



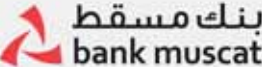
RAO HOSTS OMAN-PAKISTAN MILITARY EXERCISE

The Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and units from the army of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Monday implemented the practical demonstration of the Omani-Pakistani joint drill "Mountain Lynx 1". The event was held under the auspices of Maj. Gen Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of RAO. **>A4**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Women's Excellence Award for Omani

1 Dr. Thuraya Said Al Sariri has received the Arab Women's Excellence Award (4th Edition) in appreciation for her contributions in the field of environment action. Dr. Thuraya got the award due to her efforts to protect the environment. **>A2**

OMAN Agreements signed for road construction

2 The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology yesterday signed two agreements worth OMR 15 million to boost road infrastructure. **>A3**

MARKET Opaz signs pact with Jordan's Aqaba Zone

3 The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority of Jordan. **>B1**

NEW INVESTMENTS TO ENHANCE ECONOMY OF AL DAKHILIYAH



The investment contracts were signed by Sheikh Hilal Said Al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah. The contracts provide for the development of the central public transport station in the Wilayat of Nizwa and the leasing of properties along the main road, internal streets and public places in the governorates Wilayats of Nizwa, Samayil, Al Hamra, Manah, Adam, Bidbid, Izki, Al Jabal Al Akhdar and Bahla in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah. In addition, the contracts deal with the installation and operation of advertising dashboards (printed and electronic) for a period of 5 years. **-ONA**

The deals were signed for the development of public transport stations in Nizwa

OMR2.7 million. The ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology. The signing of the contracts was aimed at boosting economic growth and commercial services in the wilayats of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. It was a step forward in a vision to activate partnership between the government and the private sectors, attract investments, provide employment opportunities for Omani citizens and enhance the local content.

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of October 21, 2024



Deaths
42,603

Injured
99,795

RARE SIGHTING

Omani diver spots rare marine species off the Masirah coast

MUSCAT: When Nasser Salim Mohammed Al Farsi, an amateur diver, took a plunge into the sea to have a glimpse of the coral reefs, four kilometres off the eastern coast of Masirah Island, little did he know that it would be a chance discovery of one of the rare marine species.

And to his utter surprise, he could see one of the rare fish in the Omani waters.

"The spotted fish, which attracted my attention, was hiding among the rocks," Al Farsi added.

Out of curiosity, Nasser caught the fish at the depth of almost 30 metres and brought it to the boat, however, he released it again in water after taking some pictures.

Having no knowledge about this marine creature, Al Farsi released some of its pictures on his WhatsApp group to receive information from other divers.

Meanwhile, one of the divers showed the photos to a fisherman



who recognised it and said: "This is a rare fish found in the territorial waters of the Republic of Mozambique under the name (Spot-tobrotula mossambica) which means the (spotted sea snake of Mozambique). "It has been documented through a sample caught

in the Straits of Mozambique at the depth of 45 metres by a research boat in 1978.

This fish does not belong to the sea snake sub-family of (Hydrophiinae) but to the (Neobythiinae) and the family of (Ophiidiidae) which includes other two species which are (Spot-tobrotula persica) and (Spot-tobrotula mahodadi).

The Marine Science and Fisheries Centre of the Sultanate of Oman announced in October 2022 the documentation for the first time- of the fish (Spot-tobrotula persica) which means the spotted sea snake of Mozambique, off the coast of Kamzar Village of Musandam. The habitat of the spotted sea snake of Mozambique is at the depth of 22 to 82 metres and the length of the male snake (fish) is 30cm.

Al Farsi managed to spot the fish 46 years after its first documentation in Mozambique.



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MUSCAT

FESTIVAL SEASON

Gold prices hit record high ahead of Diwali

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Gold prices jumped 250 baisas per gram in early trade in Muscat on the first trading day of the week to reach a new high.

At 2pm Oman time on Monday, 24K rose to OMR34.65 per gram compared to OMR33.75 per gram on last Monday (14 October).

Among the other variants, 22K, 21K and 18K surged to OMR32.55, OMR29.95 per gram, and OMR 25.550 per gram, respectively.

The recent rise in gold prices is driven by various factors, including escalating tensions in the Middle East and the tightening United States election race on November 5. In addition — Diwali, Dhanteras, and the wedding season have also heightened the demand for gold.

Dhanteras is considered one of the most auspicious days of the year for buying gold as part of Hindu festivities for the Indians.



It is going to be celebrated on Tuesday, October 29 and Diwali on Saturday, October 31.

Jewellery shops in Oman expect that their sales will go up in Diwali despite the high prices of the yellow metal. "We are expecting 10 to 15 per cent more sales than any other normal day," one of them said. **>A3**



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PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	11:56pm
Asr.....	3:14pm
Maghrib.....	5:40pm
Isha.....	6:51pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:52am

Oman joins WAIPA to enhance investment, facilitate growth

As part of this new engagement, Oman aims to leverage international networks to boost foreign direct investment across key economic sectors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman has officially joined the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA), marking a strategic step toward strengthening the country's global economic presence.

As part of this new engagement, Oman aims to leverage international networks to boost foreign direct investment (FDI) across key economic sectors.

WAIPA, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, brings together



Ibtisam Al Farouji, Undersecretary for Investment Promotion at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion.

investment promotion agencies (IPAs) worldwide, facilitating collaboration, knowledge sharing, and policy alignment to foster sustainable investment and economic development.

Through WAIPA, Oman gains access to global resources and a wide network of expertise, allowing it to enhance its investment promotion strategies and attract



high-value projects. Oman's focus remains on creating an investor-friendly environment through Invest Oman, which serves as the government's arm for the realization of foreign investments and facilitating large-scale projects by providing support that accelerate business set up.

The initiative ensures that foreign investors benefit from streamlined processes, modern infrastructure, and a stable regulatory environment that promotes long-term growth.

Her Excellency Ibtisam Al Farouji, Undersecretary for Invest-

ment Promotion at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, commented on Oman's participation in WAIPA. "Joining WAIPA signals Oman's ambition to engage proactively with the global investment community. Through Invest OMAN, we will drive strategic efforts to connect with international investors and create opportunities that align with Oman's economic diversification goals and Vision 2040 aspirations. This membership positions Oman to benefit from collaborative insights and best practices in investment promotion."

This strategic partnership with WAIPA comes at a time when Oman is pursuing new avenues to diversify its economy and position itself as a leading regional hub for trade and investment.

As part of the WAIPA network, Oman will work closely with other member agencies to exchange best practices and explore collaborative opportunities that align with international investment trends. By doing so, Oman aims to attract impactful investments that support sustainable economic development and foster long-term partnerships.

The Investment Promotion sector at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion plays a key role in positioning Oman as an attractive destination for global investments, focusing on aligning efforts with Oman Vision 2040 priorities.

Its remit spans attracting major foreign investments in strategic sectors, enhancing the business environment, and offering targeted services to investors. Through proactive campaigns, exhibitions, and international outreach, the sector promotes Oman's investment opportunities to a global audience.

Central to these efforts is Invest Oman, a one-stop destination platform that brings together representatives from 22 public and private entities to streamline approvals and licensing processes, essential for setting up investments and businesses. The platform also provides tools to leverage Oman's opportunity map, ensuring investors can tap into the country's most promising sectors.

This integrated approach ensures that investment opportunities are swiftly converted into sustainable projects, driving economic growth and long-term development.

GCC STATES

RAA implements programme on future of work in govt sector



MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with "Said Business School (University of Oxford), the Royal Academy of Administration (RAA) on Monday implemented the tasks of a "Programme on future of work in the government sector in GCC states".

The programme seeks to provide public sector leaders with knowledge, skills, concepts and

tools necessary for converting visions and strategies into tangible reality. The programme includes two tracks. The first deals with distance learning (synchronous and asynchronous learning) and the second discusses in-person learning through workshops, intellectual sessions with experts and government leaders and field visits. -ONA

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

Omani wins Arab Women's Excellence Award in the field of environment action

MUSCAT: Dr. Thuraya Said Al Sariri has received the Arab Women's Excellence Award (4th Edition) in appreciation for her outstanding contributions in the field of environment action.

As an ecology activist, Dr. Thuraya Al Sariri merited the award due to her consistent efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainability.

Currently acting as Assistant Director General for Nature Conservation at the Environment Authority (EA), Dr. Thuraya Al-Sariri represents the Sultanate of Oman at many meetings and councils, including the UNESCO's International Coordinating Council for Man and Biosphere Reserves (MAB-ICC).

She also figures among Oman's nature experts who are members of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, besides being Head of the Specialized Group of Plant Experts for the Arabian Peninsula in Western Asia, International Union for Conservation of Nature



ECOLOGY ACTIVIST: Dr. Thuraya Al-Sariri represents the Sultanate of Oman at many meetings and councils, including the UNESCO's International Coordinating Council for Man and Biosphere Reserves. - ONA

(IUCN).

Dr. Thuraya Al-Sariri headed many national teams, most notably the technical team tasked with preparing Oman's environmental

strategy, the technical team for the "National Initiative to Plant 10 Million Trees" and the governance team entrusted with liaising Oman's participation in the 29th

Climate Summit.

Dr. Thuraya Al-Sariri also contributed to projects that gave rise to the proclamation of nature reserves in Oman. -ONA

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Recall

Recall Date: 22/10/2024

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
AMG E 53 4M+	2019-2023	5
AMG GT 43-53 4M+	2019-2023	6
AMG CLS 53 4M & 4M+	2019-2023	5
AMG CLS 53 4M+ Coupé	2019-2023	1
AMG E 53 4M+ Coupé	2019-2023	2

Recall consequence

Mercedes-Benz AG has determined that on certain E-Class (213 platform), E-Class Coupe/Cabriolet (238 platform), CLS (257 platform) and AMG GT 4-door (290 platform) AMG vehicles with all-wheel-drive, the electrical connector of the transmission wiring harness might not have been reworked correctly. In this case, water might penetrate the connector and might create a short circuit over time. As a result, the short circuit might lead to thermal overload of the connector when the vehicle is parked.

Recall Action

As a precautionary measure Zawawi Trading Company team will replace the two-part wiring harness including the connector on the affected vehicles with a new one-part variant on the affected vehicles. The expected workshop visit for the replacement of the wiring harness will up to 3 hours. Zawawi Trading Company team will also contact the customers affected by the recall to arrange a convenient time from 22.10.2024 on all working days between 08:00AM-5:00 PM.

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

MEETING

Oman, Poland review bilateral relations



MUSCAT: A session of political consultations was held here on Monday between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Poland.

The Omani side was headed by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, while the Polish side was headed by Andrzej Szejna, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

Enhancing ties

During the session, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and means of enhancing them. They also touched on several regional and international matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Robert Rostek, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Sultanate of Oman and several officials from both sides.

-ONA

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TRA amends regulation of Postal Services Law

The draft regulation includes a new classification of licences and the re-definition of each category, depending on the geographical scope of the services offered to clients



MUSCAT: The Regulatory Authority (TRA) has issued a decision to amend the executive regulation of the Law Regulating Postal Services.

The step fits with the rapid developments taking place in the postal services sector, which witnessed major updates, including the introduction of e-commerce technologies aimed at upgrading the quality of services provided to

beneficiaries.

The draft regulation includes a new classification of licences and the re-definition of each category, depending on the geographical scope of the services offered to clients. It also reschedules fees for each category of the licence, including renewal fees.

The draft regulation sets the terms, conditions and obligations of parties interested in obtaining necessary licences for providing postal services.

The regulation dedicates a special chapter to the quality of postal services. This includes timeframes for handling beneficiaries' complaints, ensuring that each beneficiary receives an invoice for a specific service in line with a form approved by the TRA.

Draft regulation

In particular, the draft regulation addresses the means of dealing with challenges and resolving disputes that might arise between

the parties of the service.

The overall objective is to establish a flexible regulatory environment that keeps pace with modern developments, protect the interests of beneficiaries, empower small and medium enterprises (SMEs), promote local entrepreneurship and encourage competition.

The regulation serves the beneficiaries of postal services and providers of postal services and related services. -ONA

Foreign minister meets Polish official



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received in his office yesterday Andrzej Szejna, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of tPoland. The meeting comes within the framework of the guest's visit to Oman to conduct talks.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on several regional and international matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs and a number of officials from both sides. -ONA

TRANSPORT MINISTRY

Ministry signs OMR15mn agreements to build roads

NIZWA: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology on Monday signed two agreements in the field of roads to the tune of approximately OMR15 million.

The first agreement provides for the completion of the Saih Qatna Road Project in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar (about OMR4.5 million) and the second deals with upgrading Bidbid-Nizwa carriageway (about OMR10.5 million).

The agreements were signed by Eng. Said bin Hamoud al-Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and the CEOs of the companies undertaking the projects.

The Saih Qatna Road project



includes the finalisation of the 9.2 km current section that starts from the highway in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar and leads to the Riyadh Al Jabal Farm. The road consists of two lanes, each 3.5 metres wide.

