOTICE

University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Ibra Branch) announces the auction details of which are shown in the table below: -

NO.	Name	Auction No.	companies entitled to participate	Document fees	Venue for purchase and submission of documents	Last date for submission of bids
1	Management and operation of the restaurant of the College of Technology- Ibra (Main restaurant and the restaurant of the English Language Building)	3/2022	Companies and establishments specialised in the field	(Administrative Affairs Department) - University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Ibra Branch)	OMR 25/ (Rial Omani Twenty Five)	Thursday 8 August 2022 at 10am

Companies and establishments may collect the auction's documents from 7:30am , Sunday 24 / 7/ 2022.

The auction's bid shall be accompanied by an interim e. guarantee in the form of a bank guarantee or cheque of not less than (1%) from the bid value and approved by one of the banks operating in the Sultanate. The interim guarantee shall be addressed in the name of the Chairman of the Tender Sub-Committee and valid for 90 days from date of submission of the bid. Any bid not meeting the accompanied by the interim guarantee shall not be entertained.

The bids shall be submitted in the sample prepared for this purpose in red-wax envelopes , signed and addressed in the name of the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Ibra Branch). The bids shall be sealed envelopes of the bids shall bear the name and the number of the auction / tender without the name of the bidder of any indication thereto.

The bids shall be submitted to the Administrative Affairs Department of the university not later than 10am of the date set forth in the above table.

Priority of award will be given to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) registered with the Public Authority for SMEs Development and which bids indicate the highest percentage of Omanisation and purchase of national products.

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WEATHER

Heavy to moderate rains in wilayats of Oman



NIZWA: Heavy to moderate rains fell in a number of wilayats of the Sultanate. The wilayats of Al Dakhiliyah governorate reported rains leading to the overflow of wadis that affected traffic in some areas.

The Wilayat of Nizwa also reported rains leading to the overflow of Wadi al Rahba, Wadi Samit and Wadi Tanuf.

Heavy rains fell in the Wilayat of Bahla leading to the overflow of Wadi Al Khatwa, Wadi Quriyat and Wadi Al A'ala.

In the Wilayat of Izki, rains led to the overflow of Wadi Sima and the Wilayat of Sumail reported rains leading to overflow of wadis of Rawaha, Al Aini and Mahram. Rains also fell in the wilayats of Al Hamra and Manah.

In South Al Batinah Governorate, rains fell in the areas of villages of Satal, Sani'ah, Shou, Al Masanah and Al alia, which led to the overflow of the Wadi bani Kharous. -**ONA**



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Establishment of International Olympic Shooting Clubs to help preserve Omani heritage



MUSCAT: With the Royal Blessing of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, comes the establishment of International Olympic Shooting Clubs as one of the sports, social and educational establishments under the supervision of Oman Shooting Association with the purpose of preservation of the cultural heritage and encouragement of national youth to practice this vital sport.

International shooting sport is one of the Olympic sports exercised in most countries, worldwide, and is governed by the laws and regulations of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) and targets unified management of shooting competitions, worldwide, for development of this sport.

The establishment of these clubs aims to provide the national shooting team with the national youth of both genders to enable them to efficiently participate in the regional and international competitions and to build their characters in accordance with the instructions and teachings of Islam, besides training youngsters in the safe use of shooting weapons and for creation of clear systems for this sport.

It also aims to expand the sports base and disseminate the concept of the international Olympic shooting at the level of the Sultanate. Vice Admiral, Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) said that "the Royal Blessing for establishment of International Olympic Shooting Clubs comes within the keenness

International shooting sport is one of the Olympic sports exercised in most countries, worldwide, and is governed by the laws and regulations of the International Shooting Sport Federation

of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for provision of the appropriate environment for this cultural heritage and is consistent with the regulations and laws followed to this effect.

"The establishment of the clubs represents an opportunity for upgrading the level and skills of shooters and is also an opportunity for selection of the youth capable or representing the Sultanate in the regional competitions".

He added that the "clubs are hoped to be the best place for the youth to exercise this sport". He also reaffirmed the keenness and care of the Sultan's Armed Forces for this sport in the form of local training programmes and external camps and international, which have

resulted in achievement of excellent results that have contributed and added to the Sultanate's status in the international arena.

He also laid stress on the necessity of for observing the instructions regulating the sport and the work of these clubs and employing all their facilities for the interest of the shooters.

Major general Mattar bin Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and first vice-chairman of Oman Shooting Association congratulated SAF personnel and citizens for the Royal Blessing of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, for the establishment of International Olympic Shooting Club in the Sultanate of Oman, which he said would meet the needs of the various sectors in the field of shooting, which in turn, represents an original cultural heritage of the Sultanate.

He said that the establishment of the clubs came on time and keeps abreast of the aspirations of the Sultanate's shooters at the various levels. He said that the establishment of the clubs would motivate shooters to achieve high places in their participation in the international championships.

Major General Abdullah bin Ali Al Harthi, Assistant Inspector general for police and customs for operations and second vice-chairman of the board of Oman Shooting Association said that the establishment of the international Olympic private shooting clubs in the Sultanate would contribute to polishing the skills of the youth involved in the sport. **ONA**



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السلطنة العمانية للاحتفالات الوطنية

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Secretariat General for National Celebration announces to the following Tenders of Decoration for 52 National day :

Tender no	Tender name	Last date of submission	Tender fee (OR)
4/2022	Side Sites Decoration – Muscat	8/8/2022	25
5/2022	Tree Decoration – Muscat (1)	8/8/2022	25
6/2022	Tree Decoration – Muscat (2)	8/8/2022	25
7/2022	Tree Decoration – Muscat (3)	8/8/2022	25
8/2022	Side Sites Decoration – Salalah	8/8/2022	25
9/2022	Tree Decoration – Salalah (1)	8/8/2022	25
10/2022	Tree Decoration – Salalah (2)	8/8/2022	25

Those who are and registered with Tender Board Second grade or above and qualified to carryout the project perfectly, may collect the tender documents from the Office of Secretariat General for National Celebration at Al-Khuwair, during the working hours, on working days from Sunday 24 of July 2022.

Tenderer should submit their documents stating Grade. Registration Certificates and relevant papers, issued by the concerned authorities when collecting Tender Documents.

Tender should be submitted in a red sealed wax envelope, addressed to H.M. Secretariat General for National Celebration. Tenderer should enclose approved Bank Guarantee or certified cheque for value of 1% of tender sum valid for 90 days and to be addressed to Secretariat General for National Celebration Al-Khuwair. For any information contact to (24601271).

Warehouse fire extinguished

MUSCAT: Firefighters from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority managed to control a fire that broke in a warehouse in the wilayat of Barka in the South Al Batinah Governorate.

The CDAA said: "The fire-fighting teams in the South Al Batinah Governorate put out a fire that broke out in a warehouse in Barka. The teams controlled the fire and worked to limit its spread."



