

HM SENDS CABLE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA PRESIDENT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Zeljko Komsic of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to the president and his country's people. — **ONA**



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HM THE SULTAN CONGRATULATES THE PRESIDENT OF SURINAME

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Chan Santokhi of the Republic of Suriname on his country's Independence Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to the president and his country's people. — **ONA**



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PRINCE WILLIAM RECEIVES HIS HIGHNESS SAYYID THEYAZIN

LONDON: Prince William of Wales received in Windsor Castle on Friday His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said.

The meeting reviewed relations of friendship and cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, as well as means of promoting these in different areas to serve the joint interests.

The two sides also discussed various topics of mutual interest. - **ONA**

GERMANY PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO OMAN BEGINS ON MONDAY

The visit will explore the joint areas of cooperation that serve the two countries' interests and aspirations



MUSCAT: President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Federal Republic of Germany will pay an official visit on Monday to the Sultanate of Oman.

A statement was issued by the Diwan of Royal Court to this effect. It reads as follows: "In reiteration of the Royal keenness attached by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to hold meet-

ings with world leaders to discuss regional situations and finding ways that maintain global peace and harmony, President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Federal Republic of Germany will pay an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman with effect from Monday 27/11/2023 till Wednes-

day 29/11/2023.

Advanced relations

The visit reflects the advanced relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The visit will explore the joint areas of cooperation that serve

the two countries' interests and aspirations.

It will also discuss the current regional issues.

May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan and grant him success for the good of his people and the world at large!"

— **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN A crowning moment for Oman's Rumaitha

1 Oman's multifaceted trailblazer, Rumaitha Al Busaidi's diverse roles as the first female football analyst, marine scientist, climate activist, TED Talk speaker, and Arab women's rights advocate have earned her a well-deserved spot among global achievers in 2023 BBC 100 Women list. **>A2**

OMAN This is just the beginning: Al Rawahi

2 In a stunning turn of events in November 2023, Oman's Abdullah Al Rawahi realised his rallying dream by clinching a historic FIA Middle East Rally Championship title, sharing the honour with his childhood hero, Al Attiyah. This achievement carved a new chapter in rallying history. **>A5**

WORLD 28 Palestinian detainees released

3 A total of 28 released Palestinian detainees were taken from Israeli prisons to the West Bank on Friday, according to the news agency. Another 11 detainees were taken to east Jerusalem, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club advocacy group. **>A7**

LONG WEEKEND

Chill vibes: Cool weather adds to joy during National Day holidays

MUSCAT: The refreshing cool weather became a catalyst, accentuating the jubilation of the National Day holidays in Oman over a long weekend.

The weekend, which began on Wednesday, November 22, and concluded on Saturday, November 25, witnessed cool breezes sweeping across the Sultanate.

It seemed to breathe new life into the celebrations, elevating the spirits of both locals and residents alike. The temperate climate served as an inviting embrace, encouraging people to relish the festivities with added vigour and enthusiasm.

From bustling tourist spots to serene getaways, the cool weather intertwined seamlessly with the holiday ambience, fostering a sense of delight and contentment among all who embraced it.

The holidays marked by an unprecedented surge of activity across renowned tourist destinations, painted a vibrant tapestry of leisure and engagement, unseen in recent times.

As Oman's extended weekend came to a close, the eve of Sunday witnessed bustling shopping malls packed with last-minute shoppers, setting alarms and making essential purchases, preparing for the return to work on Sunday.

Notably, the Oman Across Ages Museum emerged as a pre-



ferred destination, drawing more than 23,000 eager visitors over the extended break.

Public beaches teemed with enthusiastic crowds while iconic locales such as Al Jabal Al Akhdar, Sharqiyah Sands, Wadi Shab, Sink Hole, and several picturesque picnic spots recorded a remarkable influx of visitors.

Al Jabal Al Akhdar stood as another beacon of attraction, witnessing an influx of thousands of visitors, prompting duseitD2 Naseem Resort officials to declare a sold-out status on two days.

Jagdeep Thakral, General Manager of duseitD2 Naseem Resort, remarked, "These days have showcased exceptional instances of staycations. We were

at full occupancy on Wednesday and Thursday, with a commendable turnout on Friday. Our Adventure Park has become a local favourite, drawing families seeking leisure and adventure. A mere two-and-a-half-hour drive from Muscat, Al Jabal Al Akhdar indeed stands as the perfect getaway."

A procession of four-wheel vehicles streamed towards Jabal Akhdar on Wednesday, mirroring the influx witnessed en route to Sharqiyah Sands.

Meanwhile, amidst the holiday fervour, a tragic road accident in Dhofar Governorate claimed the lives of six Arab nationals, serving as a stark reminder of the importance of safety during travels. **>A3**



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Truly a crowning moment for me: Rumaitha

Omani scientist included in 2023 BBC 100 Women list of influential and inspiring women

MUSCAT: In the illustrious cohort of the 2023 BBC 100 Women list, featuring Nobel Prize laureates, World Cup champions, renowned actresses, former dignitaries, and entrepreneurs, stands Oman's multifaceted trailblazer, Rumaitha Al Busaidi.

Her diverse roles as the first female football analyst, marine scientist, climate activist, TED Talk speaker, and Arab women's rights advocate have earned her a well-deserved spot among global achievers.

Delighted by the acknowledgment from BBC, Rumaitha told Times of Oman: "This inclusion in the prestigious BBC 100 Women list is truly a crowning moment for me. It's a testament to the culmination of my relentless dedication across various domains."

A roller-coaster ride

Reflecting on her journey, she added, "It's not merely about soaring in your journey but embracing every obstacle encountered. It hasn't been an easy path—it's been a roller-coaster ride of sleepless nights, relentless commitment to opportunities, and grappling with moments of burnout."

"Yet, my quest to find purpose continues, aimed at being a role model for Omani and Arab women, advocating the pursuit of multiple aspirations and achieving excellence in diverse fields."

To share the list with attorney and former US First Lady



“This inclusion in the prestigious BBC 100 Women list is truly a crowning moment for me. It’s a testament to the culmination of my relentless dedication across various domains

Rumaitha Al Busaidi

Michelle Obama, human rights lawyer Amal Clooney, Ballon d'Or-winning and World Cup winning footballer Aitana Bonmati, India women's cricket team skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, AI expert Timnit Gebru, feminist icon Gloria Steinem, Nobel Prize winner in economics Claudia Goldin, Hollywood star America Ferrera, Bollywood actress Dia Mirza, and beauty mogul Huda Kattan, is a reflection of the work and contribution of Rumaitha to the society.

Rumaitha did her graduation from the Netherlands, and is passionate about Arab women's rights. She also served the Environment Society of Oman and is a

board member of the Oman Fencing Committee.

The BBC citation for Rumaitha read: "Women and Girls, You Are Part of the Climate Solution is the title of Omani scientist Rumaitha Al Busaidi's 2021 TED Talk, which has garnered more than a million views and reflects her championing of Arab women's rights. Al Busaidi's expertise has led to her position on the Arab Youth Council for Climate Change and the Environment Society of Oman."

"She has also advised the Biden administration on delivering climate-informed foreign aid, and the government of Greenland on sustainable tourism. She is the youngest Omani woman to reach

the South Pole and the founder of WomeX, a platform to help Arab women develop business negotiation skills."

Speaking to BBC, Rumaitha said: "The No.1 solution to overcome climate change is to empower women and girls. The multiplier effect they have across their communities will change perceptions and actions and protect this place we call home."

What is 100 Women?

BBC 100 Women names 100 influential and inspiring women around the world every year. BBC creates documentaries, features and interviews about their lives - stories that put women at the cen-

tre and are published and broadcast on all BBC platforms.

How were the 100 Women chosen?

The BBC 100 Women team drew up a shortlist based on names they gathered through research and those suggested by the BBC's network of World Service Languages teams, as well as BBC Media Action.

BBC looked for candidates who had made headlines or influenced important stories over the past 12 months, as well as those who have inspiring stories to tell, or have achieved something significant or influenced their societies in ways that wouldn't

NUMBER OF PAPERS PRESENTED

Ministry of Education holds training workshop to measure reading skills

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Studies and Statistical Data, in cooperation with the Arabic Language Learning Evaluation Department, held a training workshop to discuss the results of the international study to measure reading skills PIRLS 2021.

The workshop targeted specialists in the Arabic language, and the first field teachers, supervisors, curriculum and evaluation specialists, and training experts, in addition to first-cycle school administrations and administrative supervisors.

The workshop saw presentation of a number of papers. Fathia Al Maawli, Director of Studies and Statistical Data Department, presented a paper on the general results of Oman, with a compara-



tive study of to previous sessions. The second paper was titled "Ways to provide students of the first cycle with reading comprehension skills according to the International Study for Measuring Reading Skills, PIRLS 2021" and was presented by Dr. Mahfouz Al Shayadi, a senior learning assessment specialist. The third paper discussed the school environment and its impact on student achievement in the International

Study for Measuring Reading Skills, PIRLS 2021, presented by Mansour Al Faliti, a senior international studies specialist.

During the course of the workshop, the experiences of two schools - Rawdat Al-Albab School (1-4) from the North Al Batinah Governorate, and Al-Irada School (1-4) from the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate - that achieved outstanding results in the study were reviewed.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Deal inked to support Oman School Sports Association

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education recently signed an agreement with Zaahib Foods Company (Barzman) to provide services and funding to the Omani School Sports Association (OSSA).

The agreement was signed by Hisham Al Adwani, OSSA vice-chairman and Ahmed Al Hajri, Barzman general manager, in the presence of Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary for Education at the ministry, and OSSA, Fahad Al Mashaikhi, OSSA secretary-general.

The pact seeks cooperation in holding a school basketball championship, supplying the OSSA and its committees with Barzman brand drinking water, and cooperation in implementing the Barzman running race for the students of the first cycle education.



Ambosaidi said: "This agreement comes as part of the strategic direction of the Oman School Sports Association in partnerships, as it has many activities and events. The presence of such partnerships with major companies strengthens and helps in implementation as the school sector is large. We started this partnership last year, and it continues to its second year, and we hope that it will continue for years to come.

We also wish success to everyone, the company, and the union's employees in implementing what was agreed upon."

Al Hajri said: "In confirmation of the community support strategy in the areas adopted by Zaahib Foods Company, we intend to renew the cooperation agreement with the Omani School Sports Association by implementing a group of sporting events and activities that serve students of different age groups."

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Rainfall forecast over parts of the Sultanate

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The latest aerial photos show rain clouds over Musandam Governorate, with thunderstorms of varying intensity falling over the north of the governorate (Wilayat Khasab), which may be accompanied by a decrease in horizontal visibility at times, Oman Meteorology asked people to exercise caution.

Northern Governorates

According to Oman Meteorology, Saturday's weather forecast is mainly clear skies to partly cloudy over most of the Northern Governorates with a chance for isolated rain along the coastal areas of Musandam governorate and Oman Sea.

"There is the chance of low clouds or fog patches at late night to early morning along parts of the Arabian Sea and Al Dakhiliyah, Al Buraimi and Al Dhahirah governorates. With Chances of dust raising winds over desert areas of Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates."



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A big leap towards technological innovation in electoral process

The ground-breaking event utilised an AI-powered mobile application named “Intakhib,” allowing voters to conveniently cast their ballots

MUSCAT: A monumental achievement unfolded in the Sultanate of Oman as citizens enthusiastically participated in the Tenth term of Shura Council elections (2023-2027), marking an unprecedented milestone as the region's first fully-digitised election.

The ground-breaking event utilised an AI-powered mobile application named "Intakhib," allowing voters to conveniently cast their ballots.

The elections, held on October 29, 2023, witnessed a remarkable increase in voter turnout across the Sultanate, attributed to the user-friendly Intakhb app. The digital format, including the use of wireless mobile technology and innovative features like near field communication, audio reading, and sign language support for voters with disabilities, contributed to the success of the election.

Notably, overseas Omani voters participated earlier on October 22, showcasing the efficiency of the electronic voting system. The election recorded an impressive 65.88 percent voter turnout, with nearly



500,000 out of 753,260 registered voters exercising their right to vote for candidates competing for the 90 seats in the Shura Council. The results saw 61 new candidates elected.