The Bidbid-Nizwa carriageway upgrade deals with the restoration of some damaged sections of the dual carriageway, which extends 60 km from the flyover intersection to the Nizwa-Farq Intersection. -ONA

FESTIVAL SEASON

<FROM A1 Jewellers in Oman unveil offers to attract buyers

Najeeb K, Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds said: "Malabar Gold & Diamonds has unveiled a range of exception offers and exclusive jewellery as part of the festive season. Customers purchasing gold and diamond jewellery from any of our showrooms across Oman will be eligible for a free gold coin on their purchase. Additionally, 24k gold bars and 8g gold coins can be purchased without making charges. Special buy counters offering selected jewellery at incredible discounts have also been setup across our showrooms. All offers are valid in the Oman until 2 November."

He also said, "The Festive Edition jewellery collection that we have unveiled is another major highlight of our Diwali offerings; a handpicked collection of Gold, Diamond & Precious Gem jewellery across our numerous exclusive brands, these pieces will be the perfect adornment to elevate



our customer's festive looks."

He continued, "While the recent price hikes have been a cause of concern amongst jewellery buyers, we are confident that they will grow accustomed to the prevailing prices, especially when you consider the jewellery buying trend associated with the festive

season. Our 'Pay 10% Advance' offer, introduced ahead of the festive season, has been a game-changer for customers navigating this period of price volatility. By paying just 10% upfront, customers have the advantage of locking in the current rate till, ensuring they secure the best price no matter how the market fluctuates. This initiative has safeguarded our sales from price hikes, with customers flocking to our showrooms to explore our collections and take advantage of our valuable offer."

Other jewellers at Ruwi High Street also confirmed that they will keep their shops open till late night this weekend. "We will remain open till midnight, as we are expecting a brisk in sales," they said.

Dhanteras, the first day of Diwali, is considered an auspicious time to buy jewellery and clothing.



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RAO conducts Oman-Pakistan military drill ‘Mountain Lynx 1’



The event was held under the auspices of Maj Gen Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of RAO

AL JABAL AL AKHDAR: The Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and units from the army of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan yesterday conducted the live demonstration of the Omani-Pakistani joint drill

named ‘Mountain Lynx 1’. The event was held under the auspices of Maj. Gen Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of RAO. 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 are part of Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF) annual training plans and programmes. The practical demonstration was attended by several senior officers of SAF and the army of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It was also attended by the military attaché of Pakistan’s embassy in Muscat and several RAO personnel. - OMA



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FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE

Oman takes part in meeting to combat money laundering and terror financing

Paris: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing and the National Committee for Combating Terrorism, is currently participating in the General Meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The event, being held in Paris, runs till 25 October 2024.

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation is headed by Tahir Salem Al Amri, Executive President of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), Chairman of the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing. This meeting will discuss and approve the report of the Sultanate of Oman on the systems for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

It is worth noting that the mutual evaluation process is based on Oman's membership in the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) and its membership in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) through the membership of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

According to the work system of both groups, Oman, like the rest of the group's countries, is obligated to subject its anti-money



laundering and terrorist financing systems to a mutual evaluation process by experts accredited in the two groups, in accordance with the international recommendations and the mutual evaluation methodology adopted in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

Based on the timetable approved by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) regarding the mutual evaluation processes of the Sultanate, Oman has previously completed the stage of submitting the technical compliance file related to all legislation, including laws, instructions, procedures, guidelines and circulars, in accordance with the requirements of each of the forty recommendations of the FATF.

The stage of submitting the

compliance effectiveness file related to highlighting the effectiveness of the anti-money laundering systems based on each of the eleven direct results specified in the effectiveness evaluation in the group's methodology was also completed later.

The Sultanate of Oman has also completed the field visit program of the Financial Action Task Force's team of assessment experts, which was held during the period from January 29th to February 14th, 2024.

The field visit of the team of assessment experts included a large number of sessions and meetings with the relevant government agencies and some financial and non-financial institutions, associations and charitable institutions

obligated to report suspicions of money laundering and terrorist financing crimes under the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Law.

Since its last assessment in 2011, the Sultanate of Oman has made great efforts to develop its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing system to be in line with international requirements.

Law No. 30/2016 on Combating Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing was issued, in addition to developing and implementing regulations related to enforcing the supervisory powers of financial and non-financial regulatory bodies.

The National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing has also been developing the national assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing risks, developing strategies for combating money laundering, terrorist financing, and financing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction for the period (2020-2022) and (2023-2025), developing action plans to implement them, and holding awareness-raising events for the public and private sectors. -ONA

MEETING

Sayyid Badr bids farewell to Sri Lanka envoy



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister on Monday received in his office Ahamed Lebbe Sabarullah Khan, Ambassador of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to bid him

farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

Sayyid Badr expressed his appreciation for the efforts exerted by the envoy in boosting relations, wishing him success. -ONA

AL SHARQIYA AVIATION



Airbus Helicopters safety roadshow organised in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Sharqiya Aviation (ASA), the private air transport arm of the Mohammed Al Barwani Group of companies, hosted on 17 of October the first Airbus Helicopters safety roadshow in Oman.

This event, which aimed to enhance aviation safety practices, took place with representatives from Oman's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Oman Transport Safety Bureau (OTSB).

Airbus Helicopters' Aviation Safety Regional, Security & SHE Manager for the MENA region took the opportunity to feature key safety protocols and best practices relevant to helicopter operations to all helicopter operators in Oman.

Engineer Ahlam Al Jahdhami, CEO of ASA, said: "This safety roadshow has been conducted in Saudi Arabia with resounding success, and this will mark its first presentation in Oman. We are thrilled to host it as part of our commitment to fostering collaboration among helicopter operators, and collaboration with

the government. I would like to thank our guests for attending this roadshow."

Captain Tamer Gendy, COO of ASA, added: "We believe that this event contributes to aviation safety and operational excellence. It is critical that we adhere to the highest standards of safety in the industry and build upon them, ensuring the safety of crew and passengers alike."

This initiative aligns with ASA's ongoing efforts to promote a culture of safety within the aviation sector in Oman and further strengthens its role as a leader in helicopter operations in the Middle East.

The CAA said: "Since our establishment, the CAA has through its regulatory efforts worked to maximize safety in the air. We are happy with this initiative from ASA and look forward to seeing its impact within the industry."

While this initiative is the first in Oman, ASA aims to continue driving such efforts to promote a culture of safety through collaborating with all stakeholders.



The conference provides a platform that brings together pioneers, innovators and specialists in the tourism sector with the aim of exchanging expertise



ABU DHABI: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, is currently taking part in the 63rd International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), being held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Oman's delegation is headed by Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism.

The conference provides a platform that brings together pioneers, innovators and specialists in the tourism sector with the aim of exchanging expertise and suc-



cessful experiences on ways to employ modern technologies and adopt best practices of sustain-

ability and inclusion, in addition to expanding networks of cooperation and professional relation-

ships at the local, regional and international levels.

Oman's participation in this event aims at highlighting its potentials and infrastructure in conference tourism and business tourism in general. It also aims at enhancing the role of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in supporting the economy and devising strategies aimed at developing the national economy and attracting visitors to enhance the local tourism sector and attract investors to establish prominent economic investment projects that promote the tourism sector in various fields. -ONA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Oman Academic Accreditation Authority holds fourth meeting

MUSCAT: The Board of Directors of "Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Educational Quality Assurance" on Monday held its fourth meeting of the year (2024) during which it discussed the Authority's pro-

ject to align the "Programme Accreditation Guide" with the "Institutional Accreditation Guide".

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education,

Research and Innovation, Chairperson of the Authority's Board of Directors.

Performance Evaluation
The meeting also discussed amendments to the School Per-

formance Evaluation System, professional qualifications set in the National Qualifications Framework and the Authority's proposal on external international quality assurance.

-ONA

NORTH AL BATINAH

Symposium on Omani history starts

Sohar: A symposium titled "North Al Batinah in the Omani History" began on Monday in Sohar.

The 3-day event is being organised by the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA) in cooperation with the North Al Batinah Governor's Office.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr.

Mohamed Said Al Maamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs.

Further, the symposium includes 29 working papers covering the following themes: history-politics, socioeconomics and culture. On the sidelines of the symposium, an exhibition is held. It showcases 1,500 historical manuscripts. -ONA

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CANBERRA

King Charles, Queen Camilla visit Australia

CANBERRA: Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla visited Australia's capital Canberra on Monday for their first visit to the city in nearly a decade.

Charles' six-day jaunt to Australia, which started on Friday, is the monarch's first since he became the head of state of the commonwealth country in September 2022.

It is also the British King's first major foreign tour since he was diagnosed with cancer in February this year.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and other senior officials hosted a reception for the King and Queen in Parliament House later in the day.

Just moments after Charles wrapped up his speech in parlia-

ment about his time as a teenager in Australia and the threats of climate change, an Indigenous senator shouted anti-colonial slogans at him.

"Give us our land back! Give us what you stole from us!" Lidia Thorpe, an independent lawmaker who sits in the upper house, yelled.

"This is not your land, you are

not my king," Thorpe said as she rallied against what she described as a "genocide" of Indigenous Australians by European settlers.

"You committed genocide against our people," she said.

Charles, who remained otherwise unfazed, was seen speaking quietly to Albanese while the senator was stopped by security from approaching the King. - **dw**



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India, China agree on patrolling arrangements at disputed border

Border tensions arose in eastern Ladakh along Line of Actual Control in 2020 due to actions of Chinese military

NEW DELHI: Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said that India and China have reached an agreement on patrolling arrangements which would enable return of the situation before May 2020. Border tensions arose in eastern Ladakh along Line of Actual Control in 2020 due to actions of Chinese military.

During an interaction at the NDTV World Summit, Jaishankar said it was a "positive and good" development.

Jaishankar referred to the remarks of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on the agreement on patrolling points along Line of Actual Control.

"What Foreign Secretary has said is what I can also say, that we reached an agreement on patrolling and with that we have gone back to where the situation was in 2020. We can say that the disengagement process with China has been completed...There are areas which for various reasons after 2020 because they had blocked us so we had blocked them. So what has happened is we have reached an understanding which will allow the patrolling," he said.

"I think the understanding to my knowledge is that we will be able to do the patrolling which we were doing in 2020. I think it's a good development. It's a positive development and I would say it's a product of very patient and very per-



severing diplomacy. We've been negotiating since September 2020, when I met my counterpart Wang Yi, in Moscow at that time...I think it creates a basis that peace and tranquility, which there should be in the border areas, which there was before 2020, we will be able to come back to that," he added.

The actions of Chinese military

rangements along Line of Actual Control (LAC). The agreement was reached ahead of the BRICS Summit which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Misri said as a result of the discussions with the Chinese interlocutors an agreement has been arrived at on patrolling arrangements along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas.

He said this is leading to disengagement and eventually a resolution of the issues that arose after action by Chinese military in eastern Ladakh in 2020.

"We have been in discussion with Chinese interlocutors through WMCC as was mentioned earlier and at the military level as well through meetings of the military commanders at various levels. These discussions have in the past resulted in the resolution of stand-

offs at various locations. You are also aware that there were a few locations where the standoff had not been resolved," he said.

"Now as a result of the discussions that have taken place over the last several weeks an agreement has been arrived at on patrolling arrangements along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas and this is leading to disengagement and eventually a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020." Though no information is yet available on PM Modi's bilateral meetings on the sidelines of BRICS Summit, the agreement on patrolling arrangements could pave the way for a meeting between PM Modi and the Chinese President.

MEA had said after the last Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC)

held in August that the two sides had "a frank, constructive and forward-looking exchange of views on the situation along the LAC to narrow down the differences".

"In line with the guidance provided by two Foreign Ministers' meetings in Astana and Vientiane in July 2024 to accelerate their discussion, and building on the WMCC meeting held last month, the two sides had a frank, constructive and forward-looking exchange of views on the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to narrow down the differences and find early resolution of the outstanding issues. For this, they further agreed for intensified contact through diplomatic and military channels," MEA said in a release.

It said the two sides have decided to jointly uphold peace and tranquillity on the ground in border areas in accordance with relevant bilateral agreements, protocols and understandings reached between the two Governments.

The release reiterated that restoration of peace and tranquillity, and respect for LAC are the essential basis for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations.

WMCC meeting

The WMCC meeting was held in Beijing. PM Modi will visit Russia on October 22, 23 to attend the 16th BRICS Summit, being held in Kazan, under the Chairmanship of Russia.

The Summit, themed 'Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security,' will provide an important platform for leaders to discuss key global issues.

MEA said in a release that the Summit will offer a valuable opportunity to assess the progress of initiatives launched by BRICS and to identify potential areas for future collaboration.

It said PM Modi is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts from BRICS member countries and invited leaders. - **ANI**

NEW FREIGHTER AIRCRAFT

Emirates buys five more Boeing 777F

DUBAI: Emirates has placed a firm order for five more Boeing 777 freighters to be delivered from 2025/2026.

Together with its previous orders, Emirates now has 14 Boeing 777Fs pending delivery from Boeing from now until end 2026.