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REF:ISM/SA/003/2022-23

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MAJIS INDUSTRIAL SERVICES SAOC (Majis)

P.O. Box No. 553, Falaj Al Qabail, Postal Code 322, Sultanate of Oman Tel No. 26852422 Email: Tender@miscoman.com
(Office Location: Administration Building, Opposite Sohar Aluminium and Sohar Power co. at Sohar Industrial Port Area)



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Majis Industrial Services SAOC (Majis) is a closely held joint stock company fully owned by the Government of Oman. Majis is engaged in providing various water utility services at the Sohar Industrial Port Area and Sohar Free Zone .

Tenders are invited from local qualified firms for the following (Note: small description of TOR is available in our e tendering system).

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Tender Description	Bids fees In R.O.	Last date for paying bid fee	Last date for tender Submission
1.	Majis/17/2022	Supply and Installation of One Common Cooling Water Pump and Motor set at Majis' Common Cooling Water System Facility at Sohar Industrial Port area	157.500 including 5% VAT	28 th July 2022	22 nd August 2022

Bidders who have made electronic transfer of bid fee will be issued soft copy of the tender document through the e tendering system on or before 28th July 2022. The companies participating must be registered with Majis' in e-tendering system (<http://tendering.majis.com/VendorLogin.aspx>) during the tendering stage. The payment of bid fee should be made by direct transfer to the following bank account of Majis. (Account Name: Majis Industrial Services SAOC, Bank : Bank Muscat SAOG, Account Number: 0423010783830018).

Note: the registered companies who can upload the tender fee transfer receipt into our e-tendering system under the above referred tender section. Tender documents will be issued to such firms only through the system.

The Tender should be submitted, addressed to "The Management Committee, Majis Industrial Service SAOC, P.O. Box No. 553, Falaj Al Qabail, Postal Code 322, Sultanate of Oman" in our e tendering system on or before the tender submission date.

Tenderers must not display their identities on envelopes. Majis is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.

Questions regarding this procurement process shall be directed to tender@miscoman.com.



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IN INDIA

Pilot flies parents home as a surprise

NEW DELHI: Isn't it fulfilling to see your parents' hearts swell with pride when they watch you do good in life? Everyone waits for that one opportunity in life to show their parents that they've made it in life. An Indian pilot recently shared a video on his Instagram account that went viral and made many people go 'aww'! Kamal Kumar, a pilot that goes by the username @desipilot11 recently flew his parents to Jaipur and recorded the video on camera. The heartwarming video instantly became viral and netizens couldn't help but applaud him. The video currently has 2.7 million views on Instagram and has been liked by more than 113,000 Instagram users.

In the video, the pilot's parents, who were unaware that it was their son who was going to fly the plane, were baffled and amused to find him in pilot uniform inside the aircraft. Kamal captioned the video, "I had been waiting for this since I started flying and finally I got an opportunity to fly them back home

to Jaipur. It's such a feeling Check it out: This is not the first time that such a special moment was caught on camera. Earlier in May, a woman named Zahra posted a video of her husband, who was the pilot in command of the flight she boarded, making a special announcement for her. The video was an instant hit amongst netizens. — ANI



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Monkeypox now declared a global public health emergency by WHO

Tedros made the declaration despite a lack of consensus among members of the WHO's emergency committee on the monkeypox outbreak. It's the first time a leader of a UN health agency has made such a decision



NEW YORK: The World Health Organization (WHO) on Saturday declared the ongoing worldwide monkeypox outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced. Tedros made the declaration despite a lack of consensus among members of the WHO's emergency

committee on the monkeypox outbreak. It's the first time a leader of a UN health agency has made such a decision. The current outbreak started in May, with 20 cases recorded in Britain on May 20, mostly among gay men. Since then, the outbreak has grown to almost 14,000 cases as of July 20, according to the WHO.

second time the emergency committee convened, after a meeting on June 23 when it decided the outbreak had not met that threshold. "It is a tricky decision for the committee," said Dr. Jimmy Whitworth, a professor of international public health at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. "In some senses, it meets the definition — it is an unprecedented outbreak widespread in many countries and would benefit from increased international coordination. "On the other hand, it seems to be an infection for which we have the necessary tools for control; most cases are mild and the mortality rate is extremely low," Whitworth told DW. The designation of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern is the WHO's highest alert level. It is based on international health regulations

established in 2005, to define countries' rights and obligations in handling cross-border public health occurrences. The WHO defines a PHEIC as "an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response." The WHO further explains how this definition implies a situation that is serious, sudden, unusual or unexpected; carries implications for public health beyond an affected country's border and may require immediate international action. The WHO's emergency committee on monkeypox provided WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus with the recommendation. He then made a final determination based on its advice. — DW

Invitation to Tender

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C (DISC) invites reputable contractor specialized in Wastewater Operation and Maintenance Works for carrying out following works in Dhofar Region.

Reference Number Tender	Title of the Tender
DISC/Tender/2022/116	Operation and Maintenance of Taqah, Mirbat and Hasik Wastewater Treatment Plants along with TSE Lines and Sewer Network at Hasik
Tender Fee	RO. 1,575,000 Inclusive VAT (5%) Note: Tenderer who wish to participate in the above tender should send an e-mail to below mentioned mail id for tender fee process.
Experience	5 Years of experience in Wastewater Operation and Maintenance Works
Pre-qualification	Registered with tender board under excellent Grade and with expertise in Wastewater Operation and Maintenance Works.
Last date for issue of tender documents	03:00 PM on 7 th August 2022
Site Visit	10:00 AM on 9 th August 2022
Last date for seeking pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 16 th August 2022
Last date for response pre bid clarification	03:00 PM on 21 st August 2022
Last date for submission of bids	03:00 PM on 29 th August 2022
Any Queries Please Contact	Phone 23232554, purchase@disc.nama.om

Tenderers are requested to note that the bids accompanied with Tender Bond (1% of the quoted bid price and having 90 days validity) shall only be considered for evaluation.



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ECONOMIC CRISIS

Lankan President orders officials to accelerate fuel distribution process

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Saturday instructed officials to accelerate the fuel distribution process and focus on providing fuel for school and public transport. He ordered officials to provide fuel to vehicles that transport school children from all state-run fuel depots, Xinhua news agency reported. The economic crisis has particularly impacted food security, agriculture, livelihoods, and access to health services. Food production in the last harvest season was 40 - 50 per cent lower than last year, and the current agricultural season is at risk, with seeds, fertilizers, fuel and credit shortages. The instruction was given at a meeting to address the fuel crisis in the country, as schools will be reopened after several weeks of closure due to fuel shortages. Fishermen, farmers and those engaged in tourism also need to be provided adequate quantities of fuel, the newly elected President said. Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as President of Sri Lanka on July 14 in Parliament before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya. Sri Lanka's economy is bracing for a sharp contraction due to the unavailability of basic inputs for production, an 80 per cent depreciation of the currency since March 2022, coupled with a lack of foreign reserves and the country's failure to meet its international debt obligations. China has offered a relatively small amount of humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka, and even Colombo's requests for USD 2.5 billion in credit support have met with a chilly reception. "Sri Lanka still matters a lot to China, but other things also matter. In particular, they seem to not want to set a precedent in Sri Lanka of offering debt relief that other countries can then also request," Alan Keenan, senior consultant on Sri Lanka at the International Crisis Group said as quoted by Nikkie Asia. — ANI



Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe. — ANI

Food production in the last harvest season was 40-50 per cent lower than last year, and the current agricultural season is at risk, with seeds, fertilizers, fuel and credit shortages.