A total of 843 candidates, including 32 women, contested the elections. Although women constituted 48 percent of the total number of voters, no female candidate could win a seat in the council.

This turnout marked the highest in 12 years, underscoring the growing civic consciousness and enthusiasm among citizens to actively engage in the democratic process.

The surge in voter turnout, a significant improvement from previous elections, reflected citizens' growing awareness and enthusiasm for participating in the democratic process and is a positive indicator of public engagement.

According to statistics available, voter participation was the highest in 2011 when there was a turnout of 77 percent. The turnout in 2015 came down to 57 percent, out of some 612,000 registered voters and fell yet again to 49 percent in 2019, out of some 713,000 registered voters.

This year's election saw the number of those who cast their vote increased by roughly 150,000 compared to the previous election, while the number of registered voters surged by around 40,000.

The Intakhapp app streamlined various election processes, including candidacy registration, social engagement of voters, and vote counting, all conducted digitally. The transparency of the election was ensured by minimising human intervention and implementing digital monitoring. Additionally, measures were in place to

address any potential injustices, allowing appeals and complaints to be submitted electronically.

The success of the digitisation process was evident in the reduction of dedicated staff from 8,000 to 500, and the elimination of physical polling stations. This marked a significant improvement over the previous election, where 110 polling stations were set up.

Nasser Al Balushi, a voter, highlighted the convenience of the digital approach, and said: "It saved time and allowed me to cast my vote from my office in Muscat."

On November 9, Khalid bin Hilal Al Mawaali was re-elected as the Majlis Al Shura Chairman for the fourth successive term while two new deputy chairmen, Taher bin Mabkhout Al Junaibi and Said bin Hamad Al Saadi, were also elected.

Despite the overall success of the digitised election, the absence of female candidates elected to the Shura Council raises pertinent questions about gender representation.

The Shura Council, established in 1991, remains a key component of Oman's governance structure, with members elected for a four-year term and the authority to review, propose, and amend public and economic policies.

Oman's commitment to digital transformation in elections aligns with its Vision 2040 initiative, underscoring transparency, social participation, and individual voting rights.

The Shura Council election, the second nationwide electronic election, follows the municipal election in December 2022, and it reinforces Oman's position as a pioneer in embracing digital democracy within the GCC.

It is important to note the historical context, acknowledging Oman's journey towards democratisation, including granting women the right to vote and seek public office in 1994.

The Shura Council, alongside the appointed State Council, forms the "Council of Oman," representing the nation's only national body entirely comprised of democratically elected members.

The fully-digitised Shura Council elections in Oman signify a significant leap towards technological innovation in the electoral process, reflecting the nation's commitment to democratic values and civic engagement.

IDEAL CLIMATE

Cool weather adds to joy during National Day holidays



< FROM **A1** The 53rd National Day holiday, spanning from Wednesday, November 22 to Saturday, November 25, marked a time of varied experiences for many individuals.

Seema Panjak, a homemaker from India, reflected on her family trip to Al Jabal Al Akhdar, highlighting the ideal climate for barbecues and serene moments at Naseem dushiD2 Naseem Resort. Khoulou Al Balushi from the Wilayat of Mussanah shared her Dubai trip experience, reveling in quality family time amid the city's vibrant malls and returning with cherished household items.

Public parks, beaches, restaurants, cafes, hotels, and farmhouses in and around Barka

flourished during the holiday, witnessing a surge in activity.

As the holiday ebbs away, Sultan Al Abri, a private sector professional, prepares to return to work after spending cherished moments with family in his mountainous village near Hamra. He noted the pleasant weather and observed the bustling activity in nearby hotels and resorts, signifying a spirited holiday season.

Hotel industry executives admitted a rise in occupancy rates in various locales like Jabal Akhdar, Jabal Shams, Jabel Sifah, Ras Al Hadd, and Sharqiyah Sands, attributing this trend to the growing popularity of staycations and the burgeoning domestic tourism sector.

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NEW INVESTMENTS FOSTERING GROWTH IN AL WUSTA GOVERNORATE

Al Wusta Governorate is witnessing comprehensive development in its four wilayats of Haima, Mahut, Al Duqm and Al Jazir

HAIMA: The 53rd Glorious National Day is very important for Omanis as they celebrate the past achievements of the year and aspire for more achievements in the years to come under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Within the keenness of His Majesty the Sultan for the development of all governorates of the Sultanate, Al Wusta Governorate is witnessing comprehensive development in the era of the Renewed Renaissance in its four wilayats of Haima, Mahut, Al Duqm and Al Jazir.

Al Wusta Governorate accommodates the Special Economic Zone – Duqm, the vital industrial and investment centre, which plays a vital role in achieving the targets of Oman Vision 2040. The governorate saw, last October, the opening of the First Economic Forum in Duqm, under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth. The forum discussed several issues related to investment in green industries and the opportunities available for SMEs.

The economic projects in Duqm have witnessed investments in various sectors. The investments of OQ Group and its partners in Duqm amounted to over \$10 billion. Among them are Ras Markaz Project for storage and export of oil with 100 percent Omani investments, and the investment for the supply of gas from Fahud to Al Duqm.

The Special Economic Zone – Duqm accommodates the Dry-dock project of Asyad group.

Duqm Airport started its operation in 2014 and 50,892 passengers used the airport from January to September of the current year within the Sultanate of

Oman and abroad and the number of flights amounted to 595 during the same period.

The Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Wusta Governorate is offering agricultural lands to be utilised in this field. The area of such lands amounted to 200 feddans in 2023 as part of the food security projects and the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Bakhit bin Amer Al Ameri, Director of Heritage and Tourism Department in Al Wusta Governorate, said that the governorate offers a number of options for tourists for exercise and entertainment.

These options include beaches, wadis, water streams and islands, he added.

Information boards

Bakhit bin Salim Al Awa'eid, Director of Road Department in Al Wusta Governorate, said that the department carries out periodical maintenance of all road networks in the Governorate and has recently installed information boards at all points.

Rashid bin Said Al Kindi, Director General of Al Wusta Municipality, said that the governorate has prepared an annual plan for construction of development projects in the various wilayats of the governorate.

Salim bin Ali Al Shahri, Director of the Department of the Authority of SME Development in Al Wusta Governorate, said that the number of entrepreneurs in the governorate registered with the Authority of SME Development amounted to 2,807 while the number of entrepreneurs holding Riyada business cards stood at 486.

Saleh bin Ali Al Ma'ani, Director of the Culture, Sports and Youth Department in Al Wusta Governorate, said that the Governorate has Al Wusta Sports Club, Sports Centre in Mahut and a number of sports lounges in the wilayats of Haima, Mahut and Al Jazir.

Reem bint Ibrahim Al Har-soussi, Chairperson of the Omani Women Association, in the Wilayat of Haima, said that the association contributes to the community development march and spreads awareness about the health services and social services to society.

Dr. Ibrahim bin Hilal Al Mah-rooqi, Director General at the Directorate General of Health Services in Al Wusta Governorate, said that a dialysis unit was opened last March at Al Jazir Hospital.





This is just the beginning: Al Rawahi



Abdullah Al Rawahi and Qatar's Nasser Al Attiyah were declared joint winners of the 2023 FIA Middle East Rally

MUSCAT: As a teenager, Oman's Abdullah Al Rawahi was enthralled by the legendary exploits of rally driver Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah of Qatar, a stalwart at regional and global rally events. Al Attiyah stood as an emblem in the world of rallying when Al Rawahi began his rallying career in 2017, marking him as one of his earliest inspirations.

In a stunning turn of events in November 2023, Al Rawahi realised his rallying dream by clinching a historic FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC) title, sharing the honour with his childhood hero, Al Attiyah.

This monumental achievement not only secured Oman's first-ever FIA MERC crown but also carved a new chapter in Oman's rallying history. Al Rawahi, alongside co-driver Ata Al Hmoud of Jordan, delivered an exceptional season with sensational runs, resulting in unprecedented rally victories—feats unparalleled by any Omani driver in a single season.

The much-anticipated decision on the 2023 FIA Middle East Rally Championship's (MERC) Drivers' and Co-drivers' titles was finalised by the world governing body, FIA, last week. After a dead heat following the final round in Cyprus last month, the FIA proclaimed joint winners—Al Attiyah and co-driver Mathieu Baumel of France alongside Al Rawahi and navigator Ata Al-Hmoud.



The championship awards are slated to be presented at the FIA's official prize-giving ceremony in Baku, Azerbaijan, on December 8, 2023.

An elated Al Rawahi shared his thoughts with Times of Oman after being declared the MERC joint champions. He said: "This year has been phenomenal. Raising Oman's flag in this prestigious championship is a moment of immense pride. Our team's sheer determination, despite a limited budget, resulted in two rally wins and two runner-up finishes out of five rallies. The MERC title and also becoming the youngest winner fills me with immense joy. However, this is just the beginning. Our ambitions are set high, aiming to excel in more significant rallies."

Expressing hope for increased support following this title win, Al Rawahi aims to venture into the World Rally Championship (WRC) and other prestigious

championships, aspiring to conquer bigger rallies like the Rally Raid Championship. He extended gratitude to sponsors and the team for their unwavering support through a season marked by highs and lows.

Acknowledging the shared honour with Al Attiyah, Al Rawahi expressed, "While our aspiration was to claim the championship outright, sharing this title with the legendary Nasser is an extraordinary achievement."

Al Rawahi attributed his success to his father, Suleiman Al Rawahi, who also serves as the team manager. "Without his support since our early days in go-karting, this wouldn't have been possible. His unwavering support has brought us a long way," Al Rawahi added gratefully.

Suleiman Al Rawahi expressed immense pride in Abdullah's accomplishments, highlighting the team's dedication and the invaluable

partnership with navigator Ata Al Hmoud.

Suleiman said: "Abdullah has proved his credentials at some of the toughest tracks. To be the first Omani to win the MERC title is a result of his hard work and dedication of the team. We hope that the relevant authorities and officials in Oman take note of the historic win and helps in getting more support for Abdullah to take up bigger challenges ahead."

Tied on 108 points apiece

The tied score of 108 points each between Al Rawahi-Al Hmoud and Al Attiyah-Baumel led to the unprecedented joint declaration of winners by the FIA.

The two crews were tied after five rounds of the championship in Oman, Qatar, Jordan, Lebanon and Cyprus and both teams earned two wins, a pair of second-placed finishes and had one retirement.

The FIA Regional Rally Sport-

ing Regulations stipulate that in the event of such a tie, the FIA itself will decide the winner and decide between any tying drivers and co-drivers, on the basis of whatever considerations it deems appropriate.

A six-man committee consisting of Sheikh Abdullah Al Khalifa (Vice-President for Sport - Middle East), Jarmo Mahonen (President of the Rally Commission), Petter Solberg (Vice-President of the Drivers' Commission), and former WRC driver and current ERC champion Hayden Paddon, supported by Jérôme Roussel and Andrew Wheatley from the FIA Rally Department, decided to award the titles jointly in the absence of clear regulations and insufficient criteria to decide otherwise.

Suggestions were put to the Rally Commission to amend the 2024 Regional Rally Sporting Regulations to prevent such an occurrence happening again.

The Rally Commission has now approved the option put forward by both Solberg and Paddon, whereby the deciding factor should be the result of the last round of the championship, then the penultimate round and so on. This will be put to the World Motor Sports Council in December.

This is the first time in the history of the MERC where a title has been awarded jointly. Al Rawahi - who secured wins in Oman and Jordan - will collect a first ever Drivers' Championship.

Al Attiyah won his home rally in Qatar and the final round in Cyprus and has now earned a record-breaking 19 regional MERC titles.

The history-making Qatari will collect an unprecedented three trophies in Baku. The five-time Dakar Rally winner also won the overall drivers' titles in the 2023 FIA World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) and the 2023 FIA World Cup for Cross-Country Bajas.

Khazaen Economic City

OMR37mn animal feed factory to come up in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of the efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman to enhance food security, the Omani Bioproducts Company intends to support the construction of a factory for the production of animal feed for aquatic organisms. At an investment cost of OMR37 million, the company will be estab-

lishing a factory in three phases in Khazaen Economic City. The tender for the construction work of the factory was issued in June of this year, and it is expected that the construction work will be awarded before the end of this year. Nine local companies have made bids for the work, while the project's equipment and machinery have started arriving.