Dubai Aerospace Enterprise

In addition, Emirates has signed a multi-year lease extension with Dubai Aerospace Enterprise for four Boeing 777Fs in its existing fleet. Based on these investments, by December 2026, Emirates SkyCargo expects to operate a fleet of 21 production-built Boeing 777 freighters, significantly expanding its current fleet of 11 units.

Emirates also remains invested in converting 10 passenger Boeing 777-300ERs into freighters for further capacity and fleet growth.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group, said, "We're investing in new freighter aircraft to meet surging demand and provide our customers around the world with even more flexibility, connectivity, and options to leverage market opportunity. Demand for Emirates' air cargo services has been booming. This reflects Dubai's growing prominence as



a preferred and trusted global logistics hub, and also the success of Emirates SkyCargo's bespoke solutions that address the needs of shippers in different industry sectors."

Stephanie Pope, President and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, said, "Emirates continues to set the direction for our industry, and we deeply appreciate the trust they have placed in the Boeing widebody family to serve as the backbone of their global fleet."

Even as it inducts new freighter aircraft into its operations, Emirates' cargo division will continue to harness the airline's all wide-body passenger fleet to facilitate the fast, reliable and efficient movement of goods worldwide, offering customers more flexibility with a fleet mix comprised of 777s, 777-Fs, 747Fs, A350s, and A380s. - **ANI/WAM**

POWER OUTAGE

Hurricane Oscar makes landfall in Cuba

HAVANA: Hurricane Oscar made landfall in Cuba on Sunday evening as the country continues to grapple with a power outage.

Cuba has been struggling to ensure electricity supply since Thursday.

Forecasters said five to 10 inches (13-25 centimetres) of rain are expected across eastern Cuba through Tuesday, with some areas going up to 15 inches.

Hurricane Oscar hit Great Inagua island in the southeastern Bahamas earlier on Sunday, according to the US National Hurricane Center (NHC).

The NHC said the storm's center arrived in the Cuban province of Guantanamo, near the city of Baracoa, on Sunday evening. Its maximum sustained winds were close to 80 mph (130 kph).

The hurricane made landfall in Cuba at 18:10 p.m. local time (2210 GMT).

Cuban authorities said that "moderate to strong" flooding was expected "in low areas along the coast" in the eastern provinces of Guantanamo, Holguin and Las Tunas.

Cuba continues to grapple with blackout

Cuban Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy told a press conference he hopes that the country's electricity grid will be restored by Monday or Tuesday morning.

However, he said that the arrival of Oscar will bring "an additional inconvenience" to repair efforts



as the hurricane will hit a "region of strong [electricity] generation."

Cuba began seeing blackouts on Thursday, leading the government to suspend non-vital services. The country then experienced a total grid failure on Friday that left around 10 million people without power.

State media reported that the electricity supply failed again across the country on Saturday morning.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel said the US' 60-year-old trade embargo on the island had exacerbated the blackouts, causing difficulties in acquiring fuel for power stations.

While some neighbourhoods of Havana had electricity restored by Sunday, most of the capital city remained dark. - **dw**



ISRAEL AND HEZBOLLAH

US envoy visits Lebanon with cease-fire talks on agenda

BEIRUT: On Monday, US envoy Amos Hochstein visited Lebanon in a bid to broker a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah.

Lebanon's caretaker prime minister, Najib Mikati, said Monday there was no alternative to UN Resolution 1701 but added that "new understandings" could be reached to implement it.

The resolution, which ended the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, called for the Lebanese group to withdraw towards the north of the Litani River away from the Israel border, and mandated a UN peacekeeping mission to help the Lebanese army control the area free from the presence of Hezbollah or Israel.

However, Israel maintains that the resolution was never implemented and that Hezbollah has built up extensive military infrastructure

In September, Israel launched an offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon, killing most of its leadership and bombing sites it says are used by the Iran-backed group. Hundreds of people have been killed, thousands injured, and hundreds of thousands displaced in Lebanon

According to Hochstein, Resolution 1701 should be the basis for resolving the current conflict. However, he added that "commitment" to the resolution is not enough, and both sides need to implement the measures.

"We are working with the State of Lebanon and Israel to end this conflict once and for all," Hochstein said. — **DW**

Israel rejects urgent request to evacuate trapped people in Gaza

Over the past two weeks, we have repeatedly warned that the tightening of the siege on Jabalia and the northern governorate in general is making the situation even more catastrophic, the UN official said

GAZA: The media officer at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Enas Hamdan said that Israel rejected an urgent request submitted by the agency to evacuate those trapped under the rubble as a result of the genocide being committed in the northern Gaza Strip.

This came in statements made by Hamdan earlier on Monday while famine is worsening in the northern Gaza Strip due to the Israeli genocide and the policy of ethnic cleansing that the Palestinian civilians there are being subjected to.

The UN official said: "Over the past two weeks, we have repeat-



edly warned that the tightening of the siege on Jabalia and the northern governorate in general is making the situation even more catastrophic, and the ongoing Israeli military operations are putting tens of thousands of civilians in imminent danger."

"Moreover, the military offensive in northern Gaza is cutting people off from the necessities they need to survive, including water," she added.

Hamdan warned that "Jabalia camp has been under siege for more than two weeks, and we are receiving information about families trapped in their homes, with water and food running out, and images coming from the camp show residents running for their lives, with no safe place to go."

PLO official reiterates rejection of Israeli attempts to displace Gazans

Secretary of the Executive Com-

mittee of the Palestine Liberation Organization Hussein Al-Sheikh reiterated his rejection of any Israeli attempt to displace the Palestinian people from the northern Gaza Strip.

Al-Sheikh stressed during receiving the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf today in Ramallah, and in the presence of the official spokesman for the presidency, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the importance of reopening the crossings to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and the start of an urgent humanitarian relief operation for our people in the Strip.

The PLO official condemned the series of crimes and massacres committed by the Israeli occupation forces in the northern Gaza Strip, and discussed with the US official the prospects of reaching a ceasefire agreement and the commitment to work within the framework of the political

solution.

For her part, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs reaffirmed the US administration's commitment to the Tokyo Principles and support for the political track that supports stability and security in the region and leads to a two-state solution.

At least 10 civilians killed and 30 others injured

At least 10 civilians were killed and 30 others were injured today as a result of the Israeli occupation artillery shelling of Jabalia Preparatory School, which houses displaced people in Jabalia camp, north of the Gaza Strip.

Local sources said that medical teams recovered the bodies of at least 10 slain Palestinians and a number of wounded in Israeli artillery shelling of Jabalia Preparatory School in the Al-Fawqa area schools square, which is a UN-

RWA shelter for displaced people in Jabalia camp, north of the Gaza Strip.

Medical sources indicated that 57 citizens were killed in the occupation raids on the Gaza Strip since dawn on Monday, 44 of them in the north of the Strip.

The occupation is adopting a policy of starvation and exhaustion in Jabalia, and that some families that the crews reached had not eaten for 5 days.

In turn, UNRWA reported that every minute counts and the delay in allowing entry into northern Gaza means that rescue teams are unable to reach the wounded.

UN renews call for ending war in Gaza

The United Nations has renewed its call for an end to the war in Gaza, emphasising the urgent need for the release of hostages, the cessation of the displacement of Palestinians, and the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid.

In a statement released by the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, the UN expressed deep concern, stating, "The nightmare in Gaza is intensifying. Horrifying scenes are unfolding in the northern Strip amidst conflict, relentless Israeli strikes and an ever-worsening humanitarian crisis. "In Beit Lahia last night, dozens were reportedly killed in Israeli airstrikes. This follows weeks of intensified operations resulting in scores of civilian fatalities and near total lack of humanitarian aid reaching populations in the north." — **WAPA**

WWF REPORT

What's at stake at crucial UN biodiversity talks?

CALI (COLOMBIA): Biodiversity — or the variety of all living things on Earth — is collapsing. That's because humans continue to push ecosystems to the brink through burning fossil fuels, intensive farming, urbanisation and pollution.

In the past 50 years, populations of vertebrates have plummeted 73%, according to a recent report by conservation group WWF, while scientists estimate about a million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, some in the coming decades.

But the diversity of interconnected living organisms is the foundation of healthy ecosystems, and the loss of even one species can upset the intricate balance.

To address these challenges, two years ago nearly 200 nations signed what was called at the time a "landmark" UN biodiversity deal to safeguard nature.

Now, over the next two weeks, thousands of policymakers, business leaders and civil society groups will gather in the Colombian city of Cali to track the deal's progress and tackle sticky issues like financing.

It's a crucial task because a decline in biodiversity also threatens the social and economic well-being of billions of people, say experts.

"If we don't protect our nature, we are actually undermining our economies, we are undermining our agriculture, and we will not be able in future to feed a population of 10 billion people on this planet," Astrid Schomaker, executive secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, told DW.

Slow progress on national biodiversity plans

Leaders at the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference laid out ambitious goals to protect 30% of land and sea areas by the end of the decade — up from 17% of land and nearly 8% of oceans. The deal, which is to biodiversity what the Paris Agreement is to climate, also aims to restore 30% of degraded areas.

"It was already very difficult to agree on this, but the challenge lies ahead — because now, states have to implement what they agreed on," said Florian Titzte, an international policy analyst at WWF in Germany.

To help track progress and ensure countries are implementing agreed targets, governments were required to submit updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) ahead of



the Cali biodiversity summit. To date, only 34 out of 196 countries have done so. Germany is among those to have missed the deadline.

"Countries like Germany aren't feeling the pressure to submit their plans ..., because other countries haven't done so either," Titzte told DW. "We only have another five years left until 2030. If the implementation of promises doesn't start now, we will likely miss the targets for 2030."

A new study found that 8.2% of oceans are now protected — a 0.5% increase since the 2022 biodiversity agreement. It also suggests that just 2.8% of that is effectively protected, calling the "gap between pledge and action vast."

What's holding back progress on implementing biodiversity plans?

This year's conference is expected to address the obstacles to updating and implementing action plans.

"What is often holding us back is a discussion with other sec-

tors that feel that environmental policy is encroaching on them negatively on them or is problematic for competitiveness," said UN biodiversity chief Schomaker.

For instance, when the German government announced in 2023 it was going to abolish "environmentally harmful" tax breaks for diesel fuel, farmers took to the streets in their thousands to protest what they saw as a threat to their livelihoods.

The government postponed a full phaseout until 2026, although the UN's biodiversity deal aims to progressively reduce subsidies harmful to nature by \$500 billion (€461 billion) a year by 2030.

"We are accelerating positive biodiversity spending, but it is still vastly outnumbered or outspent by subsidies that are negative for biodiversity and that's a key issue for us to attack," said Schomaker.

Who will pay for nature protection?

Who foots the bills for biodiversity spending will be up for discus-

sion at Cali. At the last summit, developed countries pledged to raise \$25 billion annually by 2025 and \$30 billion by 2030 in financial aid for low-income countries to protect their nature.

But a recent report found only two countries — Norway and Sweden — had paid their fair share toward the target. Some 23 out of 28 countries analysed "are paying less than half of what they pledged."

In a press conference ahead of the summit, Colombian Environment Minister Susana Muhamad called for developed countries to increase what they'd pledged "as we need to give a signal that the commitments that were agreed on ... are going on track."

Countries also agreed to earmark \$200 billion a year for safeguarding biodiversity by 2030 through public and private sources, with negotiators expected to talk about how the huge sum will be raised in time.

WWF's Titzte hopes policymakers will agree on some aspects



of their financing strategy. In a best-case scenario, this would include ways to distribute money to low-income countries, how to deal with subsidies harmful to biodiversity and the role of private sector financing.

"The question is how effective it will be? Can countries commit to concrete measures?" said Titzte.

Finding financial solutions

Funding solutions that balance nature conservation with economic needs are on the agenda, said Schomaker.

Biodiversity credits are one tool being mooted. These schemes in theory would allow companies to offset environmental damage by buying credits from organizations or projects that safeguard or restore nature. Advocates say monetizing nature in this way would incentivize protection, while critics have said credits are a tool that invites greenwashing.

Also on the table are debt-for-nature-swaps, which entail relieving a country's debt in exchange for investment in conservation.

Another major discussion will center around the use of genetic data from nature and income that derives from that use — like in the pharmaceutical sector, where DNA sequencing of plants to produce medication can lead to multibillion-dollar profits.

Delegates will discuss fairly compensating countries with a lot of biodiversity — which are also frequently low-income — for the use of their genetic resources, as well as Indigenous communities who often preserve these species. That money could be channeled into protecting habitats.

While financial incentives can help, experts warn they must be paired with concrete action and political will to make lasting change.

"If we lose ecosystems and a tolerable climate, then human life as we know it will no longer be possible on this planet," said Titzte. "We are talking about preserving our own civilization. There is little that could be more important." — **DW**

UNITED STATES

Diwali celebrated by members of Indian diaspora

NEW YORK: With Diwali around the corner, the Indian diaspora is gearing up for celebrations and at New York's Time Square the Indian American community gathered in large numbers for festivities.