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WORLD



JAPANESE MEDIA REPORTS

Shinzo Abe’s suspected assassin to undergo psychiatric evaluation

TOKYO: The suspected assassin of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will go through psychiatric evaluation until later this year, reports in the Japanese media said on Saturday.

The 41-year-old suspect was apprehended on at the scene with a handmade gun on July 8, when Abe was shot during a campaign speech. A court in western Japan’s Nara, where the assassination took place, agreed to prosecutors’ request that the suspect be held for psychiatric examination, media reports said.

According to Nikkei, the evaluation will determine whether or not the man will be indicted for the shooting.

Meanwhile on Friday, Japan’s Cabinet said that it would hold a state funeral for the slain former prime minister on September 27, sparking protests over what critics see as an attempt to glorify a divisive political figure.

“We made this decision, as has been said before, due to Abe’s record as the longest-serving prime minister, during which he exerted leadership skills distinctive from others and bore heavy responsibility for dealing with a number of serious domestic and international issues,” chief cabinet secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters at a press conference on Friday.

Matsuno said that a state funeral for Abe was appropriate because of the slain prime minister’s “distinguished contributions” as the longest-serving Japanese leader and his “outstanding leadership and decisive actions” in areas including economic recovery, the promotion of diplomacy centered on the Japan-US alliance, and reconstruction following the 2011 tsunami.

Abe’s state funeral will be held at the Nippon Budokan, an arena built for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, and will be a non-religious ceremony, Matsuno said.

The funeral will be fully financed through state funds, the chief cabinet secretary said, likely to be taken from the budget reserve. — **nw**

HEALTH OFFICIALS



CASES BEING INVESTIGATED: Officials said that the source of the cases was being investigated, and that it was likely household transmission. — **nw**

Two children diagnosed with monkeypox in US

WASHINGTON: Two children in the United States have been diagnosed with monkeypox, US health officials said on Friday.

One of the two children is a toddler in California and the other is an infant who is not a US resident, according to public health agency Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. The children were described as being in good health and receiving treatment.

Officials said that the source of the cases was being investigated, and that it was likely household transmission.

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is endemic to parts of Africa. This year, more than 15,000 cases have been reported in other countries.

In Europe, there have been at least six cases among minors.

In Africa, monkeypox infections in children are more common. Higher proportions of severe cases and deaths have been noted among children.

Dr. James Lawler, a doctor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, was cited by the AP news agency as saying that one of the possible reasons for this is the fact that many older people were vaccinated against smallpox, which may give them some protection against monkeypox.

CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky told AP that the US government’s response is growing stronger every day and vaccine supplies will soon surge.

“I think we still have an opportunity to contain this,” Walensky said. The US government has shipped 300,000 monkeypox vaccines to US states and territories as of Friday afternoon.

“That means hundreds of thousands of Americans are going to be getting vaccinated in a matter of days or weeks,” Dr Ashish Jha, the White House Covid-19 response coordinator, said on Friday. “Jurisdictions, states territories, cities are getting their vaccines typically about 30 hours after ordering them,” as per the media portal. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reconvened the Monkeypox Emergency Committee to assess the public health implications of the evolving multi-country outbreak.

This comes as global cases passed 14,000, with six countries reporting their first cases last week. The committee first met last month but decided against declaring it a public health emergency of international concern.

On Thursday, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus acknowledged his “acute” awareness that any decision regarding the possible determination involves “the consideration of many factors, with the ultimate goal of protecting public health”.

The committee has already helped “delineate the dynamics of this outbreak,” he said in his opening remarks to committee members and advisors.

“As the outbreak develops, it’s important to assess the effectiveness of public health interventions in different settings, to better understand what works, and what doesn’t.” — **nw**

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IN THE PARLIAMENT

Thai PM survives 4th no-confidence vote in parliament

BANGKOK: Thailand’s Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha has survived his fourth no-confidence vote in the parliament and his last major test ahead of next year’s general election.

Prayuth and 10 of his cabinet members pulled through the vote on Saturday, following four days of censure debate targeting the ministers for economic mismanagement and their failure to prevent corruption.

The Prime Minister won 256 confidence votes and 206 against, with nine abstaining.

“During the censure debate in the past few days, the issues raised by the opposition contain some incorrect information and the government has used this opportunity to clarify things,” government spokesperson Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said.

“Now that the censure debate is completed we urged the opposition to work with us for the people and the country.”

What led to the vote?

Prayuth was the main target of opposition parties in the four days of grilling that was telecast live on television.

Opposition chief whip Sutin Klungsang said that the Prime Minister’s key failure was economic management.



Prayuth, who is also the Defence Minister, was also accused of spying on dissidents with Pegasus spyware, and of misusing Thailand’s budget.

Prayuth has defended his government’s record, stressing that the nation’s economy is stable despite spiking energy prices and high inflation.

“For the remaining 250 days of the government, I insist that I will do everything to take the country out of the crisis as soon as possible,” he said.

Prayuth has sailed through three previous censure motions since 2020.

The 68-year-old retired general has been in power since a coup he led in 2014.

His term is scheduled to end in March next year. However, there is yet to be an indication from the prime minister of when an election will be called. — **nw**

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SOUTH AFRICA

Kallis and Steyn to take part in Legends League Cricket

NEW DELHI: Legends League Cricket has further added two players from South Africa, the modern-day colossus Jacques Kallis and Dale Steyn to its pool of players for Season 2.

After the success of season 1, Legends League Cricket is back with the second season from September 20 to October 10, 2022, which would feature 4 privately owned franchisees.

Jacques Kallis, perhaps the greatest all-rounder of all time and certainly the best in recent times, in all forms of the game makes for jaw-dropping experience.

The only man to have scored 10,000 runs and taken over 250 wickets in both forms of the game.

Confirming his participation to play in season 2 of Legends League Cricket, Kallis said in a



Jacques Kallis

statement, "It feels great to be part of LLC and to play in the season 2 of the league. I am looking forward to play with other legends in the field."

Legendry fast bowler, Dale

Steyn said. "The list of players playing is amazing. We will have some good fun."

Earlier over the last few days, iconic players like Eoin Morgan, Virender Sehwag, Harbhajan Singh, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan, Mitch Johnson, Muralitharan, Monty Panesar, Brett Lee, Shane Watson confirmed their participation to play in the second season of Legends League of Cricket.