The project aims to benefit from agricultural and biological by-products, transforming them into specialised value-added products, and recycle date by-products, which include date kernels, pulp, and palm fronds. The project will produce about 100,000 tonnes annually of alternative grass feed made from agricultural residues enriched with

dates, and about 300,000 tonnes annually of marine life feeds for culture of shrimp and fish in cages. The project will use locally available raw materials to cover the needs of newly established food security projects in the field of red meat, dairy products, aquaculture and marine agriculture, in addition to serving the export market.

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Oman Across Ages Museum receives over 23,700 visitors during holidays

The museum also had organised a number of training programmes during the 53rd National Day holiday

MANAH: Oman Across Ages Museum received over 23,700 visitors from within the Sultanate of Oman and abroad in the Wilayat of Manah during the 53rd National Day holiday. Muznah bint Suliaman Al Hosni, media administrator at Oman Across Ages Museum, said that the management of the museum was all set to receive the visitors during the holiday. All necessary actions were taken to extend the visiting hours. Additional employees were deputed to enable the visitors to enter the museum and acquaint themselves with the history of Oman and the blessed renaissance. She said that the museum organised a number of training programmes during the 53rd National Day holiday. She reaffirmed that the museum aimed to facilitate ticketing in the upcoming period through a number of online services which would be available for the visitors soon. The museum is open for public from Saturday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm and on Friday from 1:30pm to 7pm. — ONA



AIRPORTS INNOVATE CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

Forum discusses latest trends and developments in airports sector

MUSCAT: Various attendees and participants concluded the final sessions of the Airports Innovate Conference & Exhibition, which took place from 21 to 22 November at the Oman Conference and Exhibition Centre, in Muscat. The conference was hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, represented by Oman Airports, with co-operation by the Airports Council International (ACI). During the conference, participants discussed various papers on the latest trends, developments, and technological innovations in the airports sector through a series of informative panel discussions. In addition, a total of fourteen international organizations showcased their latest airports/aviation products at an exhibition held alongside the conference. Local start-up companies were also present to display their innovations. The second day of the exhibition included sessions on brand strategy and innovation, which focused and highlighted the airport sector's goal to build increasingly customer focused brands. These sessions aligned with the current trend in the aviation sector to frame international airports as attractive gateways to the destinations that the traveller is arriving at. They also aligned with the trend of airport operators' investing in marketing strategies and brand-building in order to establish themselves and their airports as reputable brands. An increasing number of airports are moving beyond traditional marketing approaches, and adopting new and creative strategies to better serve their travellers. With this in mind, the Airports Innovate participants shed light on the efforts exerted by their airports towards digitalization, with the aim to create a more dynamic and attractive airport environ-



ment for passengers. The participants also discussed Loyalty Programmes, which despite being considered with less interest in the past, have resurfaced as a major opportunity to create a positive perception of the airport brand among passengers and target audiences. Currently, an increasing number of airports are leveraging the power of innovative marketing and brand-building exercises to engage their passengers and airport users. Reflecting this trend, the conference participants discussed ways in which airports could create an inspiring and uplifting airport environment and passenger experience through the use of art and culture installations. These efforts – and others – have the potential to create long-lasting positive impressions about an airport, in addition to increasing revenue. Additional sessions were held on topics such as comprehensive digitalisation processes; operational excellence; data-use and data security; the enhancement of the passenger travel experience inside the airport; revenue generation/flow and the reduction of operational costs; carbon emission goals; and connectivity as an im-

portant strategic production asset for airports. Another session discussed the role of airports in establishing laboratories and innovation centres – with the aim to support the development of new technologies, as well as new business and marketing practices through start-up companies, SMEs and entrepreneurs. The participants proposed that significant progress could be achieved in these fields if innovation centres were established at airports as testing grounds for various technology and innovation projects (with the best projects being awarded sponsorships and support by the appropriate stakeholder). Furthermore, the participants concluded that innovation will enable airports to remain at the forefront of the sector's current technological revolution, while enhancing potential benefits for aviation in the future. One of the sessions also highlighted the issue of risk management, in terms of achieving sustainability and resilience in airport operations. Among the topics discussed were renewable energy, water conservation, and waste management – which have

the potential to reduce all possible risks while enhancing airport resilience. Various scenarios relating to natural disasters, terrorism, and cyber threats were also looked at; and participants explored each of these in terms of risk management and insurance in mitigating their impacts. Modern airport infrastructure is now on the cusp of being able to transform to green carbon, which will contribute to the elimination of legacy carbon pollution in aviation. The conference thus highlighted various sources that would help airports around the world to identify the most efficient and effective means to make this transition. The conference also shed light on the role played by Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the airports and aviation industry – which is considered a new opportunity for airport management companies to boost revenues from sources outside the airport sector. Participants discussed the importance of utilizing technologies such as AI to help generate enhanced retail, food, and entertainment services in line with passengers' profiling and preferences. Additionally, it was pointed out that AI can sup-

port the redesign of dynamic digital marketing platforms, allowing airports to synchronize sales and offers with passenger flows, seasonal attractions and trends, and other data sources. (With the vast potential of AI, airport managers can also look to enhance entertainment, services and promotional offers, and benefit from the associated revenue generation). The conference further addressed the impact of carbon footprints associated with baggage handling – and pointed out that it is now necessary to prevent this impact as a step to get rid of carbon completely. The discussion session also looked at technology as one of the main means by which a hassle-free transport system inside the airport can be achieved. This technology can be implemented through innovative solutions to ease the travel experience of passengers with disabilities and limited mobility; and as a move towards making the overall travel experience smoother and more convenient. One of the sessions confirmed technological advancement and automation has the potential to reduce pressures on working teams inside the airport, and to therefore enhance productivity and efficiency. However, it was also confirmed that the "human touch" in the form of a traditional workforce will always be essential to the airport's efficient functioning. In this regard, HR experts from around the globe were invited to share their initiatives to ensure work force future preparedness in aviation. This important point was discussed in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, wherein many experienced professionals in aviation were forced to leave their jobs and seek opportunities in other sectors. For the two days of Airports

Innovate, various airport/aviation leaders discussed inclusion of innovation culture inside the airport ecosystem, as well as the challenges associated with this. It was highlighted that inclusion is achieved through encouraging, adopting and embracing innovation at all airport premises, and by maintaining a balance between employing the innovative ideas and adapting them to help the airport flourish in its services and operations. Amidst industry trends and new technologies that are in constant flux, attendees discussed ways to design a smart, green, and expandable airport architecture. This would be supported by drawing on the best experience in the industry, and by using an all-optical network solution and perimeter optical sensor solutions based on service scenarios. One of the participants presented a paper on future airports, and how tomorrow's airports will be designed, with a focus on efficient design, sustainable architecture, self-driving shuttles, and smart infrastructure for seamless connectivity. The conference sessions touched on the role of airport operators in increasing the use of AI and big data in the future to simplify operations and provide an advanced travel experience. It was highlighted that AI is witnessing an increase in its application in many aspects by airports to improve operational efficiency and enhance the passenger experience in general. Some of these applications are chatbots, real-time baggage tracking, facial recognition for check-in and boarding, and predictive data analysis to improve the process. Many expect that AI and big data will certainly play a significant role in driving airport transformation into the future. — ONA

Palestinian families rejoice over release of its minors and women

A total of 150 Palestinian prisoners are expected to be released over the course of a four-day pause in fighting

WEST BANK: A total of 28 released Palestinian detainees were taken from Israeli prisons to the West Bank on Friday, according to the news agency. Another 11 detainees were taken to east Jerusalem, according to the Palestinian Prisoners’ Club advocacy group. A total of 150 Palestinian prisoners are expected to be released over the course of a four-day pause in fighting. According to the Palestinian Prisoners’ Club, Israel is currently holding 7,200 Palestinians, including about 2,000 arrested since October 7. Israeli law allows for holding suspects for months without charge in administrative detention.



Among those released were prisoners arrested for offenses including attempted stabbings, stone throwings at Israeli soldiers or having contacts with hostile organizations, as well as 15 teenagers jailed for offenses including throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. In the West Bank town of Beituna, hundreds of Palestinians poured out of their homes to celebrate, honking horns and setting off fireworks. “I can’t express how I feel. Thank God,” 17-year-old Laith Othman, who was among those released,

told the Reuters news agency. The teenager was detained earlier this year on suspicion of throwing an incendiary device. “The situation inside [prison] is very difficult,” he added as he was carried along the street on another person’s shoulders. Others said they had mixed emotions. “As a Palestinian, my heart is broken for my brothers in Gaza, so I can’t really celebrate,” Abdulqader Khatib, a United Nations worker whose son was also freed on Friday, told the Associated Press.

His 17-year-old son, Iyas, had been taken into administrative detention without charges or trial and held based on secret evidence. “But I am a father. And deep inside, I am very happy,” he said. **Biden welcomes release of hostages from Gaza** US President Joe Biden said the release of the first hostages under the deal between Israel and the militant group Hamas was “a start” and said there were “real” chances to extend the truce in Gaza. The current deal stipulates a

four-day pause in fighting. “We expect more hostages to be released tomorrow, and more the day after, and more the day after that,” Biden said, adding that it was time to “renew” work on creating a two-state solution for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Germans among hostages released from Gaza Four German-Israeli dual nationals were among the hostages released from Gaza on Friday, German media reported. The reports are based on a list of 13 names released by the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, on the sidelines of a Greens’ party conference, confirmed four dual nationals were among those released. “I am immensely relieved that 24 hostages have just been released from Gaza, including four Germans, that a father, after 49 days of hell, of unbelievable anxiety, can finally hold his two little daughters and his wife safely in his arms again,” she said, expressing her thanks to Qatar for its role in negotiating the release as well as Egypt and the International Red Cross. “There are still over 200 wom-

en and men, and especially children, in the hands of Hamas. Our thoughts are with them today and also with their families. As much as this day is a day of hope, it is not a day to breathe a sigh of relief,” Baerbock said. The released hostages whose family members said they had dual citizenship were: Aviv Asher, 2; Raz Asher, 5; and Doron Katz-Asher, 34; as well as Margalit Mozes, 77.

Gaza receives largest aid convoy since October 7 The United Nations said 137 trucks of humanitarian aid were unloaded in Gaza on Friday. “During the humanitarian pause that has been in place since this morning, the UN was able to scale up the delivery of humanitarian assistance into and across Gaza,” the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement. It said 129,000 liters (34,000 gallons) of fuel and four trucks of gas also crossed into Gaza. It was the biggest humanitarian convoy to reach Gaza since October 7, the OCHA said. “Hundreds of thousands of people were assisted with food, water, medical supplies and other essential humanitarian items,” it added. —**dw**

NORTH KOREAN STATE MEDIA



North Korea says satellite has images of ‘target regions’

PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has assessed images captured by the country’s newly unveiled spy satellite, North Korean state media (KCNA) reported on Friday. The report claimed the images were of “major target regions” in South Korea, including sites around the capital, Seoul, and other locations such as Pyeongtaek, Osan, Mokpo and Gunsan, where South Korean and US military bases are located, KCNA’s report said. The images were taken on Friday morning as the satellite passed over the Korean Peninsula on Friday morning, it added. Later Saturday, KCNA also reported that Kim inspected images taken of the US military installations in the Pacific Ocean state of Hawaii, including the naval base at Pearl Harbor and an Air Force base in Honolulu. Earlier this week, North Korea announced that it successfully launched a military spy satellite and placed it into orbit. However, South Korean ana-

lysts have expressed skepticism over North Korea’s claim, and said that its too early to tell if the satellite, named “Malligyong-I,” is even functioning. The launch of the spy satellite has increased tensions between the two Koreas. A five-year-old military pact established to de-escalate tensions in the peninsula was fully suspended by North Korea, and partially suspended by the South, as tensions rose after the launch. South Korea and its allies have condemned the launch of the satellite, with the White House calling it a “brazen violation” of UN sanctions that could destabilize the region. Pyongyang’s satellite launch has also prompted South Korea, Japan and China to hold their first trilateral talks since 2019 in Busan. While Kim celebrated the launch of the satellite and said it is the advent of a “new era of a space power,” he justified the launch as a right to self-defence. —**dw**

FOR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

EU pledges 10mn euros to Afghanistan

KABUL: In order to support the healthcare system and combat infectious diseases in Afghanistan at a time when the country is facing an economic crisis under the Taliban, the European Union has pledged 10 million euros to the World Health Organization (WHO) to aid the country, Pajhwok News reported. The funding will improve preparedness and response systems for future disease outbreaks as well as health and nutrition emergencies, according to a statement issued by the EU office in Kabul on Thursday. The long-lasting cooperation between the EU and WHO has

contributed to stronger and more resilient health care in Afghanistan, it said. The increased financing is intended to improve health care in all 34 provinces, benefiting almost 2 million people. The additional funding expands on the previous EU-WHO collaboration in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by integrating and improving diagnostic and infectious disease management and response in Afghanistan, the EU stated, according to Pajhwok News. Since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, the country’s economic situation has deteriorated. —**ANI**

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Air pollution killed hundreds of thousands in the EU in 2021

BRUSSELS: Air quality in Europe still falls short of WHO recommendations, with three main polluters — fine particulate matter, ozone and nitrogen-dioxide — causing hundreds of thousands of premature deaths in the EU in 2021 alone, according to a report published on Friday by the European Environment Agency. Air pollution is “still the number one environmental health problem in the EU,” European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevicius said, commenting on the report.