In a post on the social media platform X, the Consulate General of India in New York shared, "Consul General joined friends from Indian-American Community & American friends to celebrate Diwali."

New York's Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, New York City mayor Eric Adams and Indian-American assemblywoman Jennifer Rajkumar joined in the festivities. The event was organised by leading Indian-American community leader, Neeta Bhasin.

Similarly, another event was organised by the Indian Consulate in Pennsylvania.

Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph joined the Diwali celebrations by Khalsa Asian American Association along with members of the Indian diaspora and Asian American community.

The celebrations were attended by Mayor Edward Brown and Pennsylvania State Senator Tim Kearny. The Indian Consulate thanked the American leaders for their continued support to the Indian American community & fostering India-America ties. About 4.4 million Indian origin people reside in the US. Persons of Indian origin constitute the third largest Asian ethnic group in the US.

Indian Americans are one of the most successful communities and excel in diverse fields, including politics. The Indian diaspora has been a catalyst in cementing closer ties between India and the U.S.

New York, San Francisco and Chicago metropolitan areas are places in the USA which have the highest population of the Indian community in the country.

India has continued to maintain and grow relations with the Indian community through various endeavours such as the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas. PM Modi in his speech has time and again highlighted their importance and called them 'living bridge' connecting the two places.

In 2023, to honour the community's rich cultural traditions, New York became the first place to declare a holiday in all public schools of New York City, in accordance with the Hindu calendar, for the celebration of Diwali. — **ANI**



SPORTS

All-round Pakistan A too strong for Oman



Shaheens recorded a comprehensive 74-run win for their first win of the ongoing ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup



MUSCAT: Pakistan A bounced back from their opening defeat to India with a dominant 74-run victory over hosts Oman in their Group B match of the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy on Monday.

This commanding win, Pakistan Shaheens' largest margin of victory in the T20s, secured their first points while Oman, under coach Duleep Mendis, suffered their second consecutive loss, effectively ending their hopes of advancing to the semi-finals.

Chasing a challenging target of 186 after Pakistan A posted the highest score of the event so far with 185/5, Oman's batters struggled from the outset.

They lost wickets regularly, with only captain Jatinder Singh and the promising Wasim Ali offering resistance, scoring 24 and 28 runs, respectively. Pakistan A's Zaman Khan led the bowling attack with impressive figures of 2/17, while

the remaining bowlers in action each claimed a wicket.

Oman managed just 34 runs for the loss of one wicket during the powerplay, and with Pakistan's bowlers maintaining a tight grip on the game, the hosts' chase never gathered momentum.

Oman were eventually restricted to 111/7 sealing Pakistan A's

comprehensive victory.

Earlier, Pakistan successfully overcame an impressive display of bowling from Oman's youngest player, Muzahir Raza, who struck early to dismiss both openers – skipper Mohammad Haris and Yasir Khan – within the space of two balls during the third over.

Omais Yousuf (25) helped sta-

bilise the innings, partnering with top-scorer Qasim Akram (48) in a 72-run stand for the third wicket, lifting Pakistan to 56/2 by the end of the powerplay.

Oman found a breakthrough in the 11th over when all-rounder Su-fyan Mehmood dismissed the dangerous Yousuf, caught off his own bowling. Leg-spinner Samay Shrivastav then bowled Akram in the 14th over, just as he seemed poised for a half-century, leaving Pakistan at 106/4. Akram's innings featured three sixes and two boundaries.

However, Oman's bowlers struggled to contain Pakistan in the death overs, conceding 79 runs in the final 6.3 overs. Rohail Nazir played a blistering knock, smashing an unbeaten 41 off just 20 balls, including three boundaries and two sixes, and was named the player of the match.

He was ably supported by Arafat Minhas, who hammered 31 off 15 deliveries, with two sixes and two boundaries. Together, they shared a 69-run unbroken partnership. Abdul Samad also contributed 20 off 12 balls before being dismissed by Wasim Ali.

Muzahir Raza was the standout bowler for Oman, claiming 2/29, while Ali, Mehmood, and Shrivastav each took a wicket.

Brief scores: Pakistan A 185/5 in 20 overs (Omar Yousuf 25, Qasim Akram 48, Rohail Nasir 41 n.o., Arafat Minhas 31 n.o., Abdul Samad 20; Muzahir Raza 2/29, Wasim Ali 1/42, Samay Shrivastav 1/18, Sufyan Mehmood 1/20) beat Oman 111/7 in 20 overs (Jatinder Singh 24, Wasim Ali 28, Hammad Mirza 14; Zaman Khan 2/17).

Sharma's blitz and Salam's spell lead India A into semis

MUSCAT: A destructive three-wicket over from Rasikh Salam and a blistering half-century off just 20 balls by Abhishek Sharma propelled India A to a comprehensive seven-wicket victory over the UAE in a Group B match of the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Monday night.

This victory, India's second in a row after their narrow win over Pakistan A in their opening group clash on Saturday, secured their place in the semifinals as they now are on top of the group with four points. Pakistan with one win and UAE also with one have two points each while Oman have yet to open their account. India next meet Oman while the winner of the Pakistan-UAE game will confirm the second team to move into the last four from the group.

Chasing a modest target of 108, India A had an early setback when Prabhsimran Singh (8) fell in the first over.

However, Sharma and captain Tilak Varma soon turned the tide in India's favour.

Sharma launched a ferocious counterattack, smashing his half-century in just 20 balls, ending with 58 off 29 balls, including 8 fours and 3 sixes.

During the powerplay, India raced to 74 for 1, with Tilak providing steady support at the other end, contributing 21 off 17 balls. Their 73-run partnership is India A's highest for the second wicket in T20s, breaking the record of 49 between Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma.

Sharma also broke the record for most sixes in T20s for India, going past Prabhsimran's three.

Despite the fall of both Varma and Sharma in quick succession, the target proved to be too small for the UAE to defend.

Nehal Wadhwa (6 not out) and Ayush Badoni (12 not out) ensured there were no further hiccups as they guided India A to 108 for 3 in 10.3 overs, with Badoni blasting a six and a four to complete a dominant chase.

Earlier, UAE's decision to bat first after winning the toss quickly backfired.

Openers Mayank Kumar (10) and Aryansh Sharma (1) were both dismissed cheaply, and Rasikh Salam's devastating over



- where he took three wickets in the sixth over of the innings - left UAE reeling at 40 for 5 inside the powerplay.

Basil Hameed (22 off 19) and Rahul Chopra attempted to rebuild the innings with a 41-run partnership. However, once Sharma broke the stand by dismissing Hameed, UAE's innings unraveled.

Chopra fought a lone battle, top-scoring with a patient 50 off 50 balls, but with no support from the lower order, UAE were bowled out for 107 in 16.4 overs.

Ramandeep Singh took two wickets while Anshul Kamboj, Vaibhav Arora, Sharma and Nehal Wadhera picked a wicket apiece.

Brief scores: UAE: 107 in 16.5 overs (Rahul Chopra 50, Basil Hameed 22; Rasikh Salam 3/15) lost to India A: (Abhishek Sharma 58, Tilak Varma 21; Vishnu Sukumar 1/10, Muhammad Farooq 1/16).



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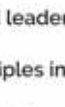
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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by December 2024 reaching \$73.51, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 60 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$74.11. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,799.89 points, down by 0.21% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.19% at 434.13 points. Oman United Insurance, up 4.86%, was the top gainer while Musandam Power, down 5.59%, was the top loser.

Oman and Jordan ink MoU to boost economic collaboration

The MoU between Opaz and Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority covers cooperation in several areas of mutual economic interest, including attracting investments to special economic zones

Times News Service

Muscat: In a bid to enhance cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in various economic fields, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm Sezad with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority of Jordan.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the Opaz by Engineer Ahmed bin Hassan Al-Deeb, Deputy Chairman of the Opaz, while Nayef Hamidi Al-Fayez, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the



Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, signed on behalf of the Jordanian side.

The MoU covers cooperation in several areas of mutual economic interest, including attracting investments to special economic zones and exchanging knowledge and expertise regarding the laws, regulations, and procedures associated with the management, operation, and development of special economic zones in both countries.

Both parties will explore the possibility of establishing joint projects to enhance and develop cooperation between them, in addition to working together to create an international institutional framework for the zones in both countries, aiming to enhance their competitiveness and cooperation

across various fields.

The MoU stipulates the exchange of experiences between both parties in managing, operating, and developing special economic zones in areas such as urban planning, facilities management, and the investment environment, including smart city applications and their potential implementation in the zones overseen by each party, while benefiting from each other's expertise in this regard.

Moreover, the MoU aims to collaborate on data and information exchange relevant to the management, financing, execution, and operation of infrastructure projects according to the applicable investment regulations in both countries.

It also encompasses areas of cooperation in implementing joint

promotional programs and coordinating regional and international conferences and seminars related to investment activities in special economic zones, along with exchanging experiences and practices in training employees within these zones and sharing studies and research on the experiences of special economic zones.

In the logistics sector, the MoU specifies the direct and indirect coordination to utilize transportation, storage, and distribution facilities to open new export channels and increase the volume of exports from the special economic zones of both countries to regional and international markets at the lowest possible costs. The parties will exchange expertise in organizing transportation movements for special economic zones, logistics,



and ports. Upcoming meetings are expected with Omani and Jordanian investors, as well as local and international trade and business institutions, to introduce the facilities this cooperation will provide to investors in the special economic zones of Oman and Jordan, aiming

to achieve maximum investment attraction in these zones.

On the sidelines of the MoU signing, Al-Fayez and his accompanying delegation visited prominent existing projects in the Sezad, such as Duqm Port, the dry dock, and the Karwa automotive factory.

RESILIENCE

Indian bonds remain attractive amid stable macro-economic variables

NEW DELHI: Indian bond markets continue to demonstrate resilience, supported by stable macroeconomic fundamentals and favourable demand-supply dynamics, as per Puneet Pal, Head of Fixed Income at PGIM India Mutual Fund.

Pal anticipates a gradual approach by the Fed to rate reductions. He argues that Indian bonds remain a lucrative investment option due to the country's robust underlying economic factors, including high real interest rates, which create room for potential rate cuts.

The recent rate cut in the US increases the probability of similar actions by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the near future.

Bond yields generally move ahead of rate changes, making it a strategic time for investors to enhance their fixed-income allocations during yield upticks.

PGIM India expects the benchmark 10-year bond yield to decline towards 6.50 per cent by Q4 2025, with long bond yields projected to drift lower in the coming quarters.

For medium to long-term investors, Dynamic Bond Funds with a duration of 6-7 years and a focus on sovereign holdings present a compelling risk-reward scenario, while Money Market Funds are suggested for investors with a 6-12 month horizon.

Puneet Pal, Head of Fixed Income at PGIM India Mutual Fund, argues that Indian bonds remain a lucrative investment option due to the country's robust underlying economic factors, including high real interest rates, which create room for potential rate cuts

The Indian bond market remained steady last week despite geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, with traders capitalizing on profit opportunities.

The benchmark 10-year bond yield closed at 6.79 per cent, unchanged from the previous week, as crude oil prices dropped nearly 7 per cent.

Hopes for an imminent RBI rate cut have dimmed, especially after the central bank's governor described such a move as premature and risky, emphasizing optimism on growth and the resilience of the economy.

Inflation remains a concern, as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to a nine-month high of 5.49 per cent, driven by increases in food

prices, especially vegetables, edible oils, and pulses, surpassing market expectations of 5.10 per cent.

Meanwhile, Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation was slightly below expectations at 1.84 per cent. On a positive note, the trade deficit narrowed to USD 20.80 billion in September from USD 29.70 billion in August, thanks to a decline in non-oil imports.

Additional data showed that India's taxpayer base has grown significantly, with an 82 per cent increase to 10.40 crore taxpayers from FY15 to FY24.

Direct tax collections in FY24 reached Rs 19.6 lakh crore, up 182 per cent from nearly Rs 7 lakh crore in FY15. Notably, personal income tax collections surpassed

corporate tax collections for the second consecutive year.

The government also approved an average Minimum Support Price (MSP) hike of 4.90 per cent for Rabi crops, with barley seeing the highest increase of 7 per cent. The hike aligns with last year's trend and is not expected to add significant pressure on food inflation.

Amid concerns over private credit risks, the RBI banned four Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) from new loan sanctions, underscoring the central bank's commitment to macroeconomic stability.

The Indian Rupee (INR) remained under pressure due to Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) outflows from the equity market, but RBI interventions helped keep it stable at 84.07 against the U.S. dollar. FPI outflows from equities have exceeded USD 9 billion this month, while FPI debt inflows remained flat.

The money market saw slight pressure, with three-month Certificate of Deposit (CD) yields rising by 3-4 basis points, even as interbank liquidity remained comfortable.

The ongoing cautious sentiment in the bond market and evolving global economic conditions suggest a dynamic outlook for investors. -**ANI**

OMANI WOMEN'S DAY



Sohar Aluminium empowers female staff with work-life harmony workshop

MUSCAT: Sohar Aluminium Company (SA) celebrated the annual anniversary of the Omani Women's Day, which falls on October 17 every year.