Raman Raheja, Co-Founder and CEO, of Legends League Cricket, said, "Legendary icons like Kallis and Steyn will bring more excitement and firepower to the field, entertaining the viewers with their performances. We welcome them to the Legends family and looking forward to experiencing their cricketing magic on the field and get entertained." -**ONA**

SECOND TIME

Mane named African Footballer of Year

BERLIN: The Confederation of African Football on Thursday awarded Senegalese forward Sadio Mane African Player of the Year for the second time.

The plaudit comes after a year in which Mane kicked the winning penalty for Senegal, and appeared in a Champions League final with his former club, Jürgen Klopp's Liverpool.

Mane tallied just ahead of Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah, his former Liverpool team mate, in the voting, as well as his fellow Senegalese Edouard Mendy.

It's the second time the 30-year-old, who joined Bundesliga champions Bayern last month in an initial €32-million (\$32.5 million)-move, has won the award.

He was the winner of the award in 2019. The Confederation of African Football did not hold the annual celebration of African football in the intervening period because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mane was in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, to receive the award having made a cross-Atlantic dash after he converted a



penalty for his new club in a 6-2 pre-season friendly win over DC United.

In February, Mane scored a crucial fifth penalty to give Senegal a 4-2 shootout victory over Egypt, clinching a first Africa Cup of Nations title for his country.

However, his appearance for Liverpool in the Champions League final ended in disappointment with the English club beaten 1-0 by Real Madrid. -**DW**

CRICKET

India beat West Indies by three runs

PORT OF SPAIN: Brilliant half-centuries from Kyle Mayers and Brandon King went in vain as West Indies succumbed to a three-run defeat to India in the first ODI of three-match series here at Queen's Park Oval on Friday.

With this victory, India has a 1-0 lead in the series. Fans were treated to a thrilling game of cricket. India posted a massive 308/7 in their first innings. Half-centuries from captain Shikhar Dhawan (97), Shubman Gill (64) and Shreyas Iyer (54) were extremely instrumental in taking the Men in Blue to a huge score. Gudakesh Motie was the pick of the bowlers with 2/54 in ten overs.

In chase of 309, half-centuries from Kyle Mayers (75) and Brandon King (54) helped Windies stay alive in the game. In the end, Akeal Hosein (32*) and Romario Shepherd (39*) almost took their side across the finishing line, but Indian bowlers held their nerves to seal a thrilling three-run win. Mohammed Siraj was the best bowler for India, with 2/57 in ten overs. He held his composure in the final over and did not allow the Windies to reach the target. -**ANI**

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TWITTER REPORTS LOSS

Twitter reported a quarterly loss on Friday and declining revenue caught Wall Street off guard with the number of people using the platform on the rise. The company lost \$270mn in the April-June period, or 8 cents per share. Wall Street was expecting a per-share profit of 14 cents, according to a poll by FactSet.

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ECB RAISES INTEREST

The European Central Bank (ECB) raised its key interest rates for the first time in over a decade. The move is aimed to combat inflation as consumer prices in the eurozone rose at an 8.6 per cent annual pace in June.

Oman to woo global businesses to invest in green energy sector

The conference is organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry represented by the Sultanate's embassy in London



CLEAN ENERGY: Oman Renewable Energy Conference to increase the Sultanate's share of non-oil Omani exports in the international market. - **ONA**

LONDON: For promoting the Sultanate of Oman as an international destination with potentials for investment in green energy, the two-day 'Oman Renewable Energy Conference' will commence on Wednesday. The inaugural of the conference will be under the auspices of Abdulsalam Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman

Investment Authority (OIA).

The conference is organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry represented by the Sultanate's embassy in London.

Oman Renewable Energy Con-

ference aimed to promote the Sultanate and to increase its share of non-oil Omani exports in the international market. It also aimed to boost exports and to acquaint with the investment climate in the Sultanate and organisation of programmes, seminars, exhibitions and bilateral meetings.

Asilah bint Salim Al Samsami, Undersecretary of MoCIIP said that the conference aimed to attract and acquaint the international business community with the opportunities available in green energy sector and in the industry, tourism, fisheries, mining, logistics sectors.

The conference also aimed to acquaint the participants with the investment environment in the Sultanate and the facilities and incentives offered by the Government of Oman for investors, she said adding that it also aimed to review the opportunities for investment cooperation in the renewable energy sector between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom.

The conference would also focus on the opportunities, potentials, incentives and benefits that can be offered to British investors and on the Sultanate's view on clean energy as one of the key sectors targeted by Oman Vision 2040 and the Sultanate's national strategy for energy.

She said that the Sultanate has already commenced with execution of a number of projects in green energy for generating 30 per cent of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030.

The conference would see organisation of direct bilateral meetings with the British companies specialised in the sector.

A number of available investment opportunities in the field would be offered to British investors, she added.

She said that the significance of the British market stems from

the fact that it is the largest investment partner for the Sultanate of Oman as the partnerships have expanded during the last few years to cover a number of sectors mainly the oil and gas and technology sector, the infrastructure sector, defence sector and education sector.

The United Kingdom has topped the list in terms of direct foreign investments by end of 2020 with total investments of OMR7.112 billion.

She also pointed to that the Sultanate, represented by Oman Investment Authority, signed last January a partnership agreement with the British side for enhancement of investment cooperation in the field of clean energy and information technology in order to attract more British investments in the targeted sectors.

It is worth mentioning that the Sultanate has offered various facilities to attract investments. These facilities included updating the Foreign capital Investment law and permission of ownership of 100% among other incentives and guarantees for foreign investors besides the launch of a programme for residence of investors for renewable 5 to 10 years under clear controls and procedures offering the investor encouraging benefits and incentives. - **ONA**

STARTUP INDIA INITIATIVE

Number of startups in India grows to 72,993 in 2022 from 471 in 2016

BRUSSELS: The total number of recognised startups in India rose from 471 in 2016 to 72,993 as on June 30, 2022, helped by proactive government interventions, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said on Friday.

Startups and the entire technology ecosystem are the engines of growth for any country. Recognising this aspect, the government launched Startup India initiative on January 16, 2016 with an aim to build a stronger ecosystem for nurturing India's startup culture that would further drive our economic growth, support entrepreneurship, and enable large-scale employment opportunities, the minister said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has recognised startups which are spread across 56 diversified sectors. More than 4,500 startups have been recognised in sectors relating to emerging technologies such as Internet of Things, robotics, artificial intelligence, analytics, etc.

Department of Science and Technology had launched an umbrella programme called National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) in year 2016 for nurturing ideas and innovations (knowledge-based and technology-driven) into successful startups.

Under NIDHI, different programmes range from providing fellowships to the students opting for entrepreneurship through Entrepreneurs-In-Residence programme, Promoting and Accelerating Young and Aspiring Innovators and Startups programme by providing financial support for converting ideas into prototypes, availability of early-stage Seed support to incubated ventures, providing mentoring and investment readiness support through Accelerators, and creating Centres of Excellence in incubation.