Poland loses 47,000 lives to small particle pollution The report found that 253,000 deaths could be attributed to fine particulate matter, small particles mostly created by gas-powered cars or coal-operated power plants. The particles are able to enter the respiratory tract and exacerbate the risk of lung disease.



They also increase the threat of heart disease, strokes, and diabetes. Fine particulate matter claimed the most lives in Poland (47,300), Italy (46,800), and Germany (32,300). Further, 52,000 lives were claimed across the EU by nitrogen-dioxide, which is mostly produced by transport and can harm people’s lungs while also raising the risk of diabetes. Short-term

ozone pollution was responsible for 22,000 deaths across the bloc. Ozone can impair breathing, aggravate lung diseases such as asthma, and inflame and damage the airways. EU experts noted that the number of deaths caused by this type of pollution had dropped by 41% since 2005. But the 2021 numbers show it is still a serious problem, they said. “The good news is that clean air

policy works, and our air quality is improving,” Sinkevicius said. “But we need to do better still, and bring pollution levels down further,” he added, calling for the EU to quickly adopt and implement legislation to bring its air quality closer to WHO standards. Besides causing deaths, air pollution creates a “significant health burden” for people living with those diseases, the agency has warned. —**dw**

INDIA TUNNEL OPERATION

Vertical drilling team on standby mode as rescue effort hit hurdles

UTTARKASHI: A team from Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) is now on standby mode to initiate vertical drilling from top of the Silkyara-Barkot tunnel to rescue to reach the 41 labourers trapped inside the under construction tunnel for the past 14 days. This comes amidst the heavy-duty auger machine repeatedly hit obstacles as it drilled through the rubble. On Friday evening the rescue efforts were suspended as the auger machine faced another hurdle a short while after drilling resumed. The 12 member team of SJVN Limited is awaiting the nod to initiate the vertical drilling process. an obstacle on Friday evening. The workers are trapped in an area that is 8.5 metres high and 2 km long in the built tunnel portion. This 2 km portion of tunnel is complete including concrete work that provides safety to the workers. On November 20, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said that the first machine of SJVNL for the construction of the Vertical Rescue Tunnel had reached the tunnel site and operations had commenced post completion of access road by the Border Roads Organisation. Machinery for vertical boring are be-



ing mobilised by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) from the US, Mumbai and Ghaziabad, a statement read. A final decision on the vertical drilling option is likely to be taken by Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) and the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation. An SJVN official said, “We have given a proposal to the administration to do vertical drilling in 5 to 6 days; our team has done the survey for drilling; and apart from this, their drilling machine has also reached the spot to do the drilling. We are just waiting for the order to come.” “The vertical drilling will be done from the top of the tunnel and about 85 to 90 metres will have to be drilled, which will take about five to six days. When drilling from inside the tunnel When

the work of building the rescue tunnel gained momentum, the plan of doing vertical drilling was put on hold, but now, due to the hurdles we are facing, we have once again come into standby mode to see if the administration needs vertical drilling. We will start our work immediately after receiving the order,” added the SJVN official. The official said that his team works on hydroelectric projects and thermal power projects and his company has a lot of experience in tunnelling; hence, the team has been called here. Surveyor Ajit Pal of Parsan Overseas Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, who conducted the survey of vertical drilling, told ANI that his team had done an ERI (Electrical Resistivity Imaging) survey in which the land was examined for the

safety of the drilling operation. “We have done this survey from the top of the tunnel; rods are placed every 10 meters and then this survey is done by passing the current, after which we send the data to our company. After this, we analysed it and identified the place that would be safe for vertical drilling. Our survey found that it would be safe to do vertical drilling from above the tunnel at 320 metres from the start of the tunnel; for this, we need to do 80 to 90 metres. Drilling will have to be done so that we can take out the people trapped inside the tunnel from above. Equipment for the vertical drilling has been mobilised from Gujarat and Odisha through Railways as the 75-tonne equipment could not be airlifted. According to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the ONGC, having expertise in deep drilling, had also started initial work for vertical drilling from Barkot end. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) team personnel have been instructed to transport machines to enable vertical drilling on the tunnel through the approach road they recently built to access the top of the hill, officials said on Saturday. —**ANI**



Verstappen on pole as Hamilton struggles

Red Bull driver
claimed his 12th pole
position in 22 races
this year with his
latest in Abu Dhabi



ABU DHABI: Red Bull driver Max Verstappen claimed pole position for the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at the Yas Marina circuit on Saturday.

The Dutchman claimed his 12th pole in 22 races this year as he got the better of Ferrari rival Charles Leclerc and McLaren's Oscar Piastri in a session that saw Carlos Sainz and Lewis Hamilton suffer respective Q1 and Q2 eliminations.

After some significant set-up struggles during practice, reign-

exit, while Piastri capitalised on a mistake from teammate Lando Norris to take third.

Like Leclerc, fourth-placed George Russell flew the flag for Mercedes in the pole position shootout after Hamilton failed to make the cut, with Norris back in fifth thanks to a wild moment on his final run, followed by the high-flying AlphaTauri of Yuki Tsunoda.

Fernando Alonso was the fastest Aston Martin driver in seventh position, in front of Haas' Nico Hulkenberg, the other Red Bull of Sergio Perez (who lost his final lap time due to exceeding track limits) and Alpine's Pierre Gasly.

However, there could be a twist in the tale after qualifying, with both Piastri and Gasly under investigation by the stewards over an apparent impeding incident during the closing stages of the session.

Russell's progression to Q3 came at the expense of Hamilton, who fell at the second qualifying hurdle in 11th, leaving him to

question what was wrong with his car, with Ocon and Stroll following in 12th and 13th for Alpine and Aston Martin.

Alex Albon had featured at the sharp end in the early stages of qualifying but Q2 proved to be the limit for himself and Williams as their rivals turned up the heat, meaning he will start 14th, just in front of Daniel Ricciardo's AlphaTauri.

Q1 had already brought a shock when Sainz – in the wake of his heavy FP2 crash – dropped out in a lowly P16, meaning the Ferrari driver faces another race-day recovery drive after an engine penalty in Las Vegas last time out enforced a midfield start.

Kevin Magnussen wound up 17th in the other Haas machine, Alfa Romeo lost both their cars as Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu could do no more than 18th and 19th, and Williams' Logan Sargeant brought up the rear after both his Q1 lap times were deleted for exceeding track limits. - formula1.com

PREMIER LEAGUE

Man City, Liverpool share the spoils



LONDON: Trent Alexander-Arnold's late equaliser gave Liverpool a point at Manchester City in the meeting of the Premier League's top two at Etihad Stadium on Saturday as the teams drew 1-1. *BBC Sport* reported.

In a game that did not touch the heights of previous encounters between the main domestic powers of recent times, reigning champions City led when Erling Haaland was the beneficiary of Liverpool keeper Alisson's poor clearance.

It made him the fastest player to reach 50 Premier League goals - in his 48th match - and gave City an advantage they held until the closing stages.

Ruben Dias thought he had added City's second, only to see his goal ruled out for a foul on Alisson, before Alexander-Arnold made Pep Guardiola's side pay for a failure to kill Liverpool off.

Alexander-Arnold had a tough game defensively trying to contain the lively Jeremy Doku, but demonstrated his quality 10 minutes from time with a crisp, low strike from the edge of the area that gave Ederson no chance.

City remain top of the table but might regard this as an opportunity missed, while Liverpool will be satisfied with a draw.

Speaking to Sky Sports, Trent Alexander-Arnold said after the match: "It's definitely better than last year. We haven't had too

many good results here in general. It's a point gained. It wasn't an amazing performance from us at all, but we take the point. There were positives – we had chances to win the game.

"I don't think we played particularly well. Their formation and the way they set up really challenged us. We regrouped at half-time and came out with a bit more of a game plan to press them. It's difficult subconsciously when you play against Man City – you can't really get tight to them or standoff them.

"There was potentially a game plan to stop me from getting the ball in midfield. I think Bernardo [Silva] was very close to me when I was pulling inside. It was about getting on the ball in different ways and getting us up the pitch. We did that especially well in the second half."

"There's been many times when we've played a lot better against Man City and lost the game. The point was something that we needed and instills that belief that even if we don't play well, if you get a point it means you're doing something right."

On his goal, he said: "I got the ball from Darwin. I could sense that there were bodies and I tried to get it across the goal. Thankfully it found the bottom corner and it's one we needed. It was about getting over the line and getting that point." - Agencies

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INDIA-EU SIGN MOU

An India-EU Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on semiconductors was signed on Friday, ahead of the Trade and Technology Council meeting in New Delhi, according to the Ministry of External Affairs press release. > B2

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL

Angel Luis Arias, Spain's Permanent Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), expressed confidence that the high prices of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) will gradually decline over time. > B2

Short week limits performance on Muscat Stock Exchange



The market recorded some volatility despite the shorter trading week, which saw the main index stabilise to a certain extent after recording strong increases for most of this month

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market witnessed a marginal performance for its primary index during the past week, displaying a 0.03 percent increase, according to an analyst.

"The market recorded some volatility despite the shorter trading week, which saw the main index stabilise to a certain extent after recording strong increases for most of this month," said Daniel Takieddine, CEO MENA BDSwiss. "Despite its rebound, the market remained near its previous lows for the year and could stay on a downtrend overall," he further added.

Trading volumes declined drastically compared to previous weeks as trading was limited by



the National Day holiday during the last two days of the week. Despite their fall, volumes remained near levels seen during previous months. Bank Muscat, OQ, and Oman Telecom dominated trading volume this week while the latter was the most traded in terms of value.

The financial sector retreated slightly and was weighed by the performance of Ahli Bank which fell 2.94 percent and the National Bank of Oman (NBO) which lost 1 percent. The sector saw some positive performance with Bank Muscat rising 1.84 percent and Muscat Finance increasing 8 percent while some other financial institutions remained without significant change.

The industrial sector recorded a 0.05 percent increase and witnessed mixed performances

among individual sectors with large declines like Salalah Mills which saw a drop of 10 percent. Others like Al Anwar Ceramic and Al Maha Ceramics recorded respective gains of 0.59 percent and 2.27 percent.

The services sector stood out and grew by 1.22 percent this week, extending gains for a second successive week and approaching levels seen at the beginning of the month. The sector saw significant increases like Dhofar Generating which surged 12 percent as well as some losses such as Sharqiyah Desalination which declined 6.82 percent. Utility companies were among the best performers. As such, Dhofar Generating, Al Batinah Power, and Al Suwadi Power all experienced substantial gains with 12 percent, 9.52 percent, and 9.25 percent, respectively.

At the same time, the Omani stock market could remain exposed to the retreating oil prices which continue to drop after hitting a peak in September, Daniel Takieddine said. "Investors could remain vigilant after the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) postponed its meeting ahead of new clues regarding production policy," he added.

"On a brighter note, the World Bank's recent update on the GCC economies delivered an optimistic outlook for the Omani economy in the forthcoming year, while the non-oil sector remains strong. This positive sentiment might contribute to improving performance and limiting downside potential over the medium term," Daniel Takieddine said.