This year's celebration was held under the theme "Glorious, Successful and Brilliant", reflecting the company's commitment to recognising the vital role that female employees play in the business development and success story of Sohar Aluminium over the past 20 years since its inception.

Believing in the importance of women's professional development, Sohar Aluminium organised "A Work-life Harmony" workshop along with other activities during the event. The workshop, conducted by a professional coach, aimed to equip the company's female employees with the key skills to manage their work and personal life effectively.

Likewise, it highlighted the importance of having work-life harmony, which eventually impacts personal satisfaction, self-confidence and career development.

On the other hand, the workshop served as an opportunity for the female employees to address their different work-life balance challenges and propose potential

solutions. With the support of the professional coach, they used the SWOT analysis approach to brainstorm the difficulties and turn them into possibilities.

Organising this event was one of the activities of Sohar Aluminium's Mulhima Committee, which was formed a year back, representing all female employees in the company. The Committee provides an official platform for discussion with the management, to bring employees concerns, and provide opportunities for female employees to collaborate, learn, and inspire.

Sohar Aluminium spares no efforts to ensure that every woman at the company has the opportunity to thrive, to pursue her dreams without barriers, and to contribute her unique expertise towards the organisation's collective progress.

Sohar Aluminium is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that not only supports female employees, but also empowers them to shoulder more responsibility and take on leadership roles. The company will continue to implement initiatives that provide training and development opportunities and introduce programmes that support work-life balance.

SAUDI ARABIA

Aramco CEO calls for updated energy transition plan focused on Asia's needs

DHAHRAN: Saudi Aramco President and CEO Eng. Amin bin Hassan Al-Nasser has called for a "Transition Plan 2.0", an updated energy transition blueprint of the current plan, which, he said, has proved ineffective, stressing that the new plan should take into consideration the needs of all countries, particularly those in Asia, and the Global South in general.

In a keynote speech delivered at Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW), Al-Nasser said: "A new energy transition plan must

be developed that acknowledges the critical role Asia plays on the global stage, the nature of its available resources, and its future growth prospects."

Regarding the need for an updated transition plan, Al-Nasser added: "This may be Asia's century. But Asia's voice and priorities, like those of the broader Global South, are hard to see in current transition planning, and the whole world is feeling the consequences. Transition progress is far slower, far less equitable, and

far more complicated than many expected. Therefore, our primary focus must be on practical solutions rather than just theory."

He stressed the need to prioritize reducing emissions systematically, and achieving the maximum possible impact at an acceptable cost and within a reasonable timeframe. He also emphasized that the approach must be "multi-source, multi-speed, and multi-dimensional, without favoring one type of energy or technology over another".

Concerning the challenge of energy transition costs, Al-Nasser said: "The transition will be expensive for everyone, with estimates of between \$100 and 200 trillion required globally by 2050. For developing countries, almost 6 trillion dollars may be required each year. Moreover, in a transition that requires staggering amounts of front-end capital investment, the cost of capital is more than twice as high in developing countries where the need is greater." -**SPA**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman United Insurance, up 4.86%, was the top gainer while Musandam Power, down 5.59%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,799.89 points, down by 0.21% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.19% at 434.13 points. Oman United Insurance, up 4.86%, was the top gainer while Musandam Power, down 5.59%, was the top loser. Shares of OQGN were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 705 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 1.67 million, with more than 10.1 million shares changing hands. Out of 38 traded securities, 12 advanced, 11 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 190K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 129K, followed by foreign investors for RO 61K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,979.83 points, up 0.12%. Prices of Oman United Insurance,

OMINVEST, Global Financial Investments were up by 4.86%, 2.20%, 1.25% respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Al Sharqia Investment, Bank Muscat were down by 2.67%, 1.37%, 0.38% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,588.06 points, up 0.3%. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Construction Materials, Al Maha Ceramics were up by 4.72%, 4.08%, 0.71% respectively. Prices of Voltamp Energy were down by 2.44% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.56% before closing at 1,830.76 points. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Muscat Desalination, Al Batinah Power, Abraj Energy, Sembcorp Salalah were up by 2.65%, 1.43%, 1.27%, 1.02%, 0.92% respectively. Prices of Musandam Power, Barka Water & Power Company, Oman National Engineering, OQ Gas Networks, SMN Power Holding were down by 5.59%, 3.57%, 3.28%, 2.74%, 2.44% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,810.39	4,797.39	4,799.89	4,810.13	-10.23	-0.21
FINANCIAL INDEX	8,000.05	7,970.47	7,979.83	7,970.31	9.53	0.12
Industry Index	5,604.68	5,576.25	5,588.06	5,571.52	16.54	0.30
Services Index	1,845.82	1,830.60	1,830.76	1,841.09	-10.33	-0.56
MSX Shariah Index	434.26	432.88	434.13	433.30	0.83	0.19
MSX TR INDEX	6,711.74	6,693.61	6,697.10	6,685.32	11.78	0.18
FINANCIAL TR IDX	9,088.88	9,055.27	9,065.91	9,055.09	10.82	0.12
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,466.46	6,433.67	6,447.29	6,428.21	19.09	0.30
SERVICES TR IDX	2,156.37	2,138.59	2,138.78	2,142.39	-3.61	-0.17
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,066.88	1,066.88	1,066.88	1,066.88	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	1,674,276	Turnover	705	Trades	24,714,983,975	Up	12	Down	11	Equal	15	Sec. Traded	38
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SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 21

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (BD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PREV VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	13,584	3,426	8	0.247	0.259	0.247	0.259	0.247	0.012	4.858	0.259	0.250	0.255	0.100	25,900,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	51,070	18,780	25	0.365	0.374	0.365	0.372	0.364	0.008	2.198	0.372	0.370	0.374	0.100	248,631,938
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	62,200	4,916	9	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.001	1.266	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.100	53,990,994
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	941,069	75,817	30	0.081	0.082	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.081	0.081	0.082	0.100	16,200,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	575,457	169,874	37	0.294	0.297	0.294	0.297	0.294	0.003	1.020	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.100	228,749,400
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	10,899	1,201	3	0.110	0.112	0.110	0.110	0.109	0.001	0.917	0.110	0.110	0.112	0.100	105,002,915
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	86,195	85,797	16	0.985	0.997	0.985	0.995	0.995	0.000	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.100	746,250,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	745,174	108,937	24	0.146	0.147	0.145	0.146	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.146	0.145	0.147	0.100	814,277,955
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	43,250	3,450	7	0.080	0.080	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.079	0.078	0.079	0.100	13,823,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	192,039	15,353	11	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.088	0.100	57,152,507
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,427,093	379,180	85	0.266	0.266	0.265	0.265	0.266	-0.001	-0.376	0.265	0.292	0.265	0.100	1,989,195,221
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	40,895	16,045	10	0.400	0.400	0.387	0.387	0.390	-0.003	-0.769	0.387	0.387	0.390	0.100	91,490,670
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	30,000	2,160	2	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.073	-0.001	-1.370	0.072	0.070	0.073	0.100	6,480,000
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	3,907,264	557,061	228	0.142	0.144	0.142	0.142	0.146	-0.004	-2.740	0.142	0.142	0.146	0.100	614,948,597
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	327	39	1	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.122	-0.004	-3.279	0.118	0.118	0.121	0.100	17,700,000
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	500	135	1	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.286	-0.016	-5.594	0.270	0.261	0.285	0.100	19,005,300
Total	16	8,127,016	1,442,171	497												
Parallel Market																
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	100	11	1	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.098	0.008	8.163	0.106	0.090	0.106	0.100	18,444,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	1,287,067	142,694	105	0.107	0.113	0.107	0.111	0.106	0.005	4.717	0.111	0.111	0.116	0.100	22,531,496
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	100	5	1	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.049	0.002	4.062	0.051	0.049	0.051	0.100	3,187,500
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	25,940	4,925	9	0.189	0.194	0.189	0.194	0.189	0.005	2.648	0.194	0.190	0.194	0.100	11,873,629
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	2,000	142	2	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.001	1.429	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.100	11,044,078
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	246	35	1	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.141	0.001	0.709	0.142	0.142	0.140	0.100	7,810,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	600	289	2	0.482	0.482	0.482	0.482	0.482	0.000	0.000	0.482	0.472	0.482	0.100	75,915,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	1,720	4,524	3	2.630	2.630	2.630	2.630	2.630	0.000	0.000	2.630	2.620	2.630	0.100	235,911,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	51,000	8,313	2	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.000	0.000	0.163	0.000	0.163	0.100	51,412,971
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	184,778	19,914	13	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.107	0.108	0.100	239,353,974
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	40,845	2,859	8	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	15,556,800
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	52,770	5,013	4	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.100	19,000,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	108,476	7,089	16	0.065	0.066	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.064	0.069	0.100	33,061,034
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	119,308	6,921	11	0.058	0.059	0.058	0.058	0.059	-0.001	-1.695	0.058	0.058	0.064	0.100	84,830,885
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	42,241	16,945	9	0.400	0.405	0.400	0.400	0.410	-0.010	-2.439	0.405	0.405	0.405	0.100	32,561,100
OM0000002448	SMN POWER HOLDING	10,000	3,200	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.328	-0.008	-2.439	0.320	0.000	0.355	0.100	63,883,392
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	4,511	329	1	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.075	-0.002	-2.667	0.073	0.073	0.079	0.100	15,489,140
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	21,815	5,892	8	0.270	0.279	0.270	0.270	0.280	-0.010	-3.571	0.278	0.279	0.278	0.100	43,200,000
Total	18	1,953,517	229,100	197												

STABILISED

Oil prices steady after 7% weekly drop

BEIJING: Oil prices stabilised on Monday after a significant drop of more than 7% last week due to concerns over demand in China. Brent crude futures rose by 8 cents to \$73.14 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude gained 10 cents to \$69.32 a barrel.

Brent had settled down more than 7% lower last week, while

WTI lost around 8 per cent, Reuters reported.

On the supply side, last week, US energy firms cut the number of oil and natural gas rigs operating for the fourth time in five weeks, according to a closely watched report by energy services firm Baker Hughes BKR.O on Friday. The rig count dropped by one to 585.

Asia shares wobble while bitcoin and gold rally

Asian shares fluctuated on Monday, weighed down by weakness in Hong Kong stocks, while bitcoin reached a three-month high.

Gold also hit a record peak, driven by global uncertainty. Investors remain cautious as they await further details on Beijing's recently

announced stimulus measures, Reuters reported.

China's blue-chip index swung between losses and gains in early trade, before turning decisively higher by the Asian afternoon, helped by a rise in technology companies. The benchmark was 0.4% higher, while the Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.31%. -BNA

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EMPOWERING OMANI TALENTS IN TOURISM SECTOR

Omran celebrates first batch of GTTP graduates as part of #IAmTourism Initiative



MUSCAT: Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) celebrated the graduation of participants from the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership (GTTP) programme, reflecting the Group's commitment to empowering the next generation of Omani talent. This initiative is part of its #IAmTourism strategy to develop a skilled national workforce for the tourism sector.

The program stands as a testament to Omran Group's dedication to nurturing homegrown talent, helping young Omanis unlock their potential and inspiring them to contribute to the nation's tourism sector development. The program, initiated in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership, provided extracurricular activities for 10th and 11th grade students, offering them hands-on experience and invaluable insights into the world of tourism.

Sheikh Yaqoob bin Saif Al-Shehaimi, Director-General of the Career Guidance and Student Counseling Center at the Ministry of Education, stated: "The tourism sector is a key component of Oman Vision 2040. This program is one of the significant initiatives that has contributed to equipping Omani students with essential skills in the tourism and hospitality sector. Through

a comprehensive system of educational and training programs delivered by a world-renowned educational institution, a number of school students have benefited from this program under the supervision of the Career Guidance and Student Counseling Center. 345 students from the governorates of Muscat and South Al Batinah participated in the program. A number of participating students achieved top rankings in the digital photography competition and the best school research project competition. The winning research project will be presented at the World Tourism Organization conference, scheduled to be held in Spain next November."

We are thrilled to celebrate the graduation of the first batch of this program, which was developed to provide school students with valuable insights into the tourism industry," said Dr. Salim Al Flaiti, Group Head of Business Partners at OMRAN Group. "I commend the dedication of both the students and the career guidance specialists, whose efforts were the cornerstone of the program's success. Their commitment inspires us to continue enriching the learning journey for future batches.

Ann Loiter, CEO of the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership, remarked, "We are delighted to have graduated the first batch of

this program in Oman. We will continue to collaborate with Omran Group and the Ministry of Education to provide future students with the skills necessary to thrive in the tourism industry, thereby contributing to the growth and success of Oman's tourism sector.