To promote innovations in biotechnology sector, the Department of Biotechnology, through Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, supports and nurtures startups in the Biotechnology sector. - **ANI**

MAJOR AGREEMENT

Ukraine, Russia sign UN-backed grain export deal

MOSCOW: Kyiv and Moscow signed a deal on Friday to free up Ukrainian grain exports that have been blocked since February.

The proposal marks the first major agreement between the two warring sides and has boosted hopes that a worsening food security crisis can now be eased.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Ukrainian Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov signed separate but identical "mirror" deals with Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"Today, there is a beacon on the Black Sea," Guterres said. "A beacon of hope, a beacon of possibility, a beacon of relief in a world that needs it more than ever."

What do we know about the deal?

Full details of the plan, which Turkey and United Nations chief Guterres have been working on for months, were not immediately released. It is expected that some 22 million tonnes worth of Ukrainian grain currently stuck in silos, will now be released onto the global market. Turkish President Erdogan said that "in the coming days,



NEGOTIATIONS: The UN played a role in the months long negotiations that led to the signed deal. - **AP**

we will inaugurate a new corridor from the Black Sea to many countries of the world."

Guterres said that commercial food exports will be restarted from the three Black Sea ports of Odesa, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny.

Shoigu said that Russia "will not take advantage of the fact that the ports will be cleared and opened. We have made this commitment."

Reuters cited two UN officials who said that exports should reach

their pre-war levels of 5 million tonnes a month in a few weeks.

Reports suggest that the parties have agreed that ships bound for Ukraine will first be searched to ensure no weapons or other military equipment are on board.

Searches will also take place when ships carrying grain from Ukrainian ports want to move in the other direction through the Bosphorus Strait.

A coordination center would be

established in Istanbul and would include UN, Turkish, Russian and Ukrainian officials.

How have world leaders reacted to the deal?

The agreement will "bring relief for developing countries on the edge of bankruptcy and the most vulnerable people on the edge of famine," UN chief Guterres said.

"It will help stabilise global food prices which were already at record levels even before the war — a true nightmare for developing countries," he added.

The EU welcomed the deal in a statement, calling it a "critical step forward in efforts to overcome the global food insecurity caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine" adding that its success "will depend on the swift and good faith implementation of today's agreement."

"This joint step we are taking with Ukraine and Russia will hopefully revive the path to peace," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who also witnessed the signing, said.

What has Ukraine said about the deal?

Ukrainian presidential advisor,

Mykhailo Podolyak, wrote on Twitter on Friday that Ukraine would not sign a deal directly with Russia, but that the two would sign "mirror agreements" with Turkey and the UN.

Podolyak also said that Russian ships could not escort the grain vessels nor could Russia have any presence in Ukrainian ports.

"All inspectors of transport ships will be carried out by joint groups in Turkish waters in the event of such a need," he added.

Kyiv has also sought guarantees that Russia won't use the safe shipping corridors created by the deal to attack the Black Sea port of Odesa. The United States has cautiously welcomed the deal. US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said Washington would focus on holding Moscow accountable for keeping to the terms of the agreement.

How has food security been impacted by the blockade?

Since the conflict began, up to 25 million tonnes of wheat and other grain have been held up by Russian warships in Ukrainian ports.

Kyiv, meanwhile laid landmines in its waters to avert a feared amphibious assault, which has further hampered exports by sea. - **AP**

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European Central Bank raises interest rates amid inflation

The bank has ended an era of negative interest rates with a higher-than-expected hike. The move could put a brake on rising prices but might also dampen economic growth

BRUSSELS: The European Central Bank (ECB) on Thursday raised its key interest rates for the first time in over a decade. The move is aimed to combat inflation as consumer prices in the eurozone rose at an 8.6 per cent annual pace in June.

The ECB raised its negative benchmark deposit rate by 50 basis points from minus 0.5 per cent to 0 per cent, lifting the bank's deposit facility out of the negative territory for the first time in eight years.

The announcement came as a surprise as the bank had initially hinted that it would hike the rate by 25 basis points only.

ECB cites inflation

The ECB justified the bigger hike with an "updated assessment of inflation risks" and pledged further action possibly as soon as its next meeting in September.

"At our upcoming meetings, further normalization of interest rates will be appropriate," said ECB chief Christine Lagarde.

Moving away from negative interest rates "allows us to make a transition to a meeting-by-meeting approach to our interest rate decisions," Lagarde added.

The ECB targets an inflation rate of 2 per cent as its maximum but had been keeping its interest rates to historic lows for years. The previous stance was calculated to encourage growth in the eurozone economy battered by several national debt crises, the COVID pandemic, and now, Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The US Federal Reserve and the



NEGATIVE BENCHMARK DEPOSIT RATE: The ECB raised its negative benchmark deposit rate by 50 basis points from minus 0.5 per cent to 0 per cent, lifting the bank's deposit facility out of the negative territory for the first time in eight years. -dw

mission of monetary policy across the euro area," the ECB said.

Meanwhile, Berlin said the ECB's move was in line with its plan to return to a constitutionally enshrined debt brake, which means Germany's federal and state governments were not allowed to run a budget deficit of more than 0.35 per cent of GDP.

"We are experiencing a new economic era," German Finance Minister Christian Lindner said.

Eurozone under stress

The eurozone is facing economic pressure, with hopes of a strong post-pandemic recovery dashed by overstressed supply chains and threats to Europe's energy supply.

For this reason, the ECB had hesitated to raise interest rates despite the rampant inflation.

The interest rate rise also comes as the national unity government in Italy, the second-most indebted eurozone state, seems on the point of collapse.

Investors are concerned about whether Italy is in a position to deal with increased borrowing costs amid the political turmoil.

On a more positive note, the euro currency is rising, partly on the back of news that Russian gas is flowing to Europe again through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline after a 10-day maintenance shutdown. -dw

THIRD-LARGEST ACQUISITION

Amazon buys into healthcare market for \$3.9 billion cash

WASHINGTON: Seattle-based Amazon on Thursday announced its purchase of established primary health care provider One Medical.

The deal reportedly cost Amazon \$3.9 billion in cash (\$18 per share / \$76.8 premium).

This would make it the third-largest acquisition in Amazon's history: In 2017 it bought upscale grocery chain Whole Foods for \$13.7 billion (€13.44) and earlier this year it paid \$8.5 billion for MGM Studios in Hollywood.

"We think health care is high on the list of experiences that need reinvention," said Neil Lindsay, senior vice-president of Amazon Health Services.

News of the deal negatively affected established companies in the health care sector — shares of the market leader Teladoc Health fell by 8 per cent and those of drug retailers CVS and Walgreens fell



by 2 per cent each.

Reinventing health care 'experiences'

The deal expands on the company's Amazon Care program, which began offering virtual doctors' visits for Amazon employees in 2019, first in Seattle and then in other

cities. It also comes after Amazon opened an online pharmacy in 2020 that lets customers have prescriptions filled online and delivered to their doorstep within days.