MSX records slight increase in weekly trading

MUSCAT: The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) in weekly trading maintained the gains it recorded in previous weeks and closed at 4,620 points, recording a slight increase of one point.

The Muscat Stock Exchange concluded last week's trading early. Trading was limited to three days due to the National Day holiday, which fell on Wednesday and Thursday. The value of trading last week amounted to OMR13.7 million, including OMR9.7 million in the stock market and OMR4 million in the bond and sukuk market, which witnessed a clear increase in its trading this week compared to trades worth OMR200,000 in the previous week.

Last week, the market capitalisation of the Muscat Stock Exchange recorded losses of OMR9 million, concluding the weekly trading at OMR23.83 billion.

Last week, the prices of 27 shares rose, while the prices of 15 declined and 16 stabilised at their previous levels. Al Hassan Engineering stock recorded the best rise, rising by 21.4 percent and closing at 17 baisas, and Dhofar Electricity Generation stock rose by 12.1 percent and closing at 37 baisas, and rose. Al



Batinah Energy shares reached 23 baisas, up 9.5 percent.

On the other hand, Salalah Mills shares recorded the highest losses, falling by 10 percent and closing at 450 baisas, Al Sharqiya Investments shares declined by 6.8 percent and closed at 123 baisas, and Oman Financial Services shares fell to 150 baisas, recording a decline of 6.2 percent.

Last week, the Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest) announced that it had successfully completed the acquisition of a 5.87 percent stake in Bank Muscat, raising its stake in the bank to 15 percent. Last week, the bank's shares rose by 5 baisas and closed at

277 baisas, while Ominvest's shares stabilised at its previous level of 430 baisas.

Also during last week, Dhofar Poultry Company announced that the company's extraordinary general assembly agreed to transform the company from a public joint stock company to a closed joint stock company. Last October, Dhofar Food and Investment Company had submitted an offer to shareholders to buy their shares at a price of 50 baisas per share. Dhofar Company is the Food and Investment Company is the main shareholder in Dhofar Poultry Company and owns 92.2 percent of its shares. Dhofar Poultry's capital amounted to OMR2.8 million. - ONA

ENERGY TRADE



Oman LNG signs sale and purchase agreement with BP

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman LNG signed a Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA) to deliver a total of 1 million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA) of LNG from Oman LNG to BP.

The agreement strengthens the robust relationship between Oman LNG and BP, with which the company has previously signed Sale and Purchase Agreements to supply reliable energy from the Sultanate of Oman.

Spanning over 9 years, the agreement is Free-on-Board (FOB) and starts in 2026.

Commenting on this agreement, Hamed Al Naamany - CEO of Oman LNG - said, "The Sale

and Purchase Agreement with BP unlocks new opportunities to leverage Oman's presence in the global energy trade. The expected revenues will not only support the national economy but also support other the energy transition, pragmatically."

Oman LNG is in a shape-shifting position that sustains energy systems, fosters economic growth, and secures our position as a reliable energy supplier.

The agreement's terms are strengthened by the company's worldwide reputation as a reliable and trusted LNG supplier, where it intends that LNG contributes to global energy security and adds value to the local economy.

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

Taageer Finance repays bonds worth OMR13.3mn issued in 2021 on maturity

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Taageer Finance, a leading financial and leasing company (FLC) committed to delivering exceptional value to its stakeholders, announced the successful repayment of its bonds issued in 2021, totalling an amount of OMR13.3 million.

This significant milestone underscores the company's commitment to financial stability and transparent business practices, reaffirming its position as a trustworthy investment partner.

Taageer Finance has strategically diversified its funding sources, including bank borrowings, bonds, and corporate deposits, to establish a resilient and sustainable financial foundation. Currently, the third issuance in consecutive years is open to investors as the company continues to provide investors with opportunities for growth and returns.

As a key player in the financial landscape, Taageer Finance focuses on fostering the financial growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and individuals, aligning its strategies with the evolving needs of the market. The company acknowledges banks as its most valuable partners, recognising the significance of collaborative efforts in achieving overall success.

Expressing his satisfaction with the bond repayment, Shahin



Mohammed Al Balushi, CEO of Taageer Finance, stated, "The repayment of the OMR13.3 million bonds reflects our commitment to financial excellence. Our diverse funding strategies, ongoing bond series, and strong partnerships with banks have contributed to this accomplishment. We remain dedicated to providing our investors with exceptional opportunities and sustaining their trust in Taageer Finance."

Taageer Finance invites inves-

HIGHLIGHTS

- The repayment is part of its ongoing bond series, demonstrating a commitment to providing investors with ongoing opportunities for growth and returns.
- Taageer Finance strategically leverages diverse funding sources, including bank borrowings, bonds, and corporate deposits; to ensure a resilient and sustainable financial foundation.
- It is dedicated to fostering the financial growth of both Small and Medium Enterprises and individuals.

tors to explore the continued opportunities it provides, backed by a track record of financial prudence, strategic growth, and a commitment to delivering value.

Offering a diverse range of financial and leasing solutions, for businesses and individuals, Taageer Finance is headquartered in Al Khuwair in Muscat.

The company has an extensive nationwide network, through branches at Wattayah, Sohar, Al Kamil Al Wafi, Barka, Nizwa, Salalah and most recently Seeb. By offering customers a cutting-edge digital platform, upholding the highest corporate governance standards, implementing resilient systems and procedures, and utilising state-of-the-art technology,

Taageer has established itself as a trusted ally for customers. This includes the integration of Point of Sale (POS) machines at all branches to facilitate a streamlined cashless payment process, as well as the efficient processing of customer requests through its mobile application.

Taageer takes pride in being a responsible corporate citizen, actively supporting the community and contributing to the nation's socio-economic development goals. To drive its business growth, the company focuses on nurturing local talent and continuously enhancing its business processes, customer service standards, and finance solutions portfolio to meet evolving market demands.

STOCKS

Wall Street ends mixed in half-day session, marks fourth straight winning week



NEW YORK: Stocks drifted to a mixed finish on Friday after a half-day trading session capped a holiday shortened week that left the major indexes with their fourth straight winning week.

The S&P 500 inched up 0.1% after wavering between small gains and losses much of the day. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.3 per cent and the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.1 per cent, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

All told, the S&P 500 added 2.72 points to 4,559.34. The Dow rose

117.12 points to 35,390.15, and the Nasdaq fell 15 points to 14,250.85.

Trading was muted as markets reopened following the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday. Gains in health care, financial, energy and other sectors helped temper losses in technology and communication services stocks.

Chipmaker Nvidia and Google parent Alphabet were among the biggest decliners, losing 1.9% and 1.3 per cent, respectively. Among the big gainers in the S&P 500 were CF Industries, which rose

2.6 per cent, and Best Buy, which closed 2.2 per cent higher.

The major stock indexes' latest weekly gains reflect a turnaround in the market's sentiment in November following a three-month slide. Traders have grown cautiously optimistic that inflation has cooled enough for the Federal Reserve to finally be done with its market-crunching hikes to interest rates.

Forecasts for a potential recession have been pushed further out into 2024 while also being

softened. The rate of inflation continues to ease, consumer spending remains solid and the economy is generally humming along. That has encouraged hopes, and bets, that the Federal Reserve might even consider cutting rates.

Fed officials, though, have said the outlook for the economy remains uncertain and they'll make upcoming decisions on rates based on incoming reports.

The Fed will get another big update next week when the government releases its October report

for a key inflation measure tracked by the central bank.

In the bond market, Treasury yields broadly rose on Friday. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which influences interest rates on mortgages and other loans, rose to 4.47 per cent from 4.41 per cent late on Wednesday. The yield on the 2-year Treasury rose to 4.95 per cent from 4.90 per cent late on Wednesday. Oil prices, a key driver of inflation, continued to ease on Friday, with US crude sliding 2 per cent. - BNA

MARKET

High prices of sustainable aviation fuel expected to fall

In the coming years, we anticipate a significant drop in SAF prices, paving the way for robust growth in this emerging sector, said Angel Luis Arias, Spain's Permanent Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation

DUBAI: Angel Luis Arias, Spain's Permanent Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), expressed confidence that the high prices of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) will gradually decline over time. He attributed the current high prices to SAF's novelty in the market and the limited number of



SAF producers. "In the coming years, we anticipate a significant drop in SAF prices, paving the way for robust growth in this emerging sector," Arias stated to the Emirates News

Agency (WAM) during the closing session of the third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) in Dubai. He highlighted the importance of CAAF/3 in establishing a new global framework for rolling out SAFs and decarbonising the aviation sector by 2050.

Desired targets He said that, despite not being legally binding, the agreement reached constitutes a commitment by ICAO members on matters such as policy and planning, regulatory framework, implementation support and financing to expedite achieving desired targets. He cited four key pillars that form the foundation of plans to decarbonise the aviation sector,

including transitioning to SAFs, adopting new technologies, particularly in engine design, boosting efficiency across all types of flights; and implementing market-based measures. "Spain is fully committed to these four elements as a part of our strategic plans," Arias explained, adding that airports, navigation service providers, and regulatory and supervisory agencies are among the country's key priorities. Asked about Spain's SAF production operations, he said that the country is currently investing in research and development activities, and plans to focus these investments, with the current expectation being to see Spain reach the 6-percent SAF target set by the European Union. -WAM

REGION'S FIRST

Adnoc opens high-speed green hydrogen refuelling pilot station

ABU DHABI: Adnoc, announced that it has opened "H2GO", the region's first high-speed green hydrogen pilot refuelling station, to test a fleet of zero-emission hydrogen-powered vehicles. The station, which is located on land provided by Masdar City and operated by Adnoc Distribution, will create green hydrogen from water using an electrolyser powered by clean grid electricity. The hydrogen supplied at the pilot station will be certified as "green" from solar sources by the International REC Standard, an internationally recognised certification organisation. The pilot will be used to gather data to understand the long-term viability of hydrogen vehicles in the UAE. -WAM

GREEN TRANSITION

ADB underlines need to empower women for green economy

NEW DELHI: In a bid to foster gender inclusivity in the burgeoning green job market, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) took to social media platform X to highlight the need for empowering women, particularly in the technology sector, as Central Asia navigates the transition toward a greener economy. "Women make up only 20 per cent of the global energy workforce. However, the anticipated job surge resulting from a green transition could create a unique opportunity for women to enter traditionally male-dominated sectors," ADB posted on X. The ADB, in its post, emphasised that currently, women constitute only 20 per cent of the global energy workforce, unveiling an opportunity for a significant paradigm shift as the green transition unfolds. In 2018, the International Labour Organisation foresaw the potential for a monumental shift toward a greener economy, projecting the creation of 24 million jobs globally by 2030 with the right policies in place. However, this optimism raises a critical question: Will the anticipated job surge narrow or widen the existing gender gap in labour force participation? Even before the projected job boom, women faced underrepresentation in occupations critical for the green transition, particularly in Central and West Asia. The statistics reveal that wom-



en comprise only 20 per cent of the global energy workforce and a mere 11 per cent of top executives in global oil and gas. The transition to green employment poses a challenge, with only 62 women per 100 men considered as "green talent" in 2021--a statistic that has remained stagnant since 2015. This stagnation underscores significant gender disparities both at the workforce and leadership levels within the broader energy sector. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region faces additional challenges for rural women due to the scarcity and unaffordability of clean and efficient energy resources. Women, primarily responsible for fuel collection and stove preparation, bear the brunt of energy poverty, impacting their time, quality of life, job opportunities,

and economic empowerment. However, the anticipated job surge resulting from a green transition holds the promise of transforming this narrative for women--from vulnerability to active agents of change. It provides a unique opportunity for women to enter traditionally male-dominated sectors, especially in the burgeoning renewable energy market and other technology and innovation sectors. The first crucial step involves championing gender equity and emphasising the added value of women in technology sectors like energy, transport, or telecommunications. This necessitates a mindset shift among government and business leaders. Empowering women in technology-related roles demands concerted efforts to develop their capacities, equip them with requisite skills, and

expand their career opportunities. Overcoming stereotypes is essential to empowering women by allowing them to pursue diverse roles and careers without being confined by traditional expectations. Addressing gender stereotypes is instrumental in fostering a more equitable and inclusive society. The CAREC Program, through its Gender Strategy 2030, provides a regional approach to improving gender mainstreaming and strengthening equal access to economic opportunities. Initiatives include supporting female entrepreneurs, improving access to green financing, and creating economic opportunities through training in technology and innovation. Promoting regional cooperation through women's professional networks is crucial. The Women in Business Online Community Platform connects women professionals, offering guidance, inspiration, and knowledge exchange. Encouraging more women to pursue education related to the low-carbon transition, particularly in STEM fields, is imperative. While challenges persist, increasing women's presence in green jobs across technology sectors presents a dual opportunity--providing more employment opportunities for women and meeting the demand for labour during a green transition, contributing to more inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the CAREC region. -ANI