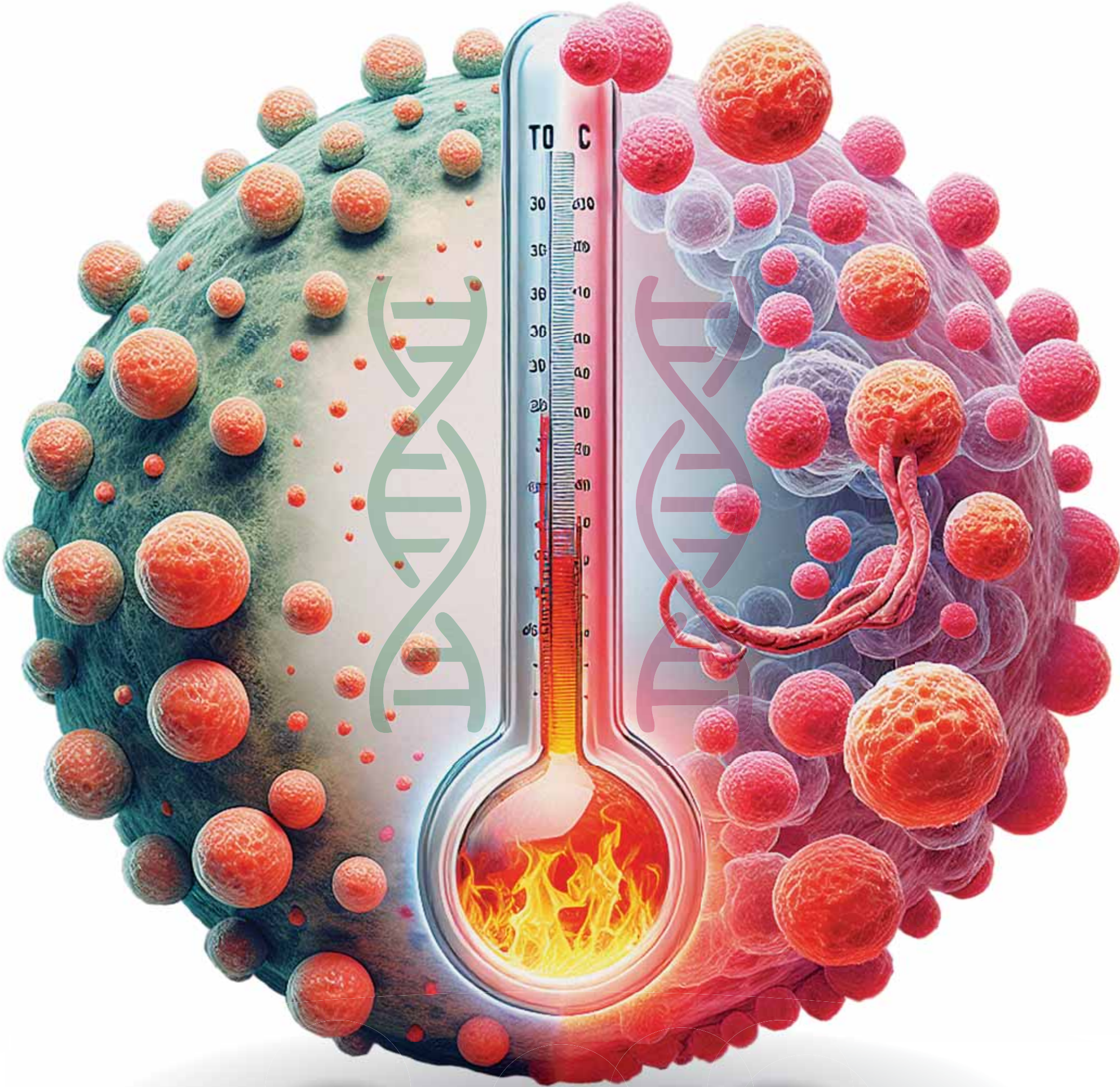
At the ceremony, Majid Ali Al Bahri, a student from Wadi Bani Kharus School, a GTTP graduate, said, "I am pleased to participate in this eye-opening program, which made me understand the nature of the tourism sector. I'm leaving this program with a clear sense of direction and excitement for the road ahead."

Omran Group's #IAmTourism strategy, centered on four main pillars: Inform, Attract, Retain, and Partner. This comprehensive strategy seeks to build a dynamic and enduring tourism workforce by developing national talent and fostering partnerships that ensure Oman's competitive edge in the global market. This specific partnership embodies two fundamental pillars of the strategy: 'inform' and 'partner'.

The GTTP serves as one of the educational arms of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). With its e-learning platform, the GTTP boasts over 500,000 participants from more than 15 countries worldwide, contributing significantly to the global tourism industry.



Fever drives enhanced activity, mitochondrial damage in immune cells: Study



The study, published in Science Immunology, sheds light on how cells respond to heat and how persistent inflammation can lead to cancer

Fever increases immune cell metabolism, proliferation, and activity, but it also causes mitochondrial stress, DNA damage, and cell death in a specific subgroup of T cells, according to Vanderbilt University Medical Centre researchers. The study, published in Science Immunology, sheds light on how cells respond to heat and how persistent inflammation can lead to cancer. The impact of fever temperatures on cells is a relatively understudied area, said Jeff Rathmell, PhD, Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Immunobiology and corresponding author of the new study. Most of the existing temperature-related research relates to agriculture and how extreme temperatures impact crops and livestock, he noted. It's challenging to change the temperature of

animal models without causing stress, and cells in the laboratory are generally cultured in incubators that are set at a human body temperature, 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit). "Standard body temperature is not actually the temperature for most inflammatory processes, but few have really gone to the trouble to see what happens when you change the temperature," said Rathmell, who also directs the Vanderbilt Center for Immunobiology. Graduate student Darren Heintzman was interested in the impact of fevers for personal reasons: Before he joined the Rathmell lab, his father developed an autoimmune disease and had a constant fever for months on end. "I started thinking about what an increased set point tempera-

ture like that might do. It was intriguing," Heintzman said. Heintzman cultured immune system T cells at 39 degrees Celsius (about 102 degrees Fahrenheit). He found that heat increased helper T cell metabolism, proliferation and inflammatory effector activity and decreased regulatory T cell suppressive capacity. "If you think about a normal response to infection, it makes a lot of sense: You want effector (helper) T cells to be better at responding to the pathogen, and you want suppressor (regulatory) T cells to not suppress the immune response," Heintzman said. But the researchers also made an unexpected discovery that a certain subset of helper T cells, called Th1 cells, developed mitochondrial stress and DNA

damage, and some of them died. The finding was confusing, the researchers said, because Th1 cells are involved in settings where there is often fever, like viral infections. Why would the cells that are needed to fight the infection die? The researchers discovered that only a portion of the Th1 cells die, and that the rest undergo an adaptation, change their mitochondria, and become more resistant to stress. "There's a wave of stress, and some of the cells die, but the ones that adapt and survive are better -- they proliferate more and make more cytokine (immune signaling molecules)," Rathmell said. Heintzman was able to define the molecular events of the cell response to fever temperatures. He found that heat rapidly im-

paired electron transport chain complex 1 (ETC1), a mitochondrial protein complex that generates energy. ETC1 impairment set off signaling mechanisms that led to DNA damage and activation of the tumor suppressor protein p53, which aids DNA repair or triggers cell death to maintain genome integrity. Th1 cells were more sensitive to impaired ETC1 than other T cell subtypes. The researchers found Th1 cells with similar changes in sequencing databases for samples from patients with Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis, adding support to the molecular signaling pathway they defined. "We think this response is a fundamental way that cells can sense heat and respond to stress," Rathmell said. "Temperature varies across tissues and changes all the time, and we don't really

know what it does. If temperature changes shift the way cells are forced to do metabolism because of ETC1, that's going to have a big impact. This is fundamental textbook kind of stuff." The findings suggest that heat can be mutagenic -- when cells that respond with mitochondrial stress don't properly repair the DNA damage or die. "Chronic inflammation with sustained periods of elevated tissue temperatures could explain how some cells become tumorigenic," Heintzman said, noting that up to 25% of cancers are linked to chronic inflammation. "People ask me, 'Is fever good or bad?'" Rathmell added. "The short answer is: A little bit of fever is good, but a lot of fever is bad. We already knew that, but now we have a mechanism for why it's bad." -ANI

Norris penalised for Verstappen pass as Leclerc clinches US GP



Verstappen has extended championship lead over Lando Norris to 57 points

AUSTIN: The title battle between Max Verstappen and Lando Norris erupted in controversy at the United States Grand Prix after the McLaren driver was penalised for passing his rival for third place off the track on Sunday.

The race was dominated by Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who took the lead on the first lap after Norris and Verstappen ran wide at the first corner of the race.

Leclerc was imperious in leading Carlos Sainz to a Ferrari one-two once he had moved into first place, but the drama was all behind him in Austin.

Norris finished third after passing Verstappen around the outside at Turn 12 with four laps to go, only to run off the track on the exit of the corner.

Norris chose not to give the place back, while Verstappen complained he had to, and the stewards agreed with the Dutchman.

They handed Norris a five-second penalty and as he had pulled out only a 4.1-second lead once in front, he was dropped back to fourth place, one behind the Red Bull driver, in the results.

Verstappen has therefore extended his drivers' championship lead to 57 points with five races to go and 146 points still available.

The race was bookended by two incidents between the title rivals, at the start and in the closing stages at the Circuit of the Americas.

At the first corner, Norris, who was on pole, appeared to have covered the inside line, but Verstappen went for it anyway and the two drivers ran off the track on the exit.

Norris complained Verstappen had forced him off and should give the place back, but the stewards did not investigate the incident.

Their battle allowed Leclerc to slip by into the lead, and once there he was in total control of the race.

He quickly extended his advantage and it soon became clear the Ferrari driver would dominate unless something went wrong.

Leclerc was 10 seconds in the lead by the time Verstappen in second place made his first pit stop on lap 25. Ferrari pulled him in a lap later and he controlled the race to the end.

Sainz ran third in the first stint, after briefly challenging Verstap-



pen on the first lap, and Ferrari chose to use the 'undercut' on Red Bull. Sainz pitted on lap 21, so by the time Verstappen stopped the new tyres on the Ferrari had gained the Spaniard enough time that the Red Bull came out behind.

Verstappen was unable to do anything about Sainz, and had to turn his sights to Norris.

He and team-mate Oscar Piastri had a quiet first stint, running in fourth and fifth places.

Norris stopped six laps after

Verstappen and was 6.6 seconds behind when he returned to the track. He was on the Red Bull's tail just over 10 laps later and the two set about an engrossing battle over the next 10 laps.

Norris tracked Verstappen closely and a number of times the two ran side by side through some of the corners of the complex after Turn 12, the tight corner at the end of the long back straight.

But Verstappen positioned his car with expertise to prevent Norris being able to make a move at the hairpin at Turn 15. On lap 52, Norris was closer than ever coming on to the back straight and he went for the outside as Verstappen defended the inside line. Both cars ran off the track, Norris considerably, and the McLaren emerged ahead.

Verstappen immediately complained Norris had overtaken by going off the track and should give the place back. But Norris decided to press on, arguing to his team he had been ahead at the apex.

But the stewards disagreed, and Norris was given a five-second penalty just before the end of the race. Although he had pulled away, he had not quite done enough to negate the penalty.

Piastri took fifth, while George Russell saved Mercedes' blushes by recovering to sixth place after starting from the pit lane because of a crash in qualifying. Team-mate Lewis Hamilton crashed on the second lap.

Penalty 'momentum killer' for title hopes, says Norris



AUSTIN: Lando Norris said the decision to penalise him for a passing move on title rival Max Verstappen in the United States Grand Prix was a "momentum killer" for his championship hopes.

The penalty, which the McLaren driver described as "rash", demoted Norris from from third to fourth place, one position behind Verstappen, who has now extended his championship lead to 57 points with five races to go and 146 points still available.

Norris also said he had "driven like a muppet" at the first corner, and allowed Verstappen to get up his inside and force him wide, a move that cost both of them places to eventual race winner Charles Leclerc of Ferrari.

Norris said: "For me, the thing that is incorrect is what Max did, which is defend his position by going off the track and effectively keeping his position. He over-defended and made a mistake and gained from that.

"I had to go off the track. It is impossible for people to know whether I could have made it on the track or couldn't, therefore you cannot steward that kind of thing."

Norris and McLaren team boss Andrea Stella said the stewards should have reviewed the incident with both drivers after the race.

"For me it's just a rash decision," Norris said. "They don't hear or understand our points, which they should do after the race. They just want to make a decision at the time so they don't alter points and podiums and things like that.

"But they don't hear my point or my team's point or Max's point, which I don't think is the most correct thing. But today it's a penalty and there's not a lot I can do apart from accept that.

"It was a great battle. Max defended very well but he ended up on top and congrats to him."

Norris said: "It's a momentum killer, but we came here with our mind open, not expecting to dominate or win or anything. The fact Ferrari were so quick showed they are just as competitive, I could only have finished third. But the one guy I had to beat is Max and I didn't beat him." - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE



City's last-gasp goal in victory

LONDON: John Stones' dramatic stoppage-time winner kept Manchester City in touch with Premier League leaders Liverpool as the champions beat battling Wolves 2-1 on Sunday.