One Medical is a membership-based health care provider, offering virtual and in-person visits for 767,000 members at 188 facilities

in 25 markets. March earnings reports showed the company generating \$254.1 million in 1Q, yet registering net losses of \$90.9 million.

The deal also gives Amazon access to One Medical's rolodex of corporate customers, which includes digital hospitality platform Airbnb and Google parent company, Alphabet.

Neil Lindsay said the purchase stems from Amazon's desire to reinvent "experiences" like going to the pharmacy or booking doctor's appointments. "We love inventing to make what should be easy easier and we want to be one of the companies that helps dramatically improve the health care experience over the next several years," he said.

Stocks in iLife Healthcare, Inc., One Medical's San Francisco-based parent company, were buoyed by the sale, jumping 68 per cent to \$17.13 per share. -dw

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

India's forex reserves dip by \$7.54 billion as RBI sells dollars to defend rupee

MUMBAI: India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves slumped by \$7.54 billion to \$572.712 billion for the week ended July 15, the lowest level in 20 months, as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) likely used its war chest to defend the rupee, which recently dipped below 80 against a dollar.

This is the second consecutive week of the sharp drop in the country's forex reserves. The forex reserves had slumped by \$8.062 billion during the week ended July 8. In the last two weeks under review, the forex reserves have declined by \$15.603 billion.

According to the Reserve Bank of India's weekly statistical supplement, all components of the forex reserves fell during the week under review. India's foreign currency assets, which are the biggest component of the forex reserves, slumped by \$6.527 billion to \$511.562 billion during the week

ended July 15. The foreign currency assets had declined by \$6.656 billion in the previous week.

Expressed in US dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-dollar currencies like the Euro, UK's Pound Sterling and Japanese Yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The value of gold reserves fell by \$830 million to \$38.356 billion during the week ended July 15. The value of gold reserves had declined by \$1.236 billion in the previous week. The value of India's Special Drawing Rights with the International Monetary Fund declined by \$155 million to \$17.857 billion during the week under review.

India's reserve position in the International Monetary Fund dropped by \$29 million to \$4.937 billion during the week ended July 15, as per the RBI Weekly Statistical Supplement. -ANI

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QUARTERLY LOSS

Twitter posts drop in revenue after row with Elon Musk

LONDON: Twitter reported a quarterly loss on Friday and declining revenue caught Wall Street off guard with the number of people using the platform on the rise.

The latest quarterly earnings figures offered a glimpse into how the social media platform has performed during a months-long negotiation with billionaire and Tesla CEO Elon Musk after he said that he would buy the company, and then changed his mind.

It was worse than industry analysts had anticipated. The Associated Press (AP) reported.

The company lost \$270 million in the April-June period, or 8 cents per share. Wall Street was expecting a per-share profit of 14 cents, according to a poll by FactSet.

Inflation has crimped advertising spending and that was a huge drag on Twitter's quarterly revenue, which slid 1 per cent to \$1.18 billion. The company also cited "uncertainty" over the acquisition by Musk.

Twitter is holding no calls with analysts and will not publish a letter to shareholders, as is the norm, because of the pending acquisition. The underlying numbers at Twitter, however, were good.

The number of daily active users rose 16.6 per cent to 237.8 million compared with the same period a year before.



Those numbers are particularly impressive in the wake of a quarterly earnings report late Thursday from the social media company Snap.

Snap also saw advertising tumble in the high-inflationary environment and shares plunged more than 30 per cent Friday before the opening bell.

"When compared to the nightmare quarter of SNAP last night, it shows digital ad spending is not falling off a cliff like feared which is a positive for others in the space

such as Facebook, Pinterest, and Google," wrote Dan Ives, who covers technology for Wedbush.

Shares of Twitter Inc. rose 1 per cent at the opening bell Friday as the clash with Musk overshadowed almost everything. Twitter is attempting to force Musk to make good on his April promise to buy the company for \$44 billion.

Twitter last week sued Musk to complete the deal and both sides are bracing for an October courtroom trial to resolve the dispute.

The April-June fiscal quar-

ter encompassed a tumultuous three months for Twitter, starting with the April 4 disclosure that Musk had acquired a huge stake in the company, paving the way for his takeover bid later that month. It didn't take long for the relationship to fray as Musk publicly tweeted his concerns about Twitter and its employees and signalled he was having second thoughts.

Twitter argued in court that Musk's actions and his "repeated disparagement of Twitter and its personnel" created uncertainty that harmed Twitter's business operations, employees and stock price.

It called for an expedited trial so the company could carry on with important business decisions, while Musk sought to wait until next year because of the complexity of the case and his demands for more of Twitter's internal data about how it counts fake and automated "spam bot" accounts — which he's cited as a chief reason for trying to terminate the deal.

A judge set the trial for October, siding with Twitter's concerns that too much delay could cause the company irreparable harm. It will be held in Delaware's Court of Chancery, which handles many high-profile business disputes unless Musk and Twitter settle the case before then. -BNA



WEARABLE ACTIVITY TRACKERS ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO EXERCISE MORE AND LOSE WEIGHT

Millions of people worldwide believe that fitness trackers, pedometers and smart watches motivate them to exercise more and lose weight, according to a new study by Australian researchers.

”
The overall results from the studies we reviewed shows that wearable activity trackers are effective across all age groups and for long periods of time. They encourage people to exercise on a regular basis, to make it part of their routine and to set goals to lose weight

The findings of the research were published in Lancet Digital Health. Wearable activity trackers encourage us to walk up to 40 minutes more each day (approximately 1800 more steps), resulting in an average 1kg weight loss over five months. Researchers from the University of South Australia reviewed almost 400 studies involving 164,000 people across the world using wearable activity trackers (WATs) to monitor their physical activity. Their findings underline the value of low-cost interventions to tackle a growing epidemic of health conditions partially caused by a lack of exercise, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancers, and mental illness. Lead researcher UniSA PhD candidate Ty Ferguson says despite the popularity of WATs, there is widespread scepti-

cism about their effectiveness, accuracy, and whether they fuel obsessive behaviours and eating disorders, but the evidence is overwhelmingly positive. “The overall results from the studies we reviewed shows that wearable activity trackers are effective across all age groups and for long periods of time,” Ferguson says. “They encourage people to exercise on a regular basis, to make it part of their routine and to set goals to lose weight.” The 1kg weight loss may not seem a lot, but researchers say from a public health perspective it is meaningful. “Bearing in mind these were not weight loss studies, but lifestyle physical activity studies, so we wouldn’t

expect dramatic weight loss,” says UniSA Professor Carol Maher, co-author of the review. “The average person gains about 0.5 kg a year in weight creep so losing 1kg over five months is significant, especially when you consider that two-thirds of Australians are overweight or obese.” Between 2014 and 2020, the number of wearable activity trackers shipped worldwide increased by almost 1500 per cent, translating to a global spend of \$2.8 billion in 2020.