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

India-EU sign MoU on semiconductors

NEW DELHI: An India-EU Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on semiconductors was signed on Friday, ahead of the Trade and Technology Council meeting in New Delhi, according to the Ministry of External Affairs press release. The MoU was signed by Minister of Electronics, IT and Communications Ashwini Vaishnaw and the European Commissioner for Internal Markets Thierry Breton. The MoU aims at increasing the resilience of the semiconductor value chain in India and the EU and covers cooperation in wide areas covering research and innovation, talent development, partnerships and exchange of market information. The MoU symbolises the strong commitment between India and the EU to work towards building robust semiconductor supply chains and work together on innovation. Meanwhile, a virtual meeting of India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) was held in New Delhi on Friday. The Indian side was led by External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar, Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) Piyush Goyal and Minister of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) Ashwini Vaishnaw. The EU delegation was led by Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis and Vice-President Vera Jourova. The TTC was launched by



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen during the latter's visit to India in April 2022. The inaugural ministerial meeting of TTC was held in Brussels on May 16, 2023, where all three working groups under TTC set out their cooperation on a wide range of issues including semiconductors, high-performance computing, digital public infrastructures, clean energy technologies, supply chain resilience and trade issues. During the virtual meeting, the co-chairs reviewed the progress achieved in the working groups since the first ministerial meeting and also discussed the future action plans of these working groups, as per the release. The co-chairs provided strategic guidance to the working groups on strategic technologies and digital connectivity; clean and green energy technologies; and trade, Investment and resilient supply chains towards achieving the objectives set out for TTC during its establishment at the highest levels. -ANI

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY

Oil and gas industry faces moment of truth and opportunity to adapt as clean energy transitions advance: IEA report

PARIS: Oil and gas producers face pivotal choices about their role in the global energy system amid a worsening climate crisis fuelled in large part by their core products, according to a major new special report from the International Energy Agency (IEA) that shows how the industry can take a more responsible approach and contribute positively to the new energy economy. The Oil and Gas Industry in Net Zero Transitions analyses the implications and opportunities for the industry that would arise from stronger international efforts to reach energy and climate targets. Released ahead of the COP28 climate summit in Dubai, the special report sets out what the global oil and gas sector would need to do to align its operations with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Even under today's policy settings, global demand for both oil and gas is set to peak by 2030, according to the latest IEA projections. Stronger action to tackle climate change would mean clear declines in demand for both fuels. If governments deliver in full on their national energy and climate pledges, demand would fall 45 per cent below today's level by 2050. In a pathway to reaching net zero emissions by mid-century, which is necessary to keep the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 °C within reach, oil and gas use would decline by more than 75 per cent by 2050. Yet the oil and gas sector --



which provides more than half of global energy supply and employs nearly 12 million workers worldwide -- has been a marginal force at best in transitioning to a clean energy system, according to the report. Oil and gas companies currently account for just 1 per cent of clean energy investment globally -- and 60 per cent of that comes from just four companies. "The oil and gas industry is facing a moment of truth at COP28 in Dubai. With the world suffering the impacts of a worsening climate crisis, continuing with business as usual are neither socially nor environmentally responsible," said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol. "Oil and gas producers around the world need to make profound decisions about their future place in the global energy sector. The industry needs to commit to genuinely helping the

world meet its energy needs and climate goals -- which means letting go of the illusion that implausibly large amounts of carbon capture are the solution. This special report shows a fair and feasible way forward in which oil and gas companies take a real stake in the clean energy economy while helping the world avoid the most severe impacts of climate change." The global oil and gas industry encompasses a large and diverse range of players -- from small, specialised operators to huge national oil companies. Attention often focuses on the role of the private sector majors, but they own less than 13 per cent of global oil and gas production and reserves. Every company's transition strategy can and should include a plan to reduce emissions from its own operations, according to the report. The production, transport

and processing of oil and gas results in nearly 15 per cent of global energy-related greenhouse emissions -- equal to all energy-related greenhouse gas emissions from the United States. As things stand, companies with targets to reduce their own emissions account for less than half of global oil and gas output. To align with a 1.5 °C scenario, the industry's own emissions need to decline by 60 per cent by 2030. The emissions intensity of oil and gas producers with the highest emissions is currently five-to-ten times above those with the lowest, showing the vast potential for improvements. Furthermore, strategies to reduce emissions from methane -- which accounts for half of the total emissions from oil and gas operations -- are well-known and can typically be pursued at low cost. While oil and gas production is vastly lower in transitions to net zero emissions, it will not disappear -- even in a 1.5 °C scenario. Some investment in oil and gas supply is needed to ensure the security of energy supply and provide fuel for sectors in which emissions are harder to abate, according to the report. Yet not every oil and gas company will be able to maintain output -- requiring consumers to send clear signals on their direction and speed of travel so that producers can make informed decisions on future spending. -WAM

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ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE



IN CHILDREN



LIFESTYLE

ON THE RISE

Antibiotics are the preferred treatment for children, but they are becoming increasingly ineffective. How dangerous is antibiotic resistance in children?

When children suffer from ear infections, sepsis or meningitis brought on by a bacterial infection, they are frequently prescribed antibiotics. But a recent study by the University of Sydney found that many of the antibiotics tested had less than 50% effectiveness.

This was attributed to antibiotic resistance, which means bacteria no longer respond to antibiotic treatment. Worldwide, antibiotic resistance has been on the rise for the past 15 years. However, new and effective treatments have not yet been developed.

Antibiotic resistance is especially dangerous for infants and young children. As long as their immune systems aren't fully developed, they are less able to ward off infections.

When treating infections with an antibiotic, it's not only important to use the correct type, but also to stick to the right doses. That's easier said than done when it comes to infants and toddlers, who often take antibiotics in the form of syrup. After all, it's easier to convince a small child to swallow a spoonful of sugary liquid than it is to get them to down a hard pill.

Antibiotics: Treatment of choice

Antibiotics are the treatment of choice for severe cases of bacterial infection. They act quickly, taking effect in up to 48 hours, and can inhibit bacterial growth and reproduction or kill off bacterial cells.

Sooner or later, many infants and children come down with an ear infection. The World Health Organization estimates that ear infections are a frequent and widespread ailment among children in all parts of the world.

Middle ear infections are accompanied by the swelling of mucous membranes, especially in the delicate eustachian, or auditory tubes leading to the throat. As these tubes become obstructed

and mucus is no longer able to drain out, pressure builds on the eardrum, which can be very painful to small children. Antibiotics can often deliver fast relief.

An illustration of purple bacteria on a black backgroundAn illustration of purple bacteria on a black background

Are there alternatives to antibiotics?

Most experts agree there are currently no reliable alternatives. Treatments for certain infections can be supplemented with antimicrobial plants and household remedies. Saline solutions can sometimes help alleviate respiratory infections, while sleeping on an onion in a sock is a classic folk remedy for ear infections.

However, antibiotics are still the best and most reliable solution. Cases of sepsis, or blood poisoning, for example, must be treated immediately. Patients left untreated can suffer septic shock, followed by organ failure and death.

Sepsis can stem from an external wound, when microbes invade the blood stream or the lymphatic system. From there, they can affect the entire body if left unchecked, causing a medical emergency. But such instances are rare.

Proper diagnosis comes first

Antibiotics can only be used to treat bacterial, not viral, infections. That's why a correct diagnosis is such an important step in providing appropriate care.

The situation in Southeast Asia and the Pacific is especially alarming. Each year, thousands of children in Indonesia and the Philippines die because they have no access to the same range of antibiotics as in Europe, for example, or because the antibiotics available to them are ineffective.

This makes proper diagnosis all the more crucial. Pathogens must be identified correctly, in order to know their susceptibility to certain treatments and to prescribe an antibiotic with the narrowest possible spectrum.

Dubai to host IPL 2024 auction



The ten teams are likely to have a purse of US\$ 12.02mn to build their squads for next season

MUMBAI: The IPL player auction ahead of the 2024 season will be held on December 19 in Dubai; it is the first time the auction will be held overseas. The event will coincide with the

second ODI of India's tour of South Africa, which is scheduled for December 19 in Gqeberha, *ESPN-cricinfo* reported on Saturday. The ten IPL teams have until December 15 to submit the lists of players they are retaining and releasing, after which the auction pool will be finalised by early December. Each team will have a purse of INR 100 crore (US\$12.02mn approximately) to build their squad for the 2024 season, a US\$600,000 increase from last season's purse of US\$11.4mn. How much each team has to spend on auction day depends on the value of players they release, in addition to their unspent purse from the 2023 auction.

Punjab Kings have the largest purse at present – US\$1.47mn – while Mumbai Indians have the smallest at US\$6,000. Of the remaining teams Sunrisers Hyderabad have US\$0.79mn; Gujarat Titans and Delhi Capitals both have INR US\$0.54mn; Lucknow Super Giants have US\$0.43mn; Rajasthan Royals have US\$0.40mn; Royal Challengers Bangalore have US\$0.21mn; Kolkata Knight Riders have US\$0.2mn; and defending champions Chennai Super Kings have US\$0.18mn. Despite being only a day-long event – compared to the two-day mega auction once every four years – mini auctions have produced some of the most expensive buys, especially in the overseas

players' category. Ahead of the 2023 season, Sam Curran became the most expensive player in IPL history when he was bought by Punjab for US\$ 2.23mn in December last year. Several prominent overseas players are likely to enter the upcoming auction, including Australian fast bowler Mitchell Starc who recently said he was "definitely" heading back to the IPL after an eight-year hiatus. Pat Cummins is also likely to put his name up for bidding, having skipped the IPL last year. Some of the other key players franchises expect to see at the auction are Travis Head, Chris Woakes, Alex Hales, Sam Billings, and Gerald Coetzee. - Agencies

Hardik Pandya set to move back to Mumbai Indians

MUMBAI: Barring any last-minute changes, Hardik Pandya is set to leave Gujarat Titans and return to Mumbai Indians, where he started his IPL career in 2015. *ESPNcricinfo* has learned the trade is an all-cash deal comprising Mumbai paying US\$1.8mn approx. as Hardik's salary and an undisclosed transfer fee to Titans. Hardik stands to earn upto 50 per cent of the transfer fee. In case the trade goes through, it will possibly be the biggest player trade in IPL history. Neither franchise has yet made any public comment on the trade though. The biggest challenge for Mumbai is to have an adequate purse for the trade. After the last auction, Mumbai had just INR 0.05 crore (\$6000 approx.) left. Franchises will get an additional US\$600,000 approx in their purse for the forthcoming auction. This only means Mumbai need to release player(s) to finish the Hardik trade. The retention deadline expires on November 26 at 4pm IST. Hardik led Titans to the title in 2022, their debut season in the IPL, and was the Player of the Match in the final against Rajasthan Royals. In 2023, the Titans made the IPL final for the second time



in two seasons, where they came runners up to Chennai Super Kings. In both seasons, under Hardik's leadership, Titans had finished top of the points table in the league stage. In his two-season stint at Titans, Hardik scored 833 runs in 30 innings, with an average of 41.65 and strike rate of 133.49. He took 11 wickets for them with an economy of 8.1. Hardik is currently injured, having suffered an ankle injury during India's ODI World Cup campaign. It was at Mumbai, where Hardik began his IPL career and developed into one of the best allrounders in the game. Hardik was a part of Mumbai's title-winning seasons in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020. Having been retained by Mumbai ahead of every auction until 2021, Hardik was finally released ahead of the 2022 mega auction.