The defender's header - in the fifth minute of injury time - was given when referee Chris Kavanagh awarded the goal on review, to the hosts' fury, after it was initially ruled out for offside.

Josko Gvardiol had earlier cancelled out Jorgen Strand Larsen's opener for Wolves, who remain winless this season and are bottom

of the Premier League.

City made the early running at Molineux but were stunned on seven minutes when neat build-up play sent Nelson Semedo away and his brilliant cross, which bypassed four visiting defenders, was tapped in by Strand Larsen.

The recalled Jose Sa, replacing the injured Sam Johnstone in goal, denied Bernardo Silva soon after as City controlled the game, but they had to wait until the 33rd minute to level when Gvardiol found the top corner. Yet it did not give them an immediate platform

for victory and the visitors were met by an undaunted opponent who denied them space, although only an excellent low save from Sa denied Savinho in first-half stoppage time.

Pep Guardiola summoned Phil Foden and Jack Grealish from the bench but City were made to wait until deep into stoppage time to find a winner. Stones headed in Foden's side as he was standing in front of Sa, but, with the City players watching on, referee Kavanagh gave the goal to break Wolves' hearts.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Jones impressive in Reds battling win over Chelsea

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool returned to the top of the Premier League with a 2-1 victory over Chelsea at Anfield on Sunday as manager Arne Slot's outstanding start continued.

The Dutchman is the first Liverpool boss to win 10 of his first 11 games, this latest triumph sending them a point clear of Manchester City following their dramatic stoppage-time victory at Wolves earlier.

Mohamed Salah put Liverpool ahead from the spot after 29 minutes following Levi Colwill's foul on Curtis Jones, though a second penalty awarded on the stroke of half-time for Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez's block on the same player was overturned by the video assistant referee (VAR) after initially being awarded by referee John Brooks.

Chelsea took advantage of that VAR reprieve to equalise three minutes after the break, Nicolas Jackson racing clear to score, the goal awarded after being ruled out for offside.

Liverpool took only three minutes to restore their lead, Jones



stealing in at the far post to steer Salah's cross past a hesitant Sanchez in front of a joyous Kop.

It mean Slot's only loss since succeeding Jurgen Klopp was to Nottingham Forest at Anfield in September, while this was Chelsea's first league defeat under new manager Enzo Maresca since the opening-weekend home reverse against Manchester City.

This win was workmanlike, but another three points is what mattered, especially as Manchester City applied pressure after the theatre and controversy of their last-gasp win at Wolves.

Salah had one of his quieter games, yet set Liverpool on their way from spot and carved out a brilliant assist for Curtis Jones' winner.

It was a goal Jones deserved for a lively performance, which earned one penalty and only had another denied by VAR.

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

Messi hits hat-trick as Miami set record

MIAMI: Lionel Messi scored a hat-trick to help Inter Miami beat New England Revolution 6-2 on Sunday as his side set a points record for a regular Major League Soccer (MLS) campaign.

The victory in their final game of the 34-match regular season took Miami to 74 points and meant they beat the previous record of 73 points set by the Revolution in 2021.

Miami, who had already secured the MLS Supporters' Shield,

which is given to the club with the best regular-season record, went 2-0 behind against the Revolution following goals from Luca Langoni and Dylan Borrero.

A Luis Suarez double levelled the match before the introduction of Messi after 58 minutes helped Miami kick on to claim victory.

The 37-year-old Argentina forward, who scored a hat-trick in midweek for his country against Bolivia, played a part in Benjamin Cremaschi putting Miami 3-2 in

front. Messi scored his first goal of the match when he powered in a left-foot shot from just outside the area after combining with former Uruguay international Suarez.

He then side-footed in a second before adding his third - and 20th of the MLS season - following a Suarez cross. Miami, who have been named as the latest addition to the FIFA Club World Cup in 2025, will now go into the MLS play-offs as they try to secure the MLS Cup.



LA LIGA PRIMERA DIVISION

Lewandowski's double leads leaders Barca past Sevilla

BARCELONA: Robert Lewandowski continued his red-hot form with two goals as Barcelona thrashed Sevilla 5-1 to restore their three-point La Liga lead on Sunday.

Lewandowski, 36, took his tally to 14 goals in 12 games in all competitions - and 10 in his past six - as Hansi Flick's side produced an emphatic response to Real Madrid's 2-1 win at Celta Vigo on Saturday. Barcelona, who

have won nine of their opening 10 league games, led 3-0 at half-time for the third match in a row after Lewandowski scored either side of Pedri's spectacular first-time strike. Poland striker Lewandowski is now the joint-third highest scorer of all time across Europe's top-five leagues, level with Jimmy Greaves on 366 and behind only Cristiano Ronaldo (495) and Lionel Messi (496).

Enticing Akeed benefits available on Corolla

The Toyota Corolla continues to set the benchmark in the automotive industry, combining stylish design, advanced features and a meticulously crafted interior



MUSCAT: Toyota Corolla fans can now own a Corolla and get exclusive benefits. Get Service from 2 Years / 20,000 kms up to 10 Years / 100,000 kms (whichever is earlier), Insurance 1 Year and chance to win 1 grand raffle – All-new Toyota Prado. The campaign is valid up to 31st October 2024 (Prospective buyers may be advised that the

benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.)

The Toyota Corolla continues to set the benchmark in the automotive industry, combining stylish design, advanced features and a meticulously crafted interior. As one of the most iconic sedans since its debut, the Corolla has become synonymous with reliability, versatility and customer satisfaction. From its sleek exterior to its well-appointed cabin, the Corolla is a vehicle that embodies the perfect balance of style, space, comfort, fuel efficiency and power.



Zubair EDC hosts Al Khaboura Vocational College’s delegation

MUSCAT: The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC), a social initiative by The Zubair Corporation recently welcomed a distinguished delegation from Al Khaboura Vocational College, comprising of both students and faculty members, for an educational and insightful visit aimed at fostering entrepreneurial growth and knowledge exchange.

The event commenced with a detailed presentation by Zubair EDC, highlighting the Centre's key services and its ongoing commitment to nurturing entrepreneurship in Oman. The presentation provided an overview of Zubair EDC's various entrepreneurial development programs and support initiatives, which are aligned with Oman's Vision 2040 to promote innovation and sustainable business growth.

During the session, particular emphasis was placed on the essential traits needed to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset. Zubair EDC reinforced its mission to empower aspiring entrepreneurs, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to succeed in an evolving business landscape.

"The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre is dedicated to empowering the next generation of Omani entrepreneurs," said Maryam Al Busaidi, Customer Service Officer at Zubair EDC. "By creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration, we are actively contributing to the growth of a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, in line with Oman's Vision 2040. The visit from Al Khaboura Vocational College exemplifies our commitment to supporting young talent and fostering innovation in the Sultanate."

As part of the visit, the delegation was given an exclusive tour of Oasis Water, a subsidiary of The Zubair Corporation. A representative from Oasis Water guided the group through the production line, offering an in-depth look at the quality assurance processes involved in the manufacturing of drinking water. The visit provided the delegation with valuable insights into the company's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety in its operations.

"We are proud to give the delegation from Al Khaboura Vocational College an inside look at our water production processes," said Moosa Al Hasani, Chief Operating Officer at Oman Oasis. "Our goal is to showcase the stringent quality control and sustainability measures we implement at every stage of production. By sharing our expertise in the field, we hope to inspire the students and faculty with practical insights into the standards required for success in the manufacturing industry. This visit underscores our commitment to supporting Oman's future entrepreneurs and innovators."

The delegation from Al Khaboura Vocational College reciprocated with an engaging presentation, showcasing their department's specialised programs. The faculty and students shared insights into their academic and practical approaches to vocational education, emphasising the importance of skill development and innovation in creating a dynamic workforce for Oman's future.

"We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to visit the Zubair Enterprises Development Centre, a beacon of entrepreneurial support in Oman. This visit to understand the Centre's operations and the Oman Oasis factory has provided both our students and faculty invaluable exposure to real-world business operations along with insight into the essential skills required to thrive in today's entrepreneurial landscape. We look forward to fostering further collaboration with Zubair EDC and are inspired by their efforts to empower Omani entrepreneurs," said a spokesperson at Al Khaboura Vocational College.

OAB celebrates Omani Women’s Day, launches programme to empower female leaders

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of Her Highness Sayyida Meyyan bint Shihab Al Said, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) organized a joyful celebration for Omani Women's Day at the St. Regis Hotel, under the theme "Empowering Omani Women: Leadership, Faith, and Innovation." The event was attended by a large gathering of successful women, including the bank's executive leaders, employees, clients, and female entrepreneurs.



The event included various activities, such as visual presentations highlighting the royal attention given to empowering Omani women and shedding light on their honorable roles and contributions in all fields. Moreover, the "Women's Leadership Development Program" was launched as a new initiative by OAB to nurture national female leaders and enhance women's participation in the sustainable growth of the Sultanate of Oman, in line with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040.

The program is being implemented in collaboration with Springboard and Aspire Institute, two prestigious international organizations in the field of training and development, adhering to the highest global standards. The program aims to empower women in senior leadership positions and strengthen their skills in strategic planning, decision-making, and achieving both personal and professional success.

A panel discussion was held on the topic of women's empowerment and the inspiring success stories they have achieved in various fields. The discussion featured the participation of Lamyia Al-Haj, Associate Professor at Sultan Qaboos University; Samra Al-Harthy, Director of Economic and Investment Research at the Oman Investment Authority; and Abeer Sultan, Executive Director, the Office of the Managing Director.

Sulaiman Al-Harthy, Chief Executive Officer, said: "The Sultanate of Oman's celebration of Omani Women's Day is a recognition of their contributions and inspiring creativity in all fields. We are all proud of the positive role Omani women play in raising generations with genuine Omani values and their significant contribution to the comprehensive development of this beloved nation. They have left clear marks in all areas and have demonstrated excellence in the roles and positions they have been entrusted with in both the public and private sectors since the early days of the Blessed Renaissance and up to the present day."

He added: "OAB has remained committed to supporting the pioneering role of women in the banking and financial sectors by investing in training and developing the skills of its promising talents. The bank's creative work environment has provided a favorable climate for success, paving the way for women to take on leadership positions at various levels, including the Board of Directors, senior and middle management, and across different departments. The bank prioritizes enhancing women's economic and social participation in all fields, in line with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040. It places special emphasis on encouraging women's involvement in initiatives and programs aimed at preparing future leaders and supporting entrepreneurs."

During the event, Zahra Abdulamir, Acting Chief Risk Officer at OAB, delivered a speech in which she said: "As we celebrate Omani Women's Day, we take pride in the programs launched by OAB

to enhance women's position in the labor market. These programs have led to successful projects that contribute to economic growth, and many talented women are now playing a tangible role in the development of various Omani institutions and companies. One of our most notable initiatives is the 'Arab Pioneers Leadership Development Program.' Continuing with these efforts, the bank has launched the 'Women's Leadership Development Program,' aimed at empowering women in leadership roles and enhancing their skills to achieve personal and professional success."

She also expressed joy over the wide participation of women within the bank's continuously expanding customer base and their benefit from the advanced banking services provided by the bank to enrich the customer experience, as well as the unique advantages and offers designed specifically for OAB credit cardholders.

She further highlighted the large number of female entrepreneurs who are joining and benefiting from OAB's innovative programs, initiatives, and services tailored to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs), such as the "Tumouhi" program for comprehensive financial services for entrepreneurs and the SMEs development training program. She also cited the SMEs Competition held by the bank, which aims to spotlight the experiences of female entrepreneurs and support their projects to achieve further growth and expansion.

EXPANSION

BankDhofar opens four branches in different universities

MUSCAT: BankDhofar continues its strategic plan to expand its branch network in order to provide the best banking services and establish a close relationship with its customers. Therefore, the bank opened new branches in four different universities, namely Al Sharqiyah University, Nizwa University, Sohar University and Al Buraimi University.

These branches serve a large number of students and employees on campus, saving them time and effort in light of university life and its many demands, as BankDhofar offers special accounts for women and youth that provide comprehensive banking solutions, exclusive offers at many stores, and various digital services. A vertical purple card has also been designed exclusively for women.

The branch of Al Sharqiyah University in Ibra was opened under the patronage of Professor Fouad Shadiq, President of Al Sharqiyah University, while the branch of Sohar University was opened under the patronage of Dr. Hamdan bin Suleiman Al Fazari, President of Sohar University. Hamdan bin Suleiman Al Fazari, President of Sohar University, while the opening of the branch of Nizwa University was sponsored by Professor Ahmed bin Khalfan Al Rawahi, President of Nizwa University, while the branch of Al Buraimi University was opened under the patronage of Yousef bin Abdul Rahim Al Farsi, Chairman of the



Board of Directors of Al Buraimi University.

Al Sharqiyah University is one of the most important universities in the Sultanate of Oman, with about 8,000 students in 2024 enrolled in various majors such as Engineering, Applied Health Sciences, Business Administration and Literature, Humanitarian Sciences, Law and others. Sohar University is the first private university in the Sultanate of Oman and was established in September 2001. It includes five faculties: Business Administration, Computer and Information Technology, Education and Arts, Engineering, Language Studies, and Law.