Apart from the extra physical activity and weight loss attributed to WATs, there is some evidence that fitness trackers also help lower blood pressure and cholesterol in people with type 2 diabetes and other health conditions. “The other reported benefit is that WATs improved depression and anxiety through an increase in physical activity,” Ferguson says. -ANI







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OMAN SAILING CHAMPIONSHIP 2022 RESCHEDULED DUE TO HEAVY RAINS

Organised by Oman Sail and held under the authority of the Oman Maritime Sports Committee, there will be 20 races and no more than five each day in the iQFOiL competition and 12 with a maximum of three in all other classes



MUSCAT: Due to a period of prolonged heavy rains across the country, the Oman Sailing Championship 2022, originally scheduled to begin in Sur on 17 July 2022, has been rescheduled and will now take place from 24-27 July. Approximately 75 sailors from Oman Sail's sailing schools at Al Mouj Muscat, Marina Bandar Al Rowdha, Mussanah and Sur will compete for a place in the Oman National Team for international events.

Racing will begin on 24 July 2022 and over four days, sailors in Optimist, Diam24, ILCA 4, ILCA 6, ILCA 7 and iQFOiL classes, along with athletes from the Sail-Free programme competing in the RS Venture class for the first time in championship history, will put their training to the test to claim gold, silver, and bronze medals, while impressing coaches from Oman Sail.

Said Al Araimi, Sur Sailing

School Manager, said, "The recent rains have given us little choice but to delay the start of the championship in the interests of the safety of our sailors and the local community. We still anticipate a high quality event at the Oman Sailing Championship, which gives us an exciting opportunity to gauge the progress of the talented sailors together from our four sailing schools and select the top performers for forthcoming international competition."

Organised by Oman Sail and held under the authority of the Oman Maritime Sports Committee, there will be 20 races and no more than five each day in the iQFOiL competition and 12 with a maximum of three in all other classes. The top three sailors in each class will receive prizes and be considered to be part of the Oman National Team for upcoming national, regional and international competition.



Approximately 75 sailors from Oman Sail's sailing schools at Al Mouj Muscat, Marina Bandar Al Rowdha Mussanah and Sur compete for a place in the Oman National Team for international events



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IN-PICTURES



Chinese, US artistes stage joint performance in New York
Attendants watch the concert at the Lincoln Centre in New York City, the United States. A group of artists from China and the United States staged a joint performance at the Lincoln Centre, garnering rounds of applause from the audience. *Xinhua*



Beauty contest for Arabian purebred horses held in West Bank city of Hebron
A Palestinian breeder leads an Arabian horse during a beauty contest for Arabian pure-bred horses in the West Bank city of Hebron. *Xinhua*



Figs harvested in Kandahar province, Afghanistan
Picture shows figs harvested in Kandahar province, Afghanistan. *Xinhua*



Astronomy-themed town in SW China's Guizhou
Aerial photo shows the astronomy-themed projects in Kedu Township of Pingtang County, southwest China's Guizhou Province. In 2007, Pingtang County launched a relocation programme that involved 6,653 rural residents from Kedu and Tangbian townships. The programme was implemented in order to prepare for the construction of the FAST (Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope), also known as the 'China Sky Eye'. *Xinhua*



The cast of the film Shamshera during its press conference
Bollywood actors Sanjay Dutt and Ranbir Kapoor with actress Vaani Kapoor at a press conference of their upcoming film *Shamshera*, in Lucknow. *ANI Photo*



Indonesia commemorates National Children's Day
Boys have fun with soap bubbles at the Bumi Serpong Damai City Park in South Tangerang, Banten Province, Indonesia. Indonesia commemorates its National Children's Day on July 23 every year. *Xinhua*



Scenery of Longtoushan scenic area in Hanzhong, NW China's Shaanxi Province
Aerial picture shows the scenery of Longtoushan scenic area in Hanzhong, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP



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Kempinski Muscat signs MoU for charitable cause

The hotel officially announced its partnership with the Association for Children with Disability



MUSCAT: Kempinski Hotel Muscat has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Association for Children with Disability in Oman. The agreement was signed by hotel General Manager, Carsten Wiegandt and the Chairperson of the association, Her Highness Sayyida Hujaija Al Said. As part of Kempinski Hotel Muscat's ongoing sustainability and corporate responsibility initiatives, the hotel held a press conference on July 21 at the property to officially announce the collaboration between Kempinski Hotel Muscat's BE Health programme and the Association for Children with Disability. General Manager Carsten Wiegandt, said, "It is our pleasure to be partnering with the local charity to support and give back to the community. Corporate social responsibility is of utmost importance to Kempinski hotels worldwide and is at the core of our business model. Only by collaborating with partners who share our values will we be able to achieve our ambitious goal - to celebrate the hospitality industry in a luxurious yet sustainable manner."

BE Health's mission is to care for people's health from the workplace to the local community by establishing individual hotel health prevention programmes under the name of

worldwide and is at the core of our business model. Only by collaborating with partners who share our values will we be able to achieve our ambitious goal - to celebrate the hospitality industry in a luxurious yet sustainable manner."

BE Health. In this programme, individual hotel objectives are achieved by building capacity through health promotion and prevention and empowering people at the workplace and in local communities through health awareness and promotion so that each will be able to protect themselves. Hujaija Al Said, said, "The goal of this agreement is to achieve the goals that the association seeks, and one of our most important goals is to support children with disabilities and help them in all areas of life to enable them to adapt and integrate into their society professionally, psychologically and socially, to care for the child and provide them with the best-advanced services, in coordination with all parties, for them to have a decent life." The programme will support the local charity through a donation from hotel guests at check-in, upon receiving confirmation from the guest. This amount will be donated to the association towards the end of the year to aid and assist in their charitable efforts.

Sohar International wins 'Best Corporate Banking - Oman' award

MUSCAT: Fuelled by an inherent drive for excellence, Sohar International has been spearheading change and setting new benchmarks in the banking industry. In recognition of the bank's consistent quality performance, finesse in carrying out operations, and innovative product portfolio, Global Business Review Magazine Awards 2022 honoured Sohar International with the title of 'Best Corporate Banking - Oman 2022'. The popular UAE-based magazine focuses on the latest updates and emerging trends in the market and its Banking Awards highlight the significance of exceptional service delivery while identifying outstanding banks on the global market that are considered trendsetters within their industry. Dedicated to driving socio-economic growth, the bank has been helping its clients realise their ambitions and propelling them to greater heights. While its Wholesale Banking Group caters to the needs of businesses of different scales, Sohar International has also expanded its offering by including an entire suite of financial and business advisory solutions aligned to the overall direction of the economy and Oman vision 2040.



"At Sohar International, we understand that having a leading position in the market comes with a lot of responsibility and commitment. That is why we stand by our strong business fundamentals, and consciously adapt global best practices in our products, processes, and people management. It further demonstrates our ability to conceptualise innovative financial solutions, achieve excellence in management, and establish ourselves as a customer-centric bank," said Ahmed Al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer at Sohar International. "To remain at the forefront of devising cutting-edge solutions that add value to the lives of our customers, it is quintessential to understand the shifts in customer preferences, have a thorough knowledge of the prevalent local conditions, and remain agile in adapting to a dynamically evolving operating environment. This is specifically relevant for wholesale banking services, and I am proud to say that we have been successful in helping our corporate customers make prudent financing decisions thereby expanding their business and positively contributing to the overall economy." On the occasion, Manish Dhameja, Chief Wholesale Banking Officer, Sohar International highlighted, "By providing all corporate and institutional clients with comprehensive banking services, Sohar International keeps broadening the scope of its product offering. Through strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, we have demonstrated an unshakable commitment to aligning with the diversification goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040 and have contributed to several sectors. Business consulting, asset management, foreign exchange management, liquidity management, structured finance, bancassurance, and retail solutions for our corporate clients' employees are some of our main areas of focus. Additionally, Sohar International's wholesale banking provides standard finance options for working capital, commerce, and capital addition."

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FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

TechSpace, bp Oman deliver SmoothY programming language courses

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman, TechSpace organised and delivered courses on SmoothY programming language targeted at school students from Grades I-IV. A total of 201 students benefited from the courses representing 13 schools across 10 governorates in Oman. The courses aimed to teach children the basics of programming. The courses also inspired children to utilise the new technologies available to carry out their innovative projects and provided them with an enriching environment to develop their skills and potential. The courses included school visits and taught children and teachers the basics of SmoothY programming language through written codes. It also helped kids get creative on their projects,



which in turn allowed them to understand the different programming languages available. Shamsa Al-Rawahi, bp Oman Social Investment Manager, said, "We

are proud to empower students in the field of innovation and technology through the courses that were delivered. The students showed strong abilities and creativity in the

way they solved challenges using the programming tools. I am proud to say that over a total of 1577 projects were carried out by the students with nearly 4103 challenges solved." Iman Al Rawahi, CEO of TechSpace said: "The SmoothY programming language courses achieved the intended outcomes; becoming a foundation course in learning programming. The school students showed exceptional talent through the projects worked on using the SmoothY programming language. Overall, we are very proud of the standards reached by the little children programmers." It is worth noting that TechSpace is an Omani foundation specialising in developing innovative and programming skills among young children aged six to 16 years old.

GRADUATE PROGRAMME

ahlibank's 'HIMAM' programme opens its doors to new batch of Omani youth to start a career in banking

MUSCAT: ahlibank continues its long-term commitment to empower Omani youth with leadership and professional skills to enhance their career development opportunities in the banking sector. HIMAM graduate programme has welcomed its new batch of graduates to its eighth edition. Following the success of the previous batches of HIMAM; ahlibank's management is pleased to open its doors for a new batch of graduates to join ahlibank and commence their career in banking through the prestigious two-year program that will facilitate on-the-job training and skill refinement initiatives for enhanced career gains in the banking sector. Structured to meet the market's changing needs, the intensive course will equip chosen candidates with hands-on experience in the sector, with practical inputs from professionals in the industry. Hana Al Kharusi, General Manager - Corporate Banking, ahlibank, said: "This is a moment of pride and accomplishment for the bank. Since 2015, when we first launched



the program, we have been investing our resources in aiding and shaping Oman's workforce with requisite skills, and have achieved significant milestones every year, strengthening our foundation with trained employees who are well informed about the local and global banking industry. We have our finger on the pulse of the job market and are aware of the changing needs that require constant vigilance to upgrade and update our course modules." Highlighting the merits of the programme, Mohammed Mohsin Al Mufargi, AGM-Head of Human Resources, ahlibank, said: "At the core of HIMAM is the bank's larger goal of partnering with the gov-

ernment in its youth development initiatives. Our Program is conceptualised to meet the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which calls on youth to share in the march towards economic competitiveness and social well-being. Accordingly, HIMAM has been steering the Bank's youth development agenda with its well-defined employment program supported by training modules. It has significantly contributed to the development of leadership skills among the youth with professional coaches and mentors who have assimilated their expertise and experience to bring up a new generation of professionals. The course module is equally focused on building self-confidence and honing their acquired and inherited skills. "ahlibank is receptive to the needs of the market and has bolstered its sustainable business practices by strengthening and securing its human capital with training that is designed to build its competitiveness on the lines of regional and international job markets. Over the next two years,

our new batch of graduates will get an insight into critical requirements of the industry to prove to be assets who will shape the next chapter of the bank's success story. We trust their abilities and await their successful transition as professionals and leaders of the industry," he added. Besides theoretical training and practical experience, HIMAM program provides graduates with opportunities to work across departments, thereby enhancing their banking skills through assigned managers, trainers, and specialists. As per the programme schedule, the chosen candidates are nominated - in the first year of their on-the-job training - to an in-classroom training for technical, functional and soft skills followed by a rotation across various departments of the bank while they simultaneously participate in group projects. Following that the Bank awards trainees who have successfully cleared the program and assigns them to certain departments, dependent on their leadership capabilities and acquired skills.

EXTRAORDINARY HIGHLIGHT

Omega casts light on Buzz Aldrin for moonlanding anniversary

MUSCAT: On the anniversary of history's first moon landing, Buzz Aldrin has spent time with Omega, reflecting on the hours, and the watch, that made history on July 21st, 1969. The astronaut was the Lunar Module Pilot of Apollo 11 when it touched down on the Sea of Tranquility exactly 53 years ago. His first steps were a remarkable achievement for humanity - and also for the Omega Speedmaster Professional on his wrist - which in that moment, became the first watch worn on the moon. As well as recalling images of that famous day, Omega also captured a new portrait of Buzz Aldrin wearing the Speedmaster 321 - which houses the legendary calibre that powered every Speedmaster ever worn on the moon. From Apollo 11 right through to Apollo 17, the Calibre 321 was depended



on by astronauts for its accuracy and reliability. The Apollo 11 mission remains the most extraordinary highlight of Omega's long heritage in space. It is an honour to commemorate that story today - and celebrate the inspirational accomplishments of Buzz Aldrin himself.



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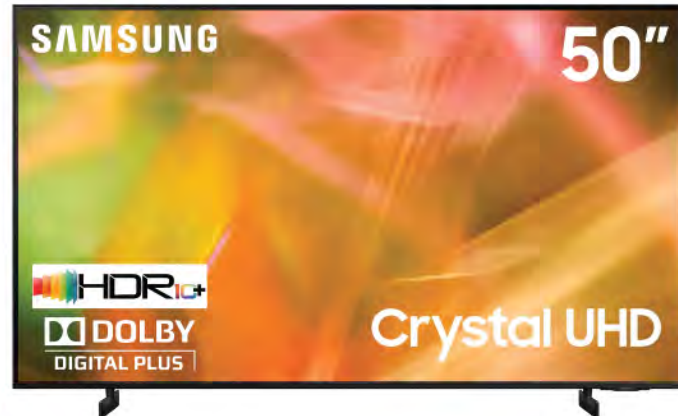
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