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Kane scores again to send Bayern top of Bundesliga

MUNICH: England captain Harry Kane scored again as Bayern Munich won 1-0 at Cologne to move top of the German Bundesliga table on Friday. Kane's goal was his 18th in 12 league matches and he also became the first Englishman to score 18 times in a Bundesliga season. He finished from close range in the 20th minute after Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting's shot was cleared off the line. The victory takes Bayern one point ahead of Bayer Leverkusen, who play their game in hand on Saturday. Leverkusen, the only other unbeaten side in the German top flight, will regain top spot if they win at Werder Bremen. Bayern's match was their first against Cologne since beating them 2-1 in May when Jamal Musiala scored a last-minute winning goal to beat Borussia Dortmund to the title. Dortmund would have be-



come champions for the first time since 2011-12 if they had defeated Mainz, but instead drew 2-2. Since then, Bayern have signed Kane from Tottenham as they bid for a 12th consecutive Bundesliga title. Against Cologne, Kane was at the heart of Bayern's best moves and they almost went ahead when his pass found Leroy Sane, but the

former Manchester City forward could not lift the ball over home goalkeeper Marvin Schwabe. But Bayern did not have to wait long before going ahead. Sane played it to Choupo-Moting, he cut inside and had a shot cleared off the line by Julian Chabot, with Kane tapping home the rebound. As well as becoming the top-scoring Englishman in one Bundesliga season, the 30-year-old became the first player in league history to have scored 18 times after the opening 12 matchdays. England's record goalscorer has 22 goals in 17 appearances in all competitions for Thomas Tuchel's side. Choupo-Moting, Sane and Kingsley Coman missed chances to double Bayern's advantage. Davie Selke had a rare chance for Cologne, who drop to the bottom of the table, but failed to beat Manuel Neuer with a header at the back post. - Agencies

FRENCH LIGUE

Mbappe on target in PSG win

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) warmed up for a vital Champions League tie against Newcastle by beating Monaco 5-2 to go four points clear at the top of Ligue 1 on Friday. Goncalo Ramos put the hosts ahead, but Gianluigi Donnarumma's clearance fell to Takumi Minamino and he levelled. Kylian Mbappe's converted penalty restored the lead for PSG, who scored twice more in the second half through Ousmane Dembele and Vitinha. Folarin Balogun scored for Monaco, but Randal Kolo Muani added PSG's fifth. Mbappe's goal against his former side was his 14th of the season in the league and came after Soungoutou Magassa fouled Dembele in the 18-yard box. Ramos had earlier benefitted from a mistake from away goalkeeper Philipp Kohn to score only a few days after his long-term future was secured. The 22-year-old had joined PSG on loan from Benfica in the summer but earlier this week



PSG announced they have activated the clause to buy him for US\$88mn, with the Portugal international striker now contracted to the club until 2027. Two goals in the space of three second-half minutes – Dembele finishing from Fabian Ruiz's pass and Vitinha's excellent curled strike that went in off the post – took the game away from Monaco. PSG lost 4-1 to Newcastle in the Champions League at St

James' Park in October. However, with two matchdays remaining, only three points separate all four teams in Group F with PSG, in second, entertaining bottom-placed Newcastle on Tuesday. In Ligue 1, reigning champions PSG, aiming for their third successive title, are four points clear of Nice, who play their game in hand on Sunday at home to Toulouse, with Monaco in third position. - Agencies

WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

FIFA launches investigation into Brazil-Argentina match disorder

LAUSANNE: Football's world governing body FIFA has opened disciplinary proceedings after crowd trouble delayed Brazil's World Cup qualifier against Argentina on Wednesday. Argentina won the match 1-0. The match was halted for 30 minutes after fighting broke out in a stand at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. Argentina captain Lionel Messi later said there "could have been a tragedy" and criticised police, who had charged at fans with batons. However the national federations of both teams now face possible sanctions. The trouble began during the national anthems before the game. As police charged fans, some supporters ripped out seats and threw them at officers, while others spilled onto the pitch to escape the trouble. Players from both sides approached the stand to attempt to calm the situation – Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez was seen trying to grab a baton out of a police officer's hand.



After players left the field the match was able to begin following a 30-minute delay. "FIFA can confirm that its Disciplinary Committee has opened proceedings against the Brazilian Football Association (CBF) and

the Argentinian Football Association (AFA)," Fifa confirmed on Friday. It added Brazil was being investigated for "potential breaches of article 17" of FIFA's disciplinary code, which deals with order and

security at matches. Argentina is facing disciplinary action over the "crowd disturbance" and the "delayed kick off". Sanctions for breaking the rules typically include fines or stadium closures in forthcoming games.

FORMER PARALYMPIC CHAMPION

Pistorius to be freed on parole in S Africa

PRETORIA: Former Paralympic champion Oscar Pistorius is to be freed from jail on parole, nearly 11 years after murdering his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. He shot her multiple times through a bathroom door on Valentine's Day in 2013, later claiming he mistook her for a burglar at their Pretoria home. Pistorius, now 37, was sentenced by a South African court in 2016 to serve 13 years and five months in prison. The parole board has set his release for January 5, 2024. Once released, Pistorius will be monitored by the authorities until his sentence officially expires "just like all other parolees", the Department of Correctional Services said on Friday. If he wants to move house or get a job during that time he will have to notify his parole officer. Pistorius will also have to attend therapy sessions, according to the Steenkamp family's spokesman.



In a letter read out to the parole board during Friday's hearing, Ms Steenkamp's mother said she did not oppose his release but wondered whether Pistorius's "huge anger issues" were truly dealt with in prison. She added that she would be "concerned for the safety of any woman" who now comes into contact with him. June Steenkamp chose not to attend the parole hearing at Atteridgeville prison, near Pretoria, saying: "I simply cannot muster the energy to face him again at this stage."

Bank Muscat launches Shukran co-branded Visa prepaid card

Shoppers can earn Shukran points on all purchases using the card and redeem them at Landmark Group stores

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has partnered with Landmark Group and Visa to launch the Bank Muscat Shukran co-branded Visa Prepaid Card.

The Bank Muscat Shukran Visa Prepaid card is a contactless payment method in the form of a reloadable card designed for everyday use. The prepaid card is linked to the cardholder's Shukran membership for accrual and redemption of Shukran points in stores and online.



Customers will earn 1 Shukran Point for every OMR 1 spent at Landmark Stores and 1 Shukran Point for every OMR 2 spent outside Landmark Group chain of stores. The total points accumulated through the prepaid card spends is added to the Shukran points gained from their Shukran membership. Points can be redeemed across Landmark Group stores in

Oman, the GCC, Egypt and online on more than 15 brands across Fashion, Home, Electronics, Hospitality and Leisure, at Landmark Group stores such as Centrepoint, Babyshop, Splash, SHOEMART, Lifestyle, Max, Shoexpress, Home Centre, Home Box and Emax.

Application and management of the prepaid card is made simple and convenient through the Bank

Muscat Mobile Banking app and Internet banking services. Customers can also link the card to their existing Shukran membership. For customers who do not have an existing Shukran membership, it will be autogenerated within the card application. Customers can use the online services to top up the card, view available balance, view transaction history and block

the card if it is lost or stolen.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager for Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "We are delighted to partner with Landmark Group and Visa which reflects the bank's commitment to enhance cooperation with reputed partners in the market aiming to offer distinctive banking experiences. Bank Muscat is a pioneer and innovator in providing electronic and digital banking channels to meet the financial requirements of its customers. This co-branded Shukran Visa Prepaid card will be an immense benefit for our ever-growing family of customers."

Saikat Mishra, Territory Head, Oman, Landmark Group, expressed his delight at the launch saying, "The Shukran co-branded Visa Prepaid card, in partnership with Bank Muscat, is a first-of-its-kind initiative in Oman. The card offers the convenience of contactless shopping and benefits of earning Shukran points on purchases across Landmark Group and other partner brands while allowing redemption across our brands, online or in-store. It is the first of many initiatives launched with Bank Muscat as we look ahead to building a stronger strategic relationship with the commitment of bringing exceptional value to our customers."

In line with its commitment to "serve you better every day", the co-branded Shukran Visa Prepaid Card is amongst one of the exclusive card products that the bank has launched as part of its co-branded partnerships, including the Bank Muscat Oman Air Visa Platinum credit card and the Bank Muscat Lulu Titanium credit card.

Landmark Group, based in Dubai, expands in the retail and hospitality sectors. With over 2,200 retail stores, more than 160 leisure and hospitality outlets, 25 homegrown brands, and several franchises, the Group has a presence that spans across the GCC, Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, and Africa. The Group's entrepreneurial spirit is evident in its innovative offerings, most notably STYLI and VIVA, and other global brands.

LUXURIOUS

New Panamera: More digital and efficient

STUTTGART/DUBAI: The Porsche Panamera is entering its third model generation. The sports car manufacturer's luxury sedan emphasises its sporting character with even more powerful drive systems. The profile is enhanced by a fundamentally modernised operating concept and plenty of innovative technology. These include the new Porsche Active Ride suspension system, which combines a significantly higher level of comfort with the sporting driving characteristics for which Porsche is famous. The technical yet elegant, dynamic design of the new Panamera gives the model line's attractive proportions a fresh update. A fundamentally redesigned, driver-centred interior enhance the driving experience.

The new Panamera already comes with dual-chamber two-valve air suspension with Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) as standard. The two-valve technology separates the rebound and compression stages of the damper control and therefore offers an even wider range between comfort and sportiness: the system noticeably dampens impacts from transverse joints and road damage while at the same time ensuring more body stability in dynamic driving situations. The car's handling can be further improved thanks to optional all-wheel steering.

In addition, the innovative Porsche Active Ride active suspension system is available as an op-



tion for the E-Hybrid models of the new Panamera. This system surpasses other suspension concepts in all relevant parameters and offers an unprecedented range between driving comfort and driving dynamics. The basis for this is newly developed active shock absorbers – also with two-valve technology – each connected to an electrically operated hydraulic pump. This generates a volume flow in the damper according to demand and can therefore build up forces between the body and wheels in a lightning-fast, highly precise and targeted manner, which counteract and almost completely compensate for the forces resulting from the road excitation. A weight-saving single-chamber air-suspension system complements this technology.

The chassis keeps the body of the Panamera flat at all times, even during dynamic braking, steering and acceleration manoeuvres. With a smooth ride, the system absorbs bumps almost completely. In dynamic driving situations, the Porsche Active Ride suspension system ensures a perfect connection to the road thanks to a balanced distribution of wheel loads.

If the corresponding mode is activated, the suspension can overcompensate for pitching and rolling tendencies to reduce the acceleration forces acting on the occupants. In this setting, the new Panamera leans into the corners like a motorcycle would. It pulls the front down when accelerating and the rear when decelerating. When stationary, the Porsche Active Ride suspension system lifts

the body to a comfortable entry or exit height.

Porsche offers a total of four efficient E-Hybrid powertrains for the new Panamera, in response to the high demand for this type of drive system. All E-Hybrid variants benefit from greater performance, range and efficiency. The Panamera Turbo E-Hybrid is ready at market launch. The heart of its powertrain is a fundamentally revised four-litre V8 turbo engine. The output of the newly developed electric motor is 140 kW (190 PS). Together, they create a system output of 500 kW (680 PS). The system torque reaches an impressive 930 Nm. Porsche integrates the electric motor into the housing of the comprehensively redesigned eight-speed PDK dual-clutch transmission.

2ND EDITION



Oxy Oman awards students of Awtad 3D printing educational programme

MUSCAT: Oxy Oman representatives recently attended the awards event for the company's exclusively sponsored Awtad 3D Printing Educational Programme and competition.

Now in its 2nd edition, Awtad trains students, teachers and job seekers in 3D printing technology, to help develop their skills in the field. The program is falls under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, and organized and conducted by InnoTech, an Omani SME specialised in 3D printing technology.

The awards event was held at the Ministry of Education under Majid Al Bahri, the undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs. Oxy Oman's Nasser Al Maskari, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, attended along with senior representatives of the company.

Over the course of the year, Awtad held a series of practical workshops to engage over 100 students, 39 teachers, and 30 job seekers from across the country in designing and creating 3D printed products and objects. The programme aims to provide practical knowledge students and job seekers, and enable them to use 3D printing technology to create solutions for real life challenges, and encourage creativity and entrepreneurship through 3D printed products.

"Now in its 2nd year, the Awtad programme is in line with Oxy Oman's Social Responsibility objectives of supporting cutting-edge technological innovation and education, particularly with youth in Oman. We're proud to celebrate the winning student projects, and to continue advancing creativity and educational excellence across the Sultanate," said Steven Lauver, President and General Manager at Oxy Oman.