Nizwa University received its first batch of students in October 2004, and the university includes 66 specializations at diploma, bachelor and master levels.

As for Al Buraimi University, it was established in 2010 and includes various academic programs at the diploma, higher diploma, bachelor and master levels.

Talib Mohammed Al Hajri, AGM Interior Branches at BankDhofar, said: "The opening of these branches is an important step in the bank's strategy to strengthen its branch network and equip them with various modern technologies in line with the international banking standards." He explained that the bank will open more branches in different locations across Oman to meet the growing needs of its customers and to be closer to them.

"Through the expansion of its branch network, BankDhofar aims to support the government's initiatives in line with the Oman Vision 2040, which aims to provide citizens with high skills and competencies and provide them with job opportunities in private sector establishments," he added.

New Realme C61 launched in Oman

MUSCAT: MHD ITICS, the authorised distributor of Realme, a rapidly expanding global brand in the smartphone space, recently launched the cutting-edge Realme C61 model across the Oman market. This robust and elegant smartphone boasts an industry-best battery life, with an industry leading 24 months warranty on the device.

Realme C61 is designed to empower you to live life to the fullest, allowing you to take stunning photos while enjoying smooth, responsive productivity, games, and media—all in a slim, fashionable, and affordable phone.

Designed for the youth and other dynamic users, the Realme 61 is one of the most durable mobile; with an IP54 dust and water resistance rating, it can weather the numerous challenges of a hectic lifestyle.

"It's a device you can trust, no matter where you are or what you're doing."

Battery life The C61 comes with an innovative long-term battery, ensuring that it retains a significant portion of its original capacity, even after four years of regular use and it can also power through two full days on a single charge.

The screen is designed for pleasing eye comfort, providing a crisp display that enhances responsiveness to scrolling, animations, and transitions, making it suitable for various activities such as watching series, gaming, or browsing social feeds.

The C61's 50MP camera sensor is a high-resolution device



that captures detailed, sharp images with rich colors and excellent dynamic range. It allows for vivid video and photo capture for preserving memories and easily sharing them on social media.

Innovative features

Realme C61 improves your user experience through a variety of innovative artificial intelligence capabilities and technology. With the Air Gestures control function, you can answer and mute calls or switch between video streams on social media without touching your device, which is ideal when both hands are occupied.

AI Noise Reduction intelligently detects, isolates, and suppresses background noise, improving call quality in noisy environments like wind, traffic, or chatter.

Meanwhile, the AI Boost Engine dynamically optimizes the performance of your phone based on what you're doing at any given time. Smooth Boost and Game Boost optimize the system's resources to match the needs of various workloads.

Realme C61, which comes in dazzling gold & dark green, makes a dramatic fashion statement. Premium materials and sophisticated production techniques work together to create a device that is both visually appealing and tactilely satisfying. The finish contains millions of small mirror components. This produces a mesmerizing effect in which the light appears to dance across your phone's surface.

Harsh Vardhan Shukla, Realme Country Manager for Oman, said: "C61 is a smartphone that will be your companion for many years, offering plenty of storage for your media, an unprecedented battery guarantee, and the performance you need to multitask across your favorite personal and work apps. All this power comes packed into a phone thinner than 10 credit cards stacked together."

ROUND-UP

Grand Millennium Muscat reopens Bahriyat Restaurant

As the name indicates, Bahriyat (‘fruits of the sea’) encapsulates the spirit of the ocean, presenting a gastronomical feast for every palate

MUSCAT: The Grand Millennium Muscat Hotel announced the grand reopening of Bahriyat, its celebrated signature seafood restaurant. Offering a unique and enticing dining experience, Bahriyat - reintroduced with a new concept - promises to tantalise the taste buds of seafood lovers with its exquisite offerings.

Situated in the heart of Muscat, the 5-star Grand Millennium Muscat stands as a tribute to Oman's rich cultural heritage and traditional values, with Bahriyat upholding those ideals. Conveniently located near the airport and



connected to Muscat Grand Mall, the hotel is ideally positioned in the city's business, government, and diplomatic district, offering tempting dining options.

As the name indicates, Bahriyat (‘fruits of the sea’) encapsulates the spirit of the ocean, presenting a gastronomical feast for every palate. The restaurant's decor features ocean-inspired elements, creating a picturesque ambience that complements its diverse menu. Guests can em-

bark on a culinary journey with the restaurant's signature dishes, meticulously crafted from locally-sourced seafood caught along the coast of Oman.

Hand-selected from the fish market by Bahriyat's own chef, the restaurant's delectable array of dishes creates an unforgettable dining experience for everyone. It offers an inviting atmosphere for the entire family, featuring a variety of dishes, all prepared with the freshest ingredients and crafted by

true connoisseurs of good taste.

The thoughtfully designed menu, showcasing seasonal favourites and restaurant specialties that reflect the richness of the sea, include fresh oysters, grilled seafood platter for two, lobster thermidor, and traditional Moroccan Seafood Tagine. The dishes, the décor, the modern plating and presentation manifest Bahriyat's contemporary approach that fluidly merges with traditional cooking methods.

The restaurant's captivat-

ing marine theme comes to life through its decor, with cool blue tones evoking the ocean and sky. Unique design touches, like miniature jellyfish in blue lamps and a wall adorned with fish sculptures, create a magical ambiance, while the friendly staff provide a warm and inviting dining experience.

In addition to the launch of Bahriyat, Grand Millennium Muscat boasts other captivating dining options, including Café D, where guests can indulge in a delightful dessert spread and evening buffet called Bait AlShukolatah in the lobby, accompanied by the soothing melodies of an Oud player. Available on Sundays and Mondays, between 6pm to 10pm. Bait Al Shukolatah is unveiling a new and captivating concept, offering an authentic experience in a tranquil and welcoming atmosphere, perfect for relaxing evenings in Muscat.

With its luxurious accommodation, including 296 spacious rooms and suites as well as 32 serviced apartments, Grand Millennium Muscat offers guests a blend of comfort and elegance. The hotel also houses the Zanta spa, ideal for relaxation, and provides versatile spaces for large events, weddings, and meetings.

Bahriyat Restaurant is open daily for lunch (12.30 pm to 3 pm) and dinner (6.30 pm to 10.30 pm)

PIONEERING INITIATIVE

Europcar Cafe: A haven of productivity and relaxation

MUSCAT: Europcar Oman & Bahrain transforms headquarters in Muscat into Europcar Cafe, a haven of productivity and relaxation. Europcar Cafe offers a unique array of amenities completely complimentary and tailored for SMEs, startups, and professionals seeking to enhance their creativity, productivity, and collaboration.

It is open on Thursdays 10am - 5 pm with a prior reservation. Guests can delight in unlimited complimentary coffees (amazing choices) & Karak Chai's, indulge in cold drinks at the juice bar, savour a variety of snacks and access high speed WiFi!

A pioneering initiative that aims to provide professionals with a harmonious blend of work and relaxation in a vibrant and stimulating environment. Guests are invited to immerse themselves in a rejuvenating experience like no other, all while enjoying the full range of facilities available.

The Europcar Cafe is equipped with cutting-edge features, including a Gaming Lounge that offers activities such as Table Tennis, Billiards, PS5 gaming, Chess, Carom, Darts, Board games, Golf Putting Green etc. Whether guests wish to engage in physical activities or stimulate their minds, Europcar Cafe provides a diverse range of options to cater to every preference.

Moreover, the Europcar Cafe boasts a fully fitted gym for fitness enthusiasts, along with a serene Yoga Studio for those seeking inner peace and relaxation. Locker & Shower facility is also available. Additionally, guests can unwind on a massage chair, bask in the calming ambience of waterfalls, and draw inspiration from the picturesque greens and water bodies that envelop Europcar Cafe.

SMEs and Startup's can even use the Europcar Café Boardroom equipped with the state of audio-visual capabilities, providing an ideal setting to host their management Meetings and/or Pitch Perfect to impress Venture Capital Firms and make client presentations.

"We are thrilled to introduce Europcar Cafe, a transformative initiative that redefines the conventional workspace. Our goal is to create a haven where productivity seamlessly intertwines with relaxation, offering professionals a space to thrive and be inspired," said Nitin Sapre, CEO of Europcar Oman & Bahrain.

OMANI WOMEN'S DAY

Bank Muscat organises special event for female customers and employees

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, organised a special event celebrating Omani Women's Day attended by Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, and a number of female customers and employees.

During the event, Rehab Sharif, Human Development and Self-awareness Consultant, delivered a seminar titled "A Joyful Life", which focused on the importance of promoting awareness, understanding the changing dynamics of the world and the tools of sustainable happiness and how to best incorporate them to bring joy into one's life.

During her opening speech, Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "The previous few years have witnessed great



growth in women's empowerment, with more opportunities and leadership roles reflecting our country's enlightened vision. Bank Muscat prioritises Omani women's personal and professional development. Women have played a vital role in the Bank's journey, contributing significantly to the



Bank's prosperity over the last 40 years. We have also exerted our efforts to provide a diverse range of banking facilities and services to our female customers. We are proud of the important contribution that our female employees play in the Bank's different departments and divisions."

Ilham Al Hamaid commended Omani women on this day, wishing them well and success in their efforts to support the Sultanate's development goals. She emphasized the importance of Omani women as a fundamental part of society, stating: "Their success benefits the entire community. We hope that this occasion will continue to serve as a foundation for future successes and accomplishments."

Women assume various leadership positions at Bank Muscat and have built successful careers. During its march spanning four decades, the Bank has been keen since its inception to empower Omani women by providing them with various career, training and study opportunities. Bank Muscat is dedicated to delivering services and benefits specifically designed for women, well-received

and valued by customers for their alignment with diverse banking requirements. The Bank presents distinctive offerings intended to enhance women's lives across different spheres. Moreover, women represent a substantial portion of the Bank's customers, encompassing female entrepreneurs catered to by the Najahi Business Banking Unit. This initiative aims to foster the growth and enhancement of their ventures. Additionally, the Al Wathba Academy offers training programmes to empower women in developing their businesses, enabling their active involvement in bolstering the national economy. It is also worthy to note that Bank Muscat won Best Places to Work Award from a prestigious institution, which enhances its pioneering role in providing an exemplary work environment.

ADVENTURE MEETS INNOVATION

All-new Jetour T2 8AT set to redefine SUV driving in Oman

MUSCAT: The highly anticipated all new Jetour T2 8AT is set to redefine SUV driving in Oman, bringing cutting-edge technology, enhanced comfort, and an exhilarating driving experience to local roads. As part of the Jetour Plus Series, the T2 seamlessly blends modern luxury with rugged capability, perfect for those who crave exploration without compromising on style or comfort.

Derived from the words "Jet" and "Tour," which symbolize convenience and travel in Mandarin, the Jetour brand is committed to crafting top-tier SUVs that turn everyday journeys into seamless experiences. The Jetour T2 8 AT encapsulates the brand's core values—style, intelligence, spaciousness, and versatility—while ca-

tering to drivers seeking modern amenities, comfort, and a touch of accessible luxury.

Modern driving innovation

The new Jetour T2 8AT is more than just an SUV; it's a symbol of modern driving innovation. China's first 8-speed automatic transmission is now standard, featuring electronic shift, stop-start functionality, and advanced calibration technology to optimize fuel economy and power performance. This transmission, with its wide speed ratio range of 7.80, ensures smooth and efficient transitions, whether cruising on highways or tackling off-road terrain.

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles, expressed his enthusiasm for the introduc-



tion of the Jetour T2 8AT and remarked, "The Jetour T2 8AT represents a new era of SUV driving in Oman, combining luxury, technology,

and performance in one dynamic package. At MHD, we are committed to bringing world-class vehicles to our customers, and the Je-

tour T2 8AT is a testament to that vision. We believe this vehicle will resonate with drivers who seek adventure, comfort, and innovation in equal measure."

Built with adventure in mind, the T2's X-Wheel Drive system (an advanced form of four-wheel drive) offers seamless transitions between two-wheel and four-wheel drive, thanks to center and rear limited-slip differentials. Drivers can easily switch between eight driving modes, with animated displays on a 15.6-inch touchscreen to enhance the experience.

The Jetour T2 8 AT is powered by a robust 2.0-liter 4-cylinder petrol engine, delivering 254 horsepower and 390 Nm of torque, making it the ideal companion for city driving or off-road

escapades. With seat massage functionality, an automatic anti-glare rearview mirror, and practical touches like a bar that locks the back door in place, the T2 combines thoughtful design with state-of-the-art technology.

The vehicle also boasts thoughtful interior features, such as open cup holders, a Bluetooth speaker holder, and smartly designed cubby spaces. These features, along with the smooth power delivery and advanced engineering, ensure a comfortable, practical, and enjoyable journey.

Whether you're a city driver seeking elegance or an adventurer ready to tackle rugged landscapes, the Jetour T2 8 AT international 8 AT promises to take your driving experience to new heights.



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flag has 12
stars placed in
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