IMPRESSIVE TRAVEL PARTNER

Take unbeaten path confidently with dependable Toyota Hilux

MUSCAT: The Toyota Hilux is a dependable workhorse and an impressive travel partner for unbeaten journeys and remarkable experiences.

The exciting and capable Hilux Adventure is equipped with a powerful 4.0 Litre V6 Engine with 235 HP & 38.3 Kg-m Torque. It has an Auto Disconnect Differential to keep the tempo going. The 4.0 Litre V6 Toyota Hilux Adventure is a truly exciting mean machine that's been developed by Toyota to get your pulse racing. Similarly the Hilux 4X4 is equipped with a 2.7 Litre Petrol Engine that is available in 5-speed Manual Transmission and 6 Speed Automatic Transmission, outputting 164 HP.

The Hilux is not only a tough vehicle but also an advanced pick-up with stylish cues. The Hilux sports a thick, chunky Front Bumper sculpted like an SUV, Front Fog lamps, Alloy Wheels, apart from Side Stripes that adorn the vehicle.

If you are looking for some of the finest moments on the road or off-road then the Hilux rises above expectations in all aspects. The Hilux really is two vehicles in one: a work truck through the week and a family vehicle on weekends, thanks to added comforts and



safety features. Indeed the Hilux models are stunning in design and features. Their performance & safety parameters are amongst the best and the strong frame and suspension impart toughness for any demanding task.

The Hilux's interior continues the concept of "Tough and Emotional", and reflects the same attention to detail as the exterior with SUV vehicle styling, accents and ornamentations. The key features that keep you comfortable

are the Auto Air conditioner with rear vents, Multi-Information Display (MID), 8" Navigation and many more.

The Hilux comes equipped with a number of active and passive safety features like Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake-Force Distribution (EBD) and Brake Assist (BA), Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Hill Assist Control (HAC), Trailer Sway Control and SRS Airbags for the Driver and Front Passenger.

FOUR-DOOR, FOUR-SEATER CAR

Is Ferrari Purosangue a real thoroughbred?

MUSCAT: When Ferrari unveiled the Purosangue, the first ever four-door, four-seater car in the marque's 75-year history, global attention and interest was at fever-pitch.

The reason? Because the Purosangue promised not only performance but driving pleasure and comfort too – all coexisting in perfect harmony. So, was it worth the wait for the model that Ferrari chose to name 'Purosangue,' Italian for 'thoroughbred'?

In short, yes. Available to a few select clients in the Middle East, the car's optimal weight distribution, with its mid-front-mounted engine and gearbox at the rear creates a sporty transaxle layout, delivering exactly the 49:51% weight distribution that Maranello's engineers deem optimal for a mid-front-engined sportscar.

But what makes it stand head and shoulders above the rest of the market is both its performance and comfort. The Purosangue's naturally aspirated V12 echoes the brand's most iconic engine layout and unleashes more power than any other in the segment (725cv) while still delivering the classic 12-pot soundtrack.

With class-leading performances – going from 0 to 100 km/h in 3.3 s and from 0 to 200 in 10.6 – the driving position and



the heady engine note deliver an entirely new yet also entirely Ferrari driving experience.

Ferrari has also given the Purosangue the very latest vehicle dynamic control systems and features for the very first time, its F.A.S.T. (Ferrari Active Suspension Technology) system. Controlling body roll in corners as well as the tyre contact patch over high-frequency bumps, it delivers the same performance and handling response as in one of the marque's sportscars.

The all-new chassis has a carbon-fibre roof as standard to keep weight down and lower the centre of gravity. Redesigning the bodyshell from scratch also meant the designers could incorporate rear-hinged backdoors (welcome doors) to make ingress and egress easier while keeping the car as compact as possible – performance and practicality will always win.

Potential owners will be pleased to know that a vast array of comfort-focused content is provided as standard, such as the Burmester® audio system, and that the many optional extras including the brand-new Alcantara upholstery are derived from certified recycled polyester.

The synergy of luxury, practicality and performance not only makes the Purosangue worthy of its name but also the most complete four-door, four-seater in the segment.

ROUND-UP

Arçelik Hitachi home appliances unveils #ArtofEase series in Oman

Hitachi showcased an exciting array of products set to hit the Oman market, including three models of refrigerators, dishwashers, chest freezers, drum vacuum cleaners, and robo vacuum cleaners

MUSCAT: Arçelik Hitachi home appliances announced the launch of its much-anticipated #ArtofEase series in the dynamic Oman market. The unveiling took place at a prestigious event hosted at Crown Plaza Hotel, attended by esteemed authorised dealers, delegates from Genetco, and Arçelik Hitachi. The event witnessed the presence of prominent figures, including Mutadha Hassan Ali (Chairman, Genetco), Dr Muthanna Al Durrah (Acting CEO and Board Advisor, Genetco), Dr Ambuj Khare (COO – Trade, Genetco),



Atsushi Yamanaka (Managing Director, Arçelik Hitachi Middle East), Ahmed Rashwan (Director - Sales, Arçelik Hitachi Middle East), Akito Kashiwagi (Director - Product & Marketing, Arçelik Hitachi Middle East), Masao Naruse (Head - Product & Marketing, Arçelik Hitachi Middle East), and Mohammed Masood (Sales Manager, Arçelik Hitachi Middle East).

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cleaners, and robo vacuum cleaners. The event provided attendees with the opportunity to experience firsthand the innovative features, user-centric design, and overall product goals through live demonstrations and product displays. Hitachi, a renowned global brand, expressed its commitment to further fortifying its presence in Oman, aiming to bring the Omani consumers the very best in cutting-edge home appliances. In line with the commitment to customer satisfaction, Genetco assured its customers of enhanced sales service and comprehensive after-sales support. Sathesh Chandran, Product Manager of Genetco, affirmed, “We will meticulously focus on ensuring a top-quality product lineup and after-sales service for all our customers in Oman.” The launch of the #ArtofEase series marks a significant milestone for Arçelik Hitachi and Genetco in their endeavor to provide Omani households with state-of-the-art, user-friendly home appliances. Arçelik Hitachi is a leading global brand known for its innovative and reliable home appliances. The #ArtofEase series represents a commitment to providing users with seamless, user-friendly experiences in their everyday lives. Genetco is a trusted distributor and provider of high-quality consumer electronics, engineering, and facility management solutions in the Sultanate of Oman. Committed to excellence, Genetco consistently delivers top-tier products and services to enhance the quality of life for the people of Oman.

OMAN UNITED INSURANCE



Ouic clinches coveted ‘Insurance Company of the Year’ award

MUSCAT: Oman United Insurance Company (OUIC) was honoured with the prestigious ‘Insurance Company of The Year’ Award during the inaugural OER Corporate Excellence Awards 2023 held recently at Sheraton Oman Hotel. These awards were given to selected companies listed, privately held, or government-owned, alongside industry leaders and innovative corporate initiatives that have made significant contributions to the economic and social progress of the Sultanate. The ceremony brought together luminaries from across the business landscape in the Sultanate of Oman and was hosted by Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail Al Mashani. Sayyid Saud bin Hilal Al Busaidi, the Governor of Muscat, presided over the event as the Chief Guest, while His Highness Sayyid Firas bin Fatek Al Said was the Guest of Honour. Accepting the esteemed accolade on behalf of the company,

Sayyid Nasser bin Salim Al Busaidi, Chief Management Executive of OUIC, stated, “It is truly gratifying to receive this distinguished award, a privilege I share on behalf of every member of our executive management and staff at OUIC. While I commend each team member for their contribution, I extend heartfelt thanks to our customer base, many of whom have stood by us for decades. Their unwavering trust and confidence inspire us to excel continually.” This award marks yet another milestone in the company’s history of being recognised for its leadership role in Oman’s insurance sector. Renowned for its customer-centric ethos, OUIC stands as one of Oman’s oldest local insurers, with an extensive array of diversified product offerings that span motor, travel, life, health, home, domestic workers, workmen compensation, property, project, liability, professional indemnity, cyber and personal insurance, among other domains.

MEDICAL EXPERTISE

Aster Royal Al Raffah’s swift action saves life in out-of-hospital cardiac emergency

MUSCAT: In an extraordinary display of medical expertise, a multi-disciplinary team at Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital, successfully intervened and saved a 43-year-old man from an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest without any brain damage. The patient had been experiencing chest pain since morning and within minutes of collapsing, was rushed to the hospital. Upon arrival, the patient had no pulse or breathing. The emergency department team initiated high-quality Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for a full 15 minutes until signs of life returned. Once stabilized, the patient was connected to a ventilator for breathing support. Further investigations revealed a massive heart attack, and preparations were made for emergency procedures. However, an unexpected life-threatening irregular heart rhythm occurred, requiring immediate defibrillation and medication to regularise the heart rhythm. After stabilising, the patient underwent an emergency coronary angiogram, revealing multiple critical artery lesions. Under the leadership of Dr. Meher Ali and the cardiology team, an emergency procedure successfully placed three stents to address the blockages and restore blood flow. Post-procedure, the patient faced challenges, including pulmonary edema and acute kidney injury. The nephrology team, along with the ICU staff, provided specialized care. After 48 hours of ventilation, the patient improved remarkably, showing no neurological deficits. Cardiovascular diseases are known to be the leading cause of death globally, with 17.9 million lives lost globally each year due to the condition. Among these fatalities,



ties, 85% resulted from heart attacks and strokes. Commenting on the case, Dr. Dilip Abdul Khadar Medical Director (Medical Services), Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital said, “Every revived heartbeat in this case echoes our commitment to immediate and comprehensive cardiac care. At Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital, we embrace the transformative power of swift intervention and collaborative efforts in cardiology. In this remarkable case, our team’s unwavering dedication ensured that critical moments were met with precision, from the out-of-hospital resuscitation to the emergency PCI and ongoing ICU care. This success story reflects our steadfast pursuit of excellence, providing not just treatment, but the highest standard of care for a resilient cardiac future.” Dr Meher Ali, Senior Consultant – Cardiology, Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital said “Cases of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest often leads to a grim prognosis and is at high risk for brain damage due to delayed arrival at the hospital and the initiation of CPR. However, in this exceptional case, the prompt transfer of the patient by his friends, coupled with col-

laborative medical intervention, including CPR and emergency PCI by the Emergency Department and cardiology team, followed by outstanding care in the Intensive Care Unit, played a pivotal role in ensuring this patient’s remarkable recovery. It underscores the critical importance of swift action and collaborative care in achieving positive outcomes, even in seemingly dire situations.” The team led by Dr. Meher Ali, included Dr Sharique Ahmed (Specialist Cardiologist), Dr. Rajagopal (Specialist Anaesthesiologist), Dr Arsha Alias (ED Physician), Dr Lekha Gopal (Head-Dept of Anaesthesiology), Dr Mohammed Farooq Ahmed (Specialist Nephrologist), the ED nurses, ICU nurses, and duty doctors. This successful intervention exemplifies the Aster Royal Al Raffah hospital’s commitment to pioneering medical practices and delivering unparalleled care in critical cardiac emergencies. The hospital remains dedicated to pushing boundaries, ensuring that every heartbeat receives the precision and expertise it deserves, reinforcing its promise of a healthier cardiac future.

NATIONAL DAY



Chinese envoy visits Pakistan School Muscat

MUSCAT: Ambassador of China to the Sultanate of Oman, Li Lingbing, visited Pakistan School Muscat on November 19, on the occasion of Oman National Day celebrations. She inaugurated the new furniture imported from China and said such cooperation reinforces the bonds between Pakistan and China, as well as Pakistan and Oman. Lingbing and the Pakistan School Board, along with senior officers from China and Pakistan embassy, discussed avenues for future cooperation, including mutual collaboration between the government of China and Pakistan Schools in Oman, the introduction of the Chinese language, and special education in the Pakistan Schools system. Moreover, she expressed her delight when briefed about the Smart Board system, the teaching of specially-abled children, and the overall standard of education and other initiatives in the Pakistan School system. In addition, Chairman Ameer Hamza thanked the support of the Ambassador in connecting the school to the most competitively priced companies in South China that specialised in customised furniture for schools. During her visit, she explored different areas, with a particular focus on the Centre for Special Education.